

4 GEMBROOK LEISURE PARK MASTERPLAN

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RECOMMENDATION

Council endorse the Gembrook Leisure Park Masterplan.

Attachments

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2017, it was identified that the Gembrook Leisure Park playground and skate park was in urgent need of replacement. A report was presented to SLT in August 2017, recommending that the project receive capital funding.

Council was successful in receiving \$500,000 in grant funding from the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund program, and an additional \$500,000 from the State Government's Growing Suburbs Fund. These grants support Council's contribution of \$500,000 from the 2018/19 capital works program and brings the total budget for the project to \$1,500,000.

Land Design Partnership were engaged to develop a draft concept design that was used for initial community consultation in February and March 2018. The feedback from this consultation was then used to develop a revised Concept Plan. Further community engagement occurred in October and November 2018 regarding the revised concept plan.

This consultation has informed the development of the Gembrook Leisure Park Masterplan (attached).

BACKGROUND

The Gembrook Leisure Park is located adjacent to the Gembrook Community Centre and includes a large concrete skate park, a play space, public toilets, barbeques, and picnic facilities. The play space and skate park at Gembrook Leisure Park were constructed over a number of years and was completed in the year 2000. It was driven and delivered by the community. The existing play space whilst not an official "all abilities play space" included a number of ramps which allowed children in wheelchairs assisted access to the main structure.

The play space and skate park are both degrading. The play space is requiring weekly maintenance and a number of items and a section of the timber structure has been removed due to safety concerns.

A consultant was engaged to develop a draft concept design for Council to utilise to engage the community. The initial concept design was presented to the community during two community engagement workshops held in February and March in 2018. A "Have your say" survey was also undertaken to collect feedback from the community and determine the key activities the

community would enjoy in the District level reserve park. The concept design was also presented to the Gembrook Township Committee.

The key themes which emerged during the initial community engagement process and identified by the community as priorities for the park include:

- Skating / scooting
- Splashing
- Swinging
- Bouncing
- Flying fox
- Climbing
- Fitness
- Nature play.

A revised Concept Plan was prepared incorporating these key themes as well as enhancing the space through effective placement of activities as outlined below:

- Improved connections with the neighbouring Gembrook Community Centre, formalising the Centre car park and providing three entry points, including an accessible ramp.
- Formalised car parking along Beenak East Rd, providing accessible parking and improved access to the park.
- Active recreational opportunities provided including multi-purpose half court, hit up wall and large skateable space for skating, scooting and bike riding; incorporating hangout and informal space for young people, families and spectators to utilise.
- Open lawn providing sheltered barbeques and picnic tables connecting with exercise station
- Play opportunities including:
 - Zero depth water splash play, ensuring separation between play space and water play
 - Accessible play
 - Nature play; and
 - Adventure play.
- Shade provision including natural and structured shade.
- Art and some decorative items found in the existing play space, will be used to connect the new play space with its original design and community input.

The revised Concept Plan was presented to SLT and Council for discussion in October 2018 and approval for community consultation was sought.

During October and November 2018, extensive community consultation regarding the revised concept plan was undertaken including:

- Skatepark focus workshops at the Emerald Secondary College and after hours for the broader community;
- Attendance at the Gembrook Community Market;
- Attendance at the Gembrook Township and Gembrook Community Halls Committee meetings; and
- "Have your say" online survey.

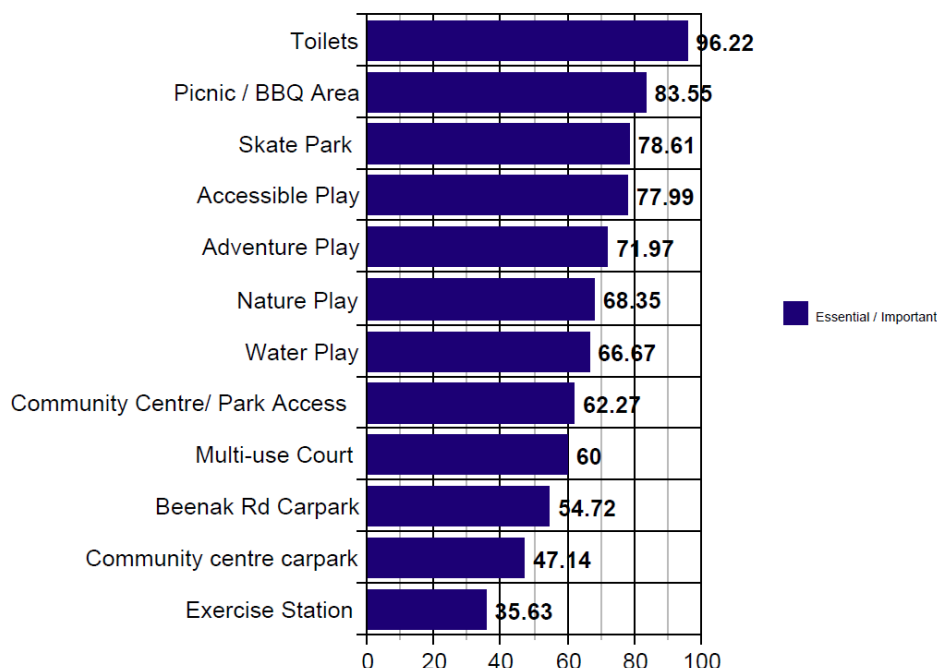
Community feedback received showed there was general support and excitement for the majority of the elements of the proposed concept design.

160 people responded to the 'Have Your Say' survey.

The 'Have your say' survey asked respondents to assign an importance rating to 12 of the components in the Concept Plan. As part of the community consultation, respondents were asked to assign an importance rating to each of the components. The data collected is summarised in the

graph below which demonstrates the order of components based on what community rated as "important" and "essential".

Gembrook Leisure Park Revised Concept Plan consultation data
November 2018



The community feedback received showed significant concern regarding the proposed skate park design. Concern was expressed that the skate park wasn't large enough, didn't meet existing skaters, scooters and BMX users' needs and that it was a downgrade from the current facility.

Council responded to the concerns regarding the skate park design elements by undertaking further engagement activities including a focus group workshop and visit to Secondary College. This feedback is now reflected by an increased skate park footprint and budget allocation, and relocated basketball/ multi use court closer to the lawn area, placing the skate park back in its original location on the site.

The community also expressed concern regarding the removal of the existing BBQ shelter due to its community connection.

In response to concerns regarding the proposed removal of the barbeque shelter, Council engaged a structural engineer to assess the structural integrity of the shelter. The report identified significant concerns regarding the structural integrity of the existing shelter which would require extensive and ongoing works. The consultant noted that even if Council undertakes the extensive works recommended, the lifespan of the shelter would still only be another five years.

It is therefore still proposed that the structure be removed and replaced with a new shelter.

The Preliminary Cost Estimate received based on the revised Concept Plan was above the available budget. Council have worked with the designer to identify savings and where required, reduced the scope of the project to fit within the available budget.

A more detailed Masterplan for the park has been prepared based on the community consultation on the revised Concept Plan. The Masterplan prepared incorporates the following changes from the revised Concept Plan based on funding available and community feedback:

- An increase in footprint of the skate park;
- Public toilets to be refurbished as opposed to being replaced with exelooos due to budget constraints;

- The removal of the proposed community centre carpark formalisation from the project scope due to budget constraints. East Beenak Rd car parking remains in the scope;
- Removal of one access path to the Community Centre - it was determined by the Gembrook Community Centre Committee that it was not a required connection. There still remains 2 pathway connections from the Community Centre;
- Removal of the exercise station due to low community desire and budget constraints; and
- Removal of the proposed zero depth water play due to lower community priority, construction funding constraints and ongoing maintenance costs and issues.

A CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) checklist was completed on the Masterplan. The Masterplan takes into consideration sightlines throughout the reserve by ensuring low level landscaping and visually accessible fencing is implemented. The reserve is located along two main roads in Gembrook, adjacent to housing and nearby public facilities, supporting day and night time surveillance. The Masterplan proposes a range of activities, encouraging a variety of user groups to utilise and access the space, supporting safety through activity generation.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The project aligns with Council's Liveability Plan vision by enhancing the liveability of the Gembrook Township, and providing opportunities and encouraging residents to be healthy, included and connected. It supports the Open Space domain of the Liveability plan, meeting objectives:

7. An increase in participation in open spaces and places.
 - 7.1 Strategically planning and maintaining open spaces and places to be safe, accessible, appealing and connected.
 - 7.2 Enriching local identity and place making through public art and cultural expression.
 - 7.3 Increasing access to leisure, sport and recreation opportunities.
 - 7.4 Protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of open spaces and places.

An action of the Gembrook Township Strategy (2011) was to revitalise and provide for the ongoing maintenance of Gembrook Leisure Park, as well as providing a direct access between the Leisure Park and the Community Centre. Currently users are scaling the embankment between the Leisure Park and the Community Centre rather than taking the path around. The revised concept plan address this issue.

The Cardinia Shire Play space Strategy specifies that Council will "Retain and enhance play spaces at Gembrook Leisure Park as an enhanced district play spaces for the community and that "The renewal of (the) play spaces should involve a high level of community consultation".

A priority of the Cardinia Skate and BMX Strategy (2016) is to demolish and replace the existing Gembrook Skate Park with a smaller local facility to current best practice.

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

Our People

- 1.4.4 Support children, young people, families, older adults and people of all abilities by providing a range of accessible services and facilities.
- 1.5.1 Provide active and passive recreation facilities to meet the needs of residents.
- 1.5.2 Increase opportunities for residents to participate in a range of sport, recreation and leisure activities.

Our Community

- 2.2.1 Provide a range of opportunities that encourage community participation in Council policy and strategy development.
- 2.2.2 Communicate the activities and decisions of Council to the residents in a variety of ways.
- 2.3.3 Strengthen Council's community engagement through the development, implementation and promotion of effective practices.

Our Environment

- 3.1.2 Develop new and maintain existing parks, gardens and reserves in a sustainable way.
- 3.1.3 Provide accessible facilities to meet identified community needs.
- 3.1.4 Manage Council's assets like roads, drainage, footpaths and buildings, etc. in a way that ensures they are adequately maintained over their life.

Our Governance

- 5.1.2 Enhance the community's confidence in Council's community engagement.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

The Gembrook Leisure Park has significant community attachment and interest. This was clearly demonstrated throughout the community consultation process.

The revised Concept Plan was presented to the community during October and November 2018 through the following consultation methods:

- October 26 - November 26 - Online survey to ensure all community members have the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft concept design. Hard copy surveys were provided at the Gembrook Post Office to ensure all community members had the opportunity to have their say.
- 28th October - Gembrook Market - Council set up a Marquee presenting the concept design at the Gembrook Market. iPads were available for people to complete the survey.
- 14th November - lunchtime 'pop up' stall held at Emerald Secondary College to receive specific feedback regarding the skate park design, as well as encourage students to complete the online survey. Approximately 50 students came and spoke to Council.
- November - Council attended the Gembrook Halls Committee and Township Committee meetings to present the concept design, answer any questions and receive feedback.

During December 2018, specific consultation was undertaken regarding the skate park component of the Concept Design. This included:

- 16 December - Informal skate park visit to meet and chat with young people using the skate park about what they like / dislike / would like to see at the upgraded version.
- 19 December - Skate park focus workshop facilitated by skate park design specialist Darren White from Baseplate. Community members were invited to attend a focus group after hours to meet with the designer and further delve into what they wanted to see in the skate park, as well as answer concerns and questions around why it was going to be rebuilt (design outdated, large area that isn't conducive to skating, scooting, or bike riding, current state unsafe for skating in particular). The Township Committee provided a BBQ at this workshop, and the overall workshop was well received by those who attended. Over 30 community members attended the workshop, mainly young people and children who regularly use the skate park. The designer actively engaged all the attendees asking each person:
 - what they want in the new skatepark,
 - what don't they like about the existing skatepark, and
 - what was missing from the existing skatepark.

The resulting information received from this workshop was 17 “wants”, 6 “dislikes”, and 14 “missing”. Out of the 17 wants, only 2 items were not able to be accommodated. And out of the 14 missing, only 1 was unable to be accommodated. The proposed design has a much superior function and flow, and also caters for a range of ages and abilities.

Further consultation with the community occurred from 4 February to 24 February 2019 to allow the community the opportunity to contribute to the detailed play space design. This consultation included conversations at the local children's centre, Gembrook Primary School and surrounding primary schools (four in total). Council received 450 votes from the schools and children's centre. An online survey was created to encourage all community members to have their say on their favourite play space design. Council received 412 online survey votes. By separating the design of the play space from the broader project tender process, it allowed Council to consult with the community and offer them the opportunity to have input into the final design.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Council was successful in receiving \$500,000 from the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Grant Program, and an additional \$500,000 from the State Government's Growing Suburbs Fund. These grants support Council's contribution of \$500,000 from the 2018/19 capital works program and bring the total budget for the project to \$1,500,000.

The project is upgrading and enhancing the reserve, and therefore will be providing a higher level of service to the community. This process will have an impact on maintenance and operating costs as described below:

The reserve is currently receiving high maintenance due to the repairs and safety inspections associated with ageing infrastructure. The project will initially reduce the level of inspections and maintenance required. However, as it will be providing higher level of service, the inspection frequencies will be higher, which will be incorporated into the current maintenance program.

The provision of the proposed zero depth water play would cost Council an upfront construction cost of \$150,000 and ongoing maintenance costs of up to \$10,000 per month. This amount would address general servicing, pumps, inspections, water quality testing and treatment in line with water quality regulations. There is the potential to incorporate these additional costs into the current Major Recreation Facility Contract 15/01 to oversee the plant management and maintenance associated with the water treatment process at a cost to Council.

The Preliminary Cost Estimate received based on the revised Concept Plan was significantly over the budgeted amount. The feedback received through the community engagement process, helped to identify the components that were considered most important. Based on this feedback, some areas of the scope were refined, reduced, and in some instances increased (i.e. skatepark).

CONCLUSION

The Gembrook Leisure Park Upgrade will provide the local and wider community with an enhanced district reserve, supporting the local and wider hills community to recreate, play, engage and socialise. It will provide a range of play opportunities for all ages and abilities, with additional active recreation opportunities, and passive space to picnic and relax.

The importance of the project is clear, demonstrated by the level of community responsiveness, and funding received through both State and Federal government grant programs.

A Masterplan for the Gembrook Leisure Park has been prepared based on community feedback on the initial and revised concept plans and funding availability. It is recommended that upon endorsement, the Masterplan is then presented to the community. This will allow Council to present to the community the final designs of the play space and skate park which they helped shape, and to also provide information regarding the process followed, closing the loop.

