

## 2.2 MULGRAVE RESERVE MASTERPLAN

(JG)

Responsible Director: Julie Salomon

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council:*

- 1. Approve the draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan (Attachment A) for public exhibition on Council's website and invite community feedback via written submissions; and*
- 2. Note that following the public exhibition period of the Draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan, the masterplan will be revised where necessary, and a final masterplan presented to Council for adoption in May 2018.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report provides an overview of the Mulgrave Reserve masterplanning process and seeks Council's approval to publicly exhibit the draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan for community feedback.

### **BACKGROUND**

Mulgrave Reserve is an important sporting, passive recreation and environmental space for the residents of Wheelers Hill, and the broader Monash community.

The reserve is located on the corner of Wellington Road and Garnett Road, and is a unique reserve that offers traditional sporting and recreation facilities and spaces in combination with a high quality bushland, wetlands, environmental and conservation zone.

The Dandenong Creek, the Melbourne Water Wetlands, and the Dandenong Creek Trail are significant features that have an interface with the reserve, and the Mulgrave Walking Track starts in Mulgrave Reserve and continues along the Dandenong Creek Trail through to Jells Park.

The following sporting groups are based at Mulgrave Reserve:

- Mulgrave Football Netball Club;
- Eastern Devils Women's Football Club;
- Mulgrave Cricket Club;
- Glen Waverley Junior Football Club (not a permanent tenant);
- Golphrobics Pty Ltd (lessee of the Waverley Pitch n Putt); and
- Wetlands Golf and Games (lessee of Wetlands Mini Golf).

The reserve is also a popular open space and recreational area for local residents, particularly as a destination for personal exercise (walking and jogging) and for dog exercise.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### Masterplanning Process

The overall aim of the masterplan is to establish clear directions for the future use and development of Mulgrave Reserve for the next 10-15 years.

The master plan study has been undertaken as a three stage process:

- Stage 1: Information gathering, research and issues and opportunities analysis.
- Stage 2: Community consultation and stakeholder engagement, including testing preliminary concept plans and masterplan options.
- Stage 3: Prepare final masterplan and study report.

The project is now at a phase in the process where a draft masterplan can be considered by community stakeholder groups. Several factors were identified for investigation during the study, and included:

- opportunities to increase the use of the reserve for both passive and active recreation, including increasing visits to the wetlands and bushland areas;
- improved connections within the reserve (paths);
- assessment of options to improve sporting uses (pavilion and other infrastructure; sports fields configurations; the future use of golf sites);
- the potential to introduce environmental education experiences; and
- traffic management matters including the adequacy of car parking and effectiveness of internal roads.

#### Masterplan Consultation

A range of consultative activities have been conducted since August 2017 to inform the preparation of the masterplan:

- Review of available facilities and spaces with reserve user groups, and the wetlands and environmental zone with Council's Bushland and Horticulture teams;
- Meetings with the reserve user groups, the golf enterprises, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water;
- Workshop with Monash City Council staff;
- Meetings and discussions with Ward Councillors;
- One-on-one interviews with reserve visitors;
- Resident survey (via letterbox drop and online); and
- Two community meetings.

#### Consultation Findings and Key Themes

The key outcomes from consultations and site reviews were grouped into the following themes. These informed the masterplan design development:

##### 1. *Inadequate Sporting Facilities*

Pavilion is not fit for purpose, particularly in relation to change rooms that are not female friendly and the size of the canteen and storage.

##### 2. *Passive Recreation and Linkages*

Improve the playground, provide picnic and BBQ facilities and upgrade the public toilets. Increase and improve the path network (including managing the pressure point on the Dandenong Creek Trail between cyclists, pedestrians and sports spectators) and install bench seating.

##### 3. *Traffic Management*

Traffic congestion and on-street parking on football days; investigate options to increase the off-street car parking.

#### 4. *Wetlands/Environmental Area*

The wetlands and environmental zone is highly valued. Improve the access into and throughout the environmental area and provide interpretive signage.

#### 5. *New Opportunities*

Over forty (40) respondents to the resident survey expressed interest in being involved in a 'Friends of Mulgrave Wetlands' group if one were established. There is support for a multi-purpose hard court capable of being used for a variety of active recreation pursuits.

Other key findings from the resident survey and the community meetings were that residents highly value the openness/bushland setting of the reserve, and the importance of the reserve as a place for personal exercise and dog exercise.

#### Masterplan Recommendations

The key strategic directions proposed in the draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan are noted below (in no specific order or priority).

This should be read in conjunction with viewing the illustrated masterplan drawing (Attachment A).

#### ***Sport and Recreation Zone***

- 1.1 Continue to use the northern oval as the main football and cricket competition venue and increase the capacity of the southern sporting fields for football and cricket by installing drainage and irrigation systems.
- 1.2 Upgrade and extend the sports pavilion to include additional player and umpires' change rooms, increased storage, a redeveloped kitchen/ canteen and public toilets.
- 1.3 Consider including a community/environmental group meeting room within the upgraded pavilion, as a means to further develop the educational and interactive opportunities possible from the wetlands/environmental zone.
- 1.4 Install terraced spectator seating between the pavilion and the main oval.
- 1.5 Remove the east-west cricket practice nets and replace them with two additional north-south synthetic practice nets. Retain the turf practice wicket.
- 1.6 Create a new activity hub within the reserve by:
  - installing a multipurpose hard court suitable for netball training (including floodlights to 100 lux) but inclusive of other active recreational features, such as a tennis hit-up wall, a basketball ring and four square court;
  - installing a new playground with a natural, nature-based theme;
  - installing picnic and BBQ facilities (remove the existing public toilets and upgrade the shelter to accommodate the picnic facilities); and
  - planting trees and other landscape embellishments.
- 1.7 Transform the existing playground space into a picnic area with a natural setting and new indigenous plantings.
- 1.8 Continue to support the existing enterprises operating the two golf activities (Waverley Pitch n Putt and Wetlands Mini Golf).

#### ***Traffic Management***

- 2.1 Provide additional car parking in the reserve for approximately fifty (50) cars.
- 2.2 Convert the site of the former residence in the north-east corner of the reserve into an unsealed overflow car park area (up to thirty two (32) spaces).

***Pedestrians and Access***

- 3.1 Construct a new recreational walking and fitness trail throughout the sport and recreation zone to link the various spaces and to enhance the opportunities for personal exercise.
- 3.2 Formalise pedestrian crossing points and access into the reserve from Garnett Road.
- 3.3 Improve the safety at the entrance to the wetlands area where the pedestrian and shared (cycle) paths intersect.
- 3.4 Widen the Dandenong Creek Trail shared (cycle) path that traverses the environmental zone.
- 3.5 Upgrade the bridge on the Dandenong Creek Trail to improve the surface, increase the width and improve sightlines.

***Wetlands/ Environmental Zone***

- 4.1 Designate the wetlands area as a 'no dogs allowed' area and install interpretive signage throughout the wetland/environmental zone.
- 4.2 Replace the existing noticeboard with an interpretive sign incorporating a map of the wetlands/environmental zone.
- 4.3 Upgrade the maintenance access road pedestrian path around the wetlands.
- 4.4 Upgrade the setting of the existing dam and provide a loop trail around the dam connected to the broader path network.
- 4.5 Renew the bird hide.

***Other***

- 5.1 Pending the establishment of a 'Friends of Wetlands' group, install an equipment storage shed within the Council compound located in the revegetation area.
- 5.2 In conjunction with Melbourne Water, investigate the potential for treatment of the stormwater that flows through the reserve from Garnett Road to Dandenong Creek.
- 5.3 Remove the northern boundary fence of the reserve and strengthen the boundary with tree planting.
- 5.4 Continue to maintain and manage the vegetation throughout the reserve in accordance with the directions of the 'Mulgrave Reserve Management Plan (2008)'.

***POLICY IMPLICATIONS***

The draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan is consistent with relevant Council policy, strategy and plans including the Council Plan and A Healthy and Resilient Monash: An Integrated Plan 2017-2021.

***SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The recommendations in the draft masterplan, when implemented, will enhance social connectiveness and community wellbeing by providing improved and accessible amenities and facilities at the reserve.

***HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS***

No human rights implications inform this proposal.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The development of the Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan was funded through the 2017/18 operational budget. Any subsequent work to progress any potential improvements identified in the draft masterplan would be subject to funding through the annual Council budget process.

Masterplans are aspirational in nature and the draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan (Attachment A) highlights some long-term opportunities for the reserve. In addition to identified long-term opportunities, there are range of opportunities captured in the draft masterplan that will increase the functionality and usability of the reserve that are practical in nature. These works can be undertaken in a staged approach that are mindful of the current fiscal constraints.

**CONCLUSION**

The masterplanning process has involved extensive consultation with the community and a range of stakeholders. A combination of meetings, interviews and site inspections were carried out with various stakeholders during the study, including user groups, potential new user groups, residents and visitors to the reserve, Melbourne Water, other groups and Council staff. Some of the consultation was undertaken during the research phase of the study, whilst other meetings and interviews were designed to receive feedback on the concept plans prepared for the reserve.

The draft masterplan incorporates the broad interests and needs of the community. Where improvements have been assessed as appropriate, they have been included in the draft masterplan.

Following the public exhibition period of the draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan, the masterplan will be revised, where necessary, and the final draft masterplan presented to Council for adoption (anticipated April 2018).

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A** - Draft Mulgrave Reserve Masterplan