

8.2-8.3 LATE REPORT: STATE TENNIS CENTRE PROPOSAL FOR ROBERTSON PARK - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

TRIM Ref: D19/11225
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Attachments: 1. Robertson Park - Areas of Concern
 2. Robertson Park - Utilised Areas

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council;

1. **RECEIVES** the community consultation feedback regarding the proposed inclusion of Robertson Park in the State Tennis Centre Business Case being prepared by the Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries;
2. **NOTES** the decision of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to not include Robertson Park amongst the shortlisted sites for the State Tennis Centre; and
3. **REQUESTS** that the Chief Executive Officer consider timing/funding options for the proposed Robertson Park Development Plan within the City's Corporate Business Plan, Annual Budget and Long Term Financial Plan.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To advise Council of the results of the community consultation process conducted by the Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries (the Department) regarding the proposed inclusion of Robertson Park amongst the shortlisted sites within the State Tennis Centre Business Case.

BACKGROUND:

At the Ordinary Council Meeting on 13 November 2018, it was resolved:

"That Council:

1. *PROVIDES in principle support for the inclusion of Robertson Park amongst the shortlisted sites within the State Tennis Centre Business Case being prepared by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries;*
1. *REQUESTS that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and Tennis West consult with residents/businesses immediately surrounding Robertson Park regarding the State Tennis Centre proposal;*
3. *REQUIRES the Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries to consider and respond to feedback received from residents/businesses immediately surrounding Robertson Park within the State Tennis Centre Business Case; and*
4. *REQUESTS that the Chief Executive Officer present a report back to the Ordinary Council meeting on 5 February 2019 including feedback received from residents/businesses immediately surrounding Robertson Park as the basis for further decision making regarding support for the proposed State Tennis Centre."*

The abovementioned consultation was undertaken to enable both the Department and Tennis West to explain the scale and function of the proposed State Tennis Centre, articulate the impacts and benefits to the local community, present and discuss the preliminary concept plan, document key feedback and issues, and respond directly to any resident queries.

DETAILS:

The Department with support from the City delivered two public information sessions and released an online survey in December 2018 seeking views about the possible inclusion of Robertson Park within the State Tennis Centre Business Case. The first public information session was held on 13 December 2018 with nine community members in attendance and the second public information session was held on 19 January 2019 with 60 community members in attendance. A project bulletin and invitation to attend the information sessions were sent to all residents and businesses located within a 400 metre radius of Robertson Park.

Throughout the consultation period an online survey and key project information was available on the City's Imagine Vincent engagement portal. A total of 61 people completed the online survey with 11 supporting the proposal and 50 not supporting the proposal. There were also a number of submissions received as written correspondence rather than the online survey, and while some submissions were in support of the proposal, again the majority were not in support of the proposal.

Given the range of concerns raised by residents following the first public information session the consultation period was extended to 31 January 2019. The table below summarises the key feedback received by the Department and the City through the public information sessions, online survey and written submissions:

Key Issue	Administration Response
Impact of car parking/lack of car parking	<p>This was by far the biggest area of concern raised by the community. Key concerns were that parking is already an issue in the area, the potential impact of State Tennis Centre visitors on event days, where the parking would be located, and potential impact on park amenity.</p> <p>Given proximity to the Perth CBD and location on Fitzgerald Street it is acknowledged that parking management would be a key issue associated with the proposed State Tennis Centre that would require innovative and effective management.</p>
Increased traffic	<p>Similar to the comments received regarding car parking the key concerns raised were that traffic congestion is already an issue in the area, the potential impact of additional State Tennis Centre traffic on event days, and potential impact of increased traffic on park amenity.</p> <p>Again, given proximity to the Perth CBD and location on Fitzgerald Street it is acknowledged that traffic management would be a key issue associated with the proposed State Tennis Centre that would require effective management.</p>
Loss of trees and useable Public Open Space	<p>Concerns were raised regarding the potential loss of 'heritage/significant trees' in and around the proposed State Tennis Centre site and the potential loss of accessible public open space.</p> <p>The concept presented by the Department was an artist's impression only depicting potential site layout given that Robertson Park was amongst several shortlisted sites. The City had already advised the Department that existing trees would need to be retained where possible and additional tree planning would likely be necessary. The Department was also advised that the proposed State Tennis Centre footprint would need to be maintained within the current Robertson Park tennis courts lease area particularly given the findings and outcomes of the City's Public Open Space Strategy. These matters were to be further investigated and refined if Robertson Park was identified as the preferred site for the State Tennis Centre.</p>
Robertson Park too small for the proposed development	<p>Concerns were expressed that the existing Robertson Park tennis courts lease area was too small for the proposed State Tennis Centre footprint.</p> <p>The concept presented by the Department was an artist's impression only depicting potential site layout given that Robertson Park was amongst several shortlisted sites. Administration advised the Department that the proposed State Tennis Centre footprint would need to be maintained within the current Robertson Park tennis courts lease</p>

Key Issue	Administration Response
	area and the Department has reaffirmed that the site was indeed large enough to accommodate the Centre.
Extra light spill from floodlights	<p>Concerns were raised regarding the increased tennis activity that would require extended use of floodlights and the associated light spill that would negatively impact nearby residents.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the State Tennis Centre would attract additional usage including night time usage that would require floodlights. The Department advised that the floodlights would be latest technology with very low light spill.</p>
Increased 'heat' from concrete	<p>The increased heat impact from the proposed hard tennis courts compared to the existing grass tennis courts was identified as an issue for nearby residents and park users.</p> <p>By their very nature tennis hardcourts would generate more heat compared to grass tennis courts although there are also a range of functional and maintenance benefits associated with this change.</p>
Increased noise	<p>Concerns were raised regarding additional noise that would be created by the State Tennis Centre and the subsequent impact on adjacent residences and businesses as well as park users.</p> <p>While the Robertson Park tennis courts already generate noise it is acknowledged that events at the State Tennis Centre may increase noise impacts at certain times. The concept presented by the Department was an artist's impression only depicting potential site layout given that Robertson Park was amongst several shortlisted sites. Detailed site design and noise management were to be further investigated and refined if Robertson Park was identified as the preferred site for the State Tennis Centre.</p>
Loss of grass courts	<p>The conversion of existing grass courts to hard courts was identified as an issue both from a heat and amenity perspective.</p> <p>The conversion of grass courts to hard courts has been identified as a key priority within the Tennis West Strategic Facilities Plan, and provides a range of functional and maintenance benefits. This conversion could arguably have a negative impact on park aesthetics.</p>
Loss of dog exercise area	<p>Robertson Park is currently an approved off leash dog exercise area and concerns were raised that the State Tennis Centre would lead this being changed.</p> <p>The proposed State Tennis Centre was to be maintained within the existing Robertson Park tennis courts lease area with the remaining park areas unimpacted. There was no intention to modify the existing approved off leash dog exercise area.</p>
Potential removal of playground	<p>The potential removal of the existing playground was noted and not supported.</p> <p>While the initial artist's impression showed the State Tennis Centre impacting the playground area the Department reissued the concept design confirming that playground would remain in-situ. Again, specific site design was to be further investigated and refined if Robertson Park was identified as the preferred site for the State Tennis Centre.</p>
Loss of amenity/impact on house values	<p>General comments were received that the increased noise, congestion and activity at Robertson Park would potentially impact amenity in the local area and subsequently housing values.</p> <p>The State Tennis Centre would inevitably increase activity at Robertson Park. Administration cannot speculate on negative or positive impacts to housing values in the surrounding area.</p>

Key Issue	Administration Response
Changes in access to tennis courts	<p>Concerns were expressed that location of the State Tennis Centre at Robertson Park would mean that access for grassroots/community tennis would decrease.</p> <p>The Department and Tennis West assured residents at the public information sessions that community access to the tennis courts would be maintained, including the online 'book a court' system.</p>
Heritage/cultural site significance	<p>The negative impact of the State Tennis Centre on site heritage and Aboriginal significance were raised as concerns.</p> <p>These important considerations were identified by the Department through the initial site analysis, and would be further investigated and responded to appropriately if Robertson Park was identified as the preferred site.</p>
Other	<p>A range of other issues were raised during the community consultation including access to public transport or lack of, and the proposed size and scale of the indoor tennis court facility.</p> <p>The Department advised that public transport availability along Fitzgerald Street had been assessed and further transport options would be identified if Robertson Park was identified as the preferred site. The proposed State Tennis Centre remained subject to more detailed design and necessary development approvals to ensure appropriate size, scale and location.</p>

At the public information session held on 19 January 2019, Administration sought direct feedback from residents to identify key areas of concern and how the park is currently utilised. This feedback overlaid on aerial maps of Robertson Park has been provided as **Attachments 1 and 2**. The information will be maintained and further analysed by Administration as the basis for any future planning of Robertson Park.

Importantly, during the community consultation phase the Department formally advised that in response to the community sentiment and concerns raised Robertson Park would no longer be included amongst the shortlisted sites within the State Tennis Centre Business Case.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

Consultation was undertaken in accordance with Council Policy No. 4.1.5 – Community Consultation which requires consultation to take place with residents of a selected target area in the case of major reserve development proposals. This included the provision of a project bulletin to residents/businesses located within a 400 metre radius of Robertson Park and two public information sessions. Key project information and an online survey was also available through the City's Imagine Vincent engagement portal.

Consultation should generally be avoided between the mid-December to mid-January period and for that reason, the process commenced early December with the first public information session held on 13 December 2018 and the second session held on 19 January 2019. The consultation period was initially due to close on 20 January 2019 following the second public information session on 19 January 2019, however due to extent of concerns received the consultation period was extended to 31 January 2019.

LEGAL/POLICY:

Policy No. 4.1.5 – Community Consultation.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

Low: Inclusion of Robertson Park amongst the shortlisted sites within the State Tennis Centre Business Case was regarded as low risk given that such approval would not represent a binding commitment to the development of the State Tennis Centre at that location.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

Consideration of the proposal for inclusion of Robertson Park in the State Tennis Centre Business Case aligns with the following priorities and outcomes within the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

“Connected Community

Our community facilities and spaces are well known and well used

Thriving Places

Our physical assets are efficiently and effectively managed and maintained

Innovative and Accountable

We are open and accountable to an engaged community.”

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Costs associated with community consultation were met by the Department and within existing Administration operational budgets.

COMMENT:

In response to feedback received during the community consultation period to the Department has already advised that Robertson Park will no longer be considered amongst the shortlisted sites within the State Tennis Centre Business Case. As per the City's Public Open Space Strategy, a development plan is required for Robertson Park to guide future use, management and development of the site albeit without a State Tennis Centre. This includes the tennis courts and associated amenities that require capital improvements and negotiation of new lease arrangements. It is recommended that the Chief Executive Officer consider funding/timing options for preparation of this development plan within the context of the City's Corporate Business Plan, Annual Budget and Long Term Financial Plan.

