

Frequently Asked Questions

Swan Regional Riverside Park All Abilities Play Space

Woodbridge Park

November 2009



1. "What is the proposed All Abilities Play Space?"

It is a regional size play space intended to provide interactive, interpretive and explorative play opportunities for people of all ages and abilities within the City of Swan and beyond by attracting visitors and tourists.

It forms part of the wider Draft Swan Regional Riverside Park Masterplan 2005, which aims to establish a beautiful parkland that will be an iconic attraction for Midland. Expansive rehabilitation and wetland restorative work is planned, as well as activity nodes at Reg Bond Reserve and Woodbridge Park as endorsed in the Draft Masterplan, following extensive prior consultation.

The Play Space Concept Sketch Design is intended to maximise its amenity and compatibility with the surrounding area, with the Play Space itself being 70% green space, and the remaining area containing a range of activity nodes positioned at the furthest points away from local houses. There will be a predominant use of natural materials, and it will incorporate features that interpret local Indigenous, colonial and multicultural heritage, as well as the environmental importance of the area.

Within the activity nodes it provides a wide range of play alternatives suited to diverse ages, and incorporates design principles and play elements that permit play by people of all ages and abilities.

The Concept Sketch for the Play Space is a draft, indicative design only at this stage. Final design will incorporate community feedback, budget assessments and an approvals process. A larger image can be viewed at <http://swancommunity.com.au/swanregionalplayspace>



2. "Is it too late to change the Play Space plan?"

It's definitely not too late to make changes. The City will be continuing to consult and modify the plans as different factors need to be given consideration, including community feedback.

The Concept Sketch has only very recently been developed, and the City has proceeded to community consultation within weeks.

One community consultation workshop has already taken place and some good feedback was received, leading to many of the topics contained in these FAQs. The City is already planning a follow up workshop with nearby residents so they can discuss those suggestions and be involved in deciding some of the detail. We will be communicating our reasoning if things can't be modified, but working with residents where things can be altered. Based on the feedback received to date, some modifications are already being considered.

For residents and visitors not close by, we really want your ideas to help influence the type of play equipment and activities, so your feedback is encouraged.

3. "How can I have a say on this project?"

The City is keen to hear from residents with ideas and comment, including from young children and teenagers.

Log on to <http://swancommunity.com.au/swanregionalplayspace> by 30 November 2009, or contact the City directly on 9267 9267 to request a Feedback Survey, which includes a page for young children to draw their ideas and suggestions if they prefer.

4. **“Why is Woodbridge Riverside Park a good site for this purpose?”**

In capitalising on the potential of this wonderful natural asset and establishing the SRRP as an iconic attraction for the region, it makes logical sense for Woodbridge Riverside Park to be a key entry point to the wider SRRP.

It is the closest arrival point for river traffic, cycle and pedestrian traffic, bus traffic and Woodbridge Train Station, which all aids in promoting pedestrian accessibility to reduce vehicle traffic to the park. The site is also some of the only land in the area owned by the City of Swan, and due to the past use of the area as a rubbish tip, ground testing has shown Woodbridge Park itself to be one of the only areas suitable for such uses. It is also classified as a recreation reserve and is currently a sporting oval, so the proposed use impacts are consistent with this classification.

However to ensure decisions weren't based on City assessments alone, the City has been conscious of developing a long running, comprehensive and inclusive consultation strategy for the SRRP project. Prior to any concept plans or principles being developed, a range of community members and stakeholders were specifically engaged, and all residents had opportunity to comment.

From this process, strong support was shown for limiting higher use areas to Reg Bond Reserve in Viveash, and Woodbridge Park in Woodbridge with the rest of the park being very low intensity native bush and wetlands.

5. **“How were people consulted?”**

A comprehensive consultation process has been operating for a number of years, in advance of the initial Draft Masterplan being approved in 2005. This has included:

- **Developing a Community Consultation Group (CCG):** This acted as the peak community consultation body – consisting of relevant community groups and organisations including the Woodbridge Ratepayers Association. Three community workshops were held with the CCG, which developed guiding principles, identified the key attributes of the parkland and provided a concept plan for public comment. The second workshop produced five concept plans from the CCG, which assisted in the formation of the concept plan presented in the Draft Masterplan. A full Community Consultation Report was produced in September 2004, and can be obtained at <http://cityofswan.com/docs/documents/965/301220043955.pdf>

- **Specific stakeholder workshops:** Additional consultation workshops during 2004 were also held with a range of key stakeholders, including one with the Woodbridge Ratepayers Association on 8 July 2004.

- **Formal public comment period:** At its Ordinary Meeting held on 13 October 2004 Council endorsed the commencement of an eight week formal comment period for the Draft SRRP Concept Plan from 1 November 2004 to the 24 December 2004. Widespread awareness of the Draft Masterplan and Concept Design then occurred with all residents having an opportunity to comment. This consisted of advertising, rotating public displays in libraries and centres, newsletters and community surveys and a public open day held at Woodbridge Riverside Park.

Out of approximately 1500 community surveys distributed throughout the consultation period, a total of 149 were returned to the City. In general, 68% of respondents either supported or strongly supported the establishment of a regional open space on the Woodbridge-Viveash foreshore, with a number of those not supporting it saying the plans weren't ambitious enough.

- **Keeping people informed:** As major information develops, such as refined plans or funding announcements, they are widely promoted through local papers, the City's website, and the distribution of formal update Newsletters in 2004 and 2006.

- **Ongoing consultations:** When there is a significant milestone reached, such as this Concept Sketch and funding commitment to begin the Play Space preparations, comprehensive new consultation occurs, including workshops, feedback fliers, direct mail-out, shopping centre displays and media releases.

6. **“What did people say they wanted at Woodbridge Riverside Park?”**

Supported as a higher activity area along with Reg Bond Reserve, there were a wide range of associated requests from the community, which can be read in detail in the 2004 Consultation Report at <http://cityofswan.com/docs/documents/965/301220043955.pdf>

Of interest to Woodbridge residents, specific consultation with the Woodbridge Ratepayers Association included requests for:

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| • Playground equipment close to car parks and to be developed over time according to demand | • Café (asked City to also consider other locations) | • No pedestrian river crossing at Woodbridge jetty |
| • Visitors centre | • Minimise carpark impacts | • Walkways |
| • Barbecues, tables, gazebos | • No toilets | • Interpretation of local heritage |
| • No canal developments | • Lots of native plantings | • Public art |
| • Mostly passive green space | • Restore jetty | • Dog exercise area |
| | • No formal sporting activities | |

Obviously meeting all of these requests would indicate a high use environment, and all but two objectives were able to be incorporated into the Draft Concept Designs in 2005, and carried through into the Play Space Sketch Design.

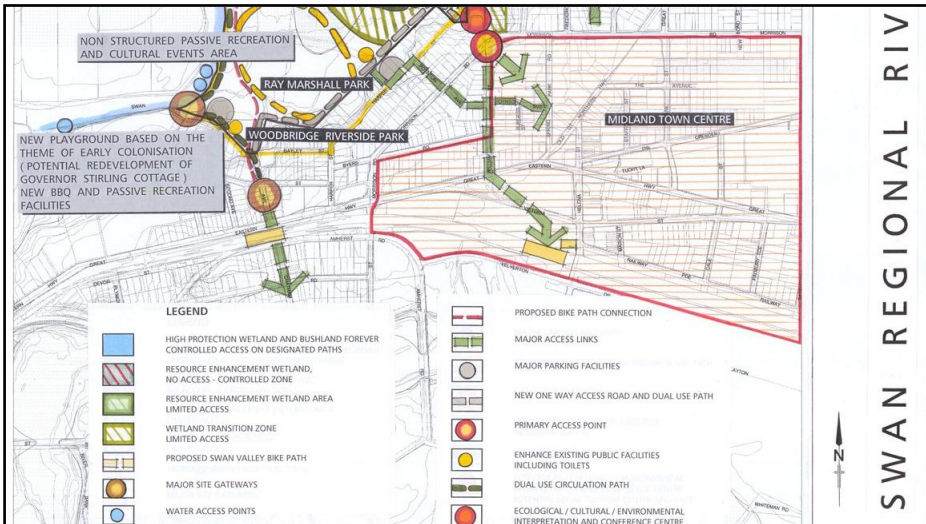
The two requests from the WRA which haven't been able to be supported were the toilets, which are a necessity in a higher use environment, and the visitors centre which while included in some early designs, the City is now reconsidering as similar outcomes can be achieved with less built form impact via interpretive signage.

7. "What did the first concept designs for the area look like?"

To the right is the first Draft Concept Design from the 2005 SRRP Draft Masterplan (cropped to show Woodbridge Park). This design was refined following five preliminary designs developed through the Community Reference Group process.

A follow up adaptation of the Concept Plan was included in the SRRP Project Newsletter - 2006 (below right).

As can be seen it references a new playground, recreation facilities, buildings, major car park, toilets, interpretive themes, and major access points.



The early community support for a higher use area also carried throughout the written Masterplan Summary Report, where its important role as an entry point in establishing the SRRP as an iconic attraction is referenced, for example:

"Apart from the designated higher use areas, Reg Bond Reserve and the Woodbridge Park jetty area, the remainder of the SRRP area should be developed primarily for passive recreational pursuits"

"Primary objective is to maintain and enhance the environmental functions and values, landscape, character and recreational and tourist attractions of the area. This site can be developed as an iconic feature that contributes to the diversity of recreational and tourist experiences available in the Swan region and provide a major drawcard and point of difference for the Midland Region."



"The City should recognise the need to retain / upgrade the Woodbridge Jetty to enable the accommodation of commercial boating that might bring picnickers, day trippers and boat based tourism to the reserve and to Midland through the reserve (temporary docking only, not extended tie up facilities)."

8. "How has the visual amenity for nearby residents been maximised?"

There was strong community support in the Draft Masterplan to minimise carpark impacts, and to retain a predominant green space.

The City has worked hard to meet these amenity related requests, with the total car parking area only proposed to be increased in size by 19% on the existing asphalt area and kept in the existing location, thus retaining maximum consistency in the visual outlook to which neighbouring residents are accustomed. Additionally 70% of the Play Space is green space with a large picnic lawn closest to houses, with high activity areas located furthest from houses behind land bunds (also to minimise noise) incorporated into the slope of the picnic lawn. There is also a large surrounding area of passive green space connecting to the river and the parklands beyond.

Substantial screen planting will also be installed, particularly alongside the carpark, safety fencing and toilets, improving the current visual amenity. This planting is intended to screen and shade components of the play space without inhibiting the view to the river and beyond. The City is still keen to work with residents on amenity concerns, and on feedback received only recently from the WRA, the City will select plant species with heights that maximise the retention of river views, and will treat the carpark in heritage brown coloured asphalt.

9. “Can there be more activities for adults, including the elderly?”

This is a good suggestion because it is intended to be for all abilities and all ages, so adult play elements could be incorporated into the finalised design

Please make suggestions on particular features and play elements to suit any type of potential user of the Play Space.

10. “It looks expensive. How is it affordable?”

The City is fortunate to have significant funding partners who support this project, and to date we have secured external grants for the overall SRRP totalling \$5,781,400, spread over different years and projects.

Of this amount, approximately \$1.6 million has been secured for the Play Space over the coming two years. This sounds like a lot, but to achieve the Concept Sketch Design in full will take a lot more, and the City continues to seek external funding for the Play Space.

11. “What are the stages and timeframes for the Play Space?”

This is largely dependent on when the City can secure funding. At present the current grants received will allow some preliminary works to be completed this financial year, and will likely include the carpark area; fencing and screening plants; toilets and sewer infrastructure, electricity to the site, and the entry area. This is indicative only and may vary slightly depending on certain constraints and opportunities. The following year a grant specifically for some of the play area will see the development of the play elements indicated at the most eastern end of the Concept Sketch Design as well as additional landscaping works. Additional play areas will then come online in coming years as funding opportunities are secured.

12. “Will the Play Space be noisy for residents?”

The choice of location minimises the collective impact on the City’s residents as best as can be achieved. Only a small number of properties are in immediate proximity to the proposed Play Space, and they are reasonably well set back from the more active nodes in the Play Space.

The area is currently classified as a recreation reserve, being an oval with goal posts utilised by Governor Stirling for sporting purposes. As such owning or buying property next to an active reserve brings with it an expectation of active uses, present and future. For example at any time the City could increase the amount of sporting activity undertaken on the oval. By contrast, play spaces are considered a passive recreation use, and the design will prevent active sporting use in the future.

The type of noise currently associated with an active reserve: voices, playing and vehicles will remain - with an increased frequency. More frequency however does not increase *volume* (dB), so the residents shouldn’t experience a level of increased penetrability of noise into their homes than normally expected in purchasing a property adjacent to an active oval. In fact due to the slowed speed environment as a result of the carpark being installed in place of the current driveway, the volume (dB) of vehicle noise should be expected to be reduced, as people no longer take the current bend and driveway at speed.

An increase in use at Woodbridge Park has always been a known impact under the Draft Masterplan due to the type of elements requested to be included by residents, as well as the overall intent in establishing it as an iconic attraction for Midland.

However, keeping the amount of noise for nearby residents as low as possible is a priority in this project, and the City has included a number of design elements and principles to achieve this:

- Locating the more active play elements at the furthest point away from houses, and bringing the very passive elements like proposed sensory gardens and the picnic lawn closer.
- Gently elevating the sloping picnic lawn to create a natural ‘noise bund’ towards the north-west corner that the more active nodes are predominantly located behind, further buffering noise.
- Locating a grassed maintenance area, which is a very low intensity use, closer to houses.
- Considering resident feedback, to consider where possible modifications that improve amenity for them

13. “Can the Play Space be relocated to the north and/or east away from residents?”

Moving the play space to is not achievable for the following reasons:

- a) the area to the north is not owned by the City, but is Crown Land vested with the Department of Education for use by the nearby high school;

- b) the area to the north is in the '100 Year Flood Plain' which restricts building options, whereas the current site allows toilets, café etc to be developed on the 'Flood fringe' land in the south east;
- c) the areas north and east of the proposed site are subject to significant subsoil contamination from the old Midland tip site and is proposed for phyto-capping remedial works, but they will still be unsuitable for such uses. The selected site has been thoroughly tested and is one of the cleanest subsoil locations in the southern end of the park. ;
- d) following 'designing out crime' principles, it is preferable to have play spaces in areas of passive surveillance. The nearby houses and the parked vehicles overlook the play space and help passively deter anti-social behaviour, whereas isolating the play space would make it more vulnerable.
- e) as a regional park, it is preferable that accessibility is maximised for all residents and visitors to the region, so its location close to the train station and bus routes along Great Eastern Highway aids accessibility, especially for mobility impaired people such as the elderly or people with disabilities.

14. "Why is the proposed car park considered the best location?"

The need to provide a bigger car park has been part of the first Draft Masterplan Concept designs, however the City has been keen to maximise the visual amenity for nearby residents.

The site selection utilises and slightly expands the existing asphalt driveway through the park. Thereby, the present location of a view of asphalt from adjacent properties will be retained.

The proposed car park, utilising the existing driveway and car park layout is not considered 'large'. The current asphalt area is 2236sqm, and proposed area is 2660sqm (less than 19% increase). Despite only a small increase in parking area, parking efficiency and visual amenity of the area will be improved, as well as reducing vehicle noise volume (dB) due to the proposed lower speed environment.

With only a small increase in carpark area, available parking efficiency is improved significantly from the current provision of a couple of dozen informal spaces to the proposed 78 car parking bays, 6 accessible bays, and 2 bus parking bays. It is also proposed to have extensive planting to buffer the edges and at the centre of the turning circle making the area much more aesthetically appealing.

Alternatively, creating a similar sized new car park in a previously grassed area of the park would have a more detrimental impact than the current proposal, as the current driveway and carpark would also need to remain for river accessibility. As an added advantage, utilising the existing asphalt helps reduce costs leaving more money for artworks, play equipment and aesthetic treatments.

15. "How is the potential negative impact of providing toilets being minimised, and can they be moved?"

Toilet provisions for a higher use area such as this are required due to the inconvenience, distress and public health issues that children and their families would otherwise experience. The location of the flood plain and difficulties with removing waste from low lying land mean toilets (as well as other infrastructure like a potential café) need to be located on the flood fringe land to the south east, as indicated on the first Concept Designs as part of the Draft Masterplan.

However the City is keen to minimise the potential for anti-social factors to develop, and is having excellent success elsewhere with new self cleaning, self locking toilet cubicles. The cubicles open directly onto public space and therefore offer no opportunity for loitering. They also have time limits before the toilet eventually closes, cleans itself and opens the door. They are able to have programmable locking times also. They will be located near the Play Space entrance to further minimise misuse due to passive surveillance, and will also be screened with plantings and other natural materials to soften the visual impact, and externally monitored by CCTV.

16. "Someone told me the area would be fenced, restricting access to the river. Is this so? Why does it need to be fenced?"

Only the specific Play Space perimeter is proposed to be fenced, with full open access to the river banks and walkways retained.

The Play Space itself needs to be fenced to ensure the safety of users, due to the close proximity of water bodies and vehicle movement, posing a hazard for anyone who escapes the watchful eye of their parent or carer. As an All Abilities Play Space, this risk is particularly elevated for users of the Play Space who have Autism Spectrum Disorders.

A fenced play area is also a common condition in the regulations of many special needs groups and play groups for undertaking group outings.

17. "Will the traffic flow along First Avenue be manageable?"

First Avenue has always been identified in the Masterplan as a major gateway to the SRRP, due to its proximity to public transport at the Woodbridge Train Station and as the closest entry road. This was identified to such an

extent that an additional entry point was recommended off Morrison Rd with an access road along the rear of properties fronting Harper Street, which would also aid passive surveillance of the overall park.

This access road was identified as a priority in the Draft Masterplan, however there are significant engineering and financial barriers to overcome, and will need to be further investigated by the City including further public consultation.

However, it was always anticipated in the Draft Masterplan that First Avenue would carry additional traffic to the SRRP, and the City will closely monitor the issue.

18. *“I heard about a proposed maintenance shed. Can this be moved?”*

There has not been a proposal for a maintenance shed. Only a “maintenance yard” was proposed. It is anticipated that equipment needing secure storage will be brought on and off site by maintenance workers as needed. It was intended only as a space to temporarily park maintenance vehicles and drop small loads of mulch, sandpit sand or plants before being distributed throughout the park.

The positioning of it was planned with the intent to maximise resident amenity, as the yard would be one of the lowest intensity uses on the site being restricted from use by the public, and would be visually screened from nearby houses. As such it would act as an additional noise buffer in favour of residents.

The other advantage to the proposed location of the maintenance yard is that it is an area easily accessible off the existing sand track that would allow City maintenance vehicles to not impede visitor parking or access whilst maintenance tasks are being carried out in the Play Space. It would not be in use all the time, with infrequent vehicle access.

It would also allow easier access into the play space for emergency vehicles should the need arise.

However the City welcomes feedback and in response to recent community concern, has reconsidered the need for a specific area for this purpose and determined it is not required. That north east area will still be approximately where maintenance vehicles will park, but it is operationally possible to only deliver those supplies that are intended for use that same day. As such this can be done without the need for a specific sectioning off of a yard and the area left as useable space. The plan can be altered in consultation with residents to reflect this request.

19. *“Can you tell me more about a proposed café?”*

The inclusion of a cafe is a feature that was strongly supported in early consultation, and has become an expected amenity in modern regional Play Spaces such as Synergy and Lotterywest playgrounds in Kings Park.

A café is not proposed to be developed in the early stages of the Play Space, and its development would be dependent on further investigations including financial and engineering constraints, and as such is shown as an indicative allocation of space on the Draft Concept Sketch. Ideally it would be located near the Play Space entry or the river, but unfortunately there are constraints to achieving this due to the flood plain. However the City will pursue these preferred locations by exploring innovative design and engineering options.

In the short term, the requested need for accessible food and beverages will be accommodated with temporary space for mobile vendors to locate daily near the turning loop at the Play Space entry..

20. *“Can the Play Space be lit at night to help with security and/or use of an evening?”*

The Play Space at this stage is not intended for regular night time use, but some lighting for security would likely be needed. There have been requests from residents for the Play Space to potentially be open for small evening events by arrangement. Lighting would be necessary for these, and could be temporary and brought in for the duration of the event only. This will be further investigated by the City.

There will be plans for security and monitoring, as these are a required component of the project risk management assessment the City will undertake. A particular priority will be minimising, and prompt response to, anti-social behaviour and vandalism. The City’s security camera network and other potential security resource needs will be considered.

21. *“If I want to read more about the background to this project where do I look?”*

The Concept Design Sketch images, including indicative images from other play spaces, can be viewed at the online consultation forum at <http://swancommunity.com.au/swanregionalplayspace>. The document that contains these images is found by clicking on the “Library” link in the bottom right corner of the screen.

Additionally a number of other background documents can be located on the City website at http://www.cityofswan.com/default.asp?doc_id=965&parent_id=983&doc_type_id=2

Alternative forms of any documents can be made available on request to the City.