



10.1 J TALBOT BASKETBALL FACILITY

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Councillors of the feedback of the community consultation on the proposed concept design for J Talbot Reserve Basketball facilities project.
- 1.2 To seek Councillors' approval to progress with the proposed design for J Talbot Basketball facilities, considering the community consultation responses.
- 1.3 Update Councillors on the proposed next steps for the project.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The basketball infrastructure located at J Talbot Reserve has been highly utilised and is at its end of functional life.
- 2.2 This project relocates the basketball hoop and creates a formal three-point court, providing a dedicated space for basketball, clearly visible by all park users improving usability and avoiding conflict with both playground users and people entering the theatre school.
- 2.3 This project provides the opportunity to deliver a new hard surface basketball court and provide a safe and usable facility to increase recreational usage in the area, whilst also catering for the increase in population in the area and for future projected participation levels.
- 2.4 Officers undertook community consultation on the proposed concept design in February and May 2023.
- 2.5 Consultation received mixed feedback from (36) community members, with 13 respondents supportive, 19 respondents not supportive and 4 respondents unsure on the relocation of the basketball hoop and creation of a formal three-point basketball court in J Talbot Reserve.
- 2.6 Officers have considered alternative options including the upgrade of the basketball facilities in current location and the installation of new basketball infrastructure as part of a playground upgrade.
- 2.7 Officers' recommendation is to proceed to construction of the proposed design, installation of a new Quarter basketball court located in middle of the park.
- 2.8 This location provides the required informal recreation infrastructure whilst having minimal impact on the reserve and key stakeholders utilising the park.
- 2.9 Delivery of this design will occur in 2024.



3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Thanks the community for participating in the community engagement process on the proposed concept design for the J Talbot Reserve Basketball facilities.
- 3.2 Authorises officers to proceed with construction of the proposed design for a new quarter basketball court located in the middle of the J Talbot Reserve.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Background

- 4.1 J Talbot Reserve is located off Barkley Street, opposite Vale Street, St Kilda.
- 4.2 There is currently a small playground located within the park and an informal basketball court, adjacent to the playground.
- 4.3 The park is a known space for rough sleepers, anti-social behaviour and backs onto the National Theatre.
- 4.4 The basketball infrastructure at J Talbot Reserve was installed approximately 15 years ago, has been highly utilised and is at the end of its functional life.
- 4.5 The court is currently a gravel surface and does not function well as a basketball court, due to its surface and location. If it is not renewed, there is a risk of injury and increased ongoing maintenance costs for Council.
- 4.6 The project has been included in the Council Plan and Budget since 2021/22.
- 4.7 As a dense, inner-city municipality, open space is limited and difficult to extend. Our open space and recreation facilities need to work harder to cater for a range of user groups.
- 4.8 Council's *Places for People Public Space Strategy 2022 – 2032 (PSS)*, and it includes the following as a key move:
 - *Design and manage spaces for more than one use to increase appeal and level of use (e.g. sporting facilities, dog off-leash areas, events, casual and unplanned activities and play etc).*
- 4.9 The PSS supporting document, PSS Technical Report November 2020, also uses an overarching principle of sharing public space. The recommendation for Council (5.5-23) was "*The principle of sharing open space will underpin the design of all future upgrades to existing public open space and guide the design of new public open space*".



Image 1: J Talbot Reserve – current basketball infrastructure

Basketball Facilities

- 4.10 An independently conducted Informal Recreation Infrastructure audit undertaken in October 2019 identified the basketball facilities at J Talbot Reserve as requiring renewal and recommended installing a quarter basketball court with a hard-court surface within the area.
- 4.11 Basketball courts are among the most used informal recreation facilities across City of Port Phillip, so having a sufficient number of high quality, safe basketball courts within visible spaces to encourage the community to feel safe using them, is a high priority.
- 4.12 Council have limited basketball facilities available for community use throughout the municipality. Fourteen (14) basketball facilities available for community use, as outlined within the below map. These include $\frac{3}{4}$ courts and basketball rings only.



Image 2: Current basketball facilities within the municipality.

The Project

- 4.13 This project would relocate the basketball hoop and create a formal three-point court, providing a dedicated space for basketball, clearly visible by all park users improving usability and avoiding conflict with both playground users and people entering the theatre school.
- 4.14 This project provides the opportunity to deliver new basketball facilities to:
- provide a safe usable surface to increase recreational, all weather usage in the area
 - cater for the increase in population in the area and for future projected participation levels
 - assist in increasing the health and wellbeing across all age groups and abilities.

Location of Basketball Infrastructure:

- 4.15 In October 2022, Council supported progressing with the proposed design to relocate the basketball facilities to the middle area of the park.



Image 3: Location of basketball court within J Talbot Reserve (Proposed Design)

4.16 Key features of the draft concept plan include:

- Newly located three-point basketball court of approximately 127m² in size.
- Court to include sound reduction surface and backboard.
- Tree planting and establishment of garden beds.
- Installation of a 1.2m high black cyclone fencing to prevent basketballs exiting onto Barkly Street. The fence would be screened by vegetation to reduce its visual impact.



Image 4: Artist's impression of basketball court.

- 4.17 Community consultation on this concept design was undertaken twice, in February and then May, inviting the public to submit their feedback on the draft concept design.
- 4.18 The National Theatre were consulted directly in early 2023 and have provided feedback via the Have Your Say page on the proposed design.
- 4.19 There has been mixed feedback on the design with concerns raised about:
- The need for the facilities
 - Amenity – noise, anti-social behaviour, loss of green space
 - Safety – proximity to road, anti-social behaviour.
- 4.20 Support for progressing with the project was very evenly divided.
- 4.21 It is recommended that Council proceed with the proposed design, installation of a new Quarter basketball court located in the middle of the park.
- 4.22 This will provide a quality outcome for users of the basketball court, recognises the importance of providing recreation infrastructure and is in line with the joint use direction in the Public Space Strategy. It will also remove the current conflicts and provide opportunities to better activate the park. The detailed design will address any safety concerns regarding balls and the road.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Officers undertook community consultation on the proposed concept design in February/March 2023. The community were invited to review and provide feedback on the proposed project [Council's Have Your Say Page](#).



- 5.2 Problems with notification occurred during the first consultation period, leading to feedback and complaints advising the community weren't provided with sufficient time to participate in the community consultation process.
- 5.3 Therefore a second round of consultation was undertaken in May and closed on 04 June 2023.
- 5.4 The survey closed on 04 June 2023 and received 36 contributions.
- 5.5 The breakdown of responses:
- Thirteen (13) respondents supported the relocation of the basketball hoop and creation of a formal three-point basketball court in J Talbot Reserve.
 - Nineteen (19) respondents were not supportive of relocation of the basketball hoop and creation of a formal three-point basketball court in J Talbot Reserve.
 - Four (4) respondents were unsure.
- 5.6 The following concerns were raised within the Have Your Say survey responses:
- **Basketball court design:**
 - **Planting/habitat:** concern around existing greenery and whether there would be tree removal during the upgrade.
 - **Noise levels and impacts to the community:**
 - concerns around additional noise levels the proposed basketball court would create if positioned in the middle of the reserve
 - Concerns around noise reduction materials and surfaces not reducing noise levels.
 - The current location of the basketball facilities is located to the side of the park which helps minimise noise levels.
 - **Location;**
 - Concern around the proposed location not being suitable for the overall park design. Respondent supported the basketball court being upgraded in the current location with installation of a full court.
 - **Passive Recreation use of the area;** preferred to keep the area as open green space, noting the reserve is utilised by many children, adults and dogs for play and exercise.
 - **Safety concerns - proximity to road;**
 - Concerns were raised around children trying to retrieve balls going onto the road, noting this occurs at another basketball court within the municipality.
 - There was strong support to the fence at least a 3m in height to provide safety for pedestrians walking along Barkly Street and protect parked cars on Barkly Street.
 - **Antisocial behaviour;** One (1) respondent requested an upgrade to the park lighting along with installation of CCTV in an attempt to reduce antisocial behaviour.



- **Overall Park design, including visual aesthetics;** several respondents stated that they did not want the use of the park to change.
- **Surrounding basketball facilities;** respondents noted there are alternative locations surrounding J Talbot Reserve with basketball facilities for use and the current facilities are not used, therefore, upgrade of J Talbot not beneficial.

5.7 A full community consultation report is available via [Council's Have Your Say Page](#).

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There is an increased risk of injury if the basketball facility is not upgraded due to the uneven condition of the current gravel surface.

6.2 There are potential legal and reputational risks to Council by not developing new amenities and continuing to utilise the current non-compliant and unsafe infrastructure, or removing access to basketball infrastructure.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Council have allocated a total of \$105,000 for the project this financial year, 2023/2024.

7.2 Council has spent \$10,000 on the project to date.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

8.1 A noise reduction backboard will be considered within the final design of the basketball upgrade to reduce the impacts to the surrounding area.

8.2 Planting will be established behind the basketball court addressing safety concerns for basketballs potential entering Barkly Street.

8.3 The court will reduce permeable surfaces in the reserve. Sustainability initiatives will be pursued throughout design development of the court, taking into consideration surfaces, recycled materials, and finishes.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 There are ongoing safety and compliance concerns with the current informal court, impacting the usability.

9.2 There have been a number of complaints received regarding this current location in relation to conflicts between users of the National Theatre and playground. Along with concerns that people are accessing the roof of the National Theatre to retrieve balls.

9.3 This project provides the opportunity to deliver a new hard surface basketball court and provide a safe usable surface to increase recreational usage in the area, whilst also catering for the increase in population in the area and for future projected participation levels.

9.4 The Basketball Court upgrade supports our communities increasing need for recreational opportunities that can be undertaken at their own time, discretion and in unstructured environments.

9.5 The recommended design will decrease green space within the park.

9.6 Basketball courts are often utilised for other uses including roller skating or scootering by younger age groups.

9.7 There will be minimal impact on the local community during the construction period.



10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 Encourage and support a diversity of community-based sports and recreation activities.

10.2 Continue to recognise the important function of the reserve as a dog off-leash socialising and exercise space.

10.3 The project aligns with the Council Plan 2021-2031:

Council Plan direction 1; Inclusive Port Phillip; a place for all members of our community, where people feel supported and comfortable being themselves and expressing their identities.

Council Plan direction 2; Liveable; a great place to live, where our community has access to high quality public spaces, development and growth are well-managed, and it is safer and easy to connect and travel within.

Council Plan direction 3; Sustainable Port Phillip; a sustainable future, where our environmentally aware and active community benefits from living in a bayside city that is greener, cooler, cleaner, and climate resilient.

Council Plan direction 4; Vibrant Port Phillip; a flourishing economy, where our community and local businesses thrive and we maintain and enhance our reputation as one of Melbourne's cultural and creative hubs.

10.4 The project also aligns with the following strategies:

Sports and Recreation Strategy 2015-2024; to plan, provide and maintain quality sport and recreation spaces for the Port Phillip community.

Council's Places for People Public Space Strategy 2022 – 2032 (PSS),

10.5 Officers are currently developing Dog Off-Leash Guidelines and undertaking a review of all existing on and off leash restrictions across Council's public space network. This piece of work will include a framework to help inform Council on where to locate off-leash areas and the infrastructure needed to support these spaces. J Talbot Reserve will be considered as part of this review.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

11.1.1 Based on feedback from Councillors, Officers will progress the proposed design to the following timeline:

- August 2023 - Detailed design completed
- October 2023 - Inform the community of the finalised design.
- Early 2024 - Commence construction

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil