



10.1 **COBDEN PLACE POCKET PARK - FEEDBACK ON ROAD CLOSURE AND CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE.**

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: **BRIAN TEE, ACTING GENERAL MANAGER, CUSTOMER, OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

PREPARED BY: **KAREN MILLER, HEAD OF PROJECT DELIVERY**

SARAH BUFTON, COORDINATOR OPEN SPACE RECREATION PORTFOLIO

CHRISTOPHER COOK, COORDINATOR OPEN SPACE PROJECTS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Councillors on the conflicts between the construction timing for Cobden Place Pocket Park and the surrounding major developments and recommend that the project be delayed to 2024/25 to manage the conflicts.
- 1.2 To present feedback from written submissions made on the proposed closure of Cobden Street and Kings Place, South Melbourne.
- 1.3 Note the transfer of the \$1.3m Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) has agreed to transfer the funding from Cobden Pocket Park to Moubray Street Community Park.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Cobden Street Pocket Park, South Melbourne, is part of the Kings Place Plaza project which was included as a project within the Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan (endorsed on 18 September 2019).
- 2.2 In March 2020 the project received \$1.3M in funding through Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP). The grant was conditional on the project being completed by 30 October 2022. Council committed a further \$500,000 towards the project, bringing the total project budget is \$1.8M.
- 2.3 The project will provide a new park, improved greening and enhance connections to public transport, including the new ANZAC station.
- 2.4 At the 4 August 2021 Council meeting, Council endorsed the Cobden Street Pocket Park concept design and agreed to commence community consultation on the concept design and project milestones.
- 2.5 Construction was due to commence mid-2022 and be completed by 30 October 2022.
- 2.6 The creation of the pocket park required a change of road function for a section of Cobden Street and Kings Place, from a roadway to a road reserve and Council commissioned a traffic study that supports this change. Formalising the change required community engagement and an application to Department of Transport (DoT).
- 2.7 At the 8 December 2021 Council meeting, Council resolved to commence the statutory road closure process associated with the Cobden Street Pocket Park project, aligning community engagement on the concept design with the road closure process. A three-week public road closure consultation process was undertaken in January 2022.



- 2.8 Council has received feedback via the public road closure consultation process undertaken in January 2022 that highlighted complexities and conflicts between the construction timing for Cobden Place Pocket Park and the surrounding major developments.
- 2.9 These surrounding developments will impact deliverability or immediately damage a park, once constructed.
- 2.10 DEWLP understand the constraints posed by the surrounding developments and has agreed to transfer the \$1.3m from Cobden Pocket Park to Moubray Street Community Park.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Note that the construction timing for Cobden Place Pocket Park will conflict with that of major surrounding developments.
- 3.2 Agrees to delay delivery of the Cobden Place Pocket Park until 2024/2025.
- 3.3 Notes the written submissions received on the proposed closure of Cobden Street and Kings Place, South Melbourne.
- 3.4 Notes that the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning supports the transfer of the \$1.3m funding from Cobden Pocket Park to Moubray Street Community Park.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 Kings Place Plaza was identified as a key projects in the Domain Precinct Realm Masterplan 2019. This area is currently of poor design, consisting of a narrow laneway, on-street parking, wide road and inconsistent and sparse tree planting. The masterplan proposes to revitalise this space and provide a new public plaza.
- 4.2 In March 2020 Cobden Street Pocket Park received \$1.3m in funding through Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP)'s Pocket Parks Program. Council has funded a further \$500,000 towards the project. The full project cost, including contingency was \$1.8m.
- 4.3 At the 4 August 2021 Council meeting, Council endorsed the Cobden Street Pocket Park concept design and agreed to commence community consultation on the concept design and project milestones.
- 4.4 Construction was due to commence in mid-2022 following a road closure process and be completed by October 2022.

Road Closure

- 4.5 On 8 December 2021, Council resolved to commence the process for the road closures of Cobden Street and Kings Place, South Melbourne in accordance with section 207, schedule 11, clause 9 of the Local Government Act 1989.
- 4.6 Section 207A and Section 223 (Right to make a submission) of the Local Government requires that Council undertake a formal public consultation process to discontinue or close roads.



- 4.7 Council provided an opportunity for community members to make submissions between 15 December 2021 and 23 January 2022 on the proposed road closures.
- 4.8 The consultation was designed to ensure that affected property owners and occupiers were aware of the proposal and its potential impacts and provide an opportunity for them to submit feedback for Council's consideration.
- 4.9 The communication and consultation activities carried out between 15 December 2021 and 23 January 2022 are outlined in section 5 of this report.
- 4.10 This consultation followed other phases of community consultation from 2015 to 2019 as part of the preparation of the St Kilda Road North Precinct Plan and the Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan.
- 4.11 A total of 16 written submissions were received between 15 December 2021 and 23 January 2022. Attachment 1 includes a summary of all submissions received and provides officer responses to key feedback themes received.
- 4.12 The key feedback themes of the submissions included comments on:
 - a) Removal of on-street parking spaces
 - b) Impacts of road closures on traffic flow and driver safety
 - c) Bicycle parking near Cobden Street Pocket Park and bicycle circulation in the precinct
 - d) Timing of road closures and delivery of Cobden Street Pocket Park during construction of surrounding developments

Delivery Impacts

- 4.13 The feedback highlighted conflicts between the construction timing for Cobden Place Pocket Park and the surrounding major developments.
- 4.14 Previous conversations with developers showed that the park could be delivered within the current timeframes, but these have since been revised.
- 4.15 There are four developments in the area surrounding the park including:
 - 1. The development at 1-13 Cobden Street, adjacent to the proposed pocket park. This developer has commenced demolition and remediation works on site which is due for completion end of May 2024.
 - 2. The adjoining development at 313-317 Kings Way, is currently being considered for a planning permit by Council.
 - 3. The development at 37- 43 Park Street is due to be completed this year.
 - 4. The development at 8 Palmerston Crescent has commenced and is due to be completed by mid-May 2023.
- 4.16 The developments and corresponding number above are detailed in the image below.
- 4.17 These surrounding developments will impact deliverability or immediately damage a park, once constructed in this location. In addition, an engineering consultant investigation is required to finalise the design. As the surrounding developments are not complete, changes to the levels will incur which may render any detail design obsolete once completed.

- 4.18 The developers were supportive of the park and were open to amend their construction schedule so Council can undertake a staged delivery of the park.
- 4.19 In view of the risks associated with the current delivery timeline, this report recommends delaying the delivery of the park until 2024/25.



Image 1: The Domain Precinct and proposed construction developments.

DELWP funding

- 4.20 DEWLP understand the complexities posed by the surrounding developments, and have approved the transfer of the \$1.3m from Cobden Pocket Park to Moubray Street Community Park, within the Albert Park Electorate.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 The communications and consultation activities carried out between 26 September and 23 October 2017 were:

- a) Letter and fact sheet mailed to landowners and occupiers in the area bounded by St Kilda Road, Park Street, Kings Way and Albert Road.
- b) Have Your Say online engagement page with feedback form.

- 5.2 The local community was engaged in 2018/19 through the development of the Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan. This consultation involved:

Stage 1: Identity Surveys

- The Place Identity Surveys were undertaken on-line and as intercept surveys.
- Following this an independently facilitated workshop was held
- A total of 453 survey responses were received and 14 people attended the facilitated workshop.
- Feedback included that the current precinct had a lack of green space, pedestrian connection and no community heart.

Stage 2: Precinct Design



- Community members provided feedback on the design response to the first stage of engagement by completing an online survey or attending a facilitated workshop on Saturday 25 May 2019.
- 74 survey responses were received and 35 people attended the workshop.
- Community feedback on the design response influenced the designs proposed in a draft masterplan.

Stage 3: Draft Masterplan

- The draft masterplan was exhibited online for public comment from in July and August 2019.
- A direct mail out to all households in the precinct (4767 letters) were sent to residents advising them the draft masterplan was on exhibition.
- A pop-up information session resulted in over 30 conversations about the project with interested community members.
- Information boards relating to each of the proposed projects were erected around the precinct to communicate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft masterplan.
- Fifty-seven submissions to the draft masterplan were received during the exhibition period, with one received outside of the period.

5.3 Feedback on Kings Place Plaza

- Support for more pedestrian areas and activation.
- Questions about access to properties and future developments with the proposed one-way arrangement.
- Concerns about safety and how the shared space / zone will function.

5.4 This feedback was considered when finalising the masterplan for adoption by Council on Wednesday 18 September 2019.

5.5 Full information on the community consultation is in the Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan on pages 22-23.

5.6 The community's input has shaped the current concept design for the pocket park.

5.7 Discussions with officers and surrounding developers their construction teams have been collaborative in anticipation that this project will improve their developments.

5.8 Officers have met with DELWP representatives who have approved the transfer of funds from Cobden Street Pocket Park to Moubray Street Community Park.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There is a risk of community dissatisfaction if the project does not proceed. This can be mitigated by including the project later in the portfolio once the developments have been completed.

6.2 Proceeding with the current timeline will mean surrounding developments will impact deliverability and/or risk damage to the park once constructed in this location.



7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 Council spend to date on the project is \$113,938.
- 7.2 Officers will explore future funding opportunities where possible for the construction of the park.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 Well-designed public spaces have economic benefits and help facilitate the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 8.2 Public space contributes to the liveability of our City and defines our unique sense of identity and place and is essential to our physical and mental well-being.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 Not progressing with the Cobden Street Pocket Park at this time will have minimal impact on the surrounding community, however if the project does not go ahead following the completion of the developments the community impact will be high.
- 9.2 This project received overall community support through the 2019 Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan engagement process.
- 9.3 The area is not currently a park, and once complete, will increase the provision of public space in the Domain Precinct.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 Council Plan – Liveable Port Phillip

- Strategic Objective – Port Phillip is 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.
- What we will work towards (our four-year strategies) – Port Phillip is safer with liveable streets and public spaces for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy.
- We will provide – Access to upgraded, expanded and well-maintained public and outdoor spaces for people of all ages and abilities to visit, in line with our 10-year Public Space Strategy (once adopted by Council), prioritised within available budgets each year
- We will facilitate and advocate for – The best possible public space outcomes that support community health and wellbeing, through infrastructure projects undertaken in our City by other levels of government and stakeholders.

10.2 Council Plan – Sustainable Port Phillip

- Strategic Objective – Port Phillip has 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. The importance of action in this area is emphasised by Council declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019.
- What we will work towards (our four-year strategies) – Port Phillip has cleaner streets, parks, foreshore areas and waterways where biodiversity flourishes.
- We will provide – Urban forests to increase tree canopy, vegetation, greening and biodiversity and reduce urban heat, in line with Council's Greening Port Phillip and Act and Adapt Strategies prioritised within available budgets each year.



- We will provide – Increased permeability of ground surfaces across public streets and in our public spaces as well as examining ways to support greater permeability on private property.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

11.1.1 Subject to Council's decision, officers will place the Cobden Street pocket park project on hold until the surrounding developments are complete.

11.1.2 Explore future funding opportunities where possible.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 Council's Have Your Say page will be updated with the details of Council's decision.

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 1. Summary of Submissions 