



7.1 PETITION AGAINST A FLYING FOX AT TT BUCKINGHAM RESERVE

A Petition containing 12 signatures, was received from local residents.

The Petition states the following: -

To the Mayor and Councillors of the Port Phillip City Council.

The petition of the following named citizens draws the attention of the Council that the residents who live around TT Buckingham Reserve do not want a flying fox installed at TT Buckingham Reserve.

Council process has not been followed. Residents have not been granted time for “right to reply”.

- 1. Council completed the upgrade of the reserve in April 2021 as part of the 2012 Play Space Strategy.*
- 2. A flying fox design at consultation has been rejected due to mixed community feedback.*
- 3. Residents were not consulted when this had been re-instated by Council.*
- 4. Detailed plans of the new 3m high re-instated flying fox were not published – a letter dated 19 December 2022 for imminent Jan 2023 construction was received.*

The new proposal places the flying fox outside of the original play space area and adjacent to existing properties on Sandridge Avenue. Residents object to potential adverse effects:

Loss of privacy due to the structure overlooking bedroom windows and home offices.

Increased noise from the equipment; users; disturbed pets; disturbed babies.

Increased traffic noise and car parking.

Increased Stress and anxiety affecting day to day living and working.

Loss of heritage character of the original park neighbourhood

Loss of a mature shade tree

There is already a flying fox in the neighbourhood at Garden City Reserve that all students have to pass close by to in order to access local schools.

A flying fox should be allocated to a new park plan for Fisherman’s Bend with no existing residents to disturb.

OFFICER COMMENT

Buckingham Reserve

Buckingham Reserve is located in Port Melbourne. It has a playground, half-court basketball/netball court, BBQ area, passive open space and a sports oval.

It is considered a neighbourhood park in the *Places for People: Public Space Strategy 2022-32 (PSS)* hierarchy and includes a local level play space.



Background

- The playground in the reserve was upgraded in 2020. A flying fox was initially included in the concept design for this upgrade, due to mixed feedback the flying fox was removed from the final design. The consultation process also resulted in the basketball/netball court being moved to a different location in the park.
- The 2019 community consultation process for TT Buckingham Reserve playground followed a three-stage consultation process. During stage two on the design for the overall Reserve, mixed feedback was received on installation of the flying fox. The community consultation report can be found [here](#).
- Information on the previous upgrade is also available on our website - [TT Buckingham Reserve | Have Your Say Port Phillip](#)
- Following the playground development, Council found there was still a high level of community interest for the flying fox to be installed.
- Council considered a petition from 105 people on 17 February 2021 which requested the flying fox to be included in the planned upgrade for TT Buckingham Reserve.
- The resulting Council resolution instructed officers to 'commence a feasibility assessment and costing to install a flying fox at TT Buckingham Reserve for consideration as part of the 2021/22 Council budget'.
- Council subsequently included funding for this project in the 2021/22 budget, which was then carried through to 2022/23 budget (circumstances meant that it could not be delivered within the original timeframe).
- Community were also advised of the inclusion of this project through the budget process.
- The project was also included as a short-term action in the PSS, which was adopted at a Council meeting in December 2021.
- Once the project had progressed to detailed design a consultant was engaged and letters were sent to local residents on 14 December 2022 notifying of the project commencement date in January 2023. Signage was also erected on site at this time. The timing of the letters sent to neighbouring properties was based on the timing of the planned instalment of the flying fox.

The project

- The project is currently on hold while Council considers this petition.
- The proposed flying fox is 26.5m long and approximately 3 metres in height with the starting point closest to the playground being slightly higher than the end point which is closer to the road. The flying fox will end approximately 15 metres from the road
- As part of the proposed flying fox project four new trees will be planted.
- Through our Greening Port Phillip project Council will look to see if there are other planting opportunities within TT Buckingham Reserve.
- Further information on the current project can be found on our website - [here](#)



Picture: TT Buckingham Reserve, with proposed flying fox location in orange

Location

- The PSS designates TT Buckingham Reserve as a local level playspace, therefore its primary focus is to service the immediate residential area. People utilising the park are likely to walk rather than drive.
- Prior feedback showed significant interest in providing a flying fox in this local community. The flying fox at Garden City does not respond to the needs to the immediate community in and around TT Buckingham Reserve.
- Development of the play spaces in Fisherman's Bend will consider the inclusion of flying foxes, however these projects are still a number of years away and would also not respond to the needs of the immediate community.

Amenity

- As part of initial design of playgrounds, all play elements are investigated to ensure they cause minimal disruption to immediate residents.

MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL 1 FEBRUARY 2023



- The location of the flying fox is such that there are no issues of overlooking properties or loss of privacy.
- The current model of flying fox was deemed appropriate for use at TT Buckingham Reserve. Flying fox designs are quieter than those installed 10 years ago.
- If the flying fox was to progress at this location, signage would be installed on site requesting that park users be respectful to neighbouring residents.

Process Improvements

- In reviewing the concerns raised through this petition it has been identified that there are opportunities to improve the way we keep the community up to date with proposed project changes. Including:
 - o Review of our engagement processes to keep our community informed with regards to council decisions.
 - o Ensure that our Have Your Say (HYS) website is updated, in a timely manner, with any significant changes to project design and scope to provide our community with the ability to be informed about changes.
 - o We have reviewed and will update the Noise Complaints webpage to support customers logging requests regarding noise complaints to Council in an easier way.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the flying fox progresses at this site due to the significant community support this project has received. Installing a flying fox is in keeping with the character of the park and consideration has been given to possible amenity impacts.

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the petition
2. Thanks the petitioners for their Petition
3. Notes that Council have previously considered a petition from 105 people on 17 February 2021 which requested the flying fox to be included in the planned upgrade for TT Buckingham Reserve.
4. Believes that adequate consideration has been given to community views for both for and against the inclusion of a flying fox.
5. Recognises that there was more that could have been done to keep community members up to date with the proposed changes to the design of TT Buckingham Reserve.
6. Requests Officers to consider improvements to the notification process for changes to projects, including timely updates to the Have Your Say Page.
7. Supports the installation of a flying fox at TT Buckingham Reserve.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil