



NORTHBRIDGE
PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Working for the advancement of Northbridge since 1919

ABN 733 956 702

PO Box 357 Northbridge 2063

March 3 2010

Ms Julie Whitfield
Open Space Manager
Willoughby City Council
PO Box 57 CHATSWOOD 2057

Dear Ms Whitfield

Re: Draft Northbridge Park Masterplan

This Association welcomes Council's initiative in generating a Masterplan for Northbridge Park and also supports many of the recommendations included in the draft Masterplan.

However, the Association has some concerns about the draft Masterplan, which we believe reflect concerns of many Northbridge residents.

Active recreation

- We note the plan to re-surface Northbridge Oval with a synthetic material and to improve the lighting. We understand that the cost will be about \$1.0 million, which will be raised by government grants, other contributions and Council funds. We note that the Golf Club and Northbridge Football Club support the proposal.

NPA does not oppose the re-surfacing plan, however, we assume a DA will be generated and notified to the community. We request that the DA includes:

- An analysis to show that this large expenditure is the most cost-effective way to cater for the increased sporting demands in Willoughby;
- A summary of any other options considered in Willoughby. (For example, an NPA member notes that there is an area in Castle Cove across Headland Ave from the Golf Course/Country Club which used to be used as a soccer field. Another member points out that the large number of playing fields and other facilities of Shore School in Northbridge are vacant for much of the time. Rather than spending \$1 million of ratepayer and taxpayer funds on resurfacing Northbridge Oval, has Council considered negotiating with Shore to gain access for Willoughby sporting clubs to its fields?)

- A list of any activities that may not be practicable on the oval with a synthetic surface because of potential damage to the surface (such as certain sports, the local churches' Carol Concert or Rotary's big annual fireworks display);
 - Details of new or improved lighting for the oval and its impact on nearby residents.
- The locations are shown on the plan for two new Futsal fields on the 1st fairway of the golf course.
 - We question whether this proposal is workable and safe. It will be impossible to prevent children playing on the unfenced Futsal fields during daylight golfing hours, especially during school holidays. Similarly, on summer evenings during daylight saving, it will be difficult to prevent golfers hitting off from the 1st tee during Futsal practice hours. High safety netting would be required to make children safe, but this would be undesirable to the Golf Club because of cost and the obstruction for golfers. Moreover, such netting would adversely affect views from Sailors Bay Rd. We also understand that an important aboriginal rock carving on the 1st fairway has been covered up for its protection and we question whether this may be in danger from developing new Futsal fields on the fairway.

We request that this proposal be abandoned and we note that the Golf Club shares this position, for safety reasons.

- In regard to the BMX track, we note that it is proposed to retain and fence the track.
 - Our observations suggest that the track has deteriorated and its use by local children has reduced over time. We have some concern about management of the BMX track and its safety. We are informed that Golf Club staff members have provided First Aid to children who have been injured on the track, which does not seem appropriate or sustainable.

We suggest that Council reviews the level of use, management and safety of the BMX track before making any decisions about its future.

- Adventure play area
 - We would be opposed to the cleared area in front of the War Memorial being used for youth recreation activities.
 - We note that Council has no plans for a skateboard ramp, which we expect would meet strong resistance from nearby residents.

- We note that it is proposed to change the use of the two public tennis courts to include basketball/volleyball/handball. While the Report states that the tennis courts will be replaced, we understand that Council proposes to retain the courts but add the line markings for the other sports plus a practice wall.
 - Residents have expressed concern to NPA about this potential loss of a public tennis facility. They state that erection and dismantling of tennis posts and nets each time they play will deter most players; the additional line markings will make tennis play very difficult; and the addition of netball or basketball posts will be a hazard for tennis players. They are concerned that there are only two other public courts in Northbridge (and three private courts).
 - We are not aware of data that shows that demand in Northbridge for netball/basketball/volleyball, etc is greater than that for tennis. We note that netball/basketball facilities are already available at Northbridge Public School.

If the mixed use plan proceeds, we request that both the tennis courts (with court markings, tennis nets and safety fences) be allowed to remain in place.

Facilities

- We note that the report recommends development of a major new three-storey (including two-level car park) sports complex east of the golf clubhouse.

Many of our members **strongly oppose** this proposal because of its potential serious impact on traffic congestion and the loss of views from Sailors Bay Rd. Many members have seen the traffic and parking chaos generated by the Leisure Centre and Shore playing fields on weekends and do not wish to see a similar situation in Northbridge.

In preparing a DA for such a facility, we expect that Council would address:

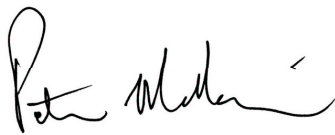
- A business case to justify the need for and viability of such a large new complex in a residential suburb;
 - The visual appearance of the new facility and its relationship with the single storey, Heritage-listed golf clubhouse;
 - The preservation of the present views from Sailors Bay Rd over the golf course and nearby suburbs;
 - A comprehensive Traffic Study to show the impact on traffic and parking in Sailors Bay Rd of a major new sports complex and car park, when added to the traffic already generated by the two schools, golf course, baths and sailing club; and
 - Adequate parking for Golf Club members as well as for patrons of the new facility.
- We support the proposal for expansion of the Mens' Shed provided it does not impact significantly on nearby bushland.
 - We support in principle a proposal to rationalise the area at the western end of the park, as recommended by the draft Masterplan. (We note that the Sea Scouts may be supportive in principle but that the Girl Guides are not.)

- We support the demolition of the old library building in order to expand the current picnic area and to improve views from Sailors Bay Rd.

Access, aesthetic, biodiversity and sustainability

- We note the Report's proposal to develop Sailors Bay Rd as a boulevard has been deleted from the draft Masterplan.
- The Report recommends lighting the oval car park. Recognising that floodlighting is a sensitive issue for nearby residents, we request that any lighting be the subject of a DA and that local residents be fully consulted about the impact of spillage from new or improved lighting for the car park.
- We note that the Report recommends a new pathway through the northern section of Northbridge Park. We support public access through the golf course, provided it is safe. We do not accept that it will be safe for walkers on the proposed new pathway across the 1st fairway, directly in front of golfers hitting off from the 1st tee. We note that the Golf Club also opposes this path, on safety grounds.
- We support the recommendation for a new path from the Golf Club depot sheds down to the waterfront provided destruction of native bushland is minimised.
- We note that recommendations for changes to traffic and pedestrian arrangements at Bonds Corner have been deleted from the Masterplan.
- We note that Council will consider entries to the park (from Dorset Rd, Weemala Rd, Roche Park and footpaths at the end of Upper Cliff Rd and Tunks Park) other than the three main entries (the Pavilion area, at the golf clubhouse and at Bonds Corner) recommended in the Report to control access into the park.

Yours sincerely



Peter McNair
President

Copy: Mr Greg Woodhams
Mr Steven Head
Sailors Bay Ward Councillors