

CM13.5. Australia Park Car Park, Footbridge and Levee Bank Upgrades - Public Exhibition Submissions

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| DATE | 20 November 2024 | FIL REFERENCE | FIL17/01908 |
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Purpose of Report

To present the feedback received through the public exhibition process to Council for the proposed improvements at Australia Park and seek Council endorsement to progress to open tender for construction of the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project.

Background

Australia Park is one of the first riverside parks encountered after crossing the NSW/Victoria border into Albury. It is an important gateway to the public parkland areas adjoining the Murray River.

A suite of improvements has been proposed for Australia Park (Attachment 1), most notably to increase flood protection to the city, as well as improve amenity for visitors to the riverside parks through increased car parking and accessibility. The project is part of a wider range of projects identified within the Murray River Experience (MRE) Master Plan that seek to improve our connection with the Murray River.

In early 2017, a proposal and breakdown of potential car parking spaces across the entire Riverside Precinct was presented to Council, including additional spaces within Australia Park. This was subsequently adopted by Council in June 2017. Community consultation was then initiated to gain community feedback in relation to the Draft Riverside Precinct Concept Plans through a 'Have your Say' process, with 562 residents participating.

The community response was overwhelmingly positive, with 91% of respondents supportive of plans to 'further improve facilities, parking and pedestrian connectivity between Australia Park, Oddies Creek Play Space and the other riverside park areas'. This information was presented to Council in August 2017 with project endorsement.

In 2018, AlburyCity applied for funding under the Regional Growth, Environment and Tourism Fund (RGETF) for projects included in the MRE Master Plan. A new car park in Australia Park and the Oddies Creek pedestrian bridge were two of the nine separate projects identified and included in this application. This application was successful and subsequently \$4.7M was allocated to deliver a suite of nine MRE projects.

Since this time, the proposed improvements for Australia Park have progressed through detailed design and completion of relevant due diligence and approvals, including a Biodiversity Assessment, Aboriginal Assessment, Arboriculture (Tree) Impact Assessment, Landscape Plan, and completion of a 'Review of Environmental Factors'.

The scope of the works included in this project is summarised below:

- realignment of a section of the South Albury Levee Bank;
- construction of an 80-space car park (with four accessible parks);
- reconstruction of Ebden Street, between Wodonga Place and the western turning area;
- landscaping, picnic shelter (with BBQ and seating), shade-tree planting, native revegetation along Oddies Creek, and installation of new linking pathways;
- pedestrian bridge linking Oddies Creek Park and Australia Park;
- decommissioning and rehabilitation of old gravel car parks adjacent to Wodonga Place and Oddies Creek Park;
- decommissioning of temporary service vehicle access across Oddies Creek and construction of new service vehicle creek crossing; and
- associated water, sewer and electrical works.

Tenders were released for this project in October 2023, with a report presented to Council on 27 November 2023 seeking to award the contract following the tender evaluation. At this meeting, Council resolved to:

- a. in accordance with Clause 178(3) Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, not accept any of the tender submissions for Contract No. 21/02476 Australia Park Car Park and Levee Construction Works;*
- b. place the Australia Park Car Park and Levee Construction Concept Plan on public exhibition for 28 days;*
- c. consider a concept plan for endorsement in 2024 prior to recommencing the tender process for the project contract; and*
- d. invite, in accordance with Section 167, 168 or 169 Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, fresh tender submissions based on the same or different details.*

In giving effect to the Council resolution to undertake further community consultation, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan was prepared and endorsed by Council at the Council meeting held on 26 February 2024. This report outlines the results of the community engagement process and provides some proposed amendments to the concept designs that can be incorporated prior to recommencing the tender process for the project.

Issues

Following the above Council resolution, the public exhibition of the Australia Park Proposed Improvements commenced on 20 June 2024 and concluded on 22 July 2024.

During this time, project information was available at the following locations:

- AlburyCity website – Have Your Say Page including a survey;
- Albury Library Museum;
- Lavington Library; and
- Council offices.

The engagement process was promoted through:

- on-site signage with QR code link to AlburyCity website;
- social media posts (x2);
- Electronic Direct Mail (EDM) sent out to 500 recipients as well as direct emails to eight adjacent key stakeholders;
- All About Albury article (June and July 2024); and
- Letterbox drop to Wodonga Place businesses.

At the close of the consultation period 96 submissions were received, which included 82 completed online questionnaires and 14 direct emails. A summary of the submissions received, and an accompanying Officers' response is included in Attachment 2, along with copies of all original submissions (personal details redacted).

The table below summarises the high-level results received from the 82 completed online surveys, with the results categorised into either 'supportive', 'neutral' or 'not supportive'.

| Survey Question | Supportive | Neutral | Not Supportive |
|--|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| How supportive are you of the proposal to install a new pedestrian bridge between Australia Park and Oddies Creek Park? | 60 (73.2%) | 5 (6.1%) | 17 (20.7%) |
| How supportive are you of the proposal to upgrade and realign the South Albury levee bank in Australia Park? | 52 (63.4%) | 11 (13.4%) | 19 (23.2%) |
| How supportive are you of the proposal to close the existing gravel car park areas in Oddies Creek Park and Wodonga Place to provide more open space? If removed, car parking will be available at Australia Park. | 42 (51.2%) | 11 (13.4%) | 29 (35.4%) |
| How supportive are you of the proposal to increase native vegetation along Oddies Creek? | 74 (90.2%) | 4 (4.9%) | 4 (4.9%) |
| How supportive are you of the proposal to construct a new 80 space car park in Australia Park? | 37 (45.1%) | 9 (11.0%) | 36 (43.9%) |
| How supportive are you of additional car parking areas in the Riverside Parks area? | 39 (47.6%) | 10 (12.3%) | 33 (40.2%) |

In summary, there was significant support for several proposed improvements including increasing the amount of native vegetation along Oddies Creek, installation of a new pedestrian bridge, upgrade of the levee bank, and to a lesser extent, closing and rehabilitating the two existing gravel car parks and reverting them back to open space. With regards to the provision of additional car parking within the Riverside Precinct and the specific proposal to create a car park at Australia Park, there were slightly more people that were 'supportive' as opposed to 'not supportive'.

Key Areas of Public Concern

Whilst the above results suggest a majority of respondents supported the proposed improvements, there were still a range of non-supportive comments provided by the community feedback, with the following key issues identified:

- concerns regarding the removal of 22 trees and impact on other trees, with suggestions the removal is inconsistent with objectives of the Urban Forest Strategy;
- concerns that there is no need for a new 80 car space car park, with suggestions the new car park is inconsistent with the MOVE: Integrated Transport Strategy;
- concerns at the potential heat sink effect of the bitumen surface of the car park;
- concerns at the loss of open space from the construction of the car park;
- concerns about the levee bank upgrade and visual impact; and
- concerns about the potential encroachment of a future splash park on the off-leash area.

To address these specific concerns raised by the community, some additional supporting information is provided below to address the key areas of concern.

Removal of 22 trees and impact on other trees.

The proposed works will require the direct removal of 22 trees, which includes 18 planted exotic trees and four young River Red Gum trees, with a detailed Arboriculture Impact Assessment Report prepared that outlines the tree impacts anticipated by the project. Importantly, there have been many modifications to the design throughout the lifecycle of this project to reduce impact on trees, including:

- A major modification to the initial concept design to allow the retention of the mature Lemon-Scented Gum tree on the corner of Ebden Street and Wodonga Place (Tree 42 in the Tree Assessment).
- Construction of a cantilever retaining wall instead of an earthen levee along the Ebden Street portion of the levee to minimise the root zone impacts of streambank trees.
- Realignment of the earthen levee around mature River Red Gum tree (Tree 66) to reduce encroachment into the Tree Protection Zone.
- Trees 67 and 68 (Sydney Blue Gum trees) were initially identified for removal with a previous version of the levee design. Following further design review, the Wodonga Place section of cantilever retaining wall has been extended and realigned to reduce the encroachment into the Tree Protection Zone of the two trees. These two trees are now considered 'Major Impact – Viable'.

- Extension of the Wodonga Place section of cantilever retaining wall reduces the encroachment on mature River Red Gum tree (Tree 69). The Arborist's report identified this tree as 'Major Impact – Non-Viable'. This tree is now considered 'Major impact – Viable'.

As the proposed works are being undertaken under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and not through a Development Application under Part 4 of the Act, the provisions of the Albury Development Control Plan (DCP) 2010 do not apply, however the proposed Australia Park design has been considered against the provisions of Part 5 of the Albury DCP 2010 to provide a benchmark for compensatory planting.

Australia Park is within a Biodiversity Certification Exclusion Area, and as such compensatory planting would be in accordance with Section 5.3.2 of the Albury DCP 2010 Part 5. This section of the Albury DCP 2010 refers to the clearing of native vegetation and does not extend to include exotic vegetation. In terms of the proposed Australia Park development, the project is seeking to remove 22 trees, of which four are native (young River Red Gum trees that are non-hollow bearing). These trees have been identified as having low/medium ecological value and as such require an offset ratio of 1:5 (in accordance with Table 2 of the Albury DCP 2010 Section 5.3.2), and therefore an Albury DCP 2010 requirement to plant 20 trees (reflective of vegetation community being removed) as compensatory planting to offset the loss of these four young River Red Gum trees.

A Revegetation Plan has been developed for Oddies Creek that identifies the proposed compensatory planting, with planting reflective of the vegetation community being removed (PCT 5 River Red Gum forest). This Plan has been reviewed and endorsed by the Environment Team (as per the conditions of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF)). The Revegetation Plan identifies the planting of 70 native trees and 120 native shrubs (from PCT 5), which exceeds the Albury DCP 2010 requirement of 20 compensatory planting trees to replace the four young River Red Gum trees being replaced.

In addition to the compensatory planting, a Landscape Plan identifies a further 12 new shade trees (Lemon Scented Gum trees) to be planted within the proposed new car park and an additional six Illawarra Flame trees identified for the extension of the Wodonga Place plantings. These trees, along with the 70 trees identified in the Oddies Creek Revegetation Plan will, in the longer term, increase the canopy cover in this area, and therefore complement the objectives of the Urban Forest Strategy (currently in preparation).

There is likely to be further opportunities for tree planting in this area, and it is proposed to assess the following opportunities following completion of the project:

- additional tree planting in the reestablished green space of Oddies Creek Park (following rehabilitation of the gravel car park);
- additional tree planting around the perimeter of the new car park in locations that does not compromise the integrity of the levee;
- general additional tree planting throughout Oddies Creek Park; and
- supplement River Red Gum tree planting along the Murray River streambank.

Need for an 80 car space car park.

The construction of the new Australia Park Car Park will replace two smaller gravel car parks (Oddies Creek Park (55 spaces – one accessible space) and Wodonga Place next to BASQ (10 spaces – no accessible space). These two car parks, along with the gravel temporary access track and creek crossing, will be closed and rehabilitated back to green space, and therefore result in no net-loss of open space in the precinct.

In terms of current car parking utilisation in the precinct, Council's Traffic and Transport Team completed a traffic and parking analysis, which identified that the existing car parks are approaching capacity during weekends, school holidays and peak periods, with an average occupancy of 75-90% during these times.

The proposed construction of the Australia Park Car Park will provide an additional net increase of 15 spaces. The additional spaces will address the need for more car parking that is anticipated with the proposed construction of a splash park and increasing visitation to the area.

It is also important to note that the car park has been designed in accordance with water sensitive urban design principles, with the inclusion of structured soil in the tree "pits" (with drainage) and car park surface run off directed to the car park trees.

There were some additional concerns expressed by the community that the proposed car park is inconsistent with the objectives of the MOVE: Integrated Transport Strategy, which adopts a hierarchy that prioritises people first and vehicles last. However, it is noted that this project proposes to include pedestrian and bicycle linkages to the Wagirra Trail and ultimately the broader city trail network. A range of other complementary projects has also been completed across the broader Riverside Precinct over recent years to further restrict vehicular movements and rationalise parking, including:

- Noreuil Park foreshore installation of bollards to restrict vehicles (particularly in the central grassed area);
- reestablishment of green space in the northern section (which was car parking and redundant gravel roadways); and
- discontinuing the vehicular thoroughfare from Precinct Place to Mudges Canal adjacent to the Wood Fired Oven and Hovell Tree.

Potential heat sink effect of the bitumen surface of the car park.

It is acknowledged that the proposed bitumen surface is a source of heat sink due to the nature of the material. However, the retention of existing significant trees adjacent to the car park will assist in shading the car park for periods of the day. The proposed car park tree planting and ultimate shade provided by these trees will further reduce this heat sink effect. As mentioned previously, there is also an opportunity at the completion of construction to review the areas around the car park and plant additional trees that will provide additional shade.

To further reduce the heat sink effect, Council Officers have explored the potential to apply some alternative surface treatments. One option considered was to utilise a permeable pavement, however there is currently no Australian Standard for permeable paving design. Further to this there are a range of complexities with permeable pavements including the need for the underlying surface drainage. It is also noted that the permeable surface is not as strong as standard pavements, therefore longevity may be compromised. Noting that permeable technology is relatively new in Australia, is relatively more expensive than standard pavement, and there is no design standard, it was considered high risk to proceed with a permeable pavement option.

A further alternative considered to reduce the heat sink effect, was to coat bitumen with a lighter coloured material. Research has concluded that bitumen can successfully be coated, thus reducing surface temperatures by up to 15°C. There are a range of products that can potentially be considered, although the life span of the coating is unknown at this time and would be dependent on car park usage. It is assumed that this would require recoating periodically therefore would increase the maintenance costs. The coating could be considered either over the whole car park or just in the traffic areas or parking areas which would reduce capital and maintenance costs.

Loss of open space from the construction of the car park.

As indicated previously, the project would see no net loss of green space. While some green space would be lost with the construction of a new car park in Australia Park, this loss would be offset through the rehabilitation of the following hard-stand areas:

- the gravel car park in Oddies Creek Park;
- the gravel car park next to Wodonga Place;
- decommissioning of the existing vehicle bridge;
- decommissioning of the temporary access road; and
- landscaping within the new car park.

The reestablishment of green space will see Oddies Creek Park become a vehicle-free open space area (with the exception of service and maintenance vehicles).

Levee bank upgrade and visual impact.

The South Albury Levee Upgrade and Feasibility Concept Design Report (2018) is the base document that identified the need to raise the levee. In summary, a large section of the levee bank through Australia Park requires raising between 200-400mm, while there is a section that requires raising up to 800mm. The report also states that trees within the levee bank would need to be removed to ensure that the integrity of the flood mitigation structure is not compromised.

The levee alignment has been designed to minimise encroachment into the Tree Protection Zones of significant trees to be retained. Retaining walls at the Ebdon Street end (adjacent to Oddies Creek vegetation) and Wodonga Place (adjacent to the rear of the Turks Head Building) will be used to protect two significant *Eucalyptus Saligna* along Oddies Creek. Due to the site constraints and levee heights, retaining walls have been included in these sections to reduce the construction footprint, before transitioning into the earthen levee bank.

Visitors entering Albury from Wodonga will not see the proposed car park, but rather see a section of the levee bank along with existing trees and proposed new plantings.

Potential encroachment of a future splash park on the off-leash area.

A separate stakeholder engagement process will be undertaken for the splash park, although it is noted the indicative location identified for the splash park is between the two entry gates of the play space on the eastern side of the raised picnic area and associated amenities.

The broader park users, including dog walkers, will still be able to walk around the splash park and play space area. The reestablishment of the gravel car park area will also increase the availability of green open space available for off-leash users.

Strategic Alignment

Towards Albury 2050

A Growing Sustainable Economy:

- 1.1 Albury is a liveable city supporting sustainable population growth through the provision of high-quality infrastructure, industry –leading services and high levels of amenity.
 - 1.2.1 Effectively plan, upgrade, and maintain our network of roads, bridges, cycleways, footpaths, walkways, and street lighting.
 - 1.3.1 Communicate the story of Albury through our tourism offerings, providing an authentic and engaging visitor experience.
 - 1.3.3 Investigate partnerships to attract visitors to our region, and increase the diversity in attractions, events and facilities for our community and visitors.

An Enhanced Natural Environment:

- 2.4 Albury is a recognised leader in the protection, conservation, and management of our natural assets.
 - 2.4.3 Acknowledge our connection to the natural environment by providing opportunities for the community to connect and respectfully enjoy our natural surroundings.

A Caring Community:

- 3.3 Our community values arts, culture, heritage, and place. All residents share and celebrate our multiculturalism in a welcoming and open community.
 - 3.3.3 Our spaces will provide a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for our community to enjoy.
- 3.5 Albury is a safe, inclusive, and accessible region for our entire community.
 - 3.5.2 Our buildings and spaces are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all community members.

A Leading Community:

- 4.2 Albury collaborates as a community to plan for the future and work towards a shared vision.

- 4.2.1 The community is consulted and engaged on important decisions in two-way conversations that result in informed decision making and shared leadership.

Early Years and Young Peoples Plan

The Early Years and Young Peoples Plan was recently endorsed by Council on 28 October 2024. As part of the development of this Plan, AlburyCity completed an extensive range of community engagement activities, with over 1,000 people providing feedback during this time. The community told us that to make Albury a better place they would like to see improvements to open space including parks and playgrounds, and a splash park was identified as a high priority.

Environmental Sustainability Framework and Action Plan

- Priority Sustainable Challenges - (PSC9) Delivery of high quality, accessible and biodiverse green infrastructure.
- Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network - (STN2.1) Improve walking and cycling connections.

Regional Natural Environment Strategy

7.2.1 Natural Places – Protect and enhance habitat.

7.2.2 Waterways and Wetlands – Protect and restore riparian zones, wetlands and aquatic habitats.

7.2.6 Liveability – Provide opportunities for everyday connections with nature and waterways. Plan strategically for appropriate recreational use of natural areas.

MOVE: Integrated Transport Strategy

- Strategic Objective SO5 and SO7: Improve our footpath and bike network.
- Strategic Objective SO11: Adopt a Road User Hierarchy prioritises people first and vehicles last.
- Strategic Objective SO12: Manage car parking efficiently.

Risk

- **Business Risk** – The Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project seeks to increase flood protection for the city as well as improve car parking capacity and overall amenity for visitors to the Riverside Precinct.

At present the gravel car parks require regular pothole maintenance, and significant maintenance following Murray River over-bank flooding. A new bitumen car park will incur an initial capital cost, however this will result in a reduction in ongoing operational costs. Options considered to minimise the 'heat sink effect' include surface coat applications. These may increase initial capital costs, but will help address concerns by reducing surface temperatures. As the life span and maintenance of these products are not fully understood at this point in time, this coating is expected to require periodic reapplication that would be funded through the operational budget.

- **Corporate Risk** – The Australia Park improvement (car park and pedestrian linking bridge) form part of the MRE Master Plan, and also forms part of a component of the \$10.1M Regional Growth, Environment and Tourism (RGETF) grant program that AlburyCity secured back in 2018 to deliver a suite of nine MRE projects. With the majority of the nine RGETF funded projects now completed, it is important to now complete the remaining Australia Park Car Park and associated pedestrian linking bridge to fulfil our funding commitments with the NSW Government. Failure to do so could result in negative publicity and reputational damage.

There was mixed feedback received through the recent public exhibition process, although there appears to be slightly more people supportive (and neutral) with regards to the project. There is a risk that some community members will feel they have not been listened to (particularly the not supportive submissions) should the project progress. A number of design modifications have now been incorporated into the design along with some additional proposed refinements to further reduce impacts and address key community concerns.

- **WHS and Public Risk** – At present there is public risk with pedestrian and vehicles conflict in the existing paths and especially with the vehicle crossing over Oddies Creek. Providing a new car park with a pedestrian linking bridge across Oddies Creek will remove this risk.
- **Environmental Risk** – A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and associated investigations have been undertaken to identify any environmental risks and suitable measures to mitigate them (see Attachment 3). The REF has concluded that the environmental impact of the project is not likely to be significant, with Tests of Significance indicating that the project is unlikely to significantly affect threatened species or their habitats. The REF is available on the AlburyCity website via the Major Projects webpage and the Have Your Say Page.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – Council endorsement to progress to construction tender phase will ensure the project commences in 2025 with minor adjustments to the delivery program required to align with the construction program. It is noted that there is currently \$4.5M identified in the Four Year Delivery Program to undertake the works, including \$500K in 2024/25, \$1.5M in 2025/26 and \$2.5M in 2026/27.

Options

That Council:

1. Progress with the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project with no further amendments to the design. **Not Recommended.**

Whilst there has been a number of design modifications made to date to reduce the potential impacts, there are still some members of the community expressing concern about the potential heat sink impacts of the car park, which could be addressed through further design modifications.

2. Progress with the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project with the following design amendments:
 - a. include painted surface to the car park (or parts thereof) to reduce the heat sink effect; and
 - b. include additional tree planting around the perimeter of the car park and wider Oddies Creek Park. **Recommended.**

The proposed painted surface of the car park will reduce surface temperatures and thereby address some of the community concerns regarding the heat sink effect. The proposed additional tree planting will further increase canopy cover and habitat values across the parkland area.

3. Do not progress with the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project and commence a design process to upgrade the existing car park in Oddies Creek Park, and upgrade the existing earthen levee bank in its current location. **Not Recommended.**

Upgrading the existing Oddies Creek car park would require replacement of the existing single lane five tonne limited vehicle bridge with a two-lane heavy vehicle bridge, which would require further environmental assessments and is anticipated to have significant impact on native trees along Oddies Creek. Upgrading the levee bank in its current location would still require the removal of up to 10 trees, including some significant trees behind the Turks Head Building.

4. Do not progress the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade Park project as designed, and continue to maintain the existing gravel car parks, and upgrade the earthen levee in its current location. **Not Recommended.**

This option could jeopardise our RGETF grant funding commitments. In addition, the majority of feedback received through the consultation process indicated the project should proceed to the construction phase. The Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project seeks to create a new 80 space car park to replace two existing gravel car parks with a current capacity of 65 existing car spaces. The additional 15 spaces (including three accessible spaces) will provide parking spaces to cater for the increase in visitation due to the new proposed splash park. Upgrading the levee bank in its current location would still require the removal of up to 10 trees, including some significant trees behind the Turks Head Building.

Conclusion

In early 2017, a proposal and breakdown of proposed car parking spaces across the entire Riverside Precinct was presented to Council, including additional spaces within Australia Park. This was subsequently adopted by Council in June 2017. Community consultation was then initiated and the community response was overwhelmingly positive, with 91% of respondents supportive of plans to 'further improve facilities, parking and pedestrian connectivity between Australia Park, Oddies Creek Play Space and the other riverside park areas'.

Since this time, the project has progressed through detailed design and completion of relevant due diligence and approvals, including a Biodiversity Assessment, Aboriginal Assessment, Arboriculture (Tree) Impact Assessment, Landscape Plan, and completion of a 'Review of Environmental Factors'.

Tenders were released for the construction of the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project in October 2023. At the Council meeting held on 27 November 2023, Council resolved not to award the contract and place the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade Concept Plan on public exhibition for 28 days prior to re-tendering the project.

Council endorsed the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the project at the Council meeting on 26 February 2024, with consultation commencing 20 June 2024 and concluding 22 July 2024. At the conclusion of the consultation period there were 96 submissions received (82 completed questionnaires and 14 direct emails).

The results indicated that there was significant support for several proposed improvements including increasing the amount of native vegetation along Oddies Creek, installation of a new pedestrian bridge, upgrade of levee bank, and to a lesser extent closing and rehabilitating the two existing gravel car parks and reverting them back to open space. With regards to the provision of additional car parking within the Riverside Precinct and the specific proposal to create a car park at Australia Park, there were slightly more people that were 'supportive' as opposed to 'not supportive'.

Whilst the above results suggest a majority of respondents supported the proposed improvements, there were 44% of respondents that were not supportive of the proposed car park in Australia Park. These respondents typically cited concerns regarding the proposed removal of 22 trees, as well as concerns about the potential heat sink effect of the bitumen surface of the car park, and loss of open space from the construction of the car park.

In responding to these concerns, it is noted that a Revegetation Plan has been developed for Oddies Creek that identifies the proposed compensatory planting, with planting reflective of the vegetation community being removed (PCT 5 River Red Gum forest). The Revegetation Plan identifies the planting of 70 native trees and 120 native shrubs (from PCT 5), which exceeds the Albury DCP 2010 requirement of 20 compensatory planting trees to replace the four young River Red Gum trees being replaced. In addition to the compensatory planting, a Landscape Plan identifies a further 12 new shade trees (Lemon Scented Gum trees) to be planted within the proposed new car park and an additional six Illawarra Flame trees identified for the extension of the Wodonga Place plantings, and more than 2,000 understorey plantings on the proposed new earthen levee bank.

To further address concerns regarding the potential heat sink, it is proposed to include a painted surface to the car park (or parts thereof), which has been shown to lower surface temperatures by up to 15°C. It is also proposed to plant some additional trees over and above those already outlined in the Revegetation Plan and Landscape Plan, and this could be achieved around the perimeter of the car park in instances where the trees won't encroach or impact the integrity of the levee bank.

Having now undertaken extensive community consultation and incorporated a range of design refinements to reduce environmental impacts and address community concerns, it is now considered appropriate to recommence the tender process for the project contract and commence the construction phase for the proposed improvements at Australia Park.

Recommendation

That Council:

- a. receive and note the feedback received through the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project public exhibition process;
- b. amend the designs of the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project to include lighter coloured coating to the car park to reduce the heat sink effect;
- c. at the conclusion of the construction phase, identify and progress additional tree planting opportunities that won't encroach or impact the integrity of the levee bank; and,
- d. recommence the tender process with a view to awarding a contract for the Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project.

Attachments

1. Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade project elements (DOC24/272593).
2. Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade – Public Exhibition Results report (including redacted submission) – (DOC24/275869).
3. Australia Park Car Park, Pedestrian Bridge and Levee Bank Upgrade – Review of Environmental Factors – (DOC24/137987).