

8.5 Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan - Adoption

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Section	Strategic Planning
Objective	To provide Council with the findings of the public exhibition process for the Draft Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan project and to present the revised Draft Master Plan for adoption.

Background

Ballina Shire Council is Crown Land Manager of Kingsford Smith Reserve (Crown Reserve No 82164, gazetted 20/11/1959, public recreation).

This reserve includes land in Ballina at:

- Kingsford Smith Park
- Commemoration Park and
- Missingham Park.

Council is the recipient of an Office of Sport grant for \$3.6 million for the upgrading of facilities at Kingsford Smith Park. Priority improvements identified as part of this grant include:

- Lighting improvements
- Change room / amenity improvements to bring in line with current sporting access, equity and inclusivity guidelines
- Grandstand improvements
- Netball facility upgrades
- Surface improvements
- Car parking upgrades.

To ensure that the upgrading works are considered holistically in the context of a vision for the broader precinct, an urban design consultant has been engaged to prepare a Master Plan for the broader precinct along with concept plans for each of the three individual park areas.

This Draft Master Plan was reported to the July 2021 Ordinary meeting. The report included an outline of community and stakeholder engagement undertaken to inform the design process and presented a Draft Master Plan seeking endorsement for public exhibition.

At this meeting, Council resolved as follows:

1. *That Council endorses the Draft Master Plan for public exhibition, as per Attachment 1, to this report.*
2. *That Council endorses the progression of Stage 1 works in line with the grant funding obligations prior to the adoption of the Master Plan. This is on the basis that some works can be undertaken using the grant funds, without prejudicing the Master Plan and acknowledging that tenders will be reported to Council for determination.*

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3. *That Council continue to lobby Crown Lands and State Ministers for access to Boomerang Park for sporting facilities such as additional netball courts.*

Following this, the Draft Master Plan was exhibited for 28 days from 17 August until 14 September 2021.

This report presents a summary of the submissions received during the public exhibition period and in response, recommended minor revisions made to the Draft Master Plan.

A copy of the revised Draft Master Plan, which is recommended for adoption, is contained in Attachment 1.

Key Issues

- Public exhibition feedback outcomes
- Balance of facilities and priorities
- Adjustments to Draft Master Plan

Discussion

Community Engagement

Given the regional significance of the recreation precinct and its importance to several sporting groups and the general community, Council has undertaken two rounds of formal engagement activities with the community and stakeholders.

The first round of engagement included widely publishing information about the project, face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders and user groups and an online survey to collect information about users, the parts of the site that they use and their priorities for improvements. This information was used to inform preparation of a design. 666 responses were received to the online survey.

A key issue for each of the stakeholder groups was that the Draft Master Plan adequately provide for their future sporting needs allowing for growth of the sport and that facilities are complying with peak sporting body standards.

The online survey identified the top 10 'High Priority' items or ideas as being:

- Kingsford Smith Park
 - Lighting and safety
 - Shaded seating and spectator areas
 - Shelters and weather protected areas
 - Improved club house facilities, change rooms and amenities
 - Improved or additional sports playing surfaces
 - Multi-use pathways
 - Playground facilities
 - Carparking
 - Improved accessibility
 - Access to the waterway/lake

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- Commemoration Park
 - Lighting and safety
 - Flexible spaces for community and other activities (e.g. markets)
 - Playground facilities
 - Picnic shelters and BBQ facilities
 - Seating along the waterfront
 - Open lawns and passive open space
 - Natural vegetation areas
 - Landscaping
 - Cycling support infrastructure
 - Exercise equipment

- Missingham Park
 - Toilets and amenities
 - Picnic and BBQ facilities
 - Carparking, lighting and safety
 - Playground facilities (0-12 age group)
 - Multi-use pathways
 - Water play or water playground
 - Seating along the waterfront
 - Playground facilities for teens (12-16 age group)
 - Skatepark expansion
 - BMX or pump track

The first round of engagement also identified the following loud messages and good ideas:

- Keep it family friendly
- Keep three defined precincts with distinctly different functions (e.g. organised sports and recreation, active play, low key and relaxed)
- Maintain a predominantly 'natural' aesthetic particularly along the water's edge
- Provide an inspiring "destination" playspace suitable for many ages and capabilities
- Expand the skatepark and provide lighting
- Improved safety on Owen Street and Bentinck Street especially during the markets
- Use native vegetation
- More shade and seating
- Upgrade the various sporting group facilities to meet peak sporting body guidelines
- Make it accessible to all

The second round of engagement involved the public exhibition of the Draft Master Plan.

The Draft Master Plan was exhibited from 17 August until 14 September 2021. A copy of the draft is available on Council's website as part of the July 2021 Ordinary meeting agenda.

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Information about the project and the Draft Master Plan was widely published via the following forums:

- Council web site (with a link to an online feedback form)
- Social media (link to online feedback form)
- Letter box drop to residences in the adjoining blocks
- Community connect article
- Media release
- Directly sent via email to stakeholder groups

The feedback form was also made available in hardcopy upon request.

Individual Responses Received during Public Exhibition

Six individual responses were received via email. These responses are contained in Attachment 2.

Online Feedback Form Responses Received during Public Exhibition

An online feedback form was used to collect feedback on the Draft Master Plan. This feedback form was active for 28 days to align with the exhibition period and 152 submissions were received.

A copy of the original feedback form responses can be found in Attachment 3.

All respondents “strongly agreed” (54.3%), ‘agreed’ (39.7%) or ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ (5.96%) with the vision statement for the broader Kingsford Smith Reserve precinct being:

Kingsford Smith Reserve: The recreational heart of Ballina, where the community comes to meet and play by the river. As a destination that brings the community together in an integrated sports and recreation parkland, Kingsford Smith Reserve will offer opportunities for play, leisure and social gatherings in a natural coastal environment that celebrates our enviable waterfront setting. It will be responsive to the natural environment and existing and future activity and will reflect our aspirations as a coastal community. It will acknowledge and celebrate the community’s connection to the park and provide an environment that everyone can enjoy.

The top 5 most desired elements for Kingsford Smith Park are:

- New or improved sports surfaces, fields, courts and associated sports facilities
- New or renovated sports amenity buildings (with accessible and equitable toilets and change rooms)
- Shelter structures and seating to support all season sports viewing
- Landscaping to provide visual amenity, shade and comfort for sports spectators and other users;
- Reconfigured parking to provide better access to sporting destinations and safer pedestrian movement;
- Recreation paths (including a 1500m loop) that connect sporting precincts and allow for equitable access to facilities and spaces and provide opportunities to explore various parts of the park.

(Note: the last two items were equally preferred)

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The top 5 most desired elements for Commemoration Park are:

- Toilet facility upgrades
- Waterfront lawn area with landscaped pavilions / shelters for social gatherings or picnics
- Market lawn (an open grassy area to support uses such as the markets)
- Pedestrian crossing or refuge on Bentinck Street to support safe crossing between Kingsford Smith Park and Commemoration Park
- Passive play elements such as public art which can be used by children as an item of play

The top 5 most desired elements for Missingham Park are:

- Expanded skate park with street skate plaza and scooter track
- A series of play spaces, including the undercover toddler play area, interactive discovery playground and an adventure playground themed around a casuarina forest
- Half-court basketball court and additional hardstand space for community exercise
- Lighting of the skatepark area (time limits would apply)
- Widened waterfront promenade/ path with seating and pavilions / shelters

Other loud messages from the online feedback:

- A bike pump track facility should be included somewhere within the precinct;
- Provision should be made for extra and improved netball facilities.

Additional Engagement with NSW Crown Lands

In addition to the engagement with the community and stakeholders and also in response to Council's resolution of 22 July 2021, staff wrote to NSW DPIE – Crown Lands on 7 September 2021 to seek advice as to the process for being appointed Crown Land Manager for land adjoining the southern extent of Kingsford Smith Reserve known as Boomerang Park.

This letter is contained in Attachment 4.

The response from NSW Crown Lands is contained in Attachment 5 whereby Crown Lands advises that it will write to the NSW Crown Holiday Parks Land Manager Board seeking their concurrence to be removed as the appointed Crown Land Manager. Crown Lands will advise Council of the outcome.

If Council were to be Crown Land Manager this would provide opportunities to expand netball facilities southward or for other complementary uses of the land. Until further correspondence is received, the Draft Master Plan excludes the Boomerang Park land. However, Council can make adjustments to the plan for this area in the event that Boomerang Park comes under Council management.

Revised Draft Master Plan

The Draft Master Plan has been revised to best address and balance the various needs and aspirations identified in the community and through stakeholder engagement and post exhibition feedback. It should also be noted that the Draft Master Plan represents a long term vision for the future of the precinct and sets out key principles and proposed general site configurations.

These configurations provide future guidance for how to develop the precinct however are still the subject of detailed site investigations, design, approvals and funding. The main features and vision of the revised Draft Master Plan remains largely unchanged.

Kingsford Smith Park will retain its core function as a regional sports facility with enhanced compliance, safety and parkland amenity. However as a result of the public exhibition period the following key alterations to the Draft Master Plan have been made:

- Western Shared Sports Amenity Building Location

The shared sports amenity building which was originally shown on plans on the Owen Street frontage between the cricket oval and multi-purpose cricket / junior rugby league field has been relocated to a position east of the multi-purpose field. This new position was supported by the Junior and Seagulls Rugby League Clubs as it provides for safer pedestrian access to toilet facilities for spectators west of the main vehicle entry. This position also minimises the visual impacts of buildings for residents on Owen Street. This shared amenity building and the future building south of the main cricket oval may also be utilised by cricket.

- Main Sports Amenity Building Precinct

Following comments from the Seagulls Rugby League Club the following changes have been made to the Draft Master Plan

- The Stage 1 toilet and change room facilities have been incorporated into a consolidated footprint to enable additional tiered landscape seating to the south of the existing (proposed new or renovated) building.
- A small toilet facility and shade structure is proposed on the eastern side of the rugby league field in the position of the existing building.

- Removal of Existing Temporary Amenity Building near the Netball Courts

The existing shipping container which is being used by the netball club is shown in the Revised Draft Master Plan as being removed in the future and these functions provided in a new shared sports amenity building.

- Hockey Upgrades

Some minor improvements to the hockey facilities have been added including a new shade structure and amenities/change building.

- Pump Track

There was a lot of community enthusiasm in the online feedback for incorporation of a bike pump track somewhere within the reserve. Some people expressed a preference for the pump track to be located in the position of the scooter track at Missingham Park, others did not express a preferred location. Whilst the Missingham Park location is an active all ages precinct, it is considered inappropriate for a pump track for the following reasons:

- A pump track is a high speed bike environment which, upon expansion of the skate park may not be compatible with an already high activity space;
- A pump track is constructed with mounds, curves and straights of a particular geometry that allows the rider to generate speed without pedaling. With implementation of an expanded skate park there is inadequate space for a small and properly designed pump track to be included;
- The combination of mounded landform and asphalt surfacing may not be visually appropriate for this waterfront peninsula landscape and would leave little remaining open grass area for water viewing and general use.

Therefore, the revised Draft Master Plan retains the pump track within the plans near the lake area off Kingsford Smith Drive (within Kingsford Smith Park) as an example of “infrastructure to activate the space”. Activating the space around the lake is key to improving use of the parkland, passive surveillance and safety.

- Owen Street traffic calming

Traffic calming has been included on Owen Street, subject to findings of a road safety audit which would be undertaken as part of any detailed design process, as Council has received feedback relating to frequent excessive speed on this local road.

Commemoration Park will remain a primarily passive open space which supports general community use, play, exercise and small local events such as the markets. However as a result of feedback received during public exhibition, the following alterations to the Draft Master Plan have been made:

- Reconfiguration of the market lawn area to provide a larger unobstructed area for the farmers market and controlled vehicular access on market days.

Missingham Park will remain a multi-use parkland and be enhanced with a focus on leisure and play for all ages and capabilities. However as a result of feedback received during public exhibition, the following minor alterations to the Draft Master Plan have been made:

- Mobile Food Vendors

Space for pop-up mobile food vendors such as a coffee cart have been included near the Missingham Park carparking area.

- Skate Park Lighting

Lighting of the skate park to allow evening and night use (time limited) was an extremely popular community response in both rounds of the community engagement.

Council has previously identified concerns about lighting at Wollongbar Skate Park, which is a parkland close to residential areas.

The Missingham Park skate park has a non-residential context and the provision of lighting could assist with night time activation of the space and management of anti-social behavior.

However, lighting of this precinct needs to also consider impacts on marine wildlife and be compliant with the “*National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds*” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

In response to this the Revised Draft Master Plan shows the usual wayfinding lighting as required by AS1158 (Lighting for Roads and Public Spaces – Pedestrian Area Lighting) as well as additional provision of power supply at the skate park to enable temporary lighting to be provided to support evening and night time events.

It does not recommend lighting the facility on a permanent basis unless it can be demonstrated that there will not be an unacceptable impact on marine wildlife.

Options for skatepark lighting that were considered, and which Council may like to further consider, include:

- Permanent fixed lighting to support regular evening and night time use. This would require undertaking a lighting feasibility assessment to determine lighting requirements for safe skatepark use and the likelihood of compliance with the guideline in order to minimise impacts to marine wildlife;
- Permanent smart lighting to support regular evening and night time use. This would require undertaking a lighting feasibility assessment to determine lighting requirements for safe skatepark use and the likelihood of compliance with the guideline in order to minimise impacts to marine wildlife. This option would enable lighting to be controlled remotely as required to manage seasonal environmental factors (e.g. nesting turtles), complaints, anti-social behavior or other periodic activities such as to enable events.
- Temporary portable lighting only (as recommended in the Revised Draft Master Plan). This option would require provision of suitable power supply points for temporary lighting to be brought in to support approved evening or night events. It would not support night use on a daily basis.

Environmental Matters

In general, the revised Draft Master plan also places additional emphasis on the riparian context and features, and the significance of the site at the convergence of the North Creek and Richmond River estuarine systems.

Staging and Implementation

Stage 1 of the Draft Master Plan is the implementation of key works within Kingsford Smith Park, funded by the NSW Office of Sport grant (as far as is possible with the available monies).

These works include:

- Lighting improvements
- Change room / amenity improvements to bring in line with current sporting access, equity and inclusivity guidelines
- Grandstand improvements
- Netball facility upgrades
- Surface improvements
- Car parking upgrades.

The NSW Office of Sport grant funding requires the Stage 1 priority works to be constructed by the end of 2022. Council staff have commenced further definition of the scope of these works with a view to progressing towards pricing and construction of the grant funded Stage 1 works within 2022. All other works remain unfunded.

This is a key consideration as it means that not all aspects of the plan can be implemented in the short term.

This plan should be viewed as a 10 to 20 year plan, with elements to be progressively undertaken as priorities and resources permit.

Delivery Program Strategy / Operational Plan Activity

The Draft Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan is aligned with the following key strategic documents:

- Delivery Program and Operational Plan (2021–25)

Direction One: Connected Community

- *Delivery Program Strategy Item CC3.2 Provide Young People with a range of leisure activities*
- *Operational Plan Activity CC3.2a – Implement the Sports and Recreation Facilities Plan*

Direction Four: Engaged Leadership

- *Delivery Program Strategy Item EL1.2 - Involve our community in our planning and decision making processes.*
- *Operational Plan Activity EL1.2a - Prepare management plan for Kingsford Smith Reserve (Target year 21/22)*

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- Sport and Recreation Facility Plan (2020)

This plan identifies Kingsford Smith Park as a regional sporting facility, with the action plan identifying a number of high priority actions across each of the sporting disciplines and park areas. Action 20.1 recommends that a Master Plan is required for the Kingsford Smith Park precinct prior to the development or upgrade of any sporting facilities (also action 2.4). The proposals contained in the Draft Master Plan are consistent with these actions.

The key benefit of the revised Draft Master Plan is that it provides a considered approach to the future development of the overall precinct which can be used as a document to attract funding, instigated by Council or community, for possible future works.

Community Consultation Policy

Extensive engagement has been undertaken with stakeholders and the general community in accordance with Part B of Council's Community Engagement Policy – Specific Engagement Strategies.

The engagement methodology was based upon the project having a potentially high level impact upon the local government area and used an "Involve" approach.

Under the policy, this approach seeks to work directly with stakeholders and the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered and directly reflected in the Master Plan.

Financial / Risk Considerations

The Draft Master Plan identifies the following items for implementation as part of the NSW Government Office of Sport grant funding of \$3.6 million (Stage 1):

- Lighting improvements
- Change room / amenity improvements to bring in line with current sporting access, equity and inclusivity guidelines
- Grandstand improvements
- Netball facility upgrades
- Surface improvements
- Carparking upgrades.

The Draft Master Plan makes clear that all other works remain unfunded at present. The consultant provides an estimate of \$22 million for completion of all subsequent stages of the long term vision.

The Master Plan will be a valuable tool to potentially attract funding to implement future works and will also support community groups in their pursuit of funding.

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To enable timely delivery of the Stage 1 works within the constraints of the grant funding, approved contract panels such as State Government contracts or the Local Government Procurement Panel (LGPP) will most likely be used to source contractors to price, design and build the works as allowed under Section 55 of the Local Government Act.

Options

Option 1 – Council may adopt the revised Draft Master Plan as presented in Attachment 1 to this report.

Under this option Council acknowledges the extent of community engagement and feedback received on the exhibited Draft Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan and Council adopts the Revised Draft Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan (dated October 2021) as per Attachment 1 to this report. This is the recommended approach.

Option 2 – Council may make amendments to the Revised Draft Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan

This option would involve Council receiving a further report attaching a revised Master Plan detailing these amendments, or if Council wishes to make relatively minor changes, such changes could be embodied in the Council resolution.

This option is not preferred as there has been significant resources applied to the community engagement and design process and Council is in a position to confirm a preferred Master Plan.

Any changes should be considered in the context of the engagement undertaken with the community and key stakeholders as detailed in this report.

The Master Plan represents a balancing of the key issues identified through the consultation process noting in particular that the area accommodates a wide variety of sporting and community interests.

Further delays may also have grant funding implications.

Option 3 - Council can choose to not adopt the revised Draft Master Plan.

Council may wish to obtain further information or examine other design options. Alternatively Council could elect to cease this project.

There have been significant resources invested in community engagement and development of the Draft Master Plan and the timeframe under the grant funding conditions for implementation of Stage 1 is short. Therefore, this option is not recommended.

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the revised Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan, as per Attachment 1 to this report.

Attachment(s)

1. Revised Draft Kingsford Smith Reserve Master Plan (October 2021)
(Under separate cover)
2. Public Exhibition Feedback (Individual Submissions)
3. Public Exhibition Feedback (Online feedback)
4. Letter to DPIE Crown Lands
5. Response from DPIE Crown Lands