

Woodland Park Enhancement Plan

Community Consultation Report

May 2023



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1. Background

In December 2021, Council consulted with the community and key stakeholders on the proposed enhancement plan for Woodland Park in Croydon South and the southern part of the Council-owned section of the former Croydon South Primary School land.

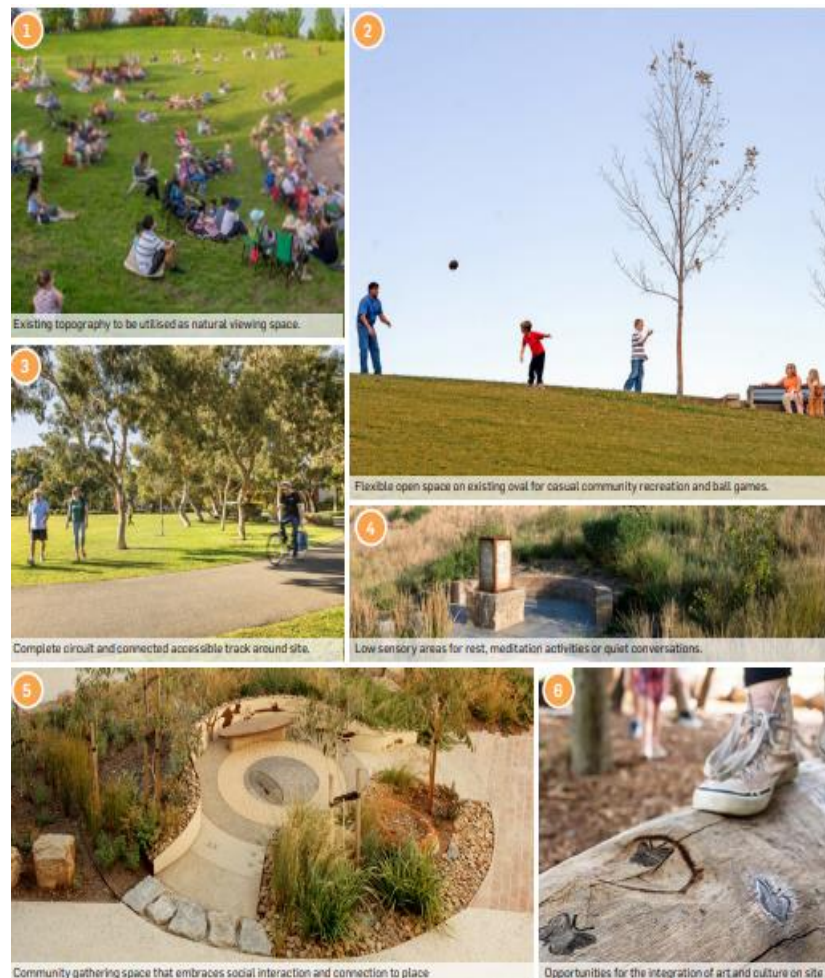
From previous feedback provided, a draft enhancement plan was developed and included:

- enhancement and preservation of the environmental values.
- improved connections for walkers.
- enhanced play and gathering spaces.

The different elements of the draft enhancement plan were also available to view including the gathering, natural, infrastructure and play elements. Images were also included as examples.

The draft enhancement plan feedback period concluded 29 January 2023.





Design

The functional design presented to the community included:

- Flexible Open Space: Open grassed area for casual community recreation.
- Viewing Area: Creation of natural, informal tiered seating using existing topography. Emphasis on maintaining view to distant Dandenong Ranges.
- Re-vegetation Opportunity to re-vegetate the upper reserve with native species and reintegrate local ecologies through-out the site.
- Buffer Planting: Dense planting areas with trees and shrubs to screen adjacent resident's properties, but not obstruct existing resident's views.
- Nature Play: Natural elements (planting, logs rocks etc) underneath existing trees for sensory play opportunities.
- Picnic Zone: Area with formal and informal furniture to allow for a range of social and gathering activities.
- Wheel Play Zone: Junior track to support roll play (bike, scooter, skate etc)
- Games Area: Hardstand area with line markings for multiple balls sports.
- Structured Play: Combined play elements to support inclusive structured play for all.
- Ephemeral Area: Area to be constructed to capture and direct environmental water flows and vegetated to support biodiversity. Also interwoven with steppers for informal play and education.

- Calm Zones: Places that promote low sensory engagement, calmness and relaxation. These zones to be designed to encourage safe places to have non-structured, casual conversations.
- Loop Trail: Extended existing path network to promote connection throughout the reserve and encourage physical activity. Trail network to support engagement with the natural environment.
- Car Parking: Opportunities for additional car parking spaces.
- Upgraded Wayfinding: Additional wayfinding and signage at pivotal entrance and access points. 15 Interpretative Signage and Art: Elements that create narrative to connect users to place, expression of theme and education.

The masterplan provides for a range of activities across the site, to balance the need for healthy social interactions for all ages and low-sensory experiences for quiet reflection. These spaces aim to embed local culture and biodiversity into everyday life to increase feelings of belonging and connection to the reserve and wider community.

2. Community consultation

2.1 Communication channels

Council sought community feedback on the proposed Woodland Park enhancement during December 2022 and January 2023.

A range of communications channels were used to promote the consultation opportunities.

Communications Channel	Reach Statistics
Letter delivered by hand with QR code to Your Say webpage.	Delivered to approximately 50 properties around Woodland Park and the surrounding streets.
Your Say Maroondah online engagement portal	Emailed to 923 subscribers of Maroondah Your Say updates on 8 December 2022. • 923 opened the email • 85 to Your Say page
On site community consultation	• 2 hour on site consultation sessions were held on 14 December 2022 with 5 attendees; 11 January 2023 with 6 attendees; 21 January 2023 with 6 attendees. • Council's project team were present to speak with residents about the project and answer any questions about the design.
Social Media	Facebook: 18 January and 24 January 2023 Total reach - 13,451 Click on links to Your Say project page: 28 Instagram: 9 January, 18 January, and 24 January 2023 Total reach - 3,486 Click on links to Your Say project page: 2
Maroondah eNews	Thursday 15 December • Sent to 10,224 recipients • Clicked on link to Your Say project page: 22 clicks.
Direct email to community groups.	A detailed email was sent to Friends of Woodland Park. The project team then met with members of the group on site to discuss the enhancement plan.

2.2 Consultation tools

Consultation tools	Description	Outcomes
Online	Your Say Maroondah	437 total visits to project page 33 survey responses
In person consultation	For verbal submissions/feedback	Approximately 17 people spoken to with key themes identified

3. Community feedback

3.1 Online submissions - Your Say Maroondah

A total of 637 people visited the consultation page on the Your Say Maroondah engagement website between 1 December 2022 and 30 January 2023. The below image is a summary of visitors to the page during the 8 week period with a total of 33 surveys completed.



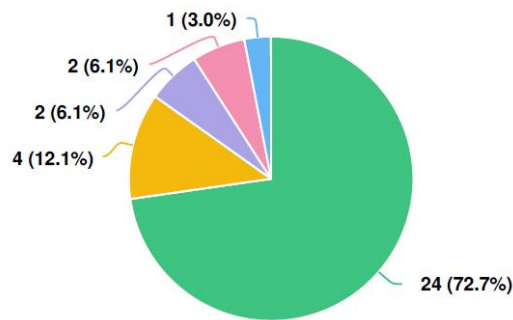
The main spike in activity around the 10 December period on the graph corresponds with the social media posts on Facebook and Instagram and the email to Your Say subscribers on the 8 December 2023

The above summary figures are based on the three types of activity with the project on the Your Say Maroondah engagement website:

- **Aware:** Participants that have viewed the project page and are aware that the project exists. This is the result of your promotional activities.
- **Informed:** Participants that have viewed various elements within the project page and are well informed about a subject and take time to think before participating.
- **Engaged:** And, finally, participants who provide feedback and contributions to a consultation.

Visitors to the project page on the Your Say Maroondah engagement website were asked a few questions and to provide their feedback on the enhancement plans. A summary is provided below.

Question: Where do you live?



Question options

CROYDON SOUTH, VIC

BAYSWATER NORTH, VIC

HEATHMONT, VIC

RINGWOOD EAST, VIC

CROYDON, VIC

1. Comments on the Flexible Open Space

There were 24 responses on this area. Comments included:

- *Drainage - long term residents said that lack of drainage is a very common problem.*
- *Water fountain - dogs to be included.*
- *Designated dog on-leash areas.*
- *Open space was welcomed especially for ball games and kit flying.*

2. Comments on the Viewing Area

There were 16 responses. Comments included:

- *Viewing area is a great idea.*
- *Shading - ensure plenty is available.*
- *Will the seating be safe and comfortable?*

3. Comments on Re-vegetation

There were 14 responses. Comments included:

- *Positive response to re-vegetation of the area.*
- *Smaller birdlife will hopefully be encouraged to visit.*
- *Include native flowers.*
- *Ensure weeds are kept under control.*

4. Comments on Buffer Planting

There were 15 responses. Comments included:

- *The canopy will provide shade, heat reduction, and protect the flora and fauna.*
- *Great noise reduction and privacy for neighbours.*
- *Keep pathways.*
- *Ensure Mulduri Crescent still has an entrance to the park.*

5. Comments on Nature Play

There were 15 responses. Comments included:

- *Excellent use to encourage play in nature.*
- *Calm and quiet especially for children to play around in.*
- *Educational information could be provided for identifying the various plants etc.*
- *Keep as a dog free zone or on-leash only.*

6. Comments on Picnic Area

There were 17 responses. Comments included:

- *Great idea.*
- *Toilets may be useful.*
- *Multiple tables and chairs with shading.*
- *Perfect for families and friends to meet up.*
- *Ensure there are rubbish bins.*

7. Comments on Wheel Play Zone

There were 22 responses. Comments included:

- *Families will get pleasure from this area.*
- *Hope that wheelchairs will be included in this area.*
- *Ensure that all ages are catered for, including older teenagers.*
- *Traffic lights, zebra crossing, speed humps could be included for smaller children.*
- *Trail bike riders need to be excluded.*
- *Fencing to be kept separating the oval from other areas.*

8. Comments on Games Area

There were 17 responses. Comments included:

- *Good to keep active.*
- *A new level basketball court will be great.*
- *There will be many users.*
- *Excited about the design.*

9. Comments on Structure Play

There were 16 responses. Comments included:

- *Yes, for kids today, tomorrow and the future.*
- *Good climbing for younger children in learning their limits.*
- *Could an exercise circuit be included?*
- *Ensure equipment is suitable for under 4 year olds.*
- *Love the wood play equipment.*

10. Comments on Ephemeral Area

There were 10 responses. Comments included:

- *Great idea - leave it to the experts.*
- *Frogs are to be encouraged but need to be protected from foxes.*
- *Biodiversity is good but need some good drainage.*

11. Comments on the Calm Zones

There were 14 responses. Comments included:

- *This is already a lovely spot to walk through - it's good that it can be kept as such.*
- *Yes please!*
- *My favourite place. Would be nice to have a seat in the middle section. This area is currently off-lead. It should be an on-lead area as birds and wildlife live here.*

12. Comments on the Loop Trail

There were 15 responses. Comments included:

- *Lovely walks*
- *All tracks look appropriate, however is there a reason why there is not structured access from Faraday Rd and Muldari crescent?*
- *Please include directional arrows so foot traffic goes in only one direction (easier for those in wheelchairs and with mobility issues to handle)*
- *I hope the trail will connect to streets from one side of the park to the other, it's a lovely walk on a weekend.*

13. Comments on Car Parking

There were 13 responses. Comments included:

- *Good idea.*
- *Not sufficient car parking for visitors to residences in the areas well as visitors to the new environment. Definitely needs to be revisited.*
- *Currently the park is used by people who can walk there from home, and it would be good for it to remain that way. The carpark here is mostly used by visitors to the houses across the road.*

14. Comments on Upgraded Wayfinding

There were 13 responses. Comments included:

- *Great idea.*
- *Essential to help those visiting the first few times.*
- *Keep maps clear of graffiti, which will be inevitable, try for materials that are easily cleaned.*

15. Comments on Interpretive Signage and Art

There were 14 responses. Comments included:

- *Great idea please try to make sure the art is fitting to the outdoor*

space created.

- *Acknowledgement of our indigenous peoples and history is well overdue. Education about indigenous plantings and the wildlife that live in, and pass through, the park can be integrated here.*
- *Lovely.*
- *Please include signage about dogs being on lead*

Feedback from the question '**other comments on the draft enhancement plan**' can be divided into three broad categories:

Response	Number
Key themes/comments in support of the proposed enhancements	3
Key themes/comments in support with other enhancements in the area	20
Key themes/comments not in support of the proposed enhancements	1
Total	24

Key themes/comments in general support of the enhancements

- I think it will be a much needed, improvement for the area. Love it all.
- As local neighbours, we are really excited about these enhancements and the general plan! Great consideration for different spaces, keeping it natural and making it a welcoming space for all ages/stages/abilities. And make it more practical for picnics etc

Key themes/comments in support of the enhancements with other improvements

Nature - Flora/Fauna

- A board that identifies the common birds and butterflies in the park. There are regular sightings of Swordgrass Brown butterflies each year but no signs.
- Keep it as green as possible, and please keep as many of the long living and big trees as possible!
- A lovely natural space. I hope the final enhancements take into consideration the importance this park has for our local wildlife.

Dogs

- Keep as an off lead park for dog owners as it is a much nicer place to walk than the Eastfield dog park.

Playground equipment

- Playground equipment budget allocation to be balanced across multiple age groups for all age access.

3.2 Email submissions

No email submissions were received.

3.3 On site consultation

On site consultations took place on:

- 14 December, 2022 at 9.30am to 12.00noon
- 11 January, 2023 at 3.30pm to 6pm
- 21 January, 2023 at 9.30am to 12.30pm

The community were able to discuss the project with Council's Project team.

Large print outs of the proposed designs were displayed at the event, allowing attendees to review the designs and ask any questions they had.

Attendees were then asked to provide their feedback either in writing or via Council's Your Say platform, by scanning the QR code available on the display posters.

4. Conclusion

Feedback from this phase of community consultation indicates a high level of support for the project, as well as number of key themes, suggestions and concerns to be addressed as Council progresses the final plans for the enhancement of Woodland Park.

5. Next Steps/Update

The revised enhancement plan was endorsed by Council in March 2023, with staged works and improvements to take place over the coming years.

The enhancement plan was developed based on feedback from key stakeholders and members of the community, to help ensure Woodland Park meets the future needs of our community.

Proposed improvements for the area include:

- A flexible open space
- A viewing area
- Re-vegetation and buffer planting
- A picnic zone
- Public amenities
- Enhanced play and gathering places, such as areas for wheel play, games, nature play and structured play
- Car parking and signage improvements
- Improved connections for walkers who use the loop trail