

ITEM-19 NEW SCHOOL IN CANADA BAY

Department Executive Services

Author Initials: GS

STRATEGIC CONNECTION

This report supports FuturesPlan20 Outcome area: 1.1.3 Establish and strengthen partnerships and alliances to identify and respond to local issues.

REPORT

The proposal by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) to establish a Primary School for 600 students has significantly progressed since Council initially agreed to support the project through utilisation of Council's property at 64-66 Victoria Ave, Concord West.

Councillors would be aware that the State Government allocated funds in this year's budget that will enable the primary school to be constructed with the expected opening date scheduled for first day of term 1, 2015.

In working towards meeting this objective discussions between Council and the Department of Education and Communities have progressed in two areas:

Lease of 64-66 Victoria Ave Concord West

The location of the primary school is 64-66 Victoria Ave, Concord West. On the site is a building that is currently occupied by the Lapidary Club, which has a lease for the use of that building. Discussions with the Lapidary Club have commenced and will continue to ensure that their future accommodation needs are met.

There is also a significant portion of this site that was previously occupied by the Australian Turf Research Institute which has been vacant for many years. The Turf Research Institute site was previously used to test herbicides and pesticides. The soil analysis carried out by environmental consultants engaged by Council confirmed that the site is contaminated and requires remediation prior to any future active or passive use. The cost associated with remediation is significant and as such Council is not currently in a position to undertake those works.

The DEC is aware of these issues as well as the flooding issue that affects the site. In essence they advise that they have completed their due diligence and undertaken an Economic Feasibility Study and are satisfied that these matters can be addressed in the development of the site.

The area the school will use is divided into two distinct zones, marked “School” and “Shared Use” on the attached map, over which different agreements will be needed.

Licence agreements for the area designated “Shared Use” which includes the driveway access, car park area and playing field will form part of this agreement. Shared use of this area enables the school to have the primary use during school hours, whilst community use would continue before and after school hours. The term of the licence will be in line with the term of the lease being for a period of 30 years.

As part of the licence agreement for shared use the DEC will remediate the sports field to meet the highest standard required for school use and upgrade the dressing sheds and toilets that are adjacent to the field.

The area designated “school” is the area mainly to be leased to DEC. This area will contain 28 home bases (classrooms) including 4 special education classes, administration/staff area, library, communal hall, canteen, student facilities, games courts, and parent drop off area.

The initial term of the lease will be 30 years. The lease will make provision for community access/shared use for the communal hall, games court and meeting rooms.

As part of the planning process staff have indicated that Council would like to see additional community facilities considered – eg Early Childhood Health Centre, provision of an outside school hours care service and long day care. Discussion will continue as the planning process evolves, and budgets reviewed. Any additional community benefit achieved will be then added to the final lease agreement.

Council’s land that is proposed to be occupied by the School has both operational and community land classifications. The land that is currently classified as Community Land is 66 Victoria Avenue, Concord West (Lot 2 DP 218758) which is the site of the former Turf Institute Research. Council’s land described as 64 Victoria Avenue, Concord West (Lot 5 DP 778667) is operational land.

The Community Land classification (relating to 66 Victoria Avenue, Concord West) means that Council is unable to lease the land unless express authorisation is provided within a Plan of Management relating to that land. In order for Council to be in a position where it is able to lease the land to DEC it must reclassify the land or alternatively prepare a Plan of management which specifically authorises a lease for use of the land for school purposes. In this case the zoning of the land also needs to be changed to accommodate the school on the site and therefore a Planning Proposal will be required to amend both the zoning of the land and classification of 66 Victoria Avenue, Concord West.

Statutory Planning Process

The site at 64-66 Victoria Avenue, Concord West (Lot 2 DP 218758) presently falls under the provisions of Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 24 – Homebush Bay Area (deemed SEPP). The Department of Planning and Infrastructure has informed Council that this plan is to be repealed and as a consequence, the draft Canada Bay Local Environmental Plan has applied a RE2 Public Recreation zoning to the site. The Recreation zoning does not permit schools. SREP 24 would permit a school, however given that the draft LEP does not permit schools it is recommended that the zoning be changed. As mentioned above part of the subject site is classified community land. A community land classification limits licensing and leasing arrangements.

This report recommends that a Planning Proposal be prepared to rezone the site and reclassify the land to an operational classification. The Planning Proposal would permit the school and allow longer term leasing arrangements with the Department of Education.

It is considered that the most appropriate zoning is SP2 Infrastructure – School and Community Facilities including any development that is ordinarily incidental or ancillary to development for these purposes.

Following the completion of the above statutory planning process and reclassification of 66 Victoria Avenue, Concord West (Lot 2 DP 218758) to Operational Land, Council will then be in a position to enter into a lease with Department of Education for that site.

Planning Process

The planning process for the new school has commenced. A Project Control Group (PCG) has been established and there have been 2 meetings held to establish the framework for progressing the new school.

Members of the Project Control Group are

Cameron Lang	Project Director	DEC
Sue Llewellyn	Asset Planner	DEC
Karen Mortimer	Acting Principal	Concord West Public School
Frances Brewer	Principal	North Strathfield Public School
Carolyn Wallace- Whelan	Acting School Education Director	Strathfield Area
Jeffrey Siebels	Asset Manager	DEC
Peter Hogan	Project Manager	Public Works
Dillon Kombumerri	Architect	Government Architect Office

Cathy Kubany	Architect	Government Architect Office
Gary Sawyer	General Manager	City of Canada Bay
Lisa Miscamble	Director Community Development	City of Canada Bay
Kent Walton	Manager Property Services	City of Canada Bay
Debbie Gillman	Manager Community Services	City of Canada Bay
Community Representative		TBA

The Project Control Group (PCG) has decided to meet on a weekly basis at this stage to progress the planning and design for the new school, given the delivery date is set for Term 1, 2015.

Community Consultation

An information session for residents was held at Concord West Public School on 25 June 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to inform residents of the proposed school, introduce the Project Control Group, outline their roles and responsibilities and provide an opportunity for initial feedback prior to the finalisation of a Consultation and Communication Plan.

The response from the residents was positive about the location and delivery of a new school in the locality but they also wanted to ensure that:-

- clear lines of communication established
- opportunities to be involved in the planning process through a consultative approach early in the planning phase
- major issues in the area including traffic, flooding and noise were considered before any decisions were taken
- a community representative to the PCG

These matters will be discussed at the next PCG meeting and a Communication and Consultation Plan will be a key factor in ensuring community support for the project.

Conclusion

The establishment of a primary school in Concord West will assist in meeting the future needs of our rapidly growing population and enable children who live locally to be educated locally.

The agreements for occupation of the site known as 64-66 Victoria Ave and adjacent sports field will ensure this is achieved and also provide significant community benefits to residents and children from the area with the provision of new social, sporting and cultural facilities in that area.

To facilitate efficient dealings with the land it is recommended that a Planning Proposal be pursued to rezone the subject site and reclassify to operational.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The project is funded by NSW Treasury. Council's costs at this time are related to staff time and involvement in the Project Control Group and Community Consultation process.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Council receive and note the report on progress of the establishment of a primary school at Victoria Ave, Concord West.
2. THAT a Planning Proposal be prepared for Lot 2 DP 218758 to:
 - i) Rezone the land to SP2 Infrastructure and permit school; and
 - ii) Reclassify the land from community to operational.
3. THAT, Council enter into a Deed covering the entire agreement with the Department of Education and Communities for 64-66 Victoria Ave, Concord West, for the purpose of establishing a primary school on the site.
4. THAT conditional on 2 ii) above being successfully completed, Council enter into a Lease for 66 Victoria Avenue, Concord West (Lot 2 DP 218758) and Licence agreements with the Department of Education and Communities for the shared use of the sports field known as Powell's Creek #1 (part Lot 118 DP752023) and driveway and car park area (being part of 64 Victoria Avenue, Concord West – part Lot 5 DP 778667).
5. THAT the agreements for occupation include reference to the benefits that will be available to the community through the shared use arrangement including, but not limited to, the communal hall, games courts, sports fields, car parking, community facilities, shared classrooms, library and change room facilities as determined through the planning process.
6. THAT the General Manager be granted delegated authority to progress these matters and enter into the Lease and Licence agreements following the successful completion of the reclassification process referred to above in 2 ii).
7. THAT Council authorise affixing of the Common Seal to any related document on the condition that it is to the General Managers satisfaction.

Attachments:

1. Powells Creek – Proposed School Boundaries

