# A picture containing tree, building, outdoor, plant  Description automatically generated

Engagement outcomes report

*Petersham Park Plan of Management and Master Plan*

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# Summary

Inner West Council engaged the community on its enjoyment of Petersham Park, with a view to the preparation of a ten-year plans for the Park, which includes a Plan of Management and a Master Plan. Community engagement was carried out via the online platform Your Say Inner West (YSIW), and individual responses via phone, email or post. The face-to-face drop-in sessions were cancelled in response to COVID-19.

# Background

Plans of management must be prepared for all types of parks on community land. Inner West Council has established a park planning priority list, that nominates which open spaces are in greatest need of new or updated Plans of Management. Petersham Park has been nominated as high priority within the Inner West Council area. The previous Plan of Management was adopted in 1998 and is well beyond the 10-year validity period for a Plan of Management.

## Stage 1 – Initial Engagement

## Engagement methods and promotion

The methods of engagement were:

* Online on yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au
* Discussions, meetings and emails with existing park organisations

Planned drop-in sessions were cancelled due to Council’s Covid-19 response.

## Promotion

The engagement was promoted by Inner West Council using a number of means, including:

* Inner West Council social media
* Your Say Inner West monthly e-news
* Council column in Inner West Courier
* Council website
* Flyer to the surrounding residents
* Email to identified groups

# Engagement outcomes

Outcomes of community engagement have been separated into feedback received through the Your Say Inner West online survey and other input received via email, phone and post, and input received from stakeholders and organisations.

**Who did we hear from?**

**What did they say?**

**Online via yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au**

An online survey was conducted in March 2020 through the ‘Your Say Inner West’ (YSIW) website, seeking feedback on a range of questions regarding Petersham Park. The survey included multiple choice and essay style questions and was open for public response for four weeks from 2 March 2020 to 30 March 2020.

The project page received 618 visits. 221 visitors participated in viewing documents and information, of whom 156 visitors contributed to the online submission form. Quantitative responses to the multiple-choice questions are displayed visually in the Engagement Outcomes section below.

**Please describe what you value about Petersham Park. You may like to describe what it looks like, how you use it or how it makes you feel**

Responses to this question were extremely positive, focusing on users’ appreciation of the green space which they interact with when using Petersham Park. A number of users commented on the beauty of the park, its mature trees and heritage charm. Many users also noted the benefit of this open space on both their physical and mental health and well-being.

The root of what users valued most about Petersham Park was also repeatedly attributed to:

* The large and well-maintained open spaces with trees and shade
* The natural beauty of the park, the trees, and the birds and wildlife they attract
* The mix of activities and people visiting the park
* Interaction with the community
* Specific areas and facilities such as the pool, playground, cafe, barbeque and picnic areas. The proximity of these facilities to one another was particularly valued by families
* The relaxing atmosphere, and sense of freedom, safety and openness
* Dog walking, and interaction with dogs and their owners
* Activities such as watching sport, exercising, picnicking and visits by the Magic Yellow Bus.
* Walking and cycling routes
* The history of the park and heritage elements including established trees, the rotunda and scoreboard.
* The oval and the quality of the pitches and the playing surface
* The close proximity of the park

**What don’t you like about Petersham Park?**

A number of respondents expressed that there is nothing they dislike about the park.

Those that did share their dislikes, cited:

Public toilet facilities

* The lack of public toilets, and the need for more frequent cleaning of existing facilities.

Accessibility

* The poor amenity of paths. Respondents commented on the condition and narrow width of paths; poor wayfinding signage; the lack of a continuous circuit within the park; and the concrete edging, specifically that it is a trip hazard and is prone to damage especially from service vehicles
* Barriers that reduce access to sections of the park such as the chain wire fencing behind the spectator seating

Safety

* Safety issues associated with the busy adjacent roads, and poor pedestrian access and priority to reach the park, especially at the West Street pedestrian crossings
* Safety issues associated with night-time lighting, specifically areas where there are no lights, or the lights are not turned on
* Antisocial behaviours such as drinking in the rotunda, activities in the male toilets, and drunk patrons from the bowling club
* Dogs and owners not abiding by regulations
* Safety issues to do with off leash dog areas, specifically the lack of fencing, and the proximity to busy roads, the playground and the barbeque area

Community

* The lack of non-sporting community events in the park
* Crowds and activities that take over sections of the park and impede access, specifically sporting teams, spectators and commercially operated fitness groups
* Sporting and spectator facilities that need maintenance such as the baseball netting and seating.
* The lack of gender equitable access to green space, specifically the oval, which is underutilised for organised sport and is mostly used by male groups

Parking

* Difficulty finding parking for both residents and visitors

Waste

* Waste management issues, specifically the amount of litter and frequency of collection; the need for more dog waste bag dispensers and for more bins, including recycling. Some respondents were concerned that sustainable measures to deal with organic waste have not been adopted, and that dog waste bags are not biodegradable

Play and provision of facilities

* The limited size of the playground area and the lack of wild and water play areas and equipment to cater to all ages and abilities
* The lack of covered areas and rentable spaces for parties and community activities
* The lack of options for older children, teenagers, adults and the elderly
* The shortage of facilities such as water fountains, tables, seating and barbeque areas, and the current concentration of these around the playground area.

Existing facility condition, management and maintenance

* The untidy appearance of Loftus Street and the lack of paving there
* Issues to do with trees and gardens and maintenance of these respondents would like to see more trees and bushes including native species to provide habitat, screen busy roads, and to enhance areas of the park.
* Issues to do with the grandstand, specifically the extended duration of the upgrades; the impact of the construction site on access and the appearance of the park; disappointment over the proposed new grandstand name; and concern that new public toilets won’t be included
* The poor condition of the storage shed next to the grandstand, and the disuse and decay of the old scoreboard.

Pool

* Issues to do with the pool, specifically the restricted opening hours and season, overcrowding, the cost of entry, and the management and quality of food served at the adjacent cafe

**What do you think should be the main priority of the parks plans?**

Responses to this question mirrored many of the themes which had been highlighted as ‘dislikes’ in the previous question, and reinforced themes which had been ‘liked’ in the first essay question.

* Facilities such as more toilets, picnic tables, seats and barbeques, and providing a simple system to pre-book some of these facilities.
* Several participants expressed a desire for more shade and shelter around seating areas, provided either by trees or fixed structures.
* Waste management, more bins including recycling, and emptying bins more frequently.
* There were several comments relating to dog exercise areas. The vast majority were in support of offleash dog areas. Some felt a review of regulations and better policing of them was needed, along with fencing, and designated on leash only areas. Other suggestions included facilities for dogs such as a dog splashing area and play equipment.
* Keeping the oval open for organised sport and maintaining the condition of the playing field
* Managing traffic and improving pedestrian and cycle access to the park and within it
* Improving evening lighting and the spread of this through the park
* Making better use of underutilised areas adjacent to the grandstand and along Brighton Street.
* Ensuring the grounds and facilities are well maintained
* Extending and upgrading the playground area
* Keeping the park open to all and reducing conflicts between different park users and activities
* Providing facilities for older children, teenagers, adults and the elderly such as basketball hoops, a circuit track, athletics markings to the oval, fitness equipment, tai chi, yoga and community garden areas.
* Finishing the grandstand upgrades so this area of the park can be reopened
* Fixing the storage shed next to grandstand
* Communicating the history and first nations significance of the park, along with providing the community with information on events, sporting schedules and notices.
* Keeping it the same
* Maintaining the beauty and openness of the park
* Community interaction, events and leisure - ensuring there is a mix of uses, not just organised sport.
* Passive recreation and places to relax and enjoy
* Increase planting and improving maintenance of gardens, trees and grassy areas.
* Providing habitat, food and water for native flora and fauna
* Keeping the pool open throughout the year
* Improving stormwater management to address flooding to the pathway adjoining the cafe, and stormwater surges through Wentworth Street.
* Maintaining historic features and ensuring that new work is in keeping with the parks character
* Preventing commercialisation and development of the park, and limiting crowds so that it remains an enjoyable place to visit

**Do you have any other comments on Petersham Park?’**

* Concern that more structures and fencing will compartmentalise the park, and compromise open space for the community.
* Praise for the park, it’s established trees, and a desire to keep it at it is.
* Desire for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety and amenity throughout the Inner West to improve uptake of parks and reduce dependency on vehicles.
* Emphasis on the importance of off leash dog exercise areas
* Acknowledgement of need to treasure, maintain and respect the park for the amazing community asset it is.

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**Stakeholders and organisations**

An online meeting was held on 8 April 2020 with representatives from Inner West Council, Randwick Petersham Cricket Club and Sydney Baseball to gather their feedback. Written responses were also received from Randwick Petersham Cricket Club, Sydney Baseball and KU Petersham Preschool.

Key points raised by each of the participating groups are summarised below.

**Randwick Petersham Cricket Club**

The club has a total 121 years of playing history and use of Petersham Park. In 2018/2019 there were approx. 180 current members, 106 Legends Society members, and 49 life members. Numbers steadily increase each year and members range from 12 to 80+ years old.

The field is used from September to March for Premier Cricket on Saturdays and Sundays. Both men’s and women’s change rooms are required for these matches.

The playing surface performs well throughout the season. The club seeks confirmation that an irrigation issue at the northern quadrant of the field has been addressed.

Issues with access to the canteen on games days, and the security of supplies and equipment need to be addressed. Allowing the club manager and volunteers to drive to the grandstand in their vehicles would be beneficial as they have heavy equipment and goods to unload.

Fixing or providing a new scoreboard was flagged as a priority. The club supports dual use of the scoreboard for sporting and community events such as outdoor cinema.

Maintaining the condition of seats is important. The seating area in front of the grandstand is especially well used and replacing seating in this area could be considered to improve accessibility.

The area in front of the grandstand and kiosk needs shade from the morning sun. This is also the usual scorer’s area. The club currently has temporary awnings which provide some relief.

Lights for evening junior training and other non-cricket activities on the oval would be beneficial. The club supports social play on the outfield (but not on the wickets) during weekday evenings.

The accessibility of the oval for players is not currently an issue. Cricket NSW runs an all-athletes programme, with access improvements Petersham Park could be considered as a suitable venue.

Clarity is sought around what clubs will be allowed to do going forward in terms of access to the field and facilities, along with provisions for volunteers and sponsor signage.

**Sydney Baseball**

Winter baseball started at Petersham Park in the 1890’s and has been played continually since then. The ground is used by 8 clubs and is the primary inner-city winter baseball venue. Club numbers are limited to around 60 based on the number of games that can be played on weekends. Members range from teenagers to 40+ years old.

Retention of chain wire fencing around the spectator seating area is important to ensure the safety of other park users

There is a risk of stray balls from left hand batters going into the playground area. The fig tree provides some protection, however high netting is suggested here to improve safety.

The playing surface is excellent. A place to store dirt mounds for patching the field during the season would be beneficial. The dirt is currently stored on the oval which looks messy. Access to on-field water would also be helpful for watering the baseball diamond throughout the day, between games

Limited parking and warm-up areas are issues, the club acknowledges these are difficult to resolve.

Improved lighting would allow for games to finish later, and for evening training sessions.

Other suggestions include a shaded seating area to accommodate spectators with mobility requirements, and a workable electrified scoreboard.

**KU Petersham Preschool**

The preschool takes 3-5 year old children to the park for excursions. During these excursions they investigate birds, plant life, possums and bees.

There are some concerns over the proximity of off leash dogs.

The preschool does not use the playground equipment within the park as it is not inclusive or suitable for younger children.

Suggestions include: a community garden area, with possible sharing of compost; areas to explore plants, especially natives; a secluded cubby space, and opportunities for water play.

# Stage 2 – Draft Plan of Management

# **Summary**

Council engaged the Inner West community for input on the draft 10-year plan for Petersham Park, which is to include a Plan of Management and Master Plan. Community engagement was carried out via the engagement platform Your Say Inner West (YSIW).

Online engagement was carried out between 19 October 2021 and 1 December 2021. The project page received 438 visits. Of those visitors, 30 visitors left feedback. The questions prompted visitors to read the draft Plan of Management and Master Plan and express their thoughts on the proposed master plan for the park. The engagement also received 15 written responses from the community.

## **Promotion**

The engagement was promoted by Inner West Council using a number of means, including:

* Inner West Council social media
* Your Say Inner West monthly e-news
* Flyer to the surrounding residents
* Email to identified groups

## **Who we heard from**

**What we heard**

70% of respondents supported the draft Plan of Management and Master Plan. 16% of respondents were unsure if they supported the plan and 14% did not support the current draft Plan of Management and Master Plan.

Two respondents (5%) did not agree to the name change of the Petersham Park grandstand. The other respondents either agreed with the name change or where unsure of how the felt about it.

**Online survey responses**

The main response received from the community was that the plan looked sensible and did not interfere too much with a much-loved community asset. Additional responses from the community are grouped into common themes below in order of prevalence.

Open Space

* The community appreciates the open space that Petersham Park provides.
* The community appreciates that there are active zones for play and exercise and quieter zones for passive recreation

Accessibility

* Respondents supported the focus on improving accessibility throughout the park
* The importance of improving accessibility within the playground was well supported

Dog off leash area

* The respondents supported the current dog off leash area however, there were areas of concern.
* The current dog off leash area is damaged and needs improved maintenance. Due to intense use, the grass does not grow and needs replacement regularly. This replacement does not happen and it becomes a mud pit in winter and a dust bowl in summer.

Grandstand

* Respondents were disappointed that the stairs of the grandstand are closed to the public when sport is not in play.
* Respondents were disappointed that public toilets were not provided in the grandstand upgrade.

Public Toilets

* Respondents commented that the current public toilet situation was insufficient to cope with the demand.

Waste facilities

* Respondents mentioned that the current bin situation was not sufficient to manage the current waste situation.

Road/footpath and parking

* A specific traffic/pedestrian study should be undertaken for West Street and in particular, pedestrians and cyclists from Lewisham, Dulwich Hill and Summer Hill.
* There was a mixed response for timed parking along Station Street.

Management of Fanny Durack Pool

* Some respondents were disappointed with the management of Fanny Durack and requested that management is changed to Council rather than independent operators.

Playground

* There were mixed responses about the expansion of the children’s playground to provide additional nature play spaces. Some respondents did not want to see additional hard surfaces, whilst others appreciated the opportunities for nature play.

Planting

* Native planting and the native meadow were generally supported by the respondents.

Exercise equipment

* There were mixed responses about the proposed exercise equipment with about half the respondents appreciative of the loop track and equipment for personal active recreation. Other respondents wanted to ensure Petersham Park kept space for passive recreation.

Scoreboard

* There was a strong preference for incorporating a scoreboard into the existing heritage board if possible.
* Respondents were generally not in favour of a second scoreboard next to the existing heritage structure. However, some respondents saw merit in undertaking this approach if the scoreboard could be used as an outdoor cinema.

**Written responses**

Road/footpath and parking

* There was strong opposition for timed parking along Station Street with residents noting that parking is only challenging during the summer months.
* It was suggested that cyclist access along Station Street be improved to remove cyclists from the park.

Scoreboard

* A temporary scoreboard which is remove at the end of play was suggested to provide clubs with game scores. Changes to the heritage board or a new scoreboard was not supported.

Dog off leash

* Dog off leash signage at Wentworth Street and greater Ranger presence was requested as there has been an increased in poor dog off leash behaviour.
* There were requests to improve maintenance of dog off leash areas including regularly relaying turf.
* Respondents requested signage at the entrances to the sports field identifying that dog are prohibited.

Seating

* There was a request to improve seating options along the Wentworth Street boundary rather than remove seating in this area.

Recreation facilities

* Respondents requested additional recreation activities including skate facilities and live entertainment.
* Most respondents supported the expansion of the playground with the inclusion of nature play. However, some respondents were concerned that the playground expansion would take away too much passive recreation.

Planting

* Native planting and the native meadow were generally supported by the respondents.
* Respondents commented ‘the more planting the better’

## Officer Comments

The Plan of Management has been updated to reflect the comments of the community.

Road/footpath and parking

* The Plan has been updated to include the requirement of a traffic, pedestrian, and cycle study to inform connections to the park and vehicle parking on surrounding streets. The provision for 2hr parking on Station Street has been removed and will require specific community engagement.

Dog off leash area

* The off-leash area has been updated to include additional signage at Wentworth Street
* The plan has been updated to prioritise maintenance of the dog off leash area. This may include temporary closure of the off-leash area to allow for establishment of the turf.

Public Toilets

* The document has been updated to investigate the location of additional toilet facilities within the park.

Waste facilities

* The plan has been updated to provide additional waste facilities at Station Street.

Playground

* The plan has been updated to require additional specific community engagement for the expansion of the playground. The expansion will be sympathetic to the parkland and consist of more nature play rather than hard surface, traditional play elements.

Scoreboard and grandstand

* A separate Conservation Management Plan is to be sought prior to proposing any changes or additions to the scoreboard. A new scoreboard next to the existing scoreboard will not be considered without engaging a Heritage Architect.
* Access to the grandstand is closed when sport is not in play due to vandalism and safety issues.

Exercise equipment

* Exercise equipment will remain as an option within the Plan of Management but with the provision of additional community engagement prior to installation. The Plan of Management is a 10-year vision for the park. Much can change over 10 years, not including it as an option could be detrimental long term.

Seating

* Seating along the Wentworth Street boundary will be retained or improved.