

Rymill Park Lake Renewal Options

Tuesday, 14 June 2022

Council

Strategic Alignment - Environmental Leadership

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Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rymill Park Lake requires renewal to address structural decline, a leaking base and ongoing poor water quality and amenity.

In November 2019, the City of Adelaide (CoA) consulted with key stakeholders and the wider community on the Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka (Park 14) Draft Master Plan and Draft Community Land Management Plan (CLMP), which included two lake options, to help determine how to renew and enhance this important asset. Options for the lake were presented as (A) an ornamental lake or (B) a vegetated wetland. 102 responses were received with the results showing 45% preferred an ornamental lake and 55% preferred a vegetated wetland. Of the responses, key stakeholders were mostly in favour of the ornamental lake option.

In considering the lake's physical state and the community's feedback, the administration believes a third option (C) for the lake's renewal, that has not been previously considered or presented to the community, could deliver better outcomes, achieving community satisfaction and broader strategic objectives for water sustainability, amenity and lake management.

The Kadaltilla / Park Lands Authority considered the Lake Options presented in a report at their meeting held on 28 October 2021 and supported Option C – a sustainable lake. Since then, Administration has undertaken further investigations on the sustainable lake.

A sustainable Rymill Park Lake will be included in the updated Master Plan and supported by a sustainable (harvested and treated stormwater) water source. This option will ensure the lake is a clear and healthy water body, with a vastly improved aesthetic and amenity for the community's, and also benefiting Council with heavily reduced operational cost.

It is recommended that the sustainable lake is approved as the concept for renewing the Rymill Park Lake in the updated Master Plan to be presented to Council in July 2022 for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL

1. Approves a sustainable lake for the Rymill Park Lake renewal project – noting that Kadaltilla / Park Lands Authority supports a sustainable lake.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Environmental Leadership
Policy	Draft Community Land Management Plan for Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka (Park 14) (Revised September 2020 post-consultation) Infrastructure Asset Management Policy
Consultation	Consultation on the Draft Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka (Park 14) Master Plan captured community feedback using various methods including, an online survey, a community day held in Rymill Park and a drop-in session at the City Library. Park users have been consulted through a stakeholder engagement plan, including events and commercial / property. Kadatilla / Park Lands Authority has endorsed the option in this report.
Resource	The project will be co-funded through approved CoA renewal budget and State Government Deed funding. The internal resource required will come through the Infrastructure Program.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka (Park 14) Master Plan is linked to the Community Land Management Plan (CLMP) for the park. The CLMP is required under the <i>Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005 (SA)</i> and <i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i> . Both documents will reference the preferred lake option.
Opportunities	Opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew a valuable community asset with significant community and environmental benefits. Extend ecological benefits to Botanic Creek in the Eastern Park Lands. Complete the Rymill Park/Murlawirrapurka (Park 14) Master Plan and the Community Land Management Plan (CLMP). Further progress one of the key 'Big Moves' of the Adelaide Park Lands Management Plan: "Re-imagine Rymill". Align with Green Adelaide priorities and Regional Landscape Plan which will enable opportunities for partnerships and funding.
21/22 Budget Allocation	\$33,000 CoA Renewal budget \$407,000 State Government Grant Funding
Proposed 22/23 Budget Allocation	\$2,548,000 CoA Renewal budget \$2,024,000 State Government Grant Funding
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The expected useful life of the lake liner/asset is between 30-50 years. Stormwater infrastructures useful life is 125 years.
21/22 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Estimated Operational costs per annum \$15,000 – including Operations budget, utilities, specialist maintenance
Other Funding Sources	Other funding sources are being explored to extend the related works further into Botanic Creek.

DISCUSSION

Background

1. In 2007, a condition audit was undertaken on the Rymill Park Lake to identify the cause of substantial water leakage. This assessment discovered significant structural issues with the lake walls and base. As recommended, a temporary liner was installed but due to state-wide water restrictions at the time, the lake was unable to be refilled with mains (potable water).
2. In response to ongoing water restrictions, a connection was made to the lake from recycled wastewater supplied via the Glenelg to Adelaide Recycled Wastewater Scheme (GARWS) serviced by the Glenelg to Adelaide Pipeline (GAP) in 2009.
3. These temporary solutions addressed the use of potable water to maintain lake levels during restrictions and allowed time to consider the longer-term vision and design for renewal of the lake.
4. As the lake is a shallow waterbody with a large surface area, there is significant evaporation over the summer months. Combined with poor water circulation and high nutrient loading from the recycled wastewater used to fill the lake, Rymill Park Lake often has poor water quality leading to outbreaks of algal blooms in the summer months, requiring it to be temporarily closed. This impacts on the kiosk operators (particularly the hiring of row boats), festival and events held in the Park, and general visitors.
5. In 2015, consultants commenced work to prepare preliminary design drawings and a specification to upgrade Rymill Park Lake under its asset lifecycle management. In 2016 the design project was delayed by the O-Bahn tunnel works directly impacting Rymill Park and then further delayed in 2018 with the City of Adelaide (CoA) deferring investigations into a suitable water quality improvement system (mechanical treatment plant) while the Rymill Park Master Plan was developed.
6. In 2016 the State Government granted \$75,000 in funding to CoA for the Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka (Park 14) Master Plan to “Re-imagine Rymill” as one of the “Big Moves” in the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy. This funding was matched by CoA.
7. One of the considerations during the development of the Master Plan was the long-term management of Rymill Park Lake, given its well-known maintenance and water quality issues.
8. In early 2018, a series of workshops were held with consultants and CoA staff to consider if a lake was the best use of this area of Rymill Park, possible alternative water sources and management regimes to improve water quality.
9. Because the Master Plan was constrained to the boundary of Rymill Park, two options for the renewal of the lake were deemed feasible at the time: an ornamental lake, and a wetland using stormwater from the adjacent eastern CBD catchment.
10. One of the principles of the Draft Master Plan is to “embed environmentally sustainable principles - ensure that all design and outcomes include water and planting systems that are sensitive to the environment”.
11. Both lake renewal options are relevant to Action 1 of the Draft Master Plan “to enhance the lake and surrounds” with a series of key actions including:
 - 11.1. Retain the existing form and footprint of the lake and island
 - 11.2. Improve the water quality and sustainability of the lake
 - 11.3. Upgrade the lake walk
 - 11.4. Enhance the lake environment.
12. Action 1 addresses:
 - 12.1. The deteriorating structure and ongoing maintenance of the lake
 - 12.2. The degrading of water quality as a result of severe seasonal impacts on the lake and resultant public health concerns
 - 12.3. An increasingly unsustainable source of water for the lake, which is currently filled using Glenelg to Adelaide Pipeline (GAP) recycled wastewater.
13. At its meeting on 23 July 2019, Council approved the Draft Master Plan for key stakeholder and community consultation, including the vision, principles, actions and overall plan.
14. Consultation on the Draft Master Plan and Draft Community Land Management Plan were undertaken in November 2019 and included a variety of approaches including an online survey, a community day held in Rymill Park and a drop-in session at the City Library, this identified several lake options that needed further investigation.

15. The Draft Master Plan presented two options to enhance the lake, ornamental lake and vegetated wetland. The preferred option was to be further investigated and included in the final Master Plan and CLMP.
16. The results from the community engagement with key stakeholders and the wider community (of around 100 people), showed 45% of respondents preferred the ornamental lake and 55% preferred vegetated wetland. Conversely, key stakeholders (who included park-adjacent stakeholders and major event organisers) were mostly in favour of the ornamental lake option.
17. Park 14 largely retains its original Park Lands shape and form as devised by Colonel Light in 1837, and over time became an individual park as sections became segregated through the construction of Bartels Road and Rundle Road. In the 1950s–60s, under Town Clerk William Veale, the Park was substantially transformed to accommodate an ornamental lake, picnic and recreation grounds, and a large rose garden, resulting in the semi-formal 'gardenesque' park. Originally, the Botanic Creek watercourse passed through the site of the lake, however when the lake was constructed in 1958, the creek line was diverted around the lake through an underground concrete stormwater pipe.
18. Rymill Park Lake is a defining feature of the park and anecdotally there is strong sentimental attachment towards it in the community. This popularity is largely due to the ornamental features of the park, the island, adjacent kiosk, playground, open grass area for picnicking and the opportunity to row boats in the lake. It is one of only a few ornamental water features in the Adelaide Park Lands.

Preferred Option

19. A sustainable lake is in line with the community desires for an ornamental lake (open water lake with attractive views, boating and equestrian events) with the environmental benefits of a sustainable stormwater treatment and harvesting system (with upstream and downstream benefits).
20. Following the support of Option C – Sustainable Lake at the Kadaltilla / Park Lands Authority meeting on 28 October 2021 ([Link 1](#)), Administration undertook further investigations on the cost estimate due to indexation and the impacts of COVID-19 and other developments in the area.
21. These investigations included further geotechnical and topographic survey works, engagement of a design consultant, and further quantity surveying.
22. The design consultant has undertaken detailed modelling works confirming the ability to have a harvested stormwater option that will allow for a sustainable lake.
23. The recent survey works, and rainwater modelling has allowed a more detailed analysis of the upstream water sourcing.
24. The quantity surveying was reliant on the concept designs being presented, to allow confirmation in principle, on the ability to deliver the outcome within the current approved budget.

Funding

25. The current total budget for the project is \$5,012,297.
26. The renewal portion of the works is budgeted to be completed over the next two financial years. This commitment will be \$2,581,000. These works will be for the lake construction including the retaining, liner, surrounding paths and infrastructure.
27. The deed funding has been sought through the Open Space Grant Program in early 2022. The approved funding of \$2,431,297 was received in March 2022. The funding will cover majority of the design, the construction of the drainage and circulation components of the sustainable lake, landscaping, and lighting.
28. The funding deed currently has an expiration of August 2023.
29. The Administration is currently seeking funding to explore other opportunities as part of the Draft Master Plan.

Stakeholder Engagement

30. The stakeholder engagement and consultation was completed in 2019 ([Link 2](#)).
31. Engagement on the Draft Master Plan was undertaken with Kaurna community representatives in 2017-2020. This engagement found that there was potential use of the site prior to settlement as a possible meeting place and/or camping site associated with a natural creek line (now known as Botanic Creek). This creek fed a waterhole that exists on the site of the Main Lake / Kainka Wirra at the Adelaide Botanic Garden and provided a wealth of food and other resources for the Aboriginal people of the area. A Department of Aboriginal Affairs cultural survey was undertaken in late 2021 with no known artifacts.

Next Steps

32. The sustainable lake concept will be included in the updated Master Plan which will be brought to Council in July.
33. With the approval of the sustainable lake and adoption of the updated Master Plan, we will progress the design through to detailed design and prepare for a tender process for the construction.
34. As this project is connecting into the Botanic Creek stormwater catchment, the project is classed as primarily drainage and therefore exempt from the requirement to obtain and consider a prudential report under section 48 of the *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*.
35. Based on external legal advice, that the construction contract for the works is defined as a “prescribed contract” in that it will be entered into by the Council for the purposes of undertaking drainage works. Therefore, the decision to award the tender will not be a “designated decision” that is prohibited by the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 (SA)* during the election period ie caretaker. As such, the construction contract award will be presented to Council at its September meeting with further advice to support Council in its decision making.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 - Kadaltilla / Park Lands Authority Agenda 28 October 2021

Link 2 – Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka (Park 14): Draft Master Plan & Community Land Management Plan

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

- END OF REPORT -