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West End Community Association Inc.

ABN: 38 338 933 037

Natural Environment Water and Sustainability Group
Brisbane City Council
Email: news-contact@brisbane.qld.gov.au

30 November 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: West End Urban Common Project. Thomas St Park, West End

We are writing to comply with your submission date for the new park in Thomas Street West End that has been titled "West End Urban Common" project. We are responding to some elements of the proposed concept plan that was provided to the community. We are also responding to the process that has been undertaken by Council.

The new park is West End's only chance to create a truly public square big enough to support the life of the main street. Recognising this, the community worked with local landscape architects and conducted over 30 hours of community consultation speaking with over 330 people who shared with us 1000 ideas for the new park on Thomas St. We recognise that this is the first park on the peninsula in 20 years despite the huge growth in population (from 8000 when our Local Area Plan (2011) was put in place to over 16,000 today).

The approach to date by Council is seen to be working against the best interests of the community in the delivery of the new park. There has been no community consultation, but instead residents received a flyer of the new plan with a week to respond. There appears no basis that the community would not be consulted and any input given such a short window. The community deserves full control over the process and the implementation of the outcome.

We are calling on Council to work with community to deliver the best outcome for the community. We are a highly engaged and resourceful community who have consulted widely and also worked with professionals in the field to develop plans that reflect the vision for the community and best use of the space.

Highlighted community design

The highlighted design elements that are required by the community for their public green space on this site. People want a soft, shaded green space for many different activities and events. This will form a village green in the heart of the space fronting Vulture St.

The community concept will include the following elements:

- A large central multi purpose lawn with big canopy trees.
- A landmark vine covered stage structure in the rear corner for events and gatherings, with access from the lane.
- Meandering and sittable terraces that embrace the space and create niches for gathering, productive gardens and quiet spaces. These terraces can then be used for viewing events and performances.
- An all access toilet with shower/baby changing uses tucked into the edge of the park. Funds from the Boundary Street toilet, which only requires refurbishment, would fund this important facility for the park.
- A curving vine covered arbour to the Vulture Street footpath, providing the square with shade, productive gardens and a beautiful gathering space.
- A meandering perimeter path and a series of grass mounds within the park, which provide safe play for small children and create visual interest.

- A safe, well lit space with clear sightlines

Critique and Response to the Council proposal

The issues include:

- The design does not provide a shady active frontage to Vulture St that is open and accessible. It is fenced as well as blocked by bike racks.
- Multiple pathways cut up the space and do not allow the space to be well utilised. Similarly the pergola and shelter block the open and flexible use of the space. The community wants to maximise the space with a multi-use green.
- There is no lighting specified in the design and the layout has a lack of clear sightlines that are needed for a safe space.
- Access from Army St destroys the memorial mural, which celebrates 3 young people who died. Council has undertaken to retain and protect this mural and this design does not support this agreement.
- The design of the space does not allow it to be used to hold events and performances, which is a key use that is required by the community.
- The artworks are not well placed and there is a lack of transparency about what process has been used to develop ideas for art and who has been consulted on this.
- A toilet facility is needed on this space.
- The name of the project is not meaningful to the community nor is the space a common. It is an urban park.

We request that Council work with the community to create this once in a lifetime urban green space for long-term community benefit. We have undertaken significant voluntary work for the betterment of our community because we care about it so deeply. The community deserves control over the process and implementation of the outcome. This also starts with the name of the project and that it has a name that is meaningful to the community.

Sincerely,



Dr Erin Evans, President,

West End Community Association

Attachment: Thomas St Park West End “Urban Common” Submission