



Greenwich Community Association Inc

PO Box 5057, Greenwich, NSW 2065

For current committee contact details see www.greenwich.org.au

Sports and Recreation Facility

DA 64/2021

Submission

The Greenwich Community Association Inc welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in respect of the DA for the Sports and Recreation Facility (SRF).

This submission is in two parts:-

Part 1 Plans for Golf Course Precinct and adjacent sites

Part 2 Comments on Sports and Recreation Facility DA 64/2021

We hope for an opportunity to discuss the detail of this submission with Councillors and Council officers.

Merri Southwood
President
Greenwich Community Association Inc
southwood@bigpond.com
0412 361331

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Part 1
Plans for Golf Course Precinct and adjacent sites

1. The DA for the SRF should be paused until Council has undertaken a review across two areas:-

1.1 *Shared facilities with the three LGAs in the St Leonards and Crows Nest Precinct*

The St Leonards Crows Nest Precinct is controlled by three Councils – Lane Cove, Willoughby and North Sydney.

Given that the developments in one LGA in the precinct impact the other two LGAs, it is appropriate that all three LGAs undertake an urgent comprehensive investigation of the possibility of creating joint facilities, rather than undertaking expensive projects at individual LGA level.

In its resolution of 16 November 2020 Council included the following action item:-

2b Include in the due-diligence that, investigation of Council building a co-owned Sport and Recreation Precinct with Willoughby Council at Gore Hill Oval and report this option back to Council

The report to Council for the April 2021 meeting included the following response to this item :-

Willoughby Council engaged Montemare to report on their proposed indoor facility at Gore Hill, interestingly the Montemare and Xypher reports concur, that irrespective of both projects proceeding, the Lower North Shore will remain in a five (5) court deficit for basketball and netball . This highlights that neither project will compete or impact on viability. Willoughby Council have indicated that they prefer to deliver Gore Hill independently.

It is noted that there is no copy of the Montemare report to Willoughby Council included in the April 2021 report to Lane Cove Council.

In response to further enquiries from the GCA, Mr Samardzic advised the GCA on 8 July 2021 that:

Thank you, there are no reports / discussion papers subsequent to that report on the basis that Willoughby Council did not wish to proceed on a joint venture basis. Please note, per the supply / demand gap both Council's agreed that there was no risk to acting independently in the sense that Council's aggregated (future) supply would still not meet sporting needs. Lane Cove Council met with Willoughby Council's Director - Community, Culture and Leisure on 10th March 2021 to discuss the matter.

It is surprising that just one meeting was held with Willoughby Council management to discuss a possible alternative to the expensive and dominant structure proposed by Council.

It is understood that there is no timing imperative in terms of the delivery of the SRF.

There is time to ensure that this expensive decision is the appropriate one for the community.

The GCA submits that, given the importance of securing the optimal mix of recreational facilities (in terms of capacity to meet demand and best use of funds) across the entire St Leonards Crows Nest Precinct, Council should first engage in a comprehensive study with Willoughby and North Sydney Councils.

This study should be undertaken in conjunction with the review of recreational facilities and open space across the Lane Cove LGA as outlined in 2.2 below.

2.2 *Comprehensive LGA wide review of capacity to meet open space and recreational facility needs with a view to revision of Council's 2016 Open Space Plan and 2008 Recreation Action Plan*

Council should not undertake the expenditure of up to \$ 52 million on a project that has not been nominated in any of Council's key strategic plans.

The GCA has been unable to locate the nomination of a major indoor sporting facility, on the golf club site or elsewhere, in any published Council plan:-

- Major Projects Strategic Plan 2007-2016
- Open Space Plan 2016-2026
- Recreation Action Plan 2008.

The only reference to such a facility appears to be in an attachment to the Strategic Plan p 46 – *Plan for the Facilities into the Future 2005* – in which Item 16 Multi Purpose Indoor Sports Centre is identified at a cost of **\$8 million**.

The development pattern in the Lane Cove LGA has altered significantly since Council's Open Space Plan was finalised 5 years ago and its Recreation Action Plan was finalised **13 years ago**.

Many residents of Lane Cove are now living in or are impacted by high density residential precincts.

Priorities as to the optimal mix of open space, built facilities and best value per \$ spent may have changed with a developing awareness of the benefits and negatives of high density living.

Furthermore, the community restrictions associated with the COVID pandemic have prompted a re-assessment of recreational priorities in the community, priorities that are likely to endure and warrant consideration in future plans.

Plans for the entire golf course site, including the consequential changes to Stevenson Street, should be paused until a full review of open space and recreational options and priorities has been undertaken across the LGA.

2. **The proposed developments in and adjacent to the Golf Course precinct (including the reconstruction of Stevenson Street) should be assessed together to ensure that their inter-relationship and cumulative impacts are addressed.**

There are 4 elements in the proposed development of the Golf Course Precinct:

- the golf course
- the construction of the SRF
- the access provisions via Stevenson Street
- provision for SUP pathway through golf course site to River Road.

Whilst the SRF is the only element that must be dealt with via the DA process, it is inappropriate to assess the DA until the community has had an opportunity to fully understand the cumulative impacts of the four elements.

Relationship of golf course to SRF

The future of the golf course awaits Council's response to the vision articulated by the Community Panel.

Noting that Council, notwithstanding the Panel's conclusion, has reserved the right to make the final decision as to the future of the golf course, it is not clear, at this point, what will happen to the golf course.

It is only after Council determines the future of the golf course that cumulative impacts of the golf course developments and the SRF may be fully assessed eg if Council elects to proceed with a driving range and putt-putt course, the cumulative effects of light spill and noise from these facilities and from the SRF will be significantly increased over the impacts of the SRF alone.

For these reasons, exhibition of the DA should be paused.

Impact on Stevenson Street

Council has not exhibited design detail or the Statement of Environmental Effects for the roundabout at the intersection of River Road and Northwood Road.

The proposed reconstruction of Stevenson Street as the main access road to the SRF is an integral element of Council's plans for the golf course precinct.

As is the case for the golf course, it is inappropriate to exhibit the DA in advance of release of full details about and assessments of the roundabout and the roads that will run off it.

No detail provided as to proposed bicycle access through the golf course site

It is noted that there are bicycle parking spaces proposed within the SRF.

No details are provided as to the location of SUPs or other access routes to link the site to River Road.

Part 2
Comments on Sports and Recreation Facility DA 64/2021

1. SRF Project cost is unclear but it is a large financial exposure for a small Council

It is noted that the April 2021 report to Council estimated the project cost to be \$42-\$48M.

The DA notification indicates a project cost of \$51,968,392.00.

In two months the project cost estimate has jumped by between \$4 million and \$10 million.

With funding sources identified but not in place and with the uncertainty around the long term impacts of the COVID pandemic, it is inappropriate for Council to be seeking to lock in now on a project design that may cost significantly more than there are funds available to build it.

Furthermore, Council has failed to provide to the community details of the costs associated with the changes to Stevenson Street including property acquisition.

2. Lack of clarity around funding mechanism for SRF

On any measure, \$52 million (plus the undefined costs associated with the Stevenson Street changes) is a significant amount of expenditure by Lane Cove Council.

Council has secured a TCorp loan of \$20 million to part fund this project.

It is understood that a loan of this size will absorb all of Council's borrowing capacity in a challenging financial environment.

The source of the balance of the project funds is unclear.

Most of the funds to come from the 266 Longueville Road agreement with Australian Unity have not been realised and remain subject to conditions contained in an unreleased agreement for lease.

And the Section 7.11 pipeline is now significantly longer after recent NSW government changes to timing of payments.

Given the uncertainty around the long term impacts of COVID and the re-assessment of community priorities, it is concerning that Council is seeking to lock into a project for which funding may not be delivered for some time.

3. **No business case for the project has been made available to the community**

The community has been asking Council for details of the proposed operating model and business case for the SRF since March 2020.

It is important for the community to be fully informed as to Council's proposed management arrangements for the SRF and the capacity of Council to meet the ongoing operational and maintenance costs of the SRF.

4. **Contamination of the Site**

The following statement appears on p 28 of the SEE.

A Contamination Report has been prepared for the site (see **Appendix I**) demonstrates the site is suitable for the proposed development.

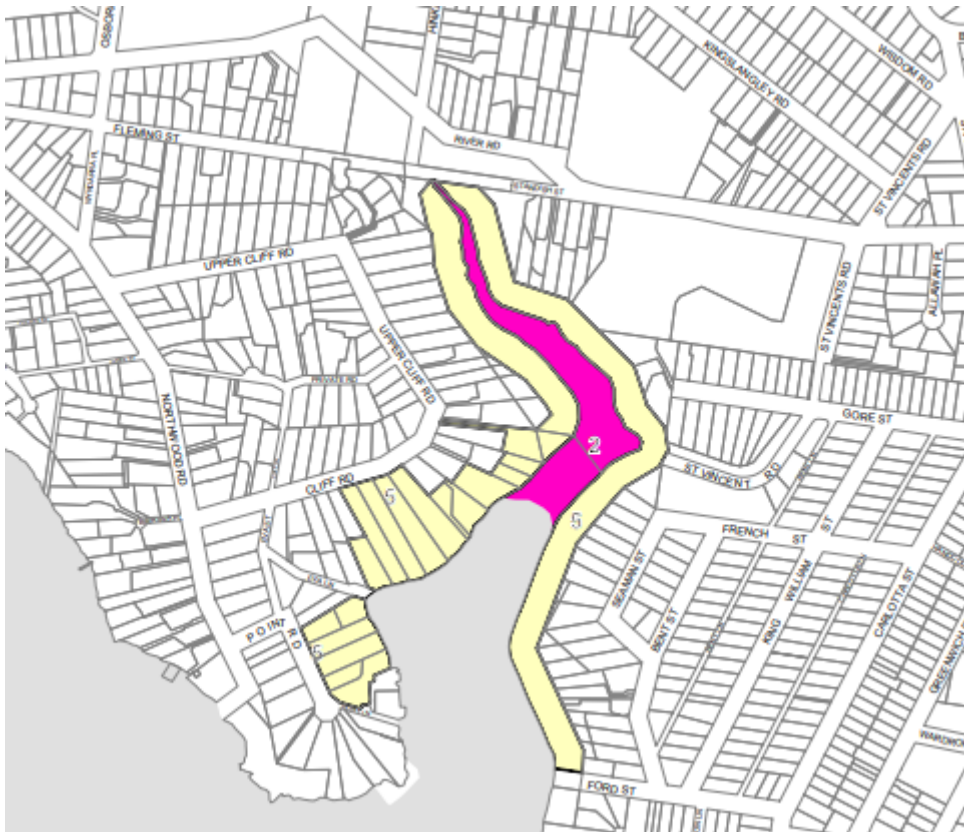
The statement made in the SEE misrepresents the findings and recommendations of the Preliminary Site Investigation (Contamination) Report by Douglas Partners in April 2021.

The Douglas Partners Report recommends a Detailed Site Investigation, a Waste Classification Investigation Program and a Hazardous Building Materials Investigation.

On this basis alone, the current DA should not proceed further until the recommendations of the Douglas Report have been implemented and the results made available to the community.

It is also concerning that the Douglas Report has inaccurately stated on page 4 that *"Published acid sulphate soils (ASS) risk mapping indicates that the site has a low probability of having ASS. There are no mapped areas of ASS occurrence within 3 km of the site"*.

This statement is inaccurate – Gore Creek Reserve across River Road is clearly identified as Acid Sulphate Classes 2 and 5 in its client's own LEP.



[4700-COM-ASS-004-010_2009.swd \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://4700-COM-ASS-004-010_2009.swd.nsw.gov.au)

5. **Incompatibility with RE1 Public Recreation zoning under Lane Cove LEP.**

The objectives of the RE1 Public Recreation zoning are:-

- To enable land to be used for public open space or recreational purposes.
- To provide a range of recreational settings and activities and compatible land uses.
- To protect and enhance the natural environment for recreational purposes.
- To make provision for rights of public access to more foreshore land and to link existing open space areas.

The SRF neither protects nor enhances the natural environment in which it is located.

It does the complete opposite.

It visually dominates its bushland setting.

It will lead to high levels of traffic with resultant noise and light impacts.

It will result in the removal of 84 trees on the golf course site and 43 trees in Stevenson Street.

The activities to be conducted in the SRF will generate noise and light spill until midnight 7 days per week.

6. The TTW Traffic Impact Assessment does not address cumulative traffic volume and movement patterns arising from approved developments in the vicinity of the golf course and the changes to Stevenson Street.

For the reasons outlined below, a new Traffic Impact Assessment should be conducted prior to assessment of this DA.

6.1 *Traffic volume along River Road and at proposed roundabout Impact on Stevenson Street*

It is noted that the TTW report measured vehicle movements on 9 April 2020.

The NSW government had issued lockdown orders on 23 March 2020 and there was minimal economic activity on 9 April, 2021.

[NSW lockdown to be lifted in 90 days as coronavirus cases fall - ABC News](#)

Modelling based on an adjustment of 80% of recorded numbers of vehicles fails to address key issues:-

- the increase is extremely inadequate, given the impact of the lockdown on economic activity at that time
- modelling should include the increased volume of traffic to be generated by the Greenwich Hospital upgrade and the Pathways development
- modelling should include an informed estimate of the numbers of vehicles that will enter or exit from the SRF via the roundabout
- modelling should include people wishing to patronise the hospitality venues in addition to players and spectators.

Given that the residents of Stevenson Street will be exposed to hundreds of vehicle movements (including large buses) up and down the road from 6 am to midnight, it is important for a determining authority to have an accurate estimate of future vehicle numbers to reach a determination.

6.2 *Parking inadequate*

Calculations around parking space adequacy appear to assume rapid changeovers after conclusion of games. Many visitors to the SRF will not leave immediately after a game but will remain in the café/restaurant.

The congestion on a Saturday morning at the netball courts at Small Street, Willoughby is a clear example of the impacts of the failure of participants and spectators to leave in their vehicles immediately after a game.