



WHITSUNDAY
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

Caring for the future is in our nature

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Mr. Jonathan Cutting,
Coordinator Engagement and Place
Whitsunday Regional Council

30 November 2023

Email: info@wrc.qld.gov.au

RE: GALBRAITH PARK LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN SURVEY – 6 Nov – 4 Dec 2023

Whitsunday Conservation Council (WCC) would like to thank the Council for meeting with us and other interested groups on site to discuss the library proposal and the development of a Land Management Plan for Galbraith Park.

Since no detailed drawings for the proposed development were presented to the community, we hope that Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC) will provide more detailed plans for the community to comment on during the consultation process.

Without knowing the exact location and design of the building, or the additional car parking requirements; neither the community or WCC is in a good position to comment in a fully informed manner on the potential impacts of the proposal on the existing values and uses of the parkland.

It seems that the plan for the management of Galbraith Park has only been written because it is needed in order to secure a grant and a site for the future library, in order to save money incurred on leasing sites for the existing library and service centre.

This may be good for rate-payers' pockets, but it comes at the cost of losing 1500 square metres of precious parkland at a time when rapid, high density urban expansion makes it more important than ever.

This situation has arisen because of a failure on the part of WRC to plan ahead for sites for these amenities to service the growing community in Cannon Valley.

We note that the sell-off of a number of Council-owned 'postage stamp' urban parks in recent years means that we have lost the opportunity to consider other Council-owned sites for the library which might have had less impact on available greenspace.

The assertion that this park requires 'activation' is not backed up by any evidence, as no study has been undertaken. Before undertaking to excise 1500 square metres of this parkland for buildings, Council needs to document the value of the park to the community as it is, and develop a management plan for the Park that values and protects the following:

- the existing public use patterns and user values and how they will be affected: playground equipment, picnic area, community garden, Landcare Group tree plantings/ revegetation maintenance/ seed collecting, bird watchers, walkers, runners, cricket nets, volleyball, dog walking area. This park is already 'activated' even without facilities like effective shade over seats and BBQs, and public toilets.
- the valuable environmental services it provides i.e. biodiversity, habitat, connectivity, water quality protection, urban cooling
- the fitness and mental health benefits that the existing greenspace provides to residents
- present and projected impacts from increased flooding due to increased stormwater flows from upstream developments channeling stormwater into the urban creeks, and how they can be mitigated/ managed
- the large investment of time, money, and effort that the community has put into restoring the creeks in this park: this is a level of commitment to a public parkland that should be better appreciated by Council and respected
- the existing and restored riparian corridors and the potential for connectivity to other reserves to form wildlife movement corridors as suburbia expands; **this is a now or never moment for identifying and protecting wildlife corridors in Cannon Valley**

WCC understands the requirement to convert the library/office building footprint to freehold tenure will removal of approximately 1500m² area from the existing parkland/open space.

We would like to reiterate that it is difficult to comment fully on the impact of the library building until we see the actual building design and location, and the size/position of the carpark and access road which is not included in the quoted area. As such, our further comments are subject to presentation of the final design and that such design maintains the integrity of the Galbraith Park Reserve as primarily open green space continuing to provide recreational and environmental benefits for all.

If this plan progresses then WCC encourages WRC to position the building and carpark to minimize its footprint and impact on the greenspace, and existing trees and community garden.

As such, WCC strongly supports the concept proposed by Cr. Baumann that the proposed building should be set into the slope, as close to Galbraith Park Drive as possible to minimize paved areas, and with the carparking sited underneath it on the lower area nearest to Galbraith Park Drive.

Permeable pavements should be used in the car park to maximize possible water infiltration (e.g. the entrance carpark to the Mackay Botanic Gardens). The complex should be designed to complement the surrounding areas and not visually dominate the site or unnecessarily block sightlines.

The building design should include capture and storage of rain run-off from the building into storage tanks for use in the community gardens/parklands in the dry season in order to not add to the existing problems with stormwater damage to the neighbouring creeks.

WCC strongly supports Landcare's proposal that WRC permanently add adjoining parkland along Galbraith Creek to the existing Parkland to compensate for the area lost to these structures.

Adding the land parcel 55HR99 which is to the north of 901 SP173637, which is largely uncleared and covers the opposite bank of the northern arm of the creek, would also increase the connectivity of the revegetated areas.

This block of uncleared land appears to be already informally incorporated into Galbraith Park, as part of it cuts through the existing park just near to the cricket nets and some of the Landcare group's revegetation has already taken place on this block of land along both of the creek banks. It has eucalypt forest with some good habitat trees and with the addition of some walking trails, it offers great potential for recreational and environmental education activities.

If current and future population growth necessitates a library of this size on the Galbraith Park site, then the Park usage will be significant enough for there to be a need for policing of activities such walking dogs off-leash.

A library on this site with outdoor classroom activities operating in the park as proposed by WRC, would require off leash dog walking to be limited to a controlled area, for the safety of the participants. Also, this will improve the value of the riparian plantings as wildlife habitat/ corridors for ground-dwelling species of birds and animals which are vulnerable to dog disturbance/ attacks.

As suggested by Landcare, the grassy centre of 15SP18096, which floods every year now, may offer an opportunity to construct a seasonal wetland to increase water infiltration and improve the water quality flowing out into Pioneer Bay and the GBRMP. This would be in keeping with WRC's obligations as a Reef Guardian Council.

WCC looks forward to seeing more detailed designs and information as the consultation process for this project continues and that WRC not only takes into account the values and expectations of the community but acts on them as plans are finalised.

Sincerely,



Jacquie Sheils
President

