

# Hobart City Council

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## Sandy Bay Rivulet Linear Park Review of Community Feedback

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Prepared for the Hobart City Council

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## Executive Summary

This report provides a review of community feedback on the *Sandy Bay Rivulet Linear Park Feasibility Study - Draft Report* (August 2006), as well as drawing on community consultation from other relevant documents and sources.

The linear park study investigated the feasibility of developing a linear park along Sandy Bay Rivulet extending from the Waterworks Reserve to Marieville Esplanade and the River Derwent. The report found that such a concept was feasible from the Waterworks Reserve to Fitzroy Gardens; however, downstream of Fitzroy Gardens it was not considered feasible because of the constraints imposed by existing private property, public safety concerns and the likely high cost. Instead it recommended the creation of a recreational street trail linking Fitzroy Gardens to Marieville Esplanade as an alternative.

During the development of the feasibility study, community feedback to the linear park concept was sought through consultation with selected landowners and community groups, Council staff and relevant agencies. This feedback was incorporated into the draft report. The draft report was also put on public display and advertised in the local media and on Council's website. Some 70 submissions were received.

Through an examination of the submissions received a number of themes emerged. The themes were (in order of how many respondents made comments related to that theme):

- o Support for the linear park concept and its recreational use opportunities;
- o Seeking a greater emphasis on ecological values/wildlife corridor;
- o Concerns over choice of routes access and parking;
- o Concerns over shared path with cyclists and dog owners;
- o Crime, privacy and/or security concerns;
- o Seeking more interpretation of environmental and historical values; and
- o Noise/visual impact.

To progress the linear park concept for Sandy Bay Rivulet, based on the community feedback received, this report recommends that the Council:

- a) Reaffirm the recommendation outlined in the feasibility study that a linear path from Waterworks Reserve to Fitzroy Gardens be adopted.
- b) Confirm the Parliament Street Reserve to be the eastern endpoint for a linear park following the course of the rivulet from Waterworks Reserve.
- c) Develop master plans with this report and the linear park feasibility study providing the basis for their development.
- d) Consider the detailed siting, design, infrastructure and associated elements of each section of the proposed linear park within the master plans. This should be timed in advance of project implementation and involve community consultation.
- e) Promote the linear park concept as a long-term project.
- f) Continue to work with community groups such as the FoSBR and WVG.
- g) Pursue the purchase of strategically important land parcels in a co-ordinated way to support the linear park concept.

# 1 Introduction

The Hobart City Council is examining the feasibility of developing a linear park along the course of the Sandy Bay Rivulet in Hobart. It commissioned a study to be undertaken by Inspiring Place Pty Ltd during 2006.

The Inspiring Place study investigated the feasibility of developing a linear park along Sandy Bay Rivulet extending from the Waterworks Reserve to Marieville Esplanade and the River Derwent. A number of options, constraints and alternative routes were considered as part of the study. Community feedback to the linear park concept was sought through consultation with selected landowners and community groups, Council staff and relevant agencies. This feedback was incorporated into the draft report.

A draft report was prepared entitled, *Sandy Bay Rivulet Linear Park Feasibility Study* (August 2006). This report found that such a concept was feasible from the Waterworks to Fitzroy Gardens; however, downstream of Fitzroy Gardens it was not considered feasible because of the constraints imposed by existing private property, public safety concerns and the likely high cost. Instead it recommended the creation of a recreational street trail linking Fitzroy Gardens to Marieville Esplanade as an alternative.

The draft report was put on public display by the Council from 13 March - 20 April 2007. Property owners along the Rivulet and adjacent to access points were advised in writing and asked to provide feedback, public notices were placed in *The Mercury* and the Council's website also provided access to the report. In all, approximately 70 submissions were received, either using a feedback form, by email or by written submission.

## 1.1 Scope of Work

The Council commissioned John Wadsley in May 2007 to undertake a review of the community feedback received. The scope of work involved the following tasks:

- Undertake a detailed review of the Feasibility Study, all submissions, media comment and internal Council papers;
- Review community feedback for other planning documents relating to the Rivulet where community consultation was undertaken (such as the Sandy Bay Rivulet Catchment Management Plan and Waterworks Valley Management Plan);
- Undertake a site visit of the study area with Council personnel;
- Assess all submissions and prepare a summary of the responses under common themes, which link back to the Study and possibly other criteria determined with the Council;
- Meet with Council officers from the Parks and Recreation, Bushland and Reserves Units and Cultural Heritage Planning to discuss the preliminary findings; and
- Prepare a report based on the above, including recommendations for further action.

## 1.2 Limitations

This review did not involve direct contact with any other individuals or organisations that made submissions. Therefore it has relied solely on the written comments received by the Council, as well as advice and comment provided by Council staff.

## 2 Background

The concept of developing linear parks and/or linear pedestrian/cycle routes has been generally supported by local communities in and around Hobart in the past. These parks are primarily developed to provide recreational opportunities, but can also improve environmental management outcomes through weed control and better stormwater management. An example of one which has been developed successfully and, in turn, has become highly valued by local communities is the New Town Rivulet Linear Park.

However, there is often a degree of opposition to such concepts, generally on the basis of a perceived increase in property crime and/or damage, the intrusion or overlooking into private yards, and the visual impact.

### 2.1 Previous Studies

The following studies were reviewed to assess what, if any, community opinion was considered that may be relevant to the Inspiring Place Study:

- *City of Hobart Open Space and Landscape Strategy* (Hepper, Marriott & de Gryse, 1994)
- *A Thematic History of Sandy Bay, Sandy Bay Heritage Review* (Terry, 1998)
- *Waterworks Valley Management Plan* (SKM, 1999)
- *Sandy Bay Rivulet Catchment Management Plan* (Leggett, 2002)

The *City of Hobart Open Space and Landscape Strategy* clearly saw the establishment of linear parks as a major opportunity for Hobart and with regard to Sandy Bay Rivulet, identified extension of reserves along its upper section to improve natural values and provide for future recreational uses. It recommended that the community be actively involved in planning for open spaces.

The *Thematic History* notes recreation uses near Sandy Bay Rivulet were popular, with the Marieville Beach and its environs recommended to be purchased for use as “a place of public amusement and recreation” as far back as 1826. The *Cyclopedia of Tasmania*, in 1900, noted that walks along Waterworks Road were particularly popular on weekends.

The *Waterworks Valley Management Plan* noted that the local community in the study area had a high awareness of the natural environment, exemplified by the successful local Bushcare program. As part of the project, a public meeting was held and 54 survey forms distributed to landowners and members of the Landcare Group to ascertain their views (there were 18 responses). A lack of access to the Rivulet and its degraded state were highlighted as concerns, and a walking track to link with Fitzroy Gardens was seen as an opportunity.

The *Sandy Bay Catchment Management Plan* identified a range of community values that were expressed through a survey conducted as part of the project. 120 households along the Rivulet were surveyed, with an excellent 72% response rate. When asked what do they most value about the Rivulet, the results were: 42% - aesthetics; 40% - flora and fauna; 9% - recreation/play; 6% - history and culture. The major priorities identified in terms of management of the Rivulet were weed control, routine inspections, flood control and water quality.

## 2.2 Council Reports

In a report to the Council dated 11 July 2005 regarding the proposed linear park, it was noted that "... *The increasing popularity of the Waterworks Valley area and Sandy Bay Rivulet and the ability to provide recreational access along the banks of the rivulet would result in positive social outcomes for those who utilise the area.*"

This report also noted that while there has been interest in the development of a linear park along the upper sections of the rivulet for some years, community interest in such a development along the lower sections had grown considerably over the past year, culminating in the formation of the Friends of Sandy Bay Rivulet group. The report did note that any development in the lower sections would affect a number of private properties and "... *generate considerable community interest*".

A further report dated 5 February 2007 considered the draft Study. It noted the keen support of the Waterworks Valley Landcare Group and the Friends of Sandy Bay Rivulet for the rivulet's development.

The report recommended placing the Study on public display, but that in light of other funding priorities, the draft Study should be considered as a long-term planning document and that the community should understand that it would be a long term project.



Figure 1: The Rivulet adjacent to Parliament Street Reserve - an area now cleared of weeds and replanted with native species

## 3 Community Feedback on the Feasibility Study

### 3.1 Public Consultation Methodology

To gain community feedback on the draft Study, the Council undertook the following:

- The draft report and plans of the proposed track network and key issues were put on public display from 13 March - 20 April 2007;
- Property owners along the Rivulet and those adjacent to access points were advised in writing and asked to provide feedback;
- Letters were sent to the Friends of Sandy Bay Rivulet (FoSBR) and Waterworks Valley Landcare (WVL) groups seeking their direct feedback;
- Public notices were placed in *The Mercury* over two weeks;
- Signs were erected publicising the draft study in three locations - the Waterworks Reserve, Fitzroy Gardens and Marieville Esplanade;
- The Council's website also provided access to the report; and
- Council staff from various divisions were also advised and asked to respond.

In all, approximately 70 submissions were received, either using a feedback form, by email or by written submission.

### 3.2 Media Comment

Media comment was limited. There was local reporting (*The Mercury*, 19 February 2007 and 27 February 2007) of consideration of the Draft Inspiring Place Report by the Council and the upcoming public display. This noted that the project was envisaged as a long term project for the Council given other projects that were planned or underway.

A feature article by *The Mercury's* Don Knowler (31 March 2007) supported the concept of a linear park, particularly if it was rehabilitated with native plants, and asked that local property owners not succumb to the 'NIMBY' principle and reject it due to self interest.

Following the public display period, a number of residents were reported (*The Mercury*, 17 April 2007) as opposing the proposal to link the linear park through Fitzroy Gardens, especially the construction of a shared path. Residents suggested that the path would "create a scar".

### 3.3 Community Group Feedback

A number of submissions were prepared by members of the FoSBR group or addressed similar themes to the group's vision for the rivulet. There were also a number of submissions regarding the proposed pedestrian-cycle path through Fitzroy Gardens which were part of a group response to the proposal. There was no formal response from the WVL group, though they had been involved in the development of the study itself.

The level of interest shown by these groups suggests that community feeling on some topics is relatively high. However, given the conceptual nature of the Study, further consultation may be required as part of any future detailed planning design process.



### 3.4 Main Themes

Through an examination of all the written submissions received it is possible to identify a number of themes which can be used to group the responses received. These themes and an analysis of the associated community feedback are described in Table 1.

It should be noted that the number of responses tallied for each key theme do not directly correlate with the total number of responses as some people commented on a range of themes.



Figure 2: Fitzroy Gardens - there were many representations against a bike path being constructed through this area

Table 1: Main Themes identified through Community Submissions<sup>1</sup>

No.	THEME	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS MADE	RESPONSE
1.	SUPPORT FOR LINEAR PARK CONCEPT AND RECREATIONAL USE OPPORTUNITIES	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many respondents supported the general concept, and while some wanted a fully contiguous pathway along the rivulet, others were happy with a mix of rivulet paths and roadway routes.</li> <li>A number of people acknowledged the problems of developing a linear park in the lower section from Fitzroy Gardens to Marieville Esplanade. Some respondents saw the linear park as discrete sections to be dealt with separately, while others wanted the rivulet to be managed as a whole.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reaffirm recommendations as currently stated in the draft feasibility study for the upper and lower sections of the Rivulet, subject to consideration at detailed planning stages.</li> <li>2) Undertake detailed master planning for the linear park prior to implementation.</li> <li>3) Pursue purchase of strategically important properties in the upper section as they become available.</li> </ol>
2.	CONCERNS OVER CHOICE OF ROUTES ACCESS AND PARKING	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns over lack of parking at suggested access points such as Overell St and Romilly St, as well as how proposed path would impact on normal parking outside residences in other streets.</li> <li>Concerns over proposed crossing point at Antill St/Fitzroy Place.</li> <li>Opposition to proposed shared path through Fitzroy Gardens.</li> <li>Many people concerned at deviation of route from Fitzroy Gardens to Byron St, rather than use direct route down Fitzroy Place to Regent St.</li> <li>Some residents/landowners at Greenlands Avenue were opposed to allowing a track near the units.</li> <li>Quayle Street was acknowledged as a good alternative route.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Detailed options regarding the route for a street trail, pedestrian crossings, parking issues and road safety concerns will be considered as part of the Master Plan stage.</li> <li>2) The proposed shared path concept through lower Fitzroy Gardens, the crossing point at Antill Street and the Greenlands Avenue to Parliament St Reserve link are not considered feasible. An alternative route will be defined as planning progresses in the Master Plan stage.</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> The number of responses tallied for each key theme does not directly correlate with the total number of responses as some people commented on multiple themes.

No.	THEME	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS MADE	RESPONSE
3.	SEEKING A GREATER EMPHASIS ON ECOLOGICAL VALUES/ WILDLIFE CORRIDOR	15	<p>The FoSBR group has a strong position on returning the entire rivulet to a more natural landscape offering ecological benefits and a wildlife corridor from “the mountain to the river”, a concept noted by some respondents.</p> <p>There was some support for extending the linear park to the source of the rivulet at Halls Saddle and offering a complete link between Mt Wellington and the River Derwent.</p> <p>Some people raised concerns that the report focussed on the upper section and did not tackle the issues in the lower section in more detail.</p> <p>Suggestions made to acquire more land in lower section to create riparian corridor.</p> <p>Some people suggested that the Planning Scheme be amended to protect the entire rivulet.</p> <p>A number of submissions referred to weed removal (including willows) as a priority, albeit that some saw this vegetation as providing visual protection.</p> <p>Some people objected to the recreational use focus of the report and noted that the rivulet needs to be valued for itself not because it has to have a ‘use’.</p>	<p>1) There are a range of plans and programs that focus on ecological values and rehabilitation. The Council and community groups are already working in the upper section to restore environmental values.</p> <p>2) The Pipeline Track (Waterworks to Fern Tree) currently provides the link to Wellington Park.</p> <p>3) Weighing up the social and environmental impacts and the economic costs, attempting to construct a path in the lower section does not warrant pursuing this option.</p> <p>4) A new planning scheme is currently underway with provisions for greater protection of riparian values.</p> <p>5) A program of weed removal and revegetation has been underway on Council owned property along the rivulet, with the active involvement of FoSBR and WVL. Further rehabilitation of the rivulet will be programmed as part of the Master Planning process.</p> <p>6) The purpose of the project was to consider the feasibility of Sandy Bay linear park to provide recreational access along the rivulet.</p>

No.	THEME	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS MADE	RESPONSE
4.	CONCERNS OVER SHARED PATH WITH CYCLISTS AND DOG OWNERS	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some cyclists were obviously in favour of shared path concept (5 people registered their support for a cycle path); however other people were concerned at potential dangers, especially where children and older people used the area. At least 9 submissions were highly critical of the proposed shared path through Fitzroy Gardens.</li> <li>• The design of any track was raised as an issue to cater for cyclists and dog owners, ie poo bag dispensers.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) It is acknowledged that the proposed shared path concept through lower Fitzroy Gardens is not popular. An alternative route will be defined as planning progresses in the Master Plan stage.</li> <li>2) The proposed route from Lynton Avenue through to Parliament Street is considered to be feasible with the addition of design features to slow cyclists.</li> <li>3) Infrastructure issues such as dog waste bins will be considered in the Master Plans.</li> </ol>
5.	CRIME, PRIVACY AND/OR SECURITY CONCERNS	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some residents were concerned about track users overlooking into backyards, or the track passing too close to houses and encouraging trespassers.</li> <li>• People suggested good lighting would be needed to stop anti-social behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Issues of security will be addressed in the Master Planning phase for the linear park.</li> </ol>
6.	SEEKING MORE INTERPRETATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL VALUES	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The link with Charles Darwin and his walk up Mount Wellington via the rivulet was raised a number of times as a key element in future interpretation of the linear park.</li> <li>• Some people saw more opportunities for greater interpretation of historical features such as the Sandy Bay Road bridge.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Development of an interpretation plan will be progressed within the Master Planning phase.</li> </ol>

No.	THEME	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS MADE	RESPONSE
7.	NOISE/VISUAL IMPACT	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some comments focussed on a desire to restrict removal of vegetation based on its perceived value as a visual <u>and</u> noise barrier (albeit that vegetation can offer little if any noise abatement). This was a focus of concern where the rivulet passes the Southern Outlet.</li> </ul>	1) The visual amenity and privacy of neighbours will be considered along with landscaping and revegetation of the linear park route during the Master Planning stage.

## 4 Discussion

Of the 70 submissions received, none of them categorically stated they were opposed to the general concept of a linear park. In fact, some 29 responses clearly indicated support for the linear park concept.

There appeared to be general acceptance of the feasibility of the linear park concept in the upper sections of the Rivulet to the Parliament Street Reserve, while opinion was divided on the lower section. The latter is clearly the most difficult for the Council to address in terms of feasibility, property acquisition, construction costs and the impact on neighbouring residents.

Some people were concerned that the feasibility study focussed too heavily on the recreational opportunities as the basis of the linear park concept; however this was the defined scope of the project.

The FoSBR submission outlined their vision of a rehabilitated linear park based on ecological values from “mountain to river”. It is noted that for some time a program of weed removal and revegetation has been underway along the rivulet on Council owned property. Further rehabilitation of the rivulet will be detailed in the master plans.

The issues of routes and impact on car parking and access was an important concern for many respondents. While many saw the reasons for diverting the path away from the rivulet at key points, there were genuine concerns for some of the selected road crossing points, such as Antill Street/Fitzroy Place and the proposal to use Greenlands Avenue and the adjacent laneway.



Figure 3: The proposed crossing point at Antill Street and Fitzroy Place - a number of comments indicated that this was a dangerous location and should not be used as part of the walking/bicycle route

Some submissions did indicate there was opposition to particular issues, such as the proposed shared pedestrian/cycle path through Fitzroy Gardens.

Developing a shared path concept was of concern to some people, while for others it was an obvious benefit arising from the study. For Council, the issue will be to determine where a shared path can work effectively.

Concerns over perceived crime and property impacts were not as significant as sometimes encountered. The matter of noise and visual impact appears to be one of assessing individual amenity. Consultation with concerned residents regarding these issues in the development of the master plans would be beneficial.

There are opportunities for Council to provide interpretation experiences along the rivulet, particularly with the Charles Darwin connection and also perhaps how a natural stream can be protected in an urban environment.



Figure 4: Some areas of the Rivulet may pose problems in terms of property impact and construction

## 5 Master Planning

It is clear from the assessment of community feedback that, while the general concept of a linear park is supported, how the concept is actually defined on the ground and which sections of the Rivulet can be feasibly incorporated into a recreational trail needs to be considered in more detail.

Results of community consultation supports the feasibility study recommendation to develop master plans to resolve the wide range of issues, opportunities and constraints identified during the project.

The following issues should be included in the development of the master plans:

- The Parliament Street Reserve should be the “bookend” or endpoint for a continuous linear park originating at the Waterworks Reserve. This would enable the Parliament Street Reserve to be further developed to complement the linear park as well as offering possible street connections for a linear park in the lower section.
- Planning for the upper section of the Rivulet (i.e. Romilly Street to Waterworks Reserve) should proceed as a high priority, as the Council already owns a number of key properties that can be integrated into the linear park (notwithstanding the need to acquire private property near Kooyong Glen).
- More detailed planning should be undertaken for any proposed street-based routes and crossing points in the lower section of the linear park from Parliament Street Reserve.
- Master planning should be accompanied with further community consultation and public display of the detailed plans.



## 6 Recommendations

To progress the linear park concept for Sandy Bay Rivulet, based on the community feedback received, this report recommends that the Council:

- a) Reaffirm the recommendation outlined in the feasibility study that a linear path from Waterworks Reserve to Fitzroy Gardens be adopted.
- b) Confirm the Parliament Street Reserve to be the eastern endpoint for a linear park following the course of the rivulet from Waterworks Reserve.
- c) Develop master plans with this report and the linear park feasibility study providing the basis for their development.
- d) Consider the detailed siting, design, infrastructure and associated elements of each section of the proposed linear park within the master plans. This should be timed in advance of project implementation and involve community consultation.
- e) Promote the linear park concept as a long-term project.
- f) Continue to work with community groups such as the FoSBR and WVG.
- g) Pursue the purchase of strategically important land parcels in a co-ordinated way to support the linear park concept.



Figure 5: The Waterworks Reserve - the western "bookend" for the linear park concept