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1. STONNINGTON INDOOR STADIUM PROPOSAL

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Recommend a site for a new four-court indoor stadium within Stonnington to be used primarily for netball and basketball; and
2. To seek endorsement to undertake a detailed feasibility study into the construction, management and operation of the stadium on the proposed site.

BACKGROUND

Recreation Strategy

As part of the community consultation undertaken in the development of the Stonnington Recreation Strategy (2014), a strong need was expressed by residents, the Prahran Netball Association (PNA) and other sporting clubs for additional indoor court provision within Stonnington.

Long established sports that have traditionally catered for male participation, such as Australian Rules football and cricket, have been extremely popular within Stonnington and dominate the use of Council's sporting facilities. Sports that have long provided greater participation opportunities for females such as netball continue to be popular within Stonnington despite the lack of facilities. Based on state based participation levels and the current level of provision, Stonnington has approximately:

- 1 indoor court per 5,190 residents who play netball, basketball and indoor soccer,
- 1 outdoor playing field per 724 residents who play football (AFL & soccer & rugby); and
- 1 outdoor court/green per 255 residents who play tennis or lawn bowls.

There is currently only one purpose-built indoor sports stadium within the municipality. This is not sufficient to cater for the high level of demand placed on it by clubs, schools and community organisations. The need for additional indoor courts for netball and basketball has been identified as a priority area for Council.

The adopted Recreation Strategy includes a commitment to:

- Conduct a feasibility study into the construction of a new multi-court indoor stadium to service the needs of indoor court users; and
- Subject to the feasibility study, construct a new multipurpose indoor stadium to service the needs of netball and other indoor sports.

Needs Analysis

In March 2015, Officers commissioned an evidence-based study into the demand for additional multi-court indoor stadiums in Stonnington. The objectives of the project included:

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- Identify current and future trends and participation rates of indoor stadium sports (especially netball and basketball);
- Review the existing provision of indoor stadiums and determine if they are adequate to meet the current and future needs of stadium users;
- Analyse the information gathered to determine the current and future needs of indoor stadium sports and make recommendations within the feasibility study;
- Provide a strong evidence base for Council to make an informed decision pertaining to multi-court indoor stadium(s) provision; and
- Respond to the Prahran Netball Association's request for additional indoor netball courts in Stonnington by confirming needs and providing short, medium and long-term solutions.

The study identified that:

- Based on State and national participation rates, the demographic profile of the municipality and findings of consultation, Stonnington clearly has a shortage of indoor court space and whilst there are a number of stadiums located in adjoining municipalities, most are at capacity.
- It is generally accepted that viable netball and basketball competitions require, as a minimum, a four-court facility. Smaller and single court facilities are more suited as training venues.
- Participation in most indoor sports is lower in Stonnington than would be expected based on State participation rates, primarily due to the lack of facilities.
- There is an increasing transition toward indoor sports courts as they have greater programming options in all weather conditions and provide a more suitable flooring surface (i.e. sprung timber floor compared to asphalt to better protect the players).
- An increasing proportion of netball competition is being played indoors, however approximately 50% of netball is still played outdoors (especially social and junior competitions).
- Across the State, future growth in all indoor sports is currently restricted due to lack of facilities. This is especially evident in Stonnington and other neighbouring inner city municipalities.
- An analysis of potential participation in all indoor court sports showed that Stonnington would require an estimated eight courts to meet projected demand (four additional courts).

The needs analysis also identified that more than half of the 795 Stonnington based registered players in PNA competitions lived in Malvern, Malvern East and Glen Iris. Netball Victoria data also shows that there are more than 2,000 registered netball players residing in these three suburbs playing in various competitions and 2,749 Stonnington residents in total playing in netball competitions including:

- Waverley District Netball Association (Ashwood) – 1,110 participants from Stonnington
- Caulfield & District Netball Association (Murrumbeena) – 160
- Richmond Netball Association – 101
- Parkville Netball Association – 88

In the absence of a suitable competition venue, there are no basketball competitions in Stonnington. Basketball Victoria data shows that there are 2,048 Stonnington residents registered to play in associations elsewhere in Melbourne. The competitions with the largest

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number of Stonnington residents are Waverley (Chadstone - 561), Hawthorn (753) and Melbourne East (Nunawading – 205).

Site Investigation

In conjunction with the needs analysis, officers conducted a preliminary site assessment of all government owned land (local, state and Crown land) for a four-court stadium with basic support features, using the following assessment criteria:

- ✓ A building site measuring 5,000 square meters with additional space for car parking.
- ✓ Accessibility – on a main road and easily accessible by public transport
- ✓ Amenity – the amenity of the nearby residents or the environment would not be compromised
- ✓ Open space – the development would not result in the loss of open space
- ✓ Displacement – current sporting users would not be displaced
- ✓ PNA catchment – within PNA catchment area

Officers identified 49 Council-owned sites as well as two other sites within the municipality that could meet some of the required criteria. No site was able to meet all of the criteria.

The results of the preliminary assessment of all sites was presented to Councillors on 31 August 2015. Councillors considered that no site was able to meet all the selection criteria and recommended that officers further explore opportunities on private land and encumbered open space. Consistent with the Strategies for Creating Open Space policy and desire to increase the amount of open space available to the community, Councillors agreed to rule out the use of open space and sportsgrounds from further consideration.

An extensive investigation of all privately owned land and opportunities to use existing encumbered open space was subsequently undertaken and has resulted in the current project proposal and recommendation to complete a detailed feasibility on the preferred location.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Site / Preferred Location

The proposed site for a four-court stadium is the north-western corner of Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park on land owned by Council. The site is currently occupied by the Chadstone Bowls Club and features two lawn bowls greens and a large clubhouse on the southern side of one of the greens. The site slopes down from north-east to south-west where the current vehicle cross over point for entry to the park from Chadstone Road is located.

The benefits of this location as a site for a four court stadium are:

- Proposed building footprint fits within encumbered open space area resulting in no net loss of open space, consistent with Council's Strategies for Creating Open Space.
- Sufficient space for four indoor courts and a car park for up to 147 vehicles in addition to the 96 parking spaces already within the reserve.
- Limited residential impact with residential properties on only the northern side of the proposed site and separated from any building by an existing path through an open space corridor that includes a number of significant trees. It is acknowledged that the

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design of any stadium on this site would need to include measures to reduce any noise emanating from the indoor courts.

- Surrounded by a local retail shopping strip to the west on the opposite side of Chadstone Road, a large area of open space to the south that is used for organised sport (cricket and lacrosse) and a 7-court tennis facility to the east.
- Close proximity to three existing outdoor netball courts at Malvern Valley Primary School to effectively create a seven court facility for netball. Council currently has a formal joint use agreement with the Minister for Education and the school for the use of these courts. The courts are not lit for night time use and remain underutilised for formal use outside of school hours. Access to the outdoor courts enables Council to deliver on the PNA's request.
- The accessibility of the site on Chadstone Road that provides direct connections to Dandenong Road and Waverley Road and is serviced by an existing bus route.
- Based on its proximity to Chadstone Shopping Centre, the site is expected to be a highly desirable competition venue that maximises secondary spending and economic impact to Stonnington.
- Significant increase in community benefit leveraged from an existing recreation facility with annual visitations expected to increase from less than 20,000 to more than 400,000.
- It is located in the suburb where the largest number of current netball and basketball participants in Stonnington live.

Chadstone Bowls Club

Bowls Australia advises that participation in lawn bowls in Australia has been gradually declining for many years. Statistics show that the number of playing members in Victoria has fallen from 58,169 in 2010 to 42,232 in 2015 representing a decline of more than 27% over the past five years. This trend is evident in Victoria and across metropolitan Melbourne. Victorian statistics also show that 26% of all bowls playing members are aged over 75 years of age and that 63% are aged over 60 years of age. Consistent with this trend, total membership of the Chadstone Bowls Club has fallen from 107 in 2012-13 to 94 in 2015-16. The drop in women members during this time has fallen from 30 to 23.

The current lease of the Percy Treyvaud facility is with the Chadstone Recreation and Civic Club (CRCC) encompassing both bowls greens, the seven tennis courts and the buildings that service both tennis and bowls facilities occupied by the Chadstone Tennis Club and Chadstone Bowls Club respectively. The current lease is in over-hold and can be ended by either the Club or Council giving 30 days' notice of that wish to the other. The membership fees for the Bowls Club and the Tennis Club include membership of CRCC and a financial contribution to CRCC for the upkeep of the facilities.

A decision to nominate the site as the preferred location for a new indoor stadium will disappoint and possibly distress the Chadstone Bowls Club members and will require officers to work with the club to accommodate the needs of its members. This could entail the potential merger, relocation, or disbandment of the club. Alternatively officers may work with individual members of the club to find suitable alternatives depending on their circumstances and preferences.

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Depending on the option the Club and its members wish to pursue it may take a number of years to facilitate the transition and allow works to commence on the indoor stadium. A consultation plan has been prepared and will be used in the event Council agrees to consider this matter. The consultation plan will be presented to Councillors at Council briefing.

Preliminary Concept Plans for the Proposed Site

Two preliminary concept plans have been developed to illustrate what could be achieved on this site as an indoor stadium.

Option 1 includes a basic four-court facility with street frontage and vehicle and pedestrian entrances facing Chadstone Road. The lower ground level includes a car park with 147 car parking spaces. The ground level includes four indoor courts with a single row of seats for spectators adjacent to each, toilet and changeroom facilities, an office, first aid room and multipurpose room.

Option 2 includes a four court facility with extra spectator seating around one court to create a showcourt for feature matches, additional changeroom facilities to service the showcourt, additional off court spaces for tournament administration and an enhanced reception area with café and outdoor seating facilities. The building footprint also integrates the new stadium with the adjacent tennis club pavilion and creates a single entrance for both facilities that faces south and overlooks the sportsgrounds.

Both options have been developed with reference to facility guidelines provided by Netball Victoria and Basketball Victoria. Final design requirements will be determined during consultation with various stakeholders during subsequent stages of this project.

The indicative cost of Option 1 is \$19,366,899 and for Option 2 is \$22,657,953. Both options include \$5,810,000 for the construction of the carpark.

Next Steps

Subject to Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park being confirmed as the preferred location for an indoor stadium, the next stage of the project will be to undertake a detailed feasibility of the proposal that will include:

- Detailed site analysis,
- Traffic and parking assessments;
- Conservation Management Plan;
- Concept plan prepared in consultation with expected users;
- Construction Cost Plan;
- Preparation of a management and operating plan detailing management options and providing advice on the expected usage levels and operating budget;
- Identify any potential funding opportunities;
- Consultation with the Chadstone Bowls Club and its members and development of a transition plan; and
- Options for the future use of Orrong Romanis Recreation Centre in Prahran and home to the current PNA competition.

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Alternatively Council may amend or abandon the proposal at this point.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Through the Recreation Strategy (2014), Council committed to undertaking a feasibility study into the construction of a new multi-court indoor stadium. A crucial decision point has been reached and requires Council confirmation of the proposal to enable the feasibility to be completed.

Importantly, the development of the proposal is also consistent with Council's Strategies for Creating Open Space that identified that Stonnington has the second lowest amount of public open space at 6.7% (20 sqm per person) of any Victorian municipality. With the population increasing, the current average rate of 20 sqm of open space per person is continuing to decline. A key priority of this strategy is to deliver increased public and accessible open space across the municipality.

The Stonnington Indoor Stadium proposal for Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park is consistent with both strategies of Council.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

The indicative cost of the project is between \$19.3 million and \$22.7 million. With the possibility of encountering adverse or contaminated soil conditions, the need for asbestos removal when demolishing existing buildings on site, the noise attenuation treatments that will be required and further design modifications the final project cost could be in the order of \$25 million.

Council has allocated \$7.2 million dollars towards the provision of indoor courts from within the strategic resource plan as follows:

2018/19	\$ 100,000
2019/20	\$2,100,000
2020/21	\$5,000,000

An additional \$4 million has been committed to the project by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. The State Government's Better Indoor Stadiums Funding Program provides an opportunity to apply for a further \$3 million in funding.

On current estimates additional funding therefore of up to \$11 million would need to be found to deliver a project that may cost up to \$25 million. The funding implications would be considered as part of the detailed feasibility study to confirm the project's viability.

LEGAL ADVICE & IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications at this stage.

CONCLUSION

The provision of an indoor stadium for Stonnington sporting clubs, associations and residents has been a long held wish by many within Stonnington and particularly for PNA. Due to the limited amount of open space, cost of land and previous priorities, the opportunity to establish a new multi-court facility for major competitions has been notionally considered too hard.

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In December 2014, Council committed to undertaking a feasibility study into the provision of additional indoor courts to service the needs of netball and other indoor-court sport users. A demand analysis found strong evidence to support the provision of a stadium and recommended that a minimum of four courts be included in that facility.

Having considered an extensive number of potential sites a preferred site has been identified that addresses all but one selection criteria and provides an opportunity to establish a legacy project that has long been considered too difficult. Officers are confident the demand for bowls facilities can be accommodated within surrounding facilities but recognise the opposition likely to be encountered from the Chadstone Bowls Club. The decision to proceed with the feasibility will provide Council with an opportunity to assess the bowls club's position and work toward resolving the club's demands whilst creating a legacy project catering to the needs of the community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATION

This recommendation complies with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Endorse Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park as the preferred site for the proposed Stonnington Indoor Stadium*
- 2. Completes a feasibility study into the proposed development of an indoor stadium at Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park with a minimum of 4 courts and include opportunities to accommodate the Chadstone Bowls Club or its members at alternate locations as part of that study.*