

Mr Robert Esdaile
Engineering Project Manager
North Sydney Council
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22/02/2022



Dear Mr Esdaile,

Re: Holtermann Street Park, Crows Nest

Thank you for your letter (dated 20/12/2021) and for the opportunity to comment on the design concepts for the Holtermann Street Park in Crows Nest. Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) Health Promotion is committed to ensuring the built environment fosters places and spaces that support the health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider community.

NSLHD Health Promotion commends Council and the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for initiating plans to increase the amount of public open space in Crows Nest in response to community feedback on the St Leonards/Crows Nest 2036 Plan.

The undergrounding of the Holtermann Street carpark and each of the three proposed design concepts for the new Holtermann Street Park offer valuable additional green open space, trees, shade, and opportunities for social connection. A well-designed built environment can help reduce health risks and improve health outcomes.¹ Exposure to green space and greenery can reduce stress and increase social cohesion, and when people have access to parks, they are more physically active.^{2,3}

Of the three design concepts, **Option 1 is the preferred concept** as it includes:

- More lawn area, planting area and less hard landscaping area (per m²).
- A more interesting layout and greater opportunity for people to interact with the space.
- Extensive bleacher/wall seating throughout the park for people to rest and connect socially.
- A built shade structure/canopy above the car park entrance structure which will provide important protection from the sun for patrons and staff of the kiosk and encourage people to sit and stay.
- Opportunity for water play and interaction with blue space, which is associated with healthy development in children and improved mental wellbeing.^{4,5}

Recommendation

That Council proceed with Option 1, with the following additions to the design:

- A 40km/hour speed limit is enforced for Holtermann Street, Willoughby Lane and Hospital Lane (currently 50km/hour) surrounding the park, with maintenance of a one-way direction for traffic on Willoughby and Hospital Lanes, and additional signage notifying drivers of high pedestrian activity.

¹ NSW Ministry of Health. (2020). Healthy Built Environment Checklist: A guide for considering health in development policies, plans and proposals. ISBN: 978-1-76081-302-4

² Groenewegen, P., van den Berg, A., Maas, J., Verheij, R. & de Vries, S. (2012). Is a green residential environment better for health? If so, why?. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102(5): 996–1003.

³ Sherer, P. (2005). *The Benefits of Parks: Why America needs more city parks and open space*. San Francisco, USA: The Trust for Public Land.

⁴ Louv, R. (2006). *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our children from nature deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

⁵ Nichols, J.W. (2015). *Blue Mind: The surprising science that shows how being near, in, on, or under water can make you happier, healthier, more connected and better at what you do*. USA: Back Bay Books.

- The proposed built shade structure/canopy above the car park entrance structure is positioned over any seating next to the kiosk and is made from material with a UPF 50+ rating to provide protection from UV radiation.
- Well-placed, mature tree species with large canopies are chosen which provide adequate shade and protection from the sun.
- Child-safe exploration and play areas to promote children's physical activity and development, consistent with the NSW Health First 2000 Days Framework, are included in the design.
- Drinking water fountains and drink bottle re-fill stations are provided to support people to be active in the space.
- Facilities which support dog owners to use the park with their leashed dog, including dog bowls, taps and tie-up points are provided.
- Other facilities which encourage use of the park are provided, including public toilets and barbeque facilities.
- Healthy food and drink options are served at the kiosk as a requirement of the lease.
- Wayfinding is supported with signage for walking and cycling routes and connecting with key destinations.
- Signage is provided to remind people not to smoke or vape, as per the *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000*, and to implement the space as an alcohol-free zone.
- Child-safe public art developed by and in consultation with local community groups and members is included. NSLHD would be happy to assist with the assessment regarding child safe public art.
- Adequate lighting at night for crime prevention and safety is provided.
- Car spaces reserved for electric vehicles and cycling end-of-trip facilities are included in the new underground carpark design.
- Strategies are developed to prevent carpark emissions impacting the Community Health Centre and park users above ground.
- Further consultation is required regarding the impact of the construction process on the Crows Nest Community Centre and the need for noise and dust mitigation. NSLHD request's North Sydney Council's advice regarding the appropriate contact and/or process for NSLHD Child & Family Services to make a separate submission regarding these issues.

NSLHD Health Promotion looks forward to being involved in the ongoing consultation for the Holtermann Street Park development. For any questions regarding this submission, please contact Nicola.Groskops@health.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Groskops

Healthy Built Environments

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