

DRAFT

Future of Elsternwick Park North

Option 5: Eco Precinct, Public Golf Course and Wetland exploration centre (2nd Meeting)

Minutes of meeting held on 01/12/2016 at the Elsternwick Golf Club.

Purpose of meeting:

The purpose of this meeting was to prepare a proposal in pursuance of the initial draft proposal that has resulted from the consultation session that took place on Sunday November 13, 2016. The initial draft proposal meeting was attended by a group of the panel members who supported this option 5 of an improved/expanded wetlands and an eco-golf course. A further meeting was held on December 1st, 2016 at the GC and was attended by the group members and interested members of the Community

Attendees:

1. Joan Bowler
2. Neredan Neill
3. Nelie Houting
4. James Spence
5. Ernest Treagus
6. Iouri Vaisman
7. Greg Dee
8. Ekram Subhi.

Apologies:

1. Gio Fitzpatrick.

The meeting was commenced by Joan Bowler and followed by Iouri Vaisman who summed up the grounds for his support of this option. The discussion from thereon focused on the benefits of this Option 5 to cater for the following diverse community expectations within a sound and realistic commercial viability.

Community Expectations:

- Biodiversity protection, awareness and water management
- Wellbeing for all ages and abilities

- Open space
- Recreation services
- Formal Sports

Critical to the development of Option 5 was the recurrent financial obligation of sustaining the expected services to a level that is satisfactory and sustainable in the long term.

The ensuing discussions have resulted in the following proposal in support of Option 5. Option 5 has replaced option 3 and 4 both these options were rejected as not viable early on the process.

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Proposal in support of Option 5: *Eco Precinct, Public Golf Course and Wetland exploration centre*

Option 5 is intended to cater for the following diverse community expectations within a sound and realistic commercial viability.

- Biodiversity protection, awareness and water management
- Wellbeing for all ages and abilities
- Open space
- Recreation services
- Formal Sports

The recurrent financial obligation of sustaining the expected services to a level that is satisfactory and sustainable in the long term is a challenge. However, the proposal attempts to address this concern in various ways that will be described later in this proposal.

It was noted from the Council presentations that the Golf course generates an income of \$ 114,000 per annum and that the cost of maintaining the course are met by the contractor (estimated at \$ 300,000 per annum). Therefore should the golf course cease to operate the estimated net impact on Council operational budget is around \$ 400,000 per annum. The 17/18 Budget already requires recurrent cuts in the operating budget of just over \$ 1 million. It was concluded by the BCC Financial officer that another \$ 400,000 will not be easily found (Bayside Council presentation at the deliberative panel meeting on 5/11/2016).

Embedded in this proposal is the view that the golf course is a valued income generating asset that can be further upgraded and incorporated into a multi-purpose facility to maximise usage, partnership opportunities and whenever possible, the revenue.

Another essential element of this approach is to deploy the golf course as a vehicle for biodiversity protection, public education & awareness and water management.

Commercial viability:

Taking the above into account, it is envisaged that the golf course be transformed into a green golf course in the sense that maintenance of the Golf course be chemical free. This approach offers several benefits.

- ✓ The presentation of the golf course as a green course coupled with the provision of other recreational & community services such as catering, educational programs, offers a potential for generating income.
- ✓ The course would be attracting keen golfers and would make it more competitive for the operator.
- ✓ The proposed redevelopment of the golf course and the wetlands should improve the recreational educational and environmental value of the site utilizing existing facilities, where possible.
- ✓ The new & improved facilities will be more open (inclusive) to the public including Bayside schools.

It is a logical assumption therefore, that a capital investment in the Elsternwick Park North – Option 5 should attract commercial interest to the extent that either the current GC operator or a competitor will find an innovative niche in operating the eco precinct and the golf course. Several 9 hole golf courses are managed by their Councils successfully; Burnley golf course is one example.

Tourism:

The group has taken note of the Council Tourism Strategy that recognizes the visibility of the Elsternwick park from the Nepean Highway and as a gateway to Glen Ira and City of Port Phillip councils. The economic significance of this can not be ignored. The approach of this option promotes the park as a worldwide highlight of the city of Melbourne tourist attractions depicting the park as an eco-precinct that offers both a formal sporting opportunity and a community engaging educational and recreational hub.

Education, Public engagement:

In their presentation to the Consultation panel in November 2016, Marcus, April and Gio pointed out that the educational and engagement value of Elsternwick Park is in the open landscape itself. They suggested “Complement, do not duplicate the nearby Port Phillip EcoCentre which serves communities around Port Phillip Bay including 17 Bayside schools.

Therefore, this option does not call for complex building structures. The operating hours of the Golf course should aim at allowing access to the Community as well as schools to enjoy excursions and events.

There is a potential for generating income as a result of the (increased) recreational use of the GC by the Community.

Recreation and incidental income:

In recognition of the importance of generating revenue to maintain and keep the park economically sustainable, this Option 5 encourages upgrading the café to provide organic food service, venue for meetings/events and possibly holding educational sessions for school kids and interest groups. It is, however, suggested that the upgrade is not elevated to a complex building that might conflict with the concept intended.

Another source of revenue would result from the golf course timing adjustments. The golf course would be open to the public during certain hours of the day. The golf course would also invite local schools, possibly for a fee, to encourage kids to play golf and to conduct the “eco walks”, “wetland walks”, camping facility etc.

Biodiversity and water management:

Council has called that the consideration of all options shall include the implications for water management and flood mitigation. The expansion of the wetlands and the natural conservation areas will be done in collaboration with Melbourne Water and the Council and should take into account the openness to the public and the utilization of the existing facilities where possible..

The following benefits are included in the option 5:

- By creating an expanded wetland we are hoping to create an immersive, ecologically interesting environment and opportunity for recreation for a wide cross section of the community
- The expanded wetland will assist in the reduction of pollution of water flowing into the bay
- Enhanced opportunity to utilize the water from the wetland to be used for irrigation of the Elsternwick Park

An innovative design could take into account all the aspects listed above.

Sport & recreation

The Option 5 will see the size of the golf course reduced by 15% by area. This area can then be utilised by the wetlands, natural conservation area and the sports group.

This option takes the view that out of 12.4 hectares of golf land - up to 15% of the area can be allocated to the lawns for other formal sports upgrades and/or for any other element of the scheme for which the land can be put to effective use.

This option 5 draft proposal outlines ideas and concepts that might aid further detailed design proposal that will take account of the issues raised in this document.

Major Benefits of proposed Option 5

- ✓ World Class Eco Precinct and Green Golf Course
- ✓ Financially viable option with minimal need for subsidies that combines the resources to provide financial sustainability
- ✓ Eco precinct that provides new opportunities for community participation, education, training, social events and catering

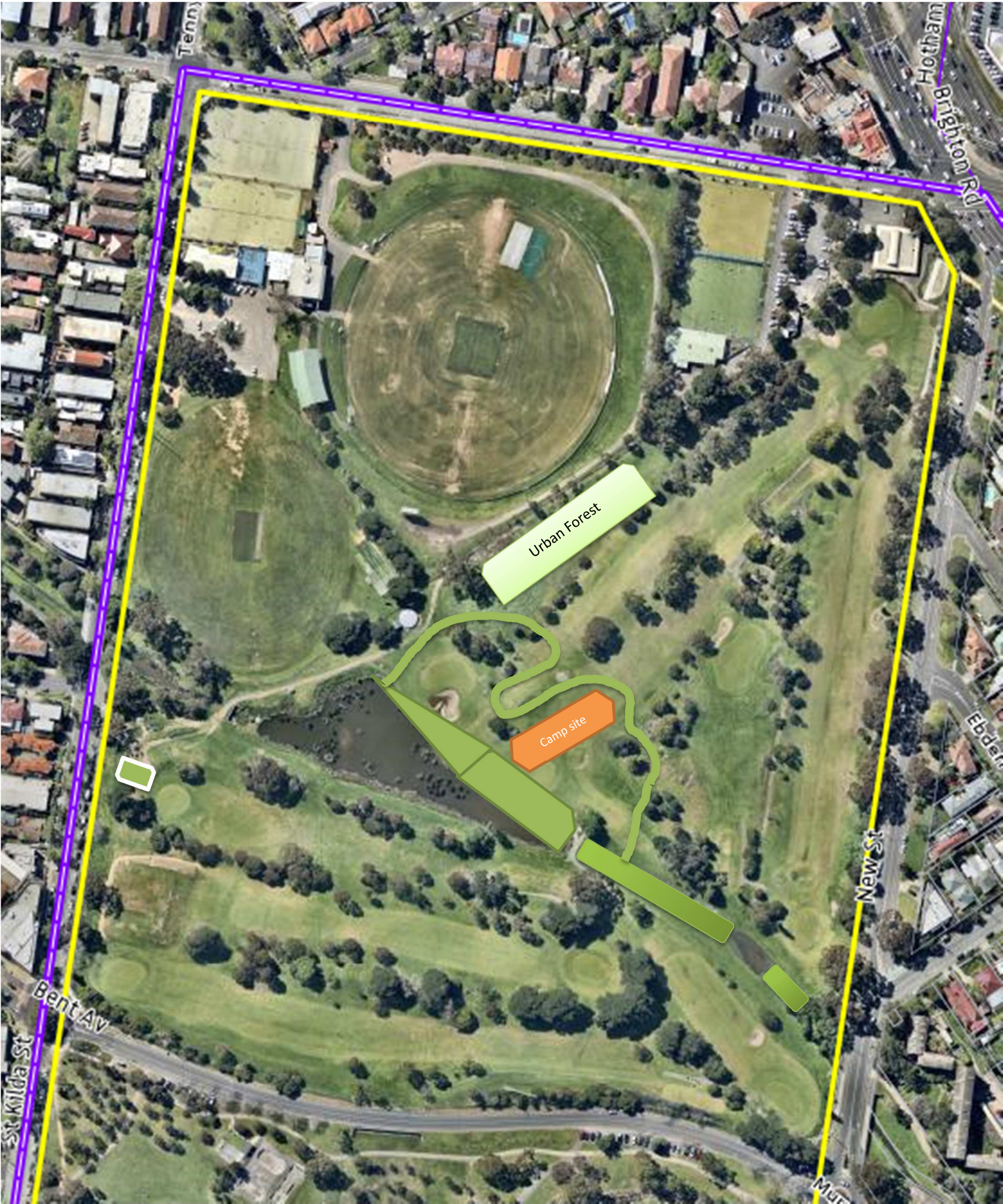
Abbreviations

BCC	Bayside City Council
Glen Eira	City of Glen Eira
Port Phillip	City of Port Phillip
MWC	Melbourne Water Corporation
Eco	Ecological
GC	Golf course






Attachments

Option 5 – Sketch & Images

End of Draft



Legend

-  Expanded wetland and sections of Elster Creek
-  Meandering creek tributary
-  Eco shelter and cafe
-  Camp site for school & social recreation (also wetland observation deck)
-  Urban Forest

Elster creek at the entry to the golf course



Elster Creek at the golf course (4 pictures)





Existing wetland at the golf course (3 pictures)







Land that can be utilized for the proposed Eco precinct development (Urban forest)

