

My name is Travis Smith and the following is submitted on behalf of the Friends of McConnell Group.

Please see below and find attached our submission:

The Friends of McConnell Group are disgruntled that the revocation of the Western portion of McConnell Avenue Reserve has once again been raised by Council. The last time this issue was raised was in 2017 (and before that in 2001). After much work by the community, Cr Gard amended his 2017 motion to "retain the Western portion of McConnell Avenue Reserve subject to developing the Eastern portion and then reviewing the whole". If the latest motion as proposed by Cr Crossland proceeds the Western portion will be disposed of long before the Eastern portion is upgraded and the reserve will never be reviewed as a whole as pledged in 2017.

1. Please find attached a current copy of our paper petition requesting that Council retain the Western portion of the McConnell Avenue Reserve and upgrade both the Eastern and Western sides of the reserve as an integrated whole for the continued benefit of current and future residents as our City grows.

We intend to continue gathering signatures and will submit the final petition to Council together with a deputation request in early January.

2. Current summary and comments attached to our online petition seeking the same as point 1 above (attached).

3. Map of Marino showing dwellings canvassed to sign the paper petition to date (attached).

Households that signed the petition are identified by a tick. Please note to date we are only aware of five people who were canvassed and declined to sign the petition; only one of the five stated it was because they thought the western portion should be sold.

4. Concept plan showing integration of the Eastern and Western portions of the McConnell Avenue Reserve (attached).

Although only a possible concept, this plan has received considerable praise from residents. Feedback to date has been positive regarding the closure of McConnell Avenue to link the Western and Eastern portions of the reserve. Other suggestions for upgrades have included:

- Playground for younger children
- Exercise equipment
- Native plantings to connect to green corridors
- Public toilet to encourage visitors to stay longer
- Level courts for bike education (as opposed to the hilly surrounding streets)
- Safe gated area to let dogs play off the leash

- Continued provision of current amenities (tennis, basketball, netball, bbq, sheter)
- Drinking fountain
- Bike rack / station
- Nature play

5. Copy of Messenger Newspaper article dated 27 June 2001 reporting that Council had plans to sell the Western portion of McConnell Avenue to fund an upgrade of the Eastern portion (attached).

There are many similarities from the story in 2001 to the 2017 and 2020 attempts to dispose of the Western portion. What is glaringly obvious when looking at the photo in the article is that Council has not upgraded or maintained the Western portion since 2001. The shabby bitumen and scrubby weeds are the same now as they were almost 20 years ago. Council installed a pool fence around the Western portion which gave the impression the land was privately held by an adjacent neighbour (feedback provided by many who signed the petition). Council claims the Western portion is underutilised by the community and is seen as redundant. Although untrue, perceived underutilisation would be from Council's failures in this regard.

We sincerely hope the process of community consultation provides Elected Members with the knowledge to make educated decisions regarding the McConnell Avenue Reserve. It is the firmly held belief of the Friends of McConnell Group that this much loved community asset must be preserved and enhanced for the continued enjoyment of current and future residents.

Thanks and kind regards

Travis Smith

Friends of McConnell Group

Together with Beryl Hall, Barbara Wake, Jill Bawden, Barry Wicklein and Dominic Burns