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McConnell Avenue Reserve, Marino East & West Portions – Why the Park is Important to me, my Family, our community and our environment and needs to be Preserved as a whole for our futures

- McConnell Avenue Reserve, Marino (East & West sections) is a unique flat area within the steeply hilled suburb of Marino with easy access to all those who live in the surrounding areas on the Eastern side of the train line (this park includes a car park). The tennis courts and Basketball ring bring adults, teenagers & children from all over Marino to play basketball, shoot hoops, play tennis, practice serving, learn to play tennis, learn to ride bikes, scooters, due to the fences & operational gates people can bring their dogs & small children and let them explore & run without fear they will go onto the road whilst they also play tennis, picnic and socialize utilizing the existing BBQ, sheltered area & table. The park is a meeting place within our community for neighbours and gives us a space to be able to relax, contemplate & communicate to recharge & de stress. I do not find that any other Park in Marino has the ability to provide all that McConnell Ave reserve does for people of all ages (despite not having play equipment) – Kauri Parade is limited to only Tennis and only if the clubs are not using the community courts. Bandon Tce playground is limited to small children but has no fencing, the outlook is nice but is too far away from my premises and the basketball ring is the only flat area not large enough for more than a couple of people & certainly not suitable for riding bikes. The Newland Ave reserve near the Marino Rocks railway station contains a small children's playground and its use is limited by this & the steep slopes that are covered in natural foliage, there is no car parking. The lack of toilets at all these parks is an issue that limits the time people can spend enjoying these parks.
- **Using the existing Park**
 - **How my family including extended family use the Park** – in the time I have lived by the park my family has made use of all the facilities the Park currently has including the basketball ring, hopscotch, netball ring, tennis court area including the open bituminized area, open "grassed" area, gazebo, BBQ & table and car parking, the large flat open space has been particularly valuable for learning to ride safely before the kids go on the road or foot path.
 - **How I see other people using the Park when I am there or go past** - Multiple different people of all age brackets utilize the open flat space of the park to exercise, let their children / grandchildren run free, play various ball games, learn to ride & control their bikes or scooters in a safe contained flat area. To hear the bounce of the basketball against the ring & backboard or the whack of the tennis ball, the laughter & gleeful squealing of kids as they explore & be active is a really pleasant & joyous experience that occurs every day. I also see people using it as a neighbourhood meeting place.
 - **How safe I feel using the park or letting my children use the park** – I have no qualms and have never had any qualms about my children using the park – when they were younger, I would always be with them to help them play & explore but now they are older teens and gaining independence it is a safe space with supportive neighbours for them to play. I always feel safe & secure within the park & surrounds.
 - **The significance of the fencing being able to safely shut / closed** – the fencing is of huge safety benefit for younger children & people who come with their dogs.
 - **The significance of the large amount of open space that both East & West sides** allows for multiple people to use the space without impacting on one another at the same time – allows for shared use.

- **When do I note people using the park?** – As the park is open and has no lighting it is only ever used during day light hours – and is used at any time of the day any day of the week – although there is less use during school hours when children are required to be at school.
- **How does the park meet my Mental Health needs** – the openness of the park & the views of the ocean and the quietness of the area promote de-stressing and I always feel more relaxed and re-charged after I have spent time in the park looking at the view, listening to the birds and watching the wildlife. I find being able to get out of the house to the park area takes me away from the business within my household.
- **How has my use of the park changed over the years?** This park is where I learned to play netball as a young child 45 years ago. The Park's vicinity to our current residence was a significant factor in the purchase of our residence 20 years ago and using the park has continued to be an important part in the daily lives of our family – our children in particular have used this park both east & west sides for their activities for the last 20 years – they meet their neighbour hood friends to hang out, ride bikes, practice bike riding, scooter riding, play a tennis tournament that lasts for months, practice their basketball shooting & compete with one another shooting hoops, flying kites – The current set up of the park & openness of the large flat areas enables multiple groups to all be using the flat areas at the same time for different activities. No one has the pressure to stop their activity due to the arrival of another group & no one who turns up feels that they can't stay due to other people already using the area.
- **Imminent increase in Marino population:** The significant number of people that will dwell in the 600 new residences to be built on the old Lorenzin site will bring additional people to the area who will utilize this park. It is short sited to sell the western side in view of this development near McConnell Avenue reserve.
- **Environment:** The park in its current state is of environmental importance as it is a link in the Green corridor for Flora & Fauna – there is the occasional visiting Koala, the owls we hear at night, the laughing kookaburras and the entertaining activity of the local Adelaide parrots, the Rosellas, the wattle birds & magpies, the piping shrikes, the willie wagtails the honey eaters and many more. The green area of the park both east & west sides is ready to be developed for native to the area plantings as a bush garden to add to the existing significant Native trees specific to this area and will aid our wildlife preservation, help preserve our dwindling native flora species, assist with the cooling of our environment and reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to cooling of the environment.
- **As is a Community Park** – We as a family would continue to be vigilant in maintaining the foliage and removing any rubbish & graffiti in the whole of the park to keep the park useable for everyone.

Things that would enhance the whole park & make it more useable and add to its Uniqueness

- Toilet
- Water fountain
- Bike fix station
- Designated car park
- Grassed green area
- Dog park area
- Pump track
- Multiple open areas that can be used by multiple groups at the same time
- Natural play space – ie rocks, plants, trees
- More shelter more seating areas (ie more than the existing 1 area)
- Water run off harvesting via plantings & swales to naturally water the plants
- More native to the area plants – bush garden
- Encourage group fitness to use the open space area like they do other parks.

- Block off & include the section of McConnell Ave that abuts both sides of the reserve

Disappointment

I am extremely disappointed in the non-action by the council as to the resolution to upgrade the park in 2017 and the lack of any visible positive face to face engagement within the community by our elected council representative whom by my expectation is required to engage face to face with the residents of the community, support and represent at council what the community wants / needs for the area they are elected to – they DO NOT represent the Council.

The personal stress & stress to our community the current proposed revocation of the western portion and the non-recognition of all the work the community has done in the past and currently to SAVE OUR PARK and develop / enhance it in the way the community wants (NOT the concept on the council website) is extreme and makes me angry that the Marion Council is showing that it is not supportive nor recognises the community needs & wants.

Covid 19 has had and will continue to have significant impact on our community in multiple ways and the ability for people to be able to be outdoors and utilize the whole of McConnell Avenue reserve East & West sides is very important for people to be able to maintain their health & well being in these troubled, difficult and challenging times. Where Covid 19 restrictions allow community gatherings will continue at the park.

In Summary:

The Park both east & west sides is currently ready for enhancement it already has good basic useable structure.

The enhancement (not redevelopment) of the current park both East & West sides including the closing of this section of McConnell Avenue to include it in the Park & provide adequate car parking will be of benefit to the Community (including the significantly expanding community). This enhancement will need to include development of a native to the area bush park for people to enjoy & learn about our natural environment – this will be a unique attraction for people, education, flora & fauna. The existing flat bitumised spaces are also unique and can be used by multiple people / groups all at the same time and would be an excellent space for outdoor group fitness. Adding another shelter, chairs & picnic table, drinking fountain, bike repair station and a toilet will only enhance the attractiveness to everyone in our community of our park.

This Park supports healthy lifestyles & an active community, enhancing the existing east & west portions will only promote increased use of the space and continue to offer safe opportunity for health & wellbeing of our community and wildlife including Community gatherings for events such as Neighbour Day.

The McConnell Avenue Reserve East & West sides is a Park for our Community NOT the Council Coffers.

Jane Gardiner and family
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Marino