

RECORD OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION 1 – Magpie Hill Park, Wattle St, Lyneham

Saturday 14 March 2020 at Girl Guides Hall, Clianthus St, O'Connor
3-5pm

CONTEXT

The Lyneham Community Association (LCA) obtained an ACT Government Adopt-a-Park grant in 2019. This allowed them to run two community consultations (this is the first of two) and to develop a Landscape Sketch Plan to direct future park development. At this stage, there is no funding for physical work in the park.

The park is approximately 3 hectares and has mainly native mature trees (including remnants) and very little understorey. In years past the understorey has been more significant.

Prior to the consultation, Edwina Robinson, from the social enterprise, The Climate Factory, met with ACT Government arborist, Jeffrey Albrecht on site to assess the health of the trees and former local resident and ecologist, Sarah Sharp. Overall tree health was good despite Canberra experiencing its second hottest summer on record and low rainfall recorded in 2019.

The site includes a mix of remnant trees (some 100 years plus) and a number of planted trees. Woodland tree species include: *Eucalyptus blakelyi*, *E. dives*, *E. macrorhyncha*, *E. mannifera*, *E. melliodora*, *E. pauciflora* and *E. polyanthemus*.

Despite an extended drought, overall the quality of the trees is good. However, there is a lack of understorey vegetation due to drought, compaction and mowing regimes. In the past, understorey plants like *Bulbine bulbosa* and *Arthropodium* (Chocolate Lilies) have been seen on site. On site there was evidence of *Lomandra*, *Chrycocephalum* and *Cassinia*. There are also some patches of grassy weeds.

The park has an informal character and a few facilities in reasonable condition including - a former carpark which was turned into a basketball court about 15 years ago, a playground installed around the same time, and an oldish 'picnic'/viewing area. The park is used for play, dog walking and social

gatherings.

Sustainability consultant [Liesl Codrington](#) facilitated the session.

INVITATIONS

Invitations were sent via:

- letterbox drop to 400 houses and apartments near the park
- Lyneham Community Association (LCA) newsletter - 250 residents

ATTENDEES - 33 (about half were LCA members and the rest were other local residents)

DISCUSSION

A VISION FOR THE PARK

The group were invited to use a word or phrase to describe their vision for Magpie Hill. They were asked - "What would you like to see this space become? What value will it bring to the community".

Below is a record of comments offered. Many of these were later addressed under the principles and features discussion.

- Build on assets of the space
- Large existing trees are important for bigger birds that use them to 'island hop'
- Protection for little birds needed
- Succession planning needed for trees
- Revegetation
- Fencing off? (to allow for natural revegetation)
- Tree management - thinning trees?
- Address soil erosion/ soil quality
- social space/ roofed structure
- benches lower on site
- accessibility and pathways
- water harvesting
- climate ready species
- frame views (not obstruct them)

And the question was posed if some of the trees that seem significant are on the ACT Tree register or can be nominated for it.

The question was also asked about why there is a roadway into the park from Lambert St. (Older residents noted that this was the access to the carpark in the middle of the park that was locked off

many years ago to prevent anti-social behaviour in the park, and the carpark turned into a basketball court.)

The group were asked to consider and discuss key principles which can guide the Landscape Sketch Plan. These were:

1. HABITAT
2. NATURE-BASED PLAY
3. MAINTENANCE - ECO FRIENDLY – reduced use of chemicals
4. FOOD PRODUCING PLANTS
5. BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTION
6. SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS
7. WATER HARVESTING

Summer shade - Winter sun, Sustainable materials use and Eco-friendly maintenance were accepted as underlying principles that should be embedded into the Landscape Sketch Plan and didn't require further exploration. The group did not pursue the principle of Food Production.

Individuals were asked to break into groups to focus on the principle they were most interested in, and brainstorm features that they might like to see included in the park under that principle. A spokesperson from each group pinned their sheet to the wall and explained their thinking and ideas for features within their chosen principle.

Participants were provided with three coloured dots to vote on the principles that were most important to them. They were given three different coloured dots to vote on the features they would like to see in the park.

The Habitat Principle was voted most important. Water Harvesting received 19 votes. We joined two principles - Social spaces and Seating and Picnic areas together as they were focused on the same thing. This also received 19 votes. The Landscape Sketch Plan will be guided by all these principles but with greater emphasis on principles with the most votes.

1. Habitat – 24 votes
2. Water Harvesting – 19 votes
3. Social spaces & Seating & Picnic areas combined - 19 votes
4. Nature based play - 15 votes
5. Access/Desire lines - 13 votes

Habitat H₂O Harvesting Social Spaces

Key principles voted that will inform the Landscape Sketch Plan for Magpie Hill.

Habitat Features

The park is highly valued for its existing and former habitat values.

- Structural complexity (ie incorporating different height vegetation layers) was seen as important to improve the park's habitat value - 16 votes
- Retain dead trees - these should be made safe and hollows can be made or boxes added. They provide habitat for owls and Tawny Frogmouths - 5 votes
- Climate adapted native plants - 2 votes
- Bee hotels - 1 vote
- Delineate non-mowing areas - 0 votes
- Remove African Love Grass and Chilean Needle grass - 0 votes
- Soil improvement - 0 votes

Note there is significant knowledge in the group about understorey plants including native grasses and flowers that grow in the park. A list was supplied from Friends of Grassland.

Water Harvesting – Features

The group recognised how dry it was at the moment and as the park is on a ridge and without any water taps, the group felt that capturing or harnessing stormwater as part of the park's design was essential in order for plants to survive/thrive in the future:

- Swales (on-contour and outside of tree protection zones) would slow the flow of stormwater and allow it to infiltrate into soil - 12 votes
- Vegetated buffer zones to slow surface water movement downslope - this could include mower exclusion zones - 0 votes
- Staged groundcover planting with hardier, pioneer plants first to build soil quality for longer term plantings.

- Ephemeral wetland along path/desire line near Lambert St/Wattle St - path to curve around it - 0 votes
- Add rocks and large woody debris (eg logs) to help with hydrating soil along with other water harvesting measures - 0 votes



Locals worked on the principles and features that they were most interested in seeing protected or implemented in the park.

Social spaces & Seating & Picnic Areas - Features

Members of the group expressed a desire for more seating in the park as well as a contemplative space and a sheltered outdoor space.

- Park benches on Wattle St side - 6 votes
- Sheltered outdoor space - 5 votes
- Contemplative space - 5 votes
- Park benches with backs on Mackennal St side with connected meandering path up the hill - 3 votes
- Maintain 'natural bush feel' of park - 1 vote
- BBQ if possible - 1 vote
- No BBQ as encourages mess - 1 vote
- Table/chairs next to playground - 1 vote
- Seating/nicer tables on eastern side of park - 1 vote
- Learning/gathering - ampitheatre - 0 votes
- site spaces to capture great views ie contemplative space - 0 votes
- interpretive panels - 0 votes
- water and poo collection for dogs - 0 votes
- lighting - 0 votes

Regarding benches/seating - work with ANU School of Art furniture design students or UC design students to design seats for the park around themes (thinking of the Three Capes Walk, Tasmania and the project with UTAS students).

Nature based play – Features

Fixed play equipment exists on the site. The group recommended play spaces or exercise opportunities for all ages on site.

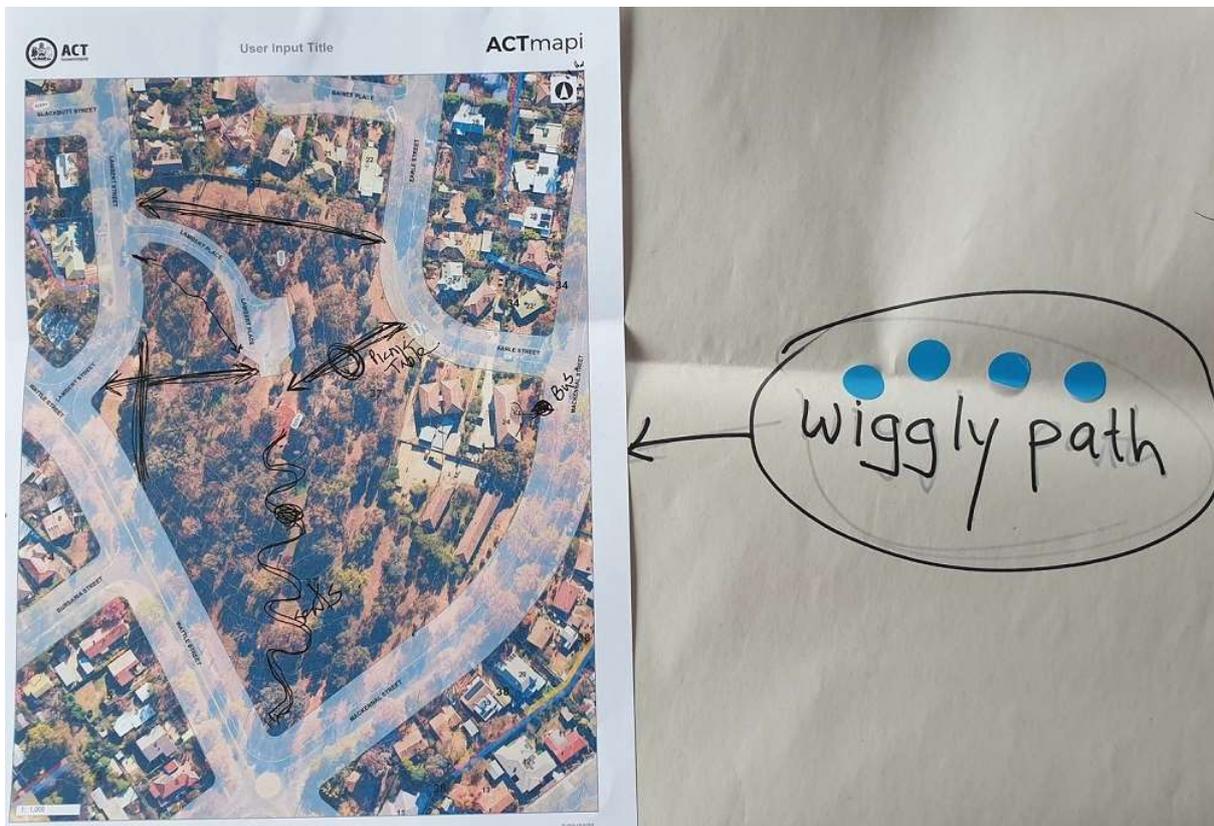
- Play spaces for all ages (could include gym equipment) - 7 votes
- Art installation - 3 votes
- Covered play space - 2 votes
- Adventure walks - 1 vote
- Ball play that doesn't involve balls rolling down the hill- 0 votes
- Retain existing equipment and build more/improve it - 0 votes
- Safer play surfaces - 0 votes
- Strategic logs/rocks/steps to stop cars entering the park over the footpath, particularly to get around the locked driveway off Lambert Street.

Access/Desire Lines & Extra Opportunities for paths - Features

There was significant interest in better paths (and less erosion in the park) without adversely impacting the natural qualities of the park.

- Formalised Path across corner of Lambert St/ Wattle St - 7 votes
- Wiggly path from corner of Wattle and Mackennal Sts to playground near Lambert place - 4 votes

The group provided a plan. Refer below.



Residents mapped desire lines across the park.



Discussing principles and features.

What happens next?

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Attendees will be sent a copy of this report to ensure their views and ideas are correctly represented.

We asked the group if they were interested in attending a second consultation where The Climate Factory will provide a Landscape Sketch Plan that reflects information gathered at the Community Consultation. The majority were interested and this meeting could potentially be held at Magpie Hill in April 2020 (depending on Coronavirus). This will give other members of the community an opportunity to contribute to the Landscape Sketch Plan.

Individuals have been asked to contact the Lyneham Community Association if they want to form a Group to help care for the park. Positions at this stage will include a convenor/co-convenors.

While no money is currently available for revegetation works we recommend a sub-committee under the Lyneham Community Association is established to apply for environment grants/fundraising (ie Crowdfunding).

Edwina Robinson
Landscape Architect and Founder
16/3/20