

**Report to General Manager**

Attachments:

1. Location Map
 2. Perspective Drawing
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SUBJECT: Community Garden Proposal – Little Young Street, Neutral Bay**AUTHOR:** Eric Sturman, Streets Alive Co-ordinator**ENDORSED BY:** Rob Emerson, Director Open Space and Environmental Services**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Council is proposing the establishment of a new community garden on the southern end of Brightmore Reserve located at Little Young Street, Neutral Bay. Community engagement letters were delivered on two occasions to 120 households in the surrounding streets. A copy of the letter was exhibited on site. First stage consultation returned one negative response and 11 in favour with suggestions on design and placement of the garden. The second stage consultation letter was delivered to the same households with an attached design and site location in response to the feedback from the first letter. A copy of the second letter with attachments was posted on site. The second letter resulted in two negative responses from the same household that had already objected in the initial consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This project will be funded from allocated funds within the 2019/20 adopted budget for the Streets Alive Program.

Comment by Responsible Accounting Officer:

The funds for this project have been allocated in accordance with the annual budget process.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the proposed Community Garden at Little Young Street, Neutral Bay be approved and establishment of the garden is undertaken.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

Direction: 1. Our Living Environment

Outcome: 1.3 Quality urban greenspaces
1.4 Public open space and recreation facilities and services meet community needs

BACKGROUND

In recent years there has been a growth in the number of community gardens in the Sydney region, indicating that the public, community organisations and local governments see community gardens as important to public needs. People regularly contact North Sydney Council seeking locations of community gardens and further possibilities of growing plants on Council land.

At present there are six (6) community gardens in North Sydney: The Coal Loader Community Garden and The Platform Community Garden at the Coal Loader in Waverton, Milson Community Garden at Kirribilli, Kurraba Community Garden at Kurraba Point, The Anzac Park Community Garden at Cammeray and Forsyth Community Garden at Neutral Bay. All venues are extremely popular in the local community. Benefits of being a member of a community garden include gardening workshops, educational resources and in particular, a sense of community.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The following table provides a summary of the key sustainability implications:

QBL Pillar	Implications
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective management of soil nutrients.• High water usage; however, effective management of water use by effective watering and mulching techniques.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of community.• Connection to the environment.• Health promotion.
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing cost and initial cost of construction.• Reduce cost of produce to local households.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nil.

DETAIL

A letter of consultation was distributed on 11 July 2019. One hundred and twenty letters were distributed by hand to residents in Little Young Street, Young Street, Benelong Road and Benelong Lane in Neutral Bay. An A3 laminated copy of the letter was also exhibited at the approximate site of the proposed garden. The letter of consultation invited comments, suggestions and expressions of interest for the proposed community garden in Brightmore Reserve. In total, twelve responses were received by email, and three by phone. Of the respondents, eleven were in favor of the proposal. Three telephone calls were received with two in favour (after clarification) and one opposed.

The local Bushcare volunteer group was informed of the proposal at a working bee during the period of consultation. The proposal was explained to the group and no objections from the group were received.

A further consultation letter was sent in response to the feedback from the original consultation letter was distributed to the same households on 12 September 2019 accompanied by a site location plan and an artist impression of the proposed garden. The design considered the input provided by the responses to the original consultation letter. The original objector remained still not in favour of the proposal.

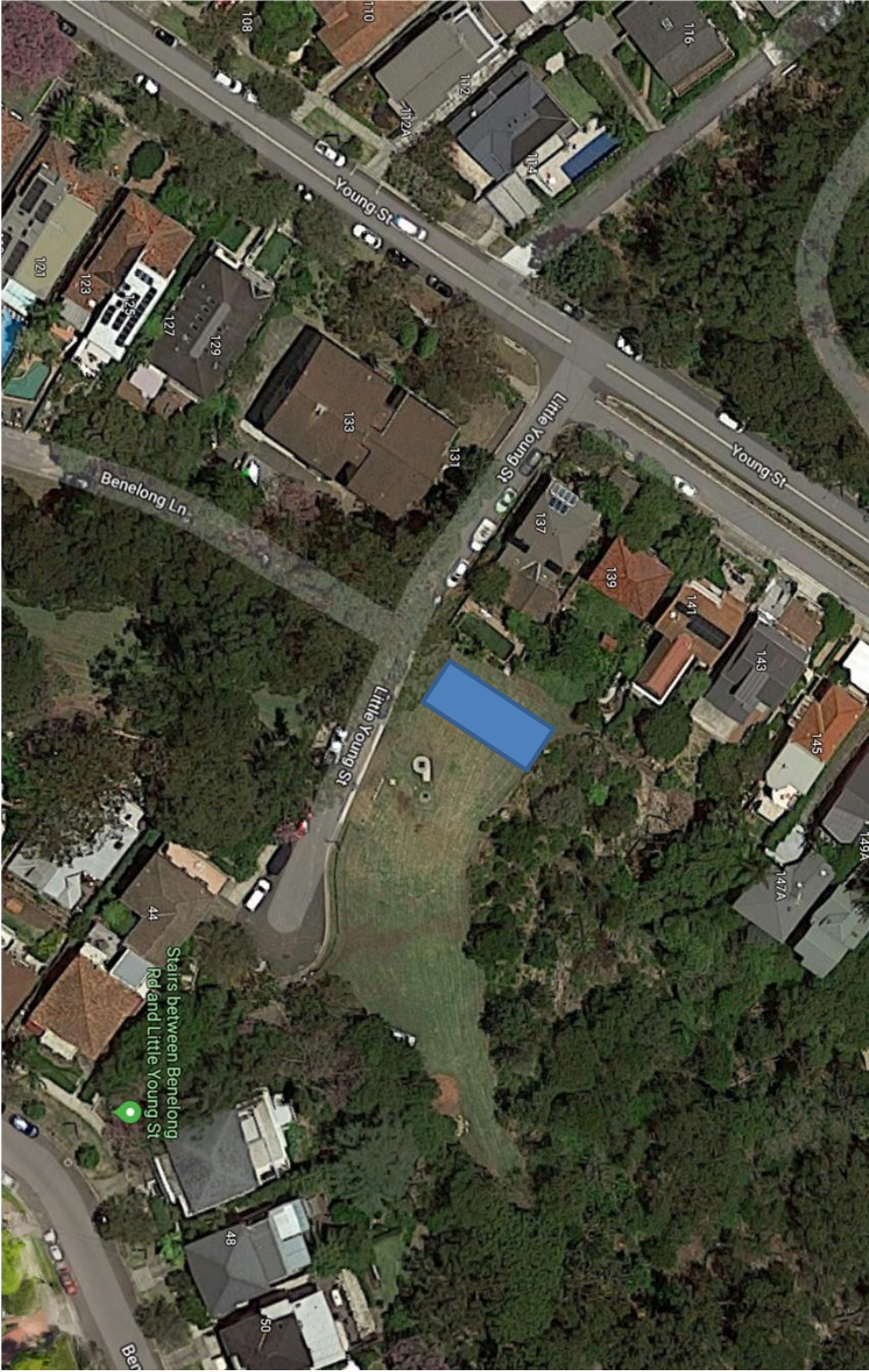
It is evident that there is consensus support for this proposal. The park is readily accessible and has sufficient sun exposure to be viable. The area taken by the garden will leave a considerable amount of adjacent public open space for all forms of recreation. The design intention is to have the garden to the western side of existing parkland to allow access for maintenance and retain recreational area for existing park users. It is considered that the design of the garden and the construction materials will add to the cultural landscape rather than detract from the existing sense of place. Garden beds will be raised as in all other gardens with clean uncontaminated soil. Due to the proximity to bushland, Bushcare has been consulted on the placement of the garden. The design is yet to be quoted but funding includes: ground treatment, water supply, tools, construction of garden beds, construction of composting areas, plant supply, storage area and fencing.

Details of the objections received appear below:

Comment	Issues	Action
Gardens might be unsightly	Aesthetics	This is a subjective comment and the design of the garden is similar to other gardens. No action necessary.
Concern loss of parkland	Space	Utilise approximately 10% of grassed area of upper Brightmore Reserve. No action necessary.
Water across site during times of heavy rain	Flooding	Positioning of garden to side of reserve where water flows are lowest.
Potential contaminates in soil	Soil contamination	Raised garden beds with new clean soil.

Increased people to area	Parking shortage	Most people will walk to garden as they do at other gardens. No action needed.
Water needs	Increased water usage	Proposed to use wicking beds similar to that utilised at the Coal Loader Platform. This reduces water needs in the beds.

Location Map



Perspective Drawing

