



INNER NORTH PLAY SPACE: PRELIMINARY DESIGN PHASE

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

During September to October 2023, Canberrans were invited to provide feedback on the preliminary design for the inner north play space to inform the final design ahead of construction.

Initial engagement on the proposed inner north play space was carried out in late 2021 with 570 pieces of feedback received in total via an online survey and kids' corner, email and social media. We heard there was strong support for an inclusive play space that caters to all ages and abilities and is well connected to and integrated with surrounding facilities and services. Feedback from the first stage of engagement identified key community priorities for the inner north play space and established the design framework for the next phase of the project.

The second phase of engagement for the inner north play space involved bringing together a diverse group of representative stakeholders in co-design workshops in mid-2023 to test and refine design concepts arising from the initial engagement. These community representatives worked with the design team to ensure the design met a wide range of needs, while remaining true to the priorities identified by the community during the 2021 engagement.

THE CONVERSATION

Online survey

An online YourSay survey was open during the consultation period from Tuesday 12 September until Wednesday 25 October 2023 for the community to provide feedback on the preliminary design for the inner north play space. A total of 97 surveys were completed.

Members of the community were also invited to provide feedback via email and Facebook. A total of 12 submissions were received via email and 37 comments via social media.

Community pop-ups

Three pop-up sessions were held to promote the consultation and meet with members of the community face-to-face at the Downer shops on Wednesday 20 September, the Watson shops on Thursday 19 October and the Dickson Group Centre on Saturday 21 October. Approximately 15 people attended the pop-ups to view the preliminary design and meet the project team.

WHO WE ENGAGED

The consultation targeted inner north residents, families and visitors to the region.

We promoted the consultation via pop-ups at the Downer shops, Watson shops and Dickson Group Centre, the ACT Government's Our Canberra newsletter, social media, the City Services website, and an email to key stakeholders.

The inner north place space YourSay engagement page attracted 2,708 page views from 1,116 visitors in total. The preliminary design was downloaded 528 times.

93% of those who filled out the online survey were inner north residents, predominantly from the suburbs of Watson, Downer and Hackett. Residents from other areas of Canberra accounted for the remaining 7% of responses. Submissions were received from the Watson Community Association, Pedal Power and Cancer Council.



Key insights from the community

Support for the preliminary design

1. Overall, it is clear there is broad support for the creation of the inner north play space and its key elements. Survey respondents rated the preliminary design 3.85 out of 5.
2. Lots of positive comments were received about the preliminary design via all feedback channels with strong support for the proposed recreation facilities and play equipment.
3. There were also a variety of suggestions received about elements that could be added to the play space design now and into the future. These suggestions are further outlined below.

Play opportunities

4. There is strong support for the play opportunities offered in the preliminary design. Survey respondents rated them 4.04 out of 5.
5. One third of survey respondents were satisfied with the play elements in the preliminary design and had no suggestions for improvement.
6. Of the two thirds of survey respondents who had suggestions for improvement, the most requested item was additional play equipment to enable a greater variety of play.
7. The most popular suggestions for specific play equipment were water play (15%), more skating elements (11%), a flying fox (10%), a large climbing structure (7%) and a bike pump track / learn to ride facilities (6%).
8. Other suggestions for play equipment included a hamster wheel, monkey bars, sandpit, and slides, as well as the inclusion of more creative/imaginative play elements such as a cubby house.
9. Suggestions were also received to improve accessibility for all ages, abilities, and body types – for example wider swing seats, climbing structures at various heights, boules for all ages, fenced play areas and separated sensory equipment for people with sensory overload issues.

Recreation opportunities

10. There is strong support for the recreation opportunities offered in the preliminary design. Survey respondents rated them 4.11 out of 5.
11. Over 40% of survey respondents were satisfied with the proposed recreation facilities and had no suggestions for improvement.
12. While there was a significant amount of support for the inclusion of multi-purpose/tennis courts in the preliminary design, requests were received to add another multi-purpose/tennis or basketball court. Suggestions were also received to add basketball hoops, futsal/pickleball/bike polo court markings, cricket nets and goal posts to increase the range of recreation opportunities on offer.
13. We also heard some locals currently use the location for the future inner north play space to exercise their dogs. Suggestions were received to include water bowls for dogs as well as signage for where dogs can and can't go. A couple of requests for an off-leash dog area were also received.
14. While some respondents supported outdoor fitness equipment in the preliminary design and requested specific equipment, there were also suggestions to replace what is perceived by some as rarely used outdoor fitness equipment with more play equipment instead.

Facilities for gathering with family and friends

15. There is strong support overall for the gathering and picnicking facilities offered in the preliminary design. Survey respondents rated the proposed facilities 4.08 out of 5.
16. We heard shade is a very important feature of the preliminary design. There is broad support for maintaining the existing trees on site and planting more new trees to support passive recreation. Some people would also like to see shade structures over play equipment / picnic facilities, in addition to more trees.



17. The most popular requests for additional recreation facilities were more shade (24%), toilets (19%), picnic facilities (11%) and seating (7%).
18. A handful of requests were also received for more barbecues, water refill stations, bins and for spreading facilities for gathering throughout the park (rather than centralising them in one area).
19. A handful of suggestions were also received to include a micro forest or community garden as part of the final design as well as community art /murals and facilities to support food carts and events.
20. We also heard consideration needs to be given to maintaining line of sight in the park to support passive surveillance and community safety. A couple of suggestions were received to install lights and CCTV.

Transport, parking, access and active travel

21. Several comments were received about the size and location of the proposed carpark. While a number of respondents (17%) wanted to see more carparking provided as part of the final design, there were almost as many respondents (14%) who did not support the future carpark and would prefer the space maintained as green/recreation space, with a greater focus on street parking and active travel.
22. There is strong support for ensuring the future inner north play space is well connected to the existing path network as well as planned future travel infrastructure such as the Garden City Cycle Route.
23. Comments were also received about the need to ensure the various play and recreation areas within the park are connected by a fully accessible path network.
24. We also heard bike parking should be available in multiple areas within the park with requests for dedicated facilities on site to support cycling.
25. A number of suggestions were also received about how best to manage the expected increase in traffic in adjoining streets, including installing pedestrian crossings and time restricted parking.
26. We also had a couple of requests to include electric vehicle charging stations as part of the final design

WHAT'S NEXT?

Feedback from the community and stakeholders during this third stage of engagement was used to finalise the design. We look forward to the start of construction on the inner north play space in 2024.

Updates on the inner north play space will be provided via the [City Services website](#). If you have questions about this project or would like to be kept updated on its progress, please email communityengagement@act.gov.au.

Key Timings

March 2018: ACT Government community engagement on future site use for Canberra Technology Park

March 2021: Academy of Interactive Entertainment's community engagement for Canberra Technology Park

September 2021: Future Intentions Plan released for Academy of Interactive Entertainment site

November – December 2021: Start stage 1 consultation inner north play space

March 2022: Stage 1 consultation What We Heard report released

April – May 2023: Stage 2 targeted stakeholder engagement

Mid 2023: Preparation of preliminary design and What We Heard Report for Stage 2 engagement released



12 September 2023: Stage 3 engagement on preliminary design opens

25 October 2023: Stage 3 engagement on preliminary design closes

5 December 2023: Final indicative design and What We Heard Report for Stage 3 engagement released

2024: Construction of inner north play space

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

146

we received 146 items of
feedback in total

97

a total of 97 surveys were
completed

3

three community pop-ups
were held

12

we received 12
submissions via email

2,700+

we received 2,708
page views on YourSay from
1,116 visitors

500+

the inner north play space
preliminary design was
downloaded 528 times

22,500+

we reached a social media
audience of 22,582 and
received 37 comments

92%

the majority of respondents
(92%) were satisfied with the
engagement experience