COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: STEWART RESERVE



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I moved here because of the reserve and I love the open feel

(quote from survey respondent)

Prepared by Strategic Matters

For the City of Holdfast Bay | 05 May 2020

Contact: Leanne Muffet

E: lmuffet@strategicmatters.com.au

strategic matters
people + planning

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Project Overview: Sturt River Greening Project

From London to Paris to Sydney to Adelaide, there is a global trend to 'green' cities through the reintroduction of trees, plants and gardens for a range of health, comfort, biodiversity, and psychological reasons.

Embracing this movement, the City of Holdfast Bay has committed to 're-greening' part of the Sturt River, known to the Aboriginal (Kaurna) people as ***Warriparri***.

Commencing in 2019, the Sturt River Greening Project is revegetating small parcels of land along the Sturt River in Glenelg North. It will result in a refined corridor of greenery along the river system, generating biodiversity, and creating amenity and wellbeing benefits for the community and local flora and fauna.

A trigger for the project was the findings from a scientific study that demonstrated parts of the council area are lacking in flora and fauna. The *Biodiversity Assessment,* conducted in 2018, identified Glenelg North as having low levels of biodiversity in the City of Holdfast Bay.
This project is an opportunity for the council to work with the local community to reverse this trend through re-greening sites along the Sturt River.

In all the reserves identified for planting, only small parts of the reserves will be planted, not the entire reserve, leaving more than 50% of each site with plenty of open space for recreational activities.

The first reserve to be replanted was the Bob Lewis Reserve (Highland Avenue).
The next scheduled stage of the Sturt River Greening Project is in the ***Stewart Avenue Reserve***, with planting planned to take place during winter 2020.

This report articulates the findings from the community engagement process around the Stewart Avenue Reserve.

Throughout the four-month project, Strategic Matters worked closely with the City of Holdfast Bay Project Leader: Ms Alex Gaut and members of Communications and Engagement team.

Process

This report articulates the findings from the community engagement undertaken for the Stewart Avenue Reserve. The upgrade to the Stewart Avenue Reserve is the second of the reserves along the Sturt River to be enhanced as part of the City of Holdfast Bay's 'Greening' project.

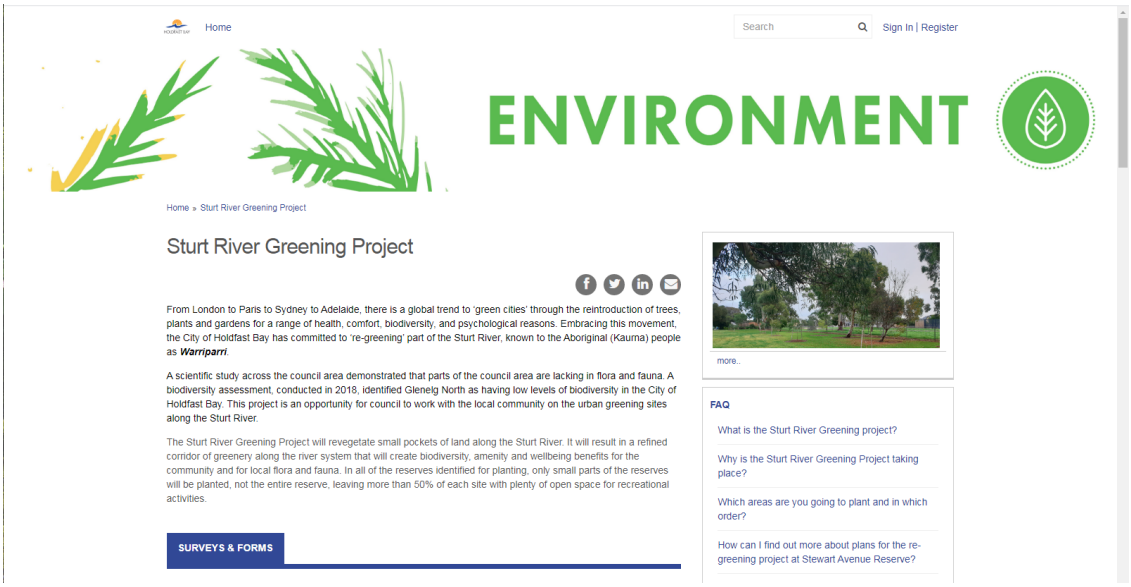
Throughout the project, Strategic Matters has worked closely with the City of Holdfast Bay Project Leader: Ms Alex Gaut and members of communications and engagement team.

Key messaging

The first step of the project involved the development of key communication elements.

This required a focus on:

- Information for the Council's website (shown below)
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet and
- Key messaging to articulate to the affected residents.



Community Pop-Up

The initial approach to the engagement was the design and facilitation of a localised community face to face 'Pop-Up' event. An afternoon event was scheduled to take place in the final weekend of March 2020. A total of thirty-one (31) households were sent correspondence inviting them to the session scheduled to be held at Stewart Avenue Reserve on **Sunday 27 March**, between 2pm and 4pm.

Designed for residents around and near the reserve, the Pop-Up was an opportunity for them to meet the project team, hear more details about the project, ask questions, and contribute to the project design. Input was being sought to inform the design of the planting on Stewart Avenue Reserve, including the area to be planted, and a location for a new bench.

The aim of the 'Pop-Up' was to obtain fast, deliberative and detailed feedback on the project's objectives and initial design ideas. The Pop-Up format was also chosen as a community building platform, and as an opportunity to connect face to face with residents.

Unfortunately owing to the Covid19 pandemic and associated national social distancing protocol, this event needed to be cancelled.

Telephone survey with residents

As the community Pop-Up was not able to proceed for Covid19 reasons, the team moved to develop an update letter and a telephone survey tool.

The telephone survey format, though not undertaken face to face still provided the opportunity to connect with residents in a personal manner, to offer clear and concise feedback on queries, and to build a positive image of council.

Residents were informed of the need to cancel the Pop-Up and move to another engagement platform; that of a telephone survey. Letters to convey this were sent in late March.

Combination of telephone survey and online / hard copy surveys

Unfortunately, for privacy reasons, and because some of the residents around the reserves reside in another local government area, the team was unable to access all phone numbers to contact affected residents. To resolve this, the team developed an additional letter and updated the survey, designing it with both paper and online functionality.

Hard copies were sent to residents together with a *Reply-paid* envelope.
Residents were asked to respond to either of the survey platforms by Friday 24 April 2020.

Key points

Leading into the surveys, all residents were provided with the following key messages:

- a "First Draft" plan[1]" had been compiled to illustrate preliminary ideas.
  Respondents were encouraged to refer to this when completing their survey.
- all survey answers would be aggregated and therefore not able to be traced back to any individual.
- when completing the survey, residents could add their name or remain anonymous.
- following the compilation of survey findings, a landscape architect would design the planting plan for the reserve.
- As part of the project commitment, council would keep affected residents informed of:
  - the final planting design and
  - the anticipated planting schedule (likely to be in June 2020).

[1] A copy of the "First Draft" plan is provided in ***Appendix A***

Survey Findings (phone, written and online)

Number of responses

A total of 12 surveys were received from a catchment of 31 households.

This equates to a 39% response rate.

Responses were received across three different platforms, as shown below:

Telephone responses	3
Hard copy responses	6
Online responses	3
TOTAL	**12**

Collation of data sets

The data used to inform this report originates from three data sources:

- Telephone survey responses
- Online survey responses, and
- Hard copy / postal survey responses

Due to the changing Covid19 related working conditions, the original qualitative / conversational questions of the phone interviews needed to be aligned with a more quantitative approach that could be put online and into a hard copy format.

Owing to this, some small assumptions have been made to align data sets so that they could be amalgamated and reported in a consistent format.
For example, in the phone survey, no rating system was provided with the following question:

> Telephone Survey Qst 3. ***What are your thoughts on the layout of the reserve and garden beds as per the site plan?*** **note a site plan was provided to residents*

However, the corresponding question both in the online and paper-based survey (designed to align with the intent of the phone survey question) also offered respondents a rating scale:

> Online Survey Qst 3: ***Please refer to the site plan . The plan shows a formalisation of garden beds to 'edge' the reserve, while still retaining open grass areas for exercise, games, dogs and the like. How satisfied are you with this layout?***
>
> - Very satisfied
> - Satisfied
> - Note satisfied
> - Any comments

In this way collation of data sets across surveys could occur.

Findings

Qst 1. Understanding of the project aims

What do you understand the aims of the project to be?

For the vast majority, the intent or aim of the project was very clear and was perceived to be an exercise in revegetation the site, including new plants and garden beds.

Many participants also recognised that the project was also about both general upgrading of the reserve, and formalising an access point for maintenance vehicles. The numbers are shown below.

Revegetating the site: new plants and garden beds	9
General upgrade and maintenance	6
Formalising an access point for maintenance vehicles	6

Other comments received from respondents indicate a desire to retain the open space, to ensure that the grass remains for children to run and play and to provide a seat.
A couple of other spontaneous comments received are provided verbatim below:

- *The big trees are great!*
- *The project is about wildlife habitat while still providing lawn for families and games*

Qst 2. Comments on planting in Winter 20202

We wish to commence planting in winter this year, do you have any comments on this?

Respondents were extremely supportive of the council commencing planting in Winter 2020. Many acknowledged that the Covid19 pandemic and associated protocols would impact the final timing.

One respondent was keen to understand how long the process and is likely to take and whether there will be disruptions to the street.

Verbatim comments included:

- *Good time to plant*
- *Good idea. Give the plants a good head start with the rain*
- *June is good timing!*

Qst 3. Preliminary thoughts on layout (formalisation garden beds and retaining open grass areas)

Please refer to the site plan . The plan shows a formalisation of garden beds to 'edge' the reserve, while still retaining open grass areas for exercise, games, dogs and the like. How satisfied are you with this layout?

As illustrated below, all the respondents either replied that they were ***very satisfied*** or ***satisfied*** with the conceptual layout ideas for the reserve upgrade.

Very Satisfied	*Satisfied*	*Not Satisfied*	*Not rated*
6	6	*n/a*	*n/a*

Other comments received, demonstrate a desire to retain as much of the grass as possible, to retain the 'Open' feeling of the reserve, and to ensure that any large gum trees on site are 'healthy' to minimise the risk of falling limbs.

- *It's important to leave open space for kicking and throwing ball, sport practice, dogs, kids and the like*
- *Need to maintain the grassed area*
- *The lower plants on the western side of the reserve are good to keep it open*
- *Need to make sure that the gum trees are healthy and not at risk of dropping limbs*

There was enthusiasm regarding how plantings might be used to cover items that are thought to be unattractive. Items that were mentioned were: the SA Power Network (SAPN) building, the fencing at the southern end of the site, and the open drain / creek also located to the south of the reserve.

- *Softening the visual impact of the SAPN building is a good idea*
- *Good idea to place garden beds on the southern side with shrubs to block the unsightly creek / drain and fence*

Qst 4 Comments on range of plants heights and relationship with SAPN building

We anticipate using a range of plant heights – for example, lower plants near the streets and taller plants near the SA Power Network (SAPN) building and the Sturt Creek. How satisfied are you with this idea?

As illustrated below, most of the respondents either answered that they were ***very satisfied*** or ***satisfied*** with the anticipated plant heights and layout, including lower plants near the streets.
It is important to note that this question was not specifically asked of the telephone interviewees – although one spontaneously provided this information. This accounts for the two replies in the 'not rated' column.

Very Satisfied	*Satisfied*	*Not Satisfied*	*Not rated*
5	5	*n/a*	2

Other comments received focused more closely on the SA Power Network (SAPN) building and how its visual connection with the reserve might be better managed. As a rule, respondents were keen to visually 'hide' the SAPN building as much as possible using plant screening.

- *Good idea to hide SA Power Networks Asset*
- *I like the idea to have taller plants (evergreen or trees) to hide the SAPN building*
- *Shrubs in front of SAPN building would be a good addition*

The theme of hiding visually obtrusive assets extends to the fence on the southern boundary of the reserve:

- *Shrubs in front of the creek fence will be great to block the fence. Different heights staggered across the reserve will look nicer*

A final statement relates to the desire to retain a sense of openness / transparency across and through the reserve, particularly relating to the grass.

- *Keep the feel of the reserve open… I like to see the grass*

Qst 5 Comments on range of suggested plants types

We anticipate using a range of local colourful and bird attracting Australian plants, including grasses and flowering plants. How satisfied are you with this idea?

Overwhelming, respondents were pleased with the idea of using local, colorful and bird attracting Australian plants in the reserve. This is evidenced by the findings below that show that 7 of the 12 respondents are "Very satisfied" and 5 are "Satisfied".

Very Satisfied	*Satisfied*	*Not Satisfied*	*Not rated*
7	5	*n/a*	*n/a*

One respondent commended the proposed plant choice recognising the connection that they will have with local growing conditions:

- *Australian plants is a good choice… they are not introduced and suit the local conditions*

Additional comments received on this question convey a desire to ensure that the plant selection will attract birds and other fauna, and that habitats are provided to attract and support local lizard and gecko communities:

- *We have a large variety of lizards in the area and some old logs further and the grasses would be good. For the geckoes as well*
- *Australian plants are fine with a preference on flowering and bird (and other fauna) attracting species*

One person requested a particular plant species (Lillie Pillies) that produce fruit that attracts birds.

Qst 6 Comments on proposed maintenance vehicular access track

To assist with maintenance on site, we are proposing to create a track between two new garden beds at the bottom of Stewart Avenue (that vehicles currently use). How satisfied are you with this idea?

Respondents were supportive of idea of formalising the current track in the south west corner of the reserve as the maintenance egress. Of the responses, 3 were "Very satisfied" and 8 were "Satisfied". One respondent did not rate the question, instead choosing to write comments.

Very Satisfied	*Satisfied*	*Not Satisfied*	*Not rated*
3	8	*n/a*	1

While the comments were mainly in support of formalising the existing vehicular track, there were a handful of observations / concerns regarding SAPN vehicles coming on to the site via the same track. These comments illustrate a wish for the SAPN trucks not to use the reserve for parking as their presence is perceived to both use up too much space and is damaging to the grass.

- *As the access track has always been there it's probably the best place to have it*
- *That sounds fine*
- *How do you stop the electricity trucks from using the area for parking?*
- *That's fine: that's what council does already. However, it would be great if SAPN does not drive up there and on to the park as they use up space and damage the grass.*

One resident requested more information on the type of material that will be used on the maintenance track (e.g.: bark chips) as they were concerned about this blowing into their property.
[Their details have been forwarded to the project manager].

One respondent queried whether Council could introduce signage to indicate that the track was only for maintenance vehicles and the that is was not a thoroughfare.

- *Please could we have better & clearer signage at the entrance (NO THROUGH ROAD or RESIDENCE ONLY) to stop the unauthorised traffic?*

Qst 7 Observations on the visual connection across the river / creek channel to Bob Lewis Reserve

How important is it to you that there is a visual connection with and across the river channel? (i.e. over to Bob Lewis Reserve)

Although a span of answers is much more evident over this question (very important = 2, Somewhat important = 4, Not important = 4), a significant number of comments were received that illustrate the *importance of the visual connection* and or 'openness' for people.

Very Important	*Somewhat Important*	*Not Important*	*Not rated*
2	4	4	2

In answering this question, some respondents focused on the need to block out 'unsightly' elements (such as the creek / drain and or fencing).

- *The view is not essential: but blocking the unattractive drain is important. If we can still see the vegetation on the open side that will be good but not essential.*
- *One or two taller plants in the south east corner would assist with covering the drain's fence*

Others focused on the sense of openness that the vista creates from them, and an innate desire to retain this. Several comments were also received on the connection across Sturt Creek and the value of the outlook for their wellbeing, happiness and lifestyle. These comments are captured below.

- *It's very important to keep the view open: It's good to see the reserve across the way, so please keep shrubs low*
- *The view to Bob Lewis is very important because that's what I look at!*
- *I moved here because of the reserve and I love the open feel*
- *Keep the vista there, as it makes it feel nice and open… and makes us feel lucky to live where we do.*

Qst 8 Colour choice for repainting the SAPN building

Working with State Government, we have the option to repaint the SA Power Network building. If we did this, what would be your colour choice and why?

A range of ideas and preferences were received on this question and respondents were able to provide more than one suggestion.

In the main, respondents were looking for something that is either an earthy tone (not beiges – as it is perceived to look dirty) or specifically GREEN – to match nature.

The idea of painting the SAPN building a bright golden color to denote danger was suggested by one respondent.

Another idea was to paint the building in a mural; an activity that could involve engaging local school students.

The breakdown of responses is provided below:

An earthy tone (could include Green, Grey, Beige, Brown)	6
Specifically, *Green* to match the trees and surrounding nature	3
A mural: something beautiful and bright. Could be painted by school children	2
Golden yellow to denote danger	1
Not over the top	1
Not white / glary or cream that looks dirty	1

Qst 9 Placement of a seat / park bench

Question nine asked participants to comment on the placement of a seat in the reserve. Answers to this question can be broadly classified into one of five themes. The numbers are captured below in descending order:

Somewhere with a view and ambience	6
In a position of suitable sun and shade	5
Happy with the choice on the draft plan	3
Somewhere where it doesn't impinge on the grassed area	2
Other comments: • *Not* in a position under a gum tree where falling branch is possible • Away from SAPN ASSET. Some people worry about being close to anything that radiates power.	2

Other verbatim responses are provided below:

Some response from "view and ambience"

- *with an outlook across the reserve. …*
- *Somewhere where you can see down the path*
- *To sit in the sun and watch the kids play*
- *Away from the street or motor vehicle access areas.*

Some responses from "suitable sun and shade"

- *Please face it north*
- *In a position where it will receive summer shade and winter sun if possible.*
- *Somewhere where there is good shade throughout the day*

Qst 10 Any other comments

The final question asked respondents for any other comments

The responses covered a range of issues as noted below…

Suggestions were made for extra items in the reserve:

- *There are plenty of dogs that access and exercise in the reserve, a pole for waste bags, bin and a water fountain for both people and dogs would be excellent.*
- *Can you add a doggie doo / poo bag dispenser?*
- *Please a rubbish bin would be a good idea and a doggy poo bag station for obvious reasons and maybe a water fountain.*

Some requests for more information:

- *Please could you advise me the proposed area directly in front of our property* [more details have been forwarded to the project manager]
- *I would like to know what are the trees, shrubs and planter beds that are being considered*

A safety suggestion:

- *Put a small safety fence along Burrupa Ave to stop people from walking across the road. We have seen people (kids) run across the road in front of vehicles because they don't see the road through the bends*

And some comments of appreciation to Council

- *The reserve is always maintained: Thank you!*
- *Please keep the watering up over summer: we appreciate the green space especially over the summer time*
- *Nice to see that the council is always looking at ways to improve our parks.*
- *It's a fantastic spot, quiet with a great outlook.*
  We love it.

Summary

The intent or aim of the project was very clear and was perceived to be an exercise in revegetation the site, including new plants and garden beds. Subject to Covid19 protocols, respondents were extremely supportive of the council commencing planting in Winter 2020.

All the respondents either replied that they were ***very satisfied*** or ***satisfied*** with the conceptual layout ideas for the reserve upgrade. The 'Open' feeling of the reserve is a theme that emerged from many respondents as a key attribute that they would like to see retained.

There was enthusiasm regarding how plantings might be used to cover items that are thought to be unattractive. Items that were mentioned were: the SA Power Network (SAPN) building, the fencing at the southern end of the site, and the open drain / creek also located to the south of the reserve. Most of the respondents either answered that they were ***very satisfied*** or ***satisfied*** with the anticipated plant heights and layout, including lower plants near the streets.

Overwhelming, respondents were pleased with the idea of using local, colourful and bird attracting Australian plants in the reserve. Additional comments illustrate a desire to ensure that the plant selection will attract birds and other fauna, including habitats to attract and support local lizard and gecko communities.

Respondents were supportive of idea of formalising the current track in the south west corner of the reserve as the maintenance egress. However, a handful of observations / concerns were cited regarding SAPN vehicles coming on to the site via the same track. These comments illustrate a wish for the SAPN trucks not to use the reserve for parking as their presence is perceived to both: use up too much space, and to damage the grass.

While a range of answers were received on the visual connection across the creek to the Bob Lewis reserve, many strong statements were expressed regarding the *importance of the visual connection* and or openness of the reserve to people. These included a focus on ambience, happiness, pleasure and quality living.

Suggestions regarding the repainting of the SAPN building illustrate a desire for either an earthy tone (not beige) or specifically GREEN – to complement the surrounding nature. Additionally, two respondents suggested painting the building with a bright mural; a task that might be undertaken by school students.

Most respondents preferred that the placement of a seat align with a view and or a sense of ambience. Other suggested a position with suitable sun and shade and in a location that doesn't impinge too much on the grassed area.

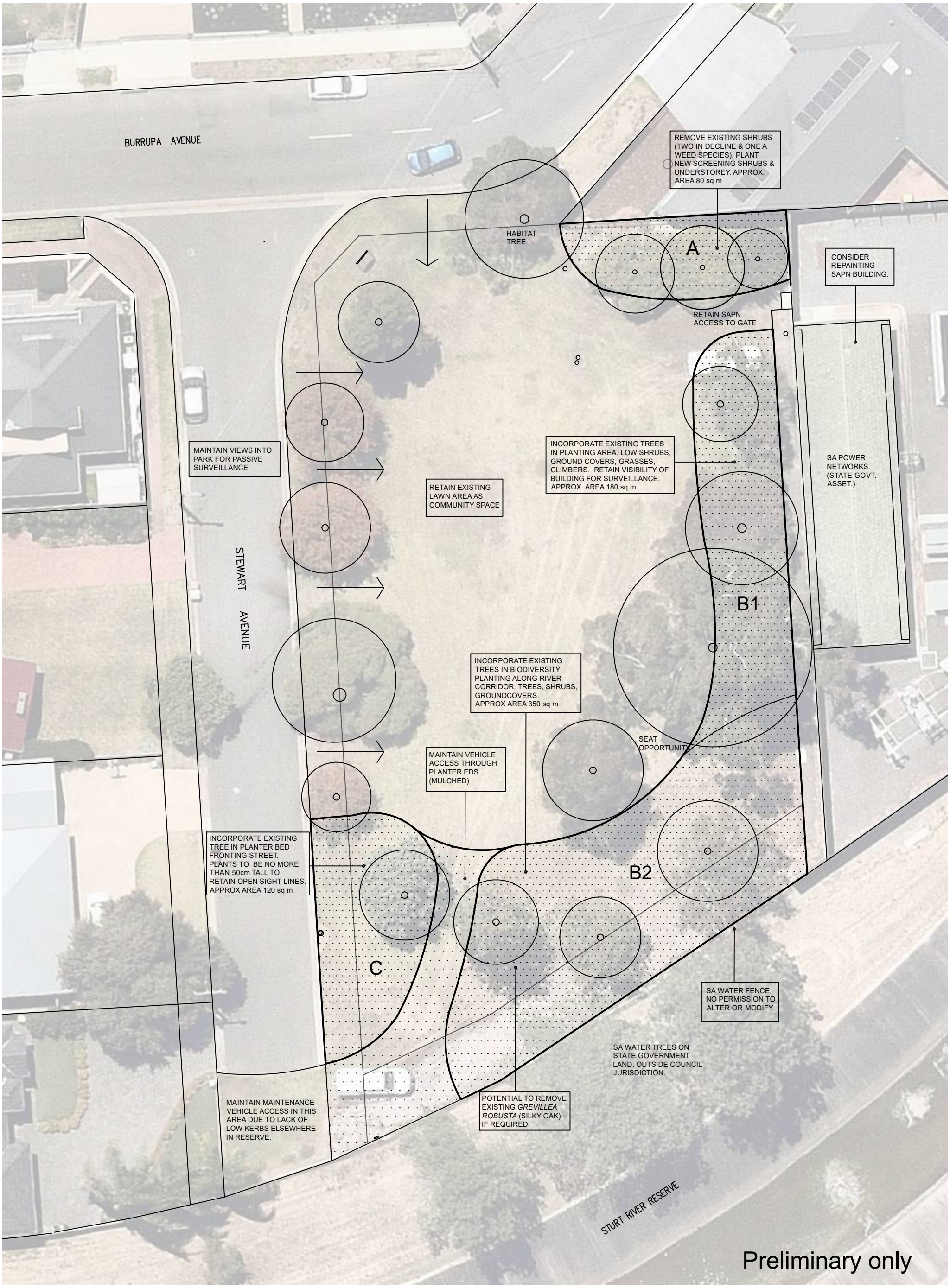
A few suggestions were submitted regarding 'other things' that council might consider. Responses included a rubbish bin, a dog poo bag stand, and a small safety fence on the Burrupa Avenue edge.

Overall, findings from the survey illustrate strong support from the community to 're-green' Stewart Avenue Reserve. In addition to a range of complementary and constructive ideas, a key message that was evident across the surveys was one of appreciation to council for both embarking on the engagement process, and for maintaining the reserve as a place of value to the local community.

Appendix A: First Draft Plan

For survey respondents to view and comment on

A3



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DATE 23/03/20
DWG NO SK02

Martin Ely B.Arch. AILA
E: martin-ely@hotmail.com
M: 0407 809 984

Proposed revegetation at Stewart Reserve, Glenelg North

Schematic site plan