

STRATEGIC AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE 8 MAY 2013

SGS1305-1 SOUTH BEACH UNIVERSAL ACCESS PROPOSAL - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

DataWorks Reference:
Disclosure of Interest: Nil
Meeting Date: 8 May 2013
Previous Item: Nil
Responsible Officer: Peter Pikor, Director Technical Services
Actioning Officer: Peter Pikor, Director Technical Services
Helen Emery, Manager Community Development
Decision Making Authority: Council
Agenda Attachments: Consultants report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2012 the Fremantle Sailing Club (through a club member) submitted a formal proposal to build a universal access ramp from the existing seawall near the Fremantle Sailing Club off South Beach.

It was indicated that the construction of an access ramp from the seawall between South Beach and the Fremantle Sailing Club would make it easier for young sailors to access the ocean.

The proposal incorporated two access ramps, with one ramp for dinghy sailors together with kayakers and the other for wheelchair users. The wheelchair ramp will enable swimmers with disabilities to gain direct wheelchair access to the waters off South Beach across a paved surface and along a purpose built disability ramp.

The boat ramp will enable dinghy sailors to hand launch their boats directly into the ocean. This ramp will also enable kayakers to wheel across the paved surface to the ocean. No vehicular access would be permitted to this universal access ramp.

It was indicated that the construction of the Universal Access ramp will not require funding from the City and will be funded through the Sailing Club and from other sources.

The Fremantle Sailing Club sought Council's in principle support for this proposal and also for the City to undertake the community consultation process.

Following Council's support for these requests the City arranged for the consultation process.

A large number of the community responded to the community consultation with over 50% opposing the proposal.

This report provides the results of the community consultation and in consideration of these findings recommends that the City takes no further action on the proposal.

BACKGROUND

The Fremantle Sailing Club (through a club member) is leading a proposal to build a universal access for dinghy sailors, disabled swimmers and kayakers from the seawall that borders the Sailing Club and South Beach.

The objectives of the universal access are to;

1. Provide direct access into south Beach for young dinghy sailors, swimmers with disabilities and kayakers
2. Build a structure that is minimal in size and bulk whilst integrating with the surrounding built environment both functional and aesthetically
3. Avoid interference with the communities current use and enjoyment of South Beach
4. Facilitate the accretion of sand against the rocks in the northern corner of South Beach, thereby effectively increasing the size of the beach.

There are two ramps incorporated in the project, one for dinghy sailors and kayakers and one for wheelchair users.

Currently, swimmers with disabilities using wheel chairs have no direct access to the ocean along this section of coast. The wheelchair ramp will enable swimmers with disabilities to gain direct wheelchair access to the waters off South Beach across a paved surface and along a purpose built ramp.

Young dinghy sailors wishing to sail in the waters off Fremantle must currently navigate a narrow, one kilometre channel shared with powerboats to access the ocean. The boat ramp will enable dinghy sailors to hand launch their boats directly into the ocean. It has been indicated that the dinghy sailors will prepare their boats on the grounds of the sailing club and will return their boat trolleys to the club after launching their boats.

This ramp will also enable kayakers to wheel across a paved surface to the ocean. There will be no vehicular access permitted to the universal access.

The proposed structure will extend approximately 76 metres long and be 35 metres wide. The seawalls of the ramps will be constructed of limestone rock and the ramps of concrete with a non-slip surface.

This concept has been prepared by two engineers with expertise in marine based engineering and coastal morphology.

Although this proposal is in an area controlled by the Department of Transport and therefore would not be a City project the Fremantle Sailing club sought Council's in principle support and also for the City to undertake the community consultation process.

At its meeting on 26 September 2012, Council resolved to;

- 1. Give in principle support for the proposed universal access concept from the seawall at the Fremantle Sailing Club as shown on the Attachment.*
- 2. Authorise for the City to provide the resources and undertake the community engagement process to determine the extent of support for the proposed universal access concept from the seawall at South Beach.*

COMMENT

An independent consultant was commissioned to undertake the community consultation through a questionnaire survey together with a sample of face to face interviews. The Fremantle Sailing Club was consulted in the lead up to the consultation to ensure the proposal was presented accurately.

At the close of the formal submission process there were 942 people providing some comment either through the survey or face to face interviews. In summary there is a lack of support for the proposal in its current form with 50% opposing the proposal outright and additional 15% that oppose it but are willing to look at alternatives.

The full consultation report is as shown on attachment 1.

Some of the respondents were concerned about the survey design and commented that the questions were misleading by either giving an overly positive slant to the project or not giving them enough opportunity to indicate that they didn't agree or support the project.

Twelve community members, nine of which also completed the survey, submitted additional comment expanding upon their objections to the proposal.

The City also received a register of 218 people objecting to the dinghy launch ramp and the survey. The register also expresses support for disability access to be addressed at another location at South Beach and a public forum on future plans of the Fremantle Sailing Club.

RISK AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial

It is intended that the cost of the construction will be funded through the Fremantle Sailing Club and other sources and therefore this will not require a funding allocation from the City.

Legal

The seabed on which the proposed universal access will be built on is controlled by the Department of Transport. On the basis that the proposal proceeds, the area of seabed required for the universal access is proposed by the Sailing Club to be vested in the City.

Operational

If the proposal is constructed and accepted by the Council to be vested in the City, then it will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep.

Organisational

Nil

CONCLUSION

As this project is in an early stage it was considered that there was merit in the Council having a position on supporting in principle the universal access concept so that consultation can be undertaken to determine the views of the community.

In view of the large response to the consultation process and the findings that there is strong opposition to the proposal it is considered that the City take no further action. It is proposed that the consultation report be made available to the Sailing club and other interested parties.

STRATEGIC AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Provide a great place to live, work and play through growth and renewal.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It was requested that the City provide the resources and undertake the community consultation on the proposal. The cost to undertake this consultation was \$10,000.

VOTING AND OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority Required

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council;

1. Receives the consultation report of March 2013 for the South Beach Universal Access proposal.
2. Notes the findings of the consultation report of the South beach Universal Access proposal and take no further action in this matter.
3. Releases the consultation report of the South Beach Universal Access proposal to the Fremantle Sailing Club and other interested parties.

Cr D Hume MOVED an amendment to the Officer's Recommendation to include the following wording:

4. On the basis of the findings of the of the consultation report, council indicate it does not support this proposal from the Fremantle Sailing Club.
5. Council does support universal access (wheelchair and disabled) at South Beach.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION/COUNCIL DECISION

MOVED: Cr J Strachan

That Council;

1. Receives the consultation report of March 2013 for the South Beach Universal Access proposal.
2. Notes the findings of the consultation report of the South beach Universal Access proposal and take no further action in this matter.
3. Releases the consultation report of the South Beach Universal Access proposal to the Fremantle Sailing Club and other interested parties.
4. On the basis of the findings of the of the consultation report, council indicate it does not support this proposal from the Fremantle Sailing Club.
5. Council does support universal access (wheelchair and disabled) at South Beach.

SECONDED: Cr T Grey-Smith

CARRIED: 12/0

For	Against
Mayor, Brad Pettitt Cr Jon Strachan Cr David Hume Cr Rachel Pemberton Cr Robert Fittock Cr Josh Wilson Cr Tim Grey-Smith Cr Ingrid Waltham Cr Sam Wainwright Cr Bill Massie Cr Andrew Sullivan Cr Doug Thompson	