Background

Subiaco Common Park is a neighborhood park located in Subiaco Centro. The park has many mature shade trees, garden beds, a stream/waterway, an irrigation lake with active bird life and a large section of open grass which is used as a regular dog exercise area. It also features a public art playspace by artist Peter Dailey (commissioned by the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority in 1997), water fountain, barbeques, park benches and covered picnic tables.

The play equipment in Subiaco Common is reaching the end of its safe useful life and is due for replacement as part of the City of Subiaco’s Capital Improvements Program. The replacement of the playground equipment will be guided by community input, budget considerations and the City of Subiaco Playspace Strategy (2013).

The city’s Playspace Strategy identifies sixteen key assessable components of a good playspace and groups them into three overarching themes, development, function and connection. During the development of the Playspace Strategy each playground within the boundaries of the City of Subiaco was assessed using this framework.

When Subiaco Common Park playspace was assessed the consultant noted that the equipment was static with limited challenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of park</th>
<th>Equipment caters for age</th>
<th>Observation and comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subiaco Common</td>
<td>3 to 6</td>
<td>• Located within attractive parklands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Static play equipment with limited challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adjacent stream/waterway offers more interesting play experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>than play structures provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The city’s play equipment replacement is guided by this assessment and aims to improve the areas that are identified as fair or poor. According to the Playspace Strategy Subiaco Common Park could be improved in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Cognitive, physical and emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Sense of place, activation and use, linkage and wayfinding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“At Subiaco Common, the artificial waterway near the play area has the potential to provide much more stimulation, enjoyment and excitement than the art structures in the designated play area – with this comment borne out in observations of where children preferred to play at this park.”

Community engagement process

The community engagement process to gain feedback for this project is divided into three stages:

- **Stage 1** - engage with residents surrounding the park to gain a picture of the frequency of park use and the ages of children using the playspace – complete.
- **Stage 2** - an online survey on the city’s engagement website, Have your say Subiaco, to explore what respondents like or don’t like about the current playspace, what they would change and the type of play their children enjoy (hard copy also available) – complete.
- **Stage 3** – playground designers will use the community feedback gained in the first two stages in conjunction with budget considerations and guidance from the city's Playspace Strategy (2013) to develop their visions for the Subiaco Common playspace. These options will be presented to the community and the option that receives the most votes and will be installed in Subiaco Common.
Overview of Stage 1 results:
During stage 1 of the consultation the city received ninety-four responses from surrounding residents, their children and their grandchildren. This data selection showed the majority of respondents used the play equipment more than once a week and the average age of children using the park was 5.2 years old. With children aged two, four and six being the highest user groups.

Twenty-six of the respondents did not use the play equipment, due to a variety of reasons including no children in the household, children too young and the equipment not being appropriate for their children.

Overview of Stage 2 results:
Stage 2 consultation took place from Thursday 1 September to Tuesday 27 September 2016. During this stage we used an online survey on the city’s engagement website, Have your say Subiaco, to explore what respondents liked or didn’t like about the current playspace and the type of play their children enjoy (note: hard copy survey was also available on request).

The consultation was advertised to those who were involved in stage 1 and to the wider Subiaco community via the city’s website and in Subiaco Scene, the city’s weekly page in The Post newspaper (Saturday 10 September 2016 edition).

During the engagement period 103 people visited the Subiaco Common Park playspace replacement project page on Have your say Subiaco and twenty nine people completed the survey.

Question 1: What do you like about the current playspace?
Twenty eight of the twenty nine respondents answered this question. The top likes are shown in the table below. The location of the playspace amongst the greenery is highly values, along with the surrounding waterway which provides opportunities for extended play.

Likes
The most frequently occurring likes were location, the waterway, the sandpit, the surrounding greenery, the TV and the originality. Three people said they liked nothing about the space.

- It's location amongst trees and bushes.
- Love the space and its location. Like the quirkiness of Subiaco Common but it is not child friendly.
- The concrete drain tunnels - children use them to hide and slide - more plantings could make them more inviting and secluded. Children love "secret cubby places" where they can hide.
- Good for imaginative play.
- The area is very beautiful with the shade and lake nearby. It has a really great relaxing atmosphere for families and individuals alike. It has a really unique vibe and physical landscape that hence, deserves a well thought out, long term upgrade of the play space area for the residents and visitors alike.
- Nothing.....cannot play on it Hi chair too high for toddlers.....not suitable.
- The sand and table for a "tea party".
- We love the water there!

Question 2: What don't you like and think we should change about the playspace?
Twenty eight of the twenty nine respondents answered this question. The top issues are shown in the table below. Most respondents thought the current playspace is not suitable or interactive enough. Many suggested the need for new equipment such as swings, climbing frames and a slide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dislikes</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs to be more interactive</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs new equipment (swings, slides etc)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not suitable</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good for younger kids</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandpit</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- It’s not stimulating enough for a 17-month old toddler as there’s nothing much for him to do there. We like to have more slides, swings, climbing ropes, tunnels, etc. something more similar to the nature play area at Subi Theatre Garden on Bagot Road.
- The tall chair is a deco more than a play space.
- It needs swings and more climbing pieces. Kids love to swing, that is a must as this area is mainly for little kids.
- The unattractive breaking up rubber soft fall needs to be replaced with woodchips and/or sand
- No climbing, no swinging, no slides - more a static art display.
- Close to the dog park - put a child secure fence please.
- Insufficient engaging play equipment - need a slide and activity station at least. Swing perhaps. Have play equipment suitable for toddlers.
- There should be slides, climbing spider, swings , fun interactive play equipment like a quality fort with different levels(for all age groups), gymnastic/balancing bars or flying fox.
- Items are uninteresting to most kids. Director’s seat is too high.
- Please take into consideration the increase of children in their early teens rapidly growing in this area due to the forward trend of apartment living, needing to be closer to the city, better schools and simplifying. It needs to be a playground catering for ages up to 15.
Question 3: What are your children’s favourite things to do when you are visiting playgrounds?
All twenty nine respondents answered this question. In this question respondents were given a list of nineteen play types and asked to select their child/children’s top six favourites from the list.

The top six play types were:
1. Climbing
2. Swinging
3. Sliding
4. Bouncing
5. Balancing / jumping (equal 5th)
6. Hiding

Spinning, building, rocking, pedalling, role play and stepping up came up as the next most popular play types of play. Crawling, lifting, pushing and rolling received no votes.

Favourite type of play

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play Type</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climbing</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swinging</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliding</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiding</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinning</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocking</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedalling</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepping up</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducking under</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling up</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Question 4: Do you have any other comments, ideas or feedback you would like to share with us about Subiaco Common playspace?
Twenty five of twenty nine respondents answered this question to take the opportunity to provide extra comments.

Feedback provided included:
- Play equipment could be more natural using logs, ropes and rocks etc similar to the area in Kings Park off the Rokeby Rd entrance. Young children love to climb, explore and swing.
- I live in Subi Centro but drive (carbon input into environment) to play area at Shenton Park lake because they love it there. All 8 grandchildren have played there and I am down to my last 2 (all the others are at school). Duplicate as far as you can that play area.
- Normal equipment please not the ‘designer’ type like now.
- A ground level trampoline would be unique, swings, a climbing frame and balance beam. Equipment that both parent and child can use (when you have a child with autism you need to model everything for them) and you need to do it with them. We don’t need a sandpit with the beach a 5min drive away or artwork that is non-functional. Let’s make this playground unique and fun :)
- Would love to have swings and climbing gear that encourage child play and encourage motor skills...
• Not many parks have swings or other swinging equipment, yet these seem to be the most popular. Also flying foxes for older children. The fenced playground in Mueller Park is interesting for younger children and safe.
• The simple playground, well integrated with native plants, at the local park at the intersection of Jersey Street and Troy Terrace is a good example of what could be done at Subiaco Common. It has natural logs and stone and simple well used play equipment.
• Please make the Subiaco Common playspace into another lovely nature play area.
• Kids still love monkey bars even if they aren’t safe anymore!
• We love the playground at Lake Jualup and also on Bagot Rd and in Meuller Park - all had lots of different possibilities and room for kids to chase and hide and slide, swing, climb, dig etc.
• Please don’t let the upgrades take too long. Build something good that lasts!
• I think a slide, swings and a chin up bar for the older children would be great.
• As previously noted this play area needs to cater up to 15 years of age. It’s needs to be modern with a European vibe that suits the rest of the park. No more Australian themed bush land. It has already been done to death. Kings Park is up the road.
• Love that it is being revitalised.
• I like walking around things and jumping over streams.
• A wooden structure that is adventurous would be great. The BBQ area with seating is good and the stepping stones with the water running down into the lake is fun too.
• Would appreciate a safe slide, safe climbing platform, nature play focused and musical based play equipment. New sandpit. Merry-go round-like spinning structure.
• The so-called Green Spine from Tighe St to the Harborne St roundabout needs an interesting playground with slides, swings, climbing apparatus etc. Things that engage kids in physical activity.
• The play space is too close to the oval where dogs are free to run around and most times these dogs also run to other areas where they are to be on leash but the dog owners are too busy chatting and just let their dogs explore the entire Subiaco Common freely. We have found the park to be a dog friendly park and not a kids friendly park at all.
• I think it would be good to have a playground with a theme while at the same time having a functional and fun playground with lots of options for kids.
• This is an exciting opportunity to create a useful space which draws local children and grandchildren together. I think this could be a real opportunity to create a space which creates a community. The timing is also appropriate given the large number of apartments recently opened and the lack of a decent playground in the area. I really hope the council makes the best of this opportunity.

**What next?**
This information will be provided to playground designers who will take onboard the feedback from participants, the available budget and guidance from the city’s Playspace Strategy (2013) to develop their visions for the Subiaco Common playspace.

These concepts will be presented to the community, who will have the opportunity to participate in choosing the final design of the new playground equipment.