



community
strength
character

Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club

Position Statement

Higgins Park and Playfield Reserve Masterplan

The only reasonable option for the Town of Victoria Park to adopt in the Higgins Park and Playfield Reserve Masterplan is Option 3: Football Focus

1. The Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club, the sport of junior football and football in general, has a proud and historic connection to Higgins Park and the Town of Victoria Park.
2. There is no suitable alternative park, reserve or location for the Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club in the Town of Victoria Park, that has the potential to cater for current and future needs.
3. Further relocation of the Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club across multiple parks and reserves within the Town of Victoria Park will threaten the viability of the club and dissipate the club's key strength: a sense of community. Weakening one club to suit another is unjust.
4. The community supports the Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club to remain at Higgins Park and opposes the construction of a fenced synthetic hockey turf and its associated infrastructure on the green public open space.

Elaboration

1. The Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club (VPRJFC), the sport of junior football and football in general, has a proud and historic connection to Higgins Park and the Town of Victoria Park.
 - The Club (under various names and mergers) has been resident at Higgins Park since 1953 with a brief relocation to Fraser Park around 40 years ago. Grandfathers, fathers and sons and more recently, daughters, have played at the club.
 - The Perth Demons WAFL team was known as the Victoria Park Football Club from 1934–35.
 - The Perth Demons trained at Higgins Park while Lathlain Park was redeveloped, using the Town’s facilities with full support and assistance from VPRJFC.

2. There is no suitable alternative park, reserve or location for the Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club in the Town of Victoria Park that has the potential to cater for current and future needs.
 - The Higgins Park Needs Analysis (Lanfear Consulting, 2019) supports this view: “...*no practical locations exist for the relocation of the football club*” (p.90). Further, this report also states that the *option to relocate football and hockey will not be explored further* (p.37).
 - Refer to the attached document (Oval Requirements and Analysis) that outlines:
 - The current use of Higgins Park by the Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club. This demonstrates that Higgins Park is used in its current form to full capacity, covering the entirety of the space bound by the tennis club, Hillview Terrace, Creaton Street and Playfield Street.
 - With increasing player numbers, it will be necessary under Option 3 of the Higgins Park Masterplan to reconfigure the football ovals to maximise the use of the available space and accommodate future needs.
Note that the club’s teams use Higgins Park to its current capacity for mixed-gender and male junior football matches on Saturdays and Sundays. This fact is omitted from the Higgins Park and Playfield Place Masterplan Stakeholder Engagement Summary document.
 - A full list of the Town’s parks and reserves and their suitability to the VPRJFC. Further, large ovals that may be assumed to be suitable, have been proven unsuitable due to their insufficient space.

3. Further relocation of the Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club across multiple parks and reserves within the Town of Victoria Park will threaten the viability of the club and dissipate the club's key strength: a sense of community. Weakening one club to suit another is unjust.

- This means VPRJFC will be placed in the same position as the Victoria Park Xavier Hockey Club. If Option 1 or Option 2 of the Higgins Park Masterplan is adopted, it will result in the dispersion of the mixed-gender, female, and male teams over multiple sites. It can be expected that the VPRJFC will lobby the Town for a suitable location and facility. With a fenced synthetic hockey turf built on Higgins Park, there will no longer be anywhere in the Town with enough space to locate the VPRJFC.
- AFL is recognised as a 'high participation rate' sport and will see continued growth into the future.
- Loss of sense of community. With additional dispersion across multiple home grounds, the club's ability to generate a community is weakened. We can currently foster our community by encouraging players and families to arrive early and remain after their own training session or game to support other teams or socialise.
- Reduced patronage of the oval during football fixtures will make the club's canteen unviable. When the club had fewer members, the canteen was run at a cost to the club. In recent years with increasing membership, the canteen operates at a profit and is relied upon as a key revenue source.
- Hosting junior football matches across a range of parks and reserves would require the maintenance and storage or transport of a range of equipment including padded goalposts (which require a trailer to transport and are hefty to move and install safely), shade structures, player benches, tables and bollards. The playing arena also needs to be marked with boundary and internal lines following WAFC rules. This would be incredibly onerous and likely inhibit the community from volunteering and threaten our ability to conduct matches.
- The club would need to purchase, maintain and periodically replace additional equipment to enable matches at a variety of venues.
- Training and matches for the club's female teams is already co-located at Curtin University by arrangement with Curtin Wesley Tigers because the mixed and male teams take up the available training and match day space at Higgins Park.

4. The community supports the Victoria Park Raiders Junior Football Club to remain at Higgins Park and opposes the construction of a fenced synthetic hockey turf and its associated infrastructure on the green public open space.

- Community support for the club is evident through the rapid collection of over 1500 signatures in an online petition managed by change.org. The size of the response disregards the fact that many in our community are not connected to social media and the Internet.
- The club has developed a strong and respectful relationship with its residential neighbours who support the club.
- The existence of a football club, and not a hockey club, retains the full capacity of the public open space for use by the community and guarantees its availability and accessibility for many years to come.
- In the Town’s Public Open Space Strategy (2020), the Town identifies East Victoria Park as currently having insufficient public open space for its population and projects that St James will have insufficient public open space by 2036 with the projected increase in population.
- In The Healthy Vic Park Plan 2017 – 2022 Summary, the community rated ‘Parks and Public Open Spaces’ as the most important public health priority. The first action item in the plan is to “*Maintain active and passive parks, playground and additional public open space*” (p.10).
- Option 1 and Option 2 of the Higgins Park Masterplan restrict the community’s use of Higgins Park **the most**. There is little support for a fenced synthetic hockey turf other than from the hockey community itself.
- Higgins Park is an oval of choice for the larger football community with Perth Demons, Carlisle Football Club, Beverley Country Football Club and Ursula Frayne Catholic College utilising the oval.

<p>Wayne Tinlin President</p>	<p>Kristy McFarlane Secretary</p>
<p>Ben Richardson Vice President</p>	<p>Shari Turner Treasurer</p>

Date: