

Perth locals react to new images of controversial planned racetrack, entertainment precinct

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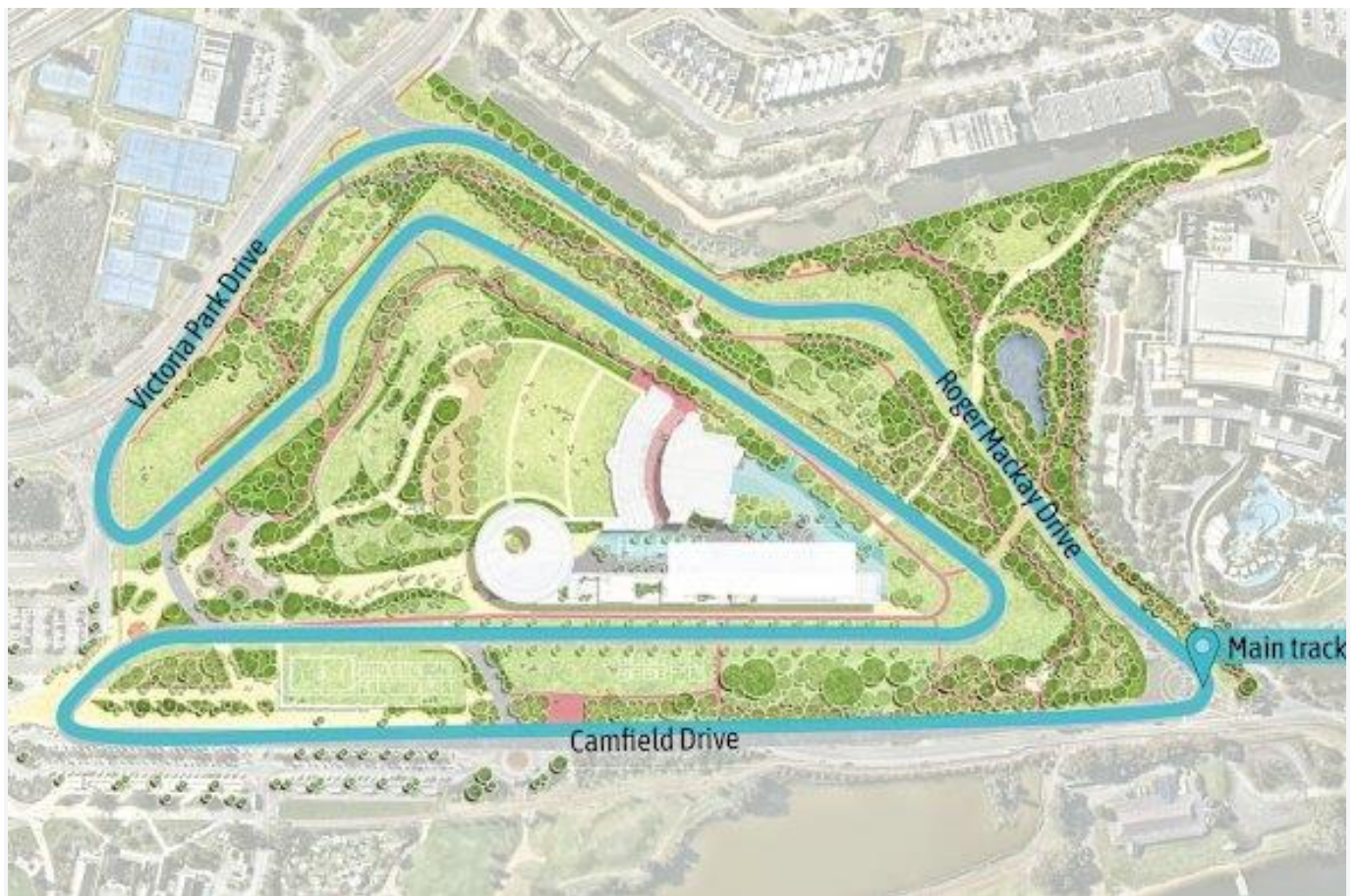
Locals are divided over new images released showing plans for Burswood's controversial multi-million dollar racetrack and entertainment precinct.



An amphitheatre is part of the state government's plans. WA GOVERNMENT

The images of Perth Park were released on Sunday, with the WA government emphasising it was a “multipurpose precinct”.

“Perth Park will be Western Australia’s premier entertainment and sporting precinct,” Premier Roger Cook said.



What the track would look like from above. WA GOVERNMENT

“Sitting alongside the Belmont Park Racecourse and Crown Perth, Perth Park will bring Optus Stadium and the State Tennis Centre together with exciting new facilities to create something truly iconic for our state long into the future.

“Not only will the project continue the reinvigoration of the Burswood Peninsula, but it will also help diversify our economy, creating new local jobs in tourism, sport, and the arts.”

The artist impressions show aerial views of the park, an urban forest, a potential hospitality venue, an amphitheatre and concepts for the main racetrack.



An aerial view of the precinct. WA GOVERNMENT

The project has previously encountered stiff opposition from the local government, member for Perth Patrick Gorman, environmental advocates and locals who will be impacted by the project.

The images have attracted criticism regarding the apparent lack of parking, allegedly underplaying the size and scope of the track, and the apparent absence of greenery bordering the precinct - despite the government's plan to "double" the tree canopy in the area throughout the project.

Save Burswood Park Alliance co-chair Dr Robin Harvey said the images were not helpful in understanding the final project.

"It still does not show with any clarity the permanent roads being built through parkland, and it even hides the widening of Camfield Drive – in fact we can't see this road at all," she said.

“We note with scepticism all the trees dotted around in this so called ‘new plan’ and we highlight that mature trees can’t be within 50 metres of a motor racing track for both safety and viewing reasons.

“The plan doesn’t show any safety run-offs, where the temporary grandstands will be placed, where people will view the race and no places for the transport trucks to park – just a pretty picture.”

The WA government said the images were artist impressions, and not planning documents.

Other residents also voiced their concerns on social media.

“The first thing to go will be the trees - trees and race cars don’t go [together] and spectators cannot see through them,” one said.



The amphitheatre as imagined at night. WA GOVERNMENT

“Apart from the environmental issues and noise, like everywhere in Perth, there’s no parking,” another posted.

“Can just imagine the thousands of cars revving up and parking on what greenery is left.”

However other locals have expressed excitement, and have called for the government to “#bringonthetrack”.

The WA government said the designs have incorporated community and stakeholder feedback, and parliamentary secretary Daniel Pastorelli said he encouraged people to have their say about the content of the artist impressions.

“I encourage everyone to take the time to review the designs we’ve released today and provide their feedback as we progress towards construction of this iconic precinct.”

Sports and Recreation Minister Rita Saffioti also spruiked the positives of the project after the images were released on Sunday.

“It will be an incredible precinct for Western Australian families, the perfect place to bring the bikes or rollerblades down with the kids and enjoy the new parklands,” she said.

The government said a recently completed independent business case for the project would deliver \$61 million in economic activity.

It currently has a project budget of \$217.5 million.

“The project will deliver significant economic returns for Western Australia, as highlighted in the business case independently prepared by ACIL Allen,” Saffioti said.

Opposition leader Basil Zempilas criticised what he characterised as inconsistency by the government on the project, and its naming as Perth Park.

“Despite these name changes ... it is exactly what it was always intended to be. It is a motorsport circuit at Burswood park,” Zempilas said.

He also criticised the business case, which was also released on Sunday, highlighting it relies on information supplied by the state government and is allegedly not independently sourced.

“I ask every West Australian when was the last time Rita Saffioti managed to bring a project in on time and in on budget?” Zempilas said.

“They are having a lend of West Australians.”

The Town of Victoria Park was contacted for comment.

It comes after Planning Minister John Carey said the Town of Victoria Park - where the precinct is being built - is “pissing money up the wall” by hiring a lobbyist to pressure his government to abandon the project.