



Merri-bek
City Council

Breese Street

Engagement Report

January 2025



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Executive Summary

Consultation Process

Merri-bek City Council consulted with the community from 7 November to 9 December seeking the community experiences and ideas for the Breese Street Precinct.

We asked people to share:

- What they liked about the Breese Street Precinct and what challenges they face while using the Street
- Ideas to improve the street

Platforms Used

- Online survey
- Direct mailing
- Physical advertising
- 2 Pop up sessions

Overview of Engagement



218 Survey Responses



9 emails received



2 Pop up Sessions



1836 letters to the community posted

What the community told us



- 70 per cent of survey respondents suggested some form of greening to improve the Breese Street Precinct
- 39 per cent of respondents suggested some form of parking changes to the area
- The top issue that respondents had with the precinct was some form of traffic related challenge (75% of respondents)
 - 42 per cent of respondents mentioned too many vehicles
 - 31 per cent of respondents mentioned parking issues
 - 11 per cent of respondents mentioned rat-running
- The top infrastructure treatment suggestions were
 - 32 per cent of respondents mentioned some form of traffic calming
 - 25 per cent of respondents mentioned making Breese Street one way
 - 24 per cent of respondents mentioned improving the footpaths
 - 20 per cent of respondents mentioned prioritising pedestrians
 - 20 per cent of respondents mentioned removing car parking on one side of Breese Street

Introduction

We're working to improve the Breese Street Precinct in Brunswick, to make it a safer, greener and more enjoyable place to live and travel



Figure 1 - Breese Street Precinct Project Area

Why are we doing this

Breese Street is a high-density residential area in Brunswick between the Upfield Rail Corridor and Sydney Road. Over the last ten years there has been significant residential development and investment in the area. There have not been any streetscape upgrades while the land use has changed massively. Council has also heard from the community that they would like to see changes to the area.

The project goals are

- Improve sustainable transport options within the area like walking and riding bikes
- Increase greenery and tree planting
- Improve the look and feel of the street
- Improve road safety
- Improve public transport connections

Purpose of this round of Engagement

The purpose of this engagement was to understand how the community currently use the Breese Street Precinct. We asked the community to identify what they liked about the precinct, what challenges they experience, and to offer us some suggestions for improvements.

Using this information Council will design some streetscape improvements and come back to the community for comments on the designs in 2025

Engagement activities



Online Survey

An online survey was made available to the public for a little over four weeks, from 7 November to 9 December 2024. The survey received 218 responses.

Letter to residents

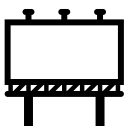


A letter drop to 1836 letters with information about the Breese Street Precinct Streetscape works and a link to the online survey were distributed to residents and business owners who would be directly affected by the proposed works.

Emails



3430 emails were sent to people that are registered with Conversations Merri-bek and who have expressed an interest in transport or Brunswick. An additional email regarding an in-person community engagement session went out to 149 recipients who subscribed to the Breese Street project page on Conversations Merri-bek.



Physical advertising

Posters linking to the survey were displayed in the Breese Street Precinct for duration of the consultation period.



Stakeholder Engagement

Merri-bek City Council reached out to several key stakeholder including Merri-bek BUG, Sydney Road Trader's Association, Brunswick Residents Network and Walk-on Merri-bek.



Pop-up Sessions

An in-person session was hosted at Bulleke-bek park on 21 November 2024 and a second session at Coburg Farmers Market on 7 December.

International Association of Public Participation Spectrum

We engaged with our community on this project at the level of 'Involve' on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum, and in line with Council's Future Bike Lane Engagement Process (2022).

This meant our engagement was designed to ensure the concerns and aspirations of our community, including local businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders, are directly reflected in the detailed designs that will be developed following this round of engagement. We will provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision so that our community understand our decisions when the detailed designs are completed.

Survey Results

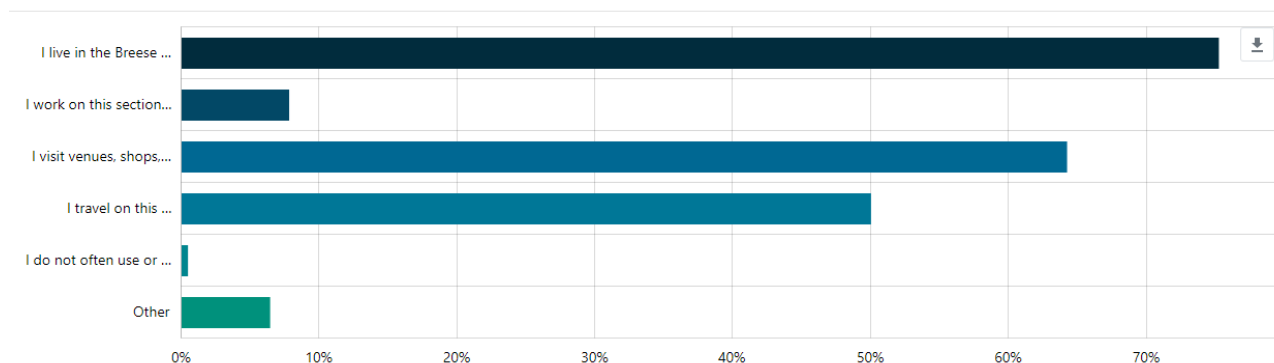
A survey with six questions was provided to get an understanding of people experience with the Breese Street Precinct.

Note – the responses we received from the community from Question 4 onwards were long form responses and respondents often mentioned multiple issues in their responses. i.e an answer may include a comment on parking issues and requests for greening. This response would be categorised subsequently as both. The responses were then grouped together to make data analysis easier.

What best describes you?

For the first question we asked respondents to tell us their connection to Breese Street, with the majority (75%) indicated they lived in the Precinct.

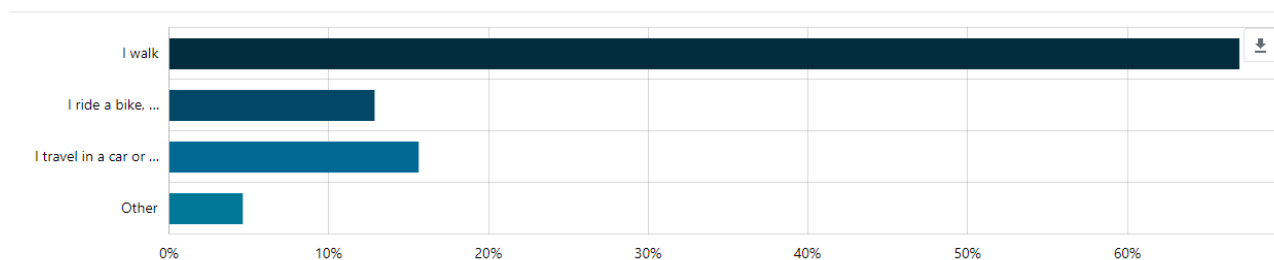
1 What best describes you? (Choose all that apply) Required
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 218 (100%)



How do you usually travel on Breese Street?

For the second question we asked residents to choose their main mode of travel on Breese Street, with the vast majority (67%) indicating that their primary mode of transport was walking. We did receive feedback that respondents wanted to choose multiple modes for this question.

2 How do you usually travel on Breese Street? (Choose one) Required
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 218 (100%)



What do you like about Breese Street?

The third survey question was an open-ended question inviting respondents to tell us what they currently liked about the precinct. The most common item that people mentioned they liked about the precinct was Bulleke-Bek Park and associated garden/greenspace (41%), this was followed by various businesses, cafes shops and bars (35%). Respondents also indicated they liked the precinct's proximity to Sydney Road (18%), to public transport (17%) as well as the Upfield bike path (4%).

13 per cent of respondents said they didn't like anything about the precinct.

What challenges do you experience while using Breese Street?

Traffic Challenges	75%
Too Many Cars/Traffic	42%
Vehicle Speed	16%
Parking Issues (including visitors parking, cars looking for parking, parking on both side of Breese Street)	31%
Thru traffic / rat running	11%
Active Transport	30%
Issues with Walking	9%
Issues with Cycling	6%
Issues with crossing the road (incl existing crossing)	17%
Not accesable for people in wheelchairs/prams	5%
Open Space Challenges	26%
Lack of Canopy Cover / Shade /Heat Issues	22%
Lack of Green Spaces	5%
Lack of Seating/water	1%
Condition Issues	39%
Issues With Road Surface	20%
Issues With Footpath width or Quality	22%

Fig 4 – table of top issues identified

Figure 4 outlines the challenges identified by respondents.

The respondents offered a range of challenges that they currently experience using Breese Street.

Traffic issues were the most commonly reported challenges. Items such as cars idling, getting stuck on weekends due to increased traffic and cars parked on the western side of the street and the presence of trucks due to frequent construction were also often mentioned.

Pedestrian and active transport challenges were also a key theme, with respondents noting that while the new crossing had made it easier for them to cross Breese Street, they still struggled to cross in other locations, as well as issues with narrow footpaths, quality and lack of shade cover while walking along the length of the street. While the crossing was referenced frequently as a positive new addition to the streetscape residents also mentioned that it had become a bottleneck on weekends when vehicles struggled to pass each other with increased traffic and parking on the eastern side of Breese Street.

Respondents also highlighted condition issues as a concern (39%), bringing attention to both the road and issues with the quality of the footpath.

Other key challenges noted not outlined in figure 4 include rubbish/cleanliness (10%), specifically calling out the intersection of Hope Street/Breese Street (6%), lighting and personal safety (6%) and issues with the built form (8%) which is out of scope for this project.

Note – the percentages refer to the number of respondents total mentioned the associated item. Some respondents mentioned both vehicle speed and parking as an issue and they both have been categorised under traffic challenges

What improvements would you like to see in the Breese Street Precinct

We asked residents to give us three suggestions of improvements that they would like to see to the precinct. These responses were grouped together based on themes and then consolidated and analysed. Responses were not weighted based on priority.

The top suggestions for improving Breese Street were as follows:

1. More Greenery and Trees (70%)
2. Changes to Parking (39%)
3. Traffic Calming (32%)
4. Making Breese Street one way (25%)
5. Improving footpaths (24%)

The most popular response by a significant margin was to increase greenery and tree planning in the precinct. This also aligns with Bulleke-Bek park being the item that was most enjoyed by respondents. Requests for greenery came in many different forms, from additional tree planting in the road to provide shade for pedestrians, to revisiting the proposed park at 1-9 Breese Street (8%).

Requests to changes to parking was also a common theme. Suggestions included removing parking on the western side of Breese Street (20%), which was higher than expected, introducing permitted parking, issues with loading zones and food delivery riders.

Similarly, some form of traffic calming was also suggested frequently by respondents. Items that came up regularly, issues with congestion due to parked vehicles and the slow point at the pedestrian crossing, less traffic and cars, items to slow traffic including speed bumps.

Approximately a quarter of respondents mentioned making Breese Street a one-way street. This is consistent with the advocacy work done by the Better Breese Block, and this percentage was higher than expected.

Lastly improving footpaths and other pedestrian improvements were frequently mentioned. Outside of improving footpaths the following items were common themes identified in the survey.

- More pedestrian crossings or other pedestrian improvements (20%)
- Pedestrianisation or making Breese Street a shared zone (20%) The Council project at Albert Street Brunswick was frequently mentioned as an example.
- Improving the intersection of Breese Street and Hope Street (12%), including making it safer for people to cross all of Breese, Hope and Oven Streets.
- More seating or benches (6%)

Appendix

Survey

We want to know about your experiences with Breese Street, and what improvements you'd like to see for the street.

Take our survey to provide your feedback and help develop our plans.

What best describes you? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ I live in the Breese Street Precinct
- ☐ I work on this section of Breese Street
- ☐ I visit venues, shops, parks, or businesses on this area of Breese Street
- ☐ I travel on this section of Breese Street to get to other places
- ☐ I do not often use or visit Breese Street
- ☐ Other (please specify)

How do you usually travel on Breese Street?

- ☐ I walk
- ☐ I ride a bike, scooter, skateboard or other wheeled transport
- ☐ I travel in a car or other motor vehicle as a driver or passenger
- ☐ Other

What do you like about Breese Street?

What challenges do you experience using Breese Street?

What improvements would you like to see in the Breese Street Precinct

First Suggestion

Second Suggestion

Third Suggestion

Is there anything else you'd like to add?