



Merri-bek
City Council

Moving Around Merri-bek

Engagement Report



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Acknowledgement of Country

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Executive summary

Consultation Process

Merri-bek City Council consulted with the community from 13 November to 24 December 2023, seeking feedback on our draft transport strategy, Moving Around Merri-bek.

We asked people to:

1. Review the draft strategy and action plan
2. Provide feedback.

Platforms Used

- Online survey
- Virtual information sessions
- Social media
- Direct mailing
- Physical advertising

Overview of Engagement



What you told us



- 83 per cent of the people who participated the survey supported the transport strategy
- Most people who participated in the survey supported the vision and values identified in Moving Around Merri-bek
- Survey participants responded positively to the proposed Streets for People framework
- Safety, particularly for pedestrians, was noted as a priority for most demographics who took part in the survey
- Many participants expressed a need for more active transport options
- Community members advocated for more cycling connections and safer routes
- Public transport improvements – to stops and to routes and lines – emerged as a priority
- Participants expressed desire for improved transport equity – especially in the north
- Many respondents requested more details and specifics in the strategy and action plan

Introduction

We asked the community for feedback on our draft transport strategy, Moving Around Merri-bek. The engagement process ran from Monday 13 November to Sunday 24 December 2023. It provided an opportunity for the community to review and provide feedback on the draft transport strategy and action plan.

We are committed to providing an accessible, safe, and well-connected transport system that caters to the diverse needs of our community. As part of this, we have written a new, draft transport strategy, Moving Around Merri-bek. The document is a long-term strategy that will guide our transport policies and projects in the coming years.

Overview of Moving Around Merri-bek

Moving Around Merri-bek establishes a framework for addressing the current and future transport needs of our community. This document will guide the planning, development, and implementation of transportation projects, fostering a system that promotes sustainability, safety, and enhances transport choice for our community. It will guide the way we manage and make changes to our transport system and outline our transport advocacy priorities to the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

This document will be reviewed and updated when required to ensure it reflects Council and the community’s priorities, and best-practice transport planning principles.

The development of this strategic document commenced with a comprehensive Discussion Paper, which was formulated based on insights derived from a Social Research Report, commissioned by Council. The initial engagement for the discussion paper took place between 24 July and 2 September 2023. We then used the results of this engagement to develop the draft transport strategy and action plan. Engagement for these documents ran from 13 November to 24 December 2023. This document details the results of this feedback and outlines the refinements made to the strategy and action plan based on is feedback. The final documents will be presented to Council for adoption at the March 2024 Council Meeting.

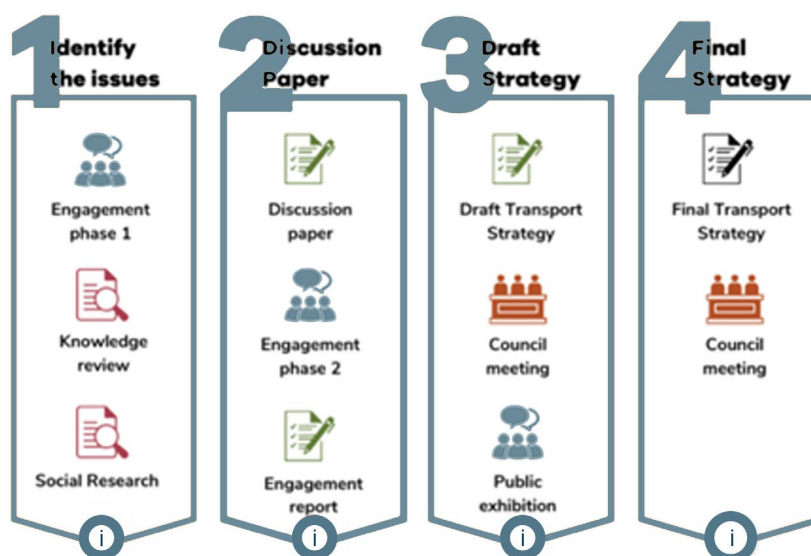


Figure 1 Diagram outlining the process for developing Moving Around Merri-bek

Previous engagement

The Moving Around Merri-bek Discussion Paper was released on 24 July 2023 and engagement commenced to seek community feedback on the development of a new transport strategy.

The paper identified 6 core themes:

- Safety
- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Health
- Liveability
- Collaboration

The paper also outlined challenges and opportunities within Merri-bek's transport system, including but not limited to:

- The need to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists
- The need to make the transport system more accessible for people with disability
- The need to reduce the transport system's impact on the environment
- The need to promote active transport and reduce reliance on cars
- The need to create more vibrant and welcoming public spaces

The consultation process ran from 24 July to 2 September and generated a strong response from the community. More than 1000 people provided feedback in 8 languages through a survey and several interactive activities, both in-person and digitally.

Previous findings

The results of this engagement stage indicated strong community support for a transport system built around the proposed values, with the community particularly prioritising safety. Specifically, the community selected 'Safety - A safe transport system' as the highest priority theme for the new Strategy (68.5%). Liveability was ranked the second highest priority overall (62.1%), closely followed by Accessibility (57.6%) and Sustainability (57%).

This was again reflected in a demonstrated desire from the community to access more active transport options but indicated that there are barriers and challenges to this, the most prominent of which was safety.

Access to public transport, and a desire for more efficient networks was noted as a specific concern for our community. The bus network garnered specific criticism and many individuals from all age groups indicated a desire to use the network more.

The full engagement report for the Discussion Paper stage is available at the following link:
<https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/moving-around-merri-bek>

Draft strategy engagement

The feedback gathered during the Discussion Paper engagement stage was used to develop a draft transport strategy. Our second round of community engagement sought feedback once more and is summarised in this report.

We designed and conducted comprehensive communications and engagement program which aimed to gather specific feedback on the draft strategy from a broad range of community members and stakeholders including those who live, work, study, visit or own/operate a business in Merri-bek.

This community consultation was undertaken over 5 weeks, from 13 November to 24 December 2023.

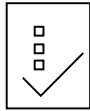
Purpose of this round of engagement

- To gather community feedback on the draft Moving Around Merri-bek strategy
- To assess the level of community support for the strategy
- To determine the level of community support for the action plan
- To identify any opportunities to improve the strategy and action plan
- To ensure that the Moving Around Merri-bek strategy meets the needs and priorities of the Merri-bek community.



Engagement Activities

Merri-bek City Council used a variety of engagement and communications methods to gather feedback from the community on the Draft Transport Strategy. These methods included:



Online survey

An online survey was made available to the public for four weeks, from Monday 13 November to Sunday 24 December 2023. The survey received over 255 responses from residents of all ages, backgrounds, and locations across Merri-bek.



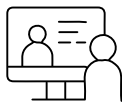
Letter to residents

A letter with information about the draft Transport Strategy and a link to the online survey was distributed to all households throughout Merri-bek.



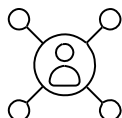
Written submissions

We received 12 written submissions from local residents and advocacy groups. These submissions provided in-depth feedback on the strategy and action plan.



Online Community information sessions

An online information session was held on 6 December, providing residents with an opportunity to learn more about the draft Transport Strategy and the opportunities to provide feedback.



Culturally And Linguistically Diverse Engagement

Members of our Community Connectors program were provided with a briefing on the draft transport strategy and opportunities to provide feedback. Key documents were provided in our top 7 languages other than English to be distributed within Culturally and Linguistically diverse communities. A total of 47 surveys were completed in a language other than English.



Digital and physical advertising

Targeted advertising campaigns were shared on Merri-bek's social media channels in English and our 7 languages other than English. Posters were displayed across the municipality in all 8 languages.

Submissions

We received 12 written submissions from members of our community and local advocacy groups providing feedback on our draft strategy. These submissions outlined suggestions for improvement, ideas and concerns, and detailed lived experience as well as data gathered by the groups through independent surveys.

Common Themes:

- Call for more focus on improvements for pedestrians – footpath improvements (width, quality and maintenance), safer crossings, and provision of facilities along walking routes
- Prioritise improvements to Sydney Road, with special mention given to the urgency for accessible tram stops and other accessibility and safety upgrades, pedestrian safety upgrades, and protected bike lanes
- Explicitly address a road and road user hierarchy which prioritises pedestrians and cyclists
- Take a proactive approach to the implementation of safer speed limits throughout the municipality, especially on roads that were not affected by the 40km/h rollout across 2023-2024
- Call for public transport improvements for train and tram lines and the bus network
- Build and improve the Merri-bek bicycle network, providing safer crossings and intersections and parking as well as bicycle lanes
- Implement a commitment to accountability and timeframes for projects, progressive timelines, and mode shift
- Include specific reference to older people and younger people in the strategy with consideration for the barriers faced by these groups in accessing transport.

Unique calls-to-action:

- Murray Road improvements
- Concerns for accessible public transport travel during the level crossing removal and call to ensure accessible options are in place for this time
- Acknowledge limits and challenges of electric vehicles
- Create safer environments to travel to and around activity centres.

Survey Results

A survey was provided to gather feedback on the draft Transport Strategy and Action Plan. This section will discuss the results of that survey.

A total of 255 people responded to the survey. This included 208 responses in English, and 47 completed in a language other than English. The surveys in another language are as follows:

- 7 in Italian
- 7 in Arabic
- 2 in Greek
- 10 in Nepali
- 6 in Turkish
- 8 in Urdu
- 7 in Chinese

We asked people to review the draft strategy and action plan. A survey was provided that asked them questions about their support for the documents overall as well as specific parts of the documents. An open text box was provided to allow respondents to expand on their answer. Demographic questions were also asked to help us understand how peoples background and personal characteristics shaped their views.

When asked about general opinions on the transport strategy, 78 per cent of participants indicated support, or support with concerns. 13 per cent noted they did not support the strategy, and 10 per cent selected that they were neutral or unsure of their support.

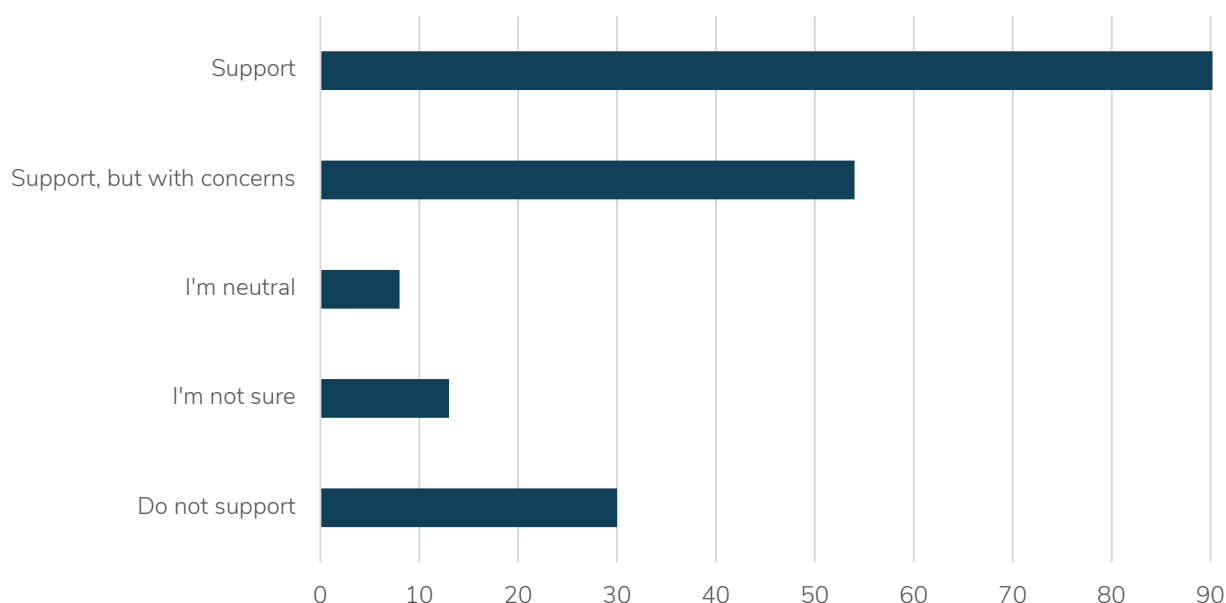


Figure 2 Overall, what do you generally feel about the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy

An open text box was provided for respondents to provide more detailed feedback and justification for their level of support.

Those who selected 'support' highlighted:

- Desire for safer infrastructure, lower speed limits, and traffic calming measures
- Call for better active transport infrastructure and separated cycling lanes
- Concerns over Council's commitment to project implementation and financial feasibility
- Requests for improvements to pedestrian and cycling networks within the municipality
- Requests for improved public transport networks, particularly concerning the Upfield line

Those who selected 'support, but with concerns' noted:

- Desire for safety solutions beyond slowing cars and safer speed limits
- The need for improved transportation connections, especially between Craigieburn and Upfield train lines
- Advocacy for equity in infrastructure development across Merri-bek
- Concerns about further reducing speed limits
- Unnecessary speed humps impacting the ability to travel at the speed limit
- Question feasibility of reducing parking without clear alternatives or incentives for mode shift

Those who selected 'do not support' noted:

- The strategy is restrictive to automobile road users
- Opposition to further reduction of speed limits
- Concerns about the strategy not adequately addressing safety for women
- Concerns that the strategy favours cycling over other modes of transport
- Concerns that the strategy and action plan may divert Council resources away from addressing more immediate issues like fixing potholes, rubbish bins, and planting trees
- Desire to focus on maintaining existing transport choices in Merri-bek

Those who indicated 'neutral' or 'unsure' noted:

- Concerns about overdevelopment causing traffic, parking constraints, and strained infrastructure
- Interest in one-way lanes and improved rules for shared paths
- Desire for clear, achievable goals to improve transport systems in Merri-bek

Vision and Values

The draft transport strategy outlines 6 values which make up the vision for Moving Around Merri-bek, those being: safe, accessible, sustainable, healthy, liveable and inclusive. The draft strategy then outlines key objectives to ensure these values are applied to Merri-bek's transport projects.

Participants were asked to indicate their feedback on this vision. 85 per cent of participants indicated support or support with concerns for this aspect of the strategy. 12 per cent did not support, 4 per cent were unsure.

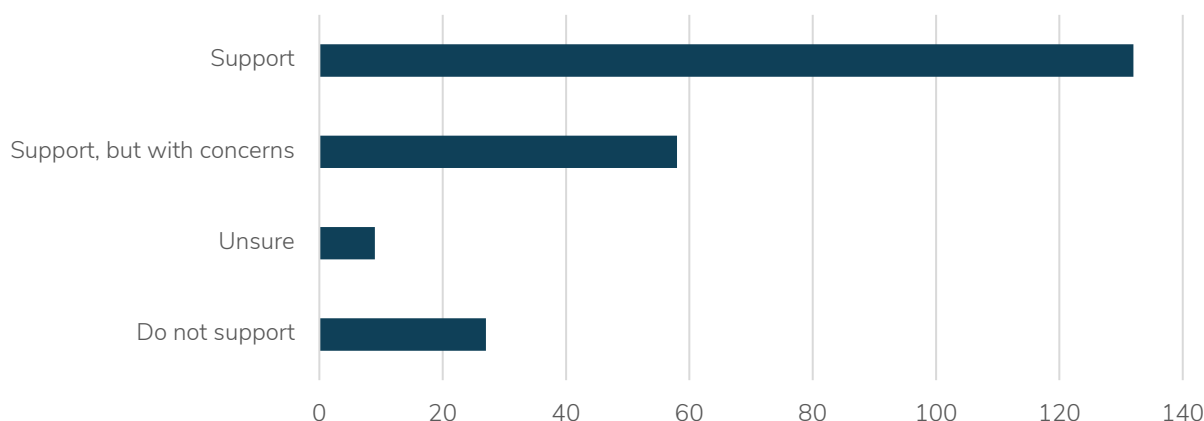


Figure 3 How do you feel about the vision and values of Moving Around Merri-bek?

An open text box was also provided for people to provide further detail on their response.

For those in support of our vision and values, priorities noted included:

- Reduce car dependency and prioritise sustainable transport
- Enhance pedestrian infrastructure
- Improve public transport stops
- Support for initiatives like street charging points for electric vehicles.

Of those indicating concerns, requests for changes included:

- Support for the proposed vision with a call for concrete timelines and action plans to effect changes
- Greater focus on walking and cycling
- More trees, shade, and a focus on environmental sustainability
- Increase advocacy for public transport
- More specificity in translating values to action
- Ensure geographic and socio-economic equity in applying our values
- Maintaining access for those who rely on driving

For those who did not support the vision and values, requested changes included:

- General improvement of transport system within Merri-bek
- Improve infrastructure for active transport users and improved path maintenance
- Support for the transition to electric and hydrogen cars
- Improve safety for active transport users of all mobility levels

- Parking challenges and dual-purpose designs, concerns about resident parking challenges
- Concerns about reducing speed limits and suggesting uniform 50km/hr limits.

Transport System

The draft strategy outlines the transport networks that make up Merri-bek's transport network. The draft strategy then outlines key objectives for each of these networks. 84 per cent of survey participants indicated support or support with concerns for the transport systems and related objectives identified in the transport strategy. Another 12 per cent did not support this section, 3 per cent were unsure or neutral.

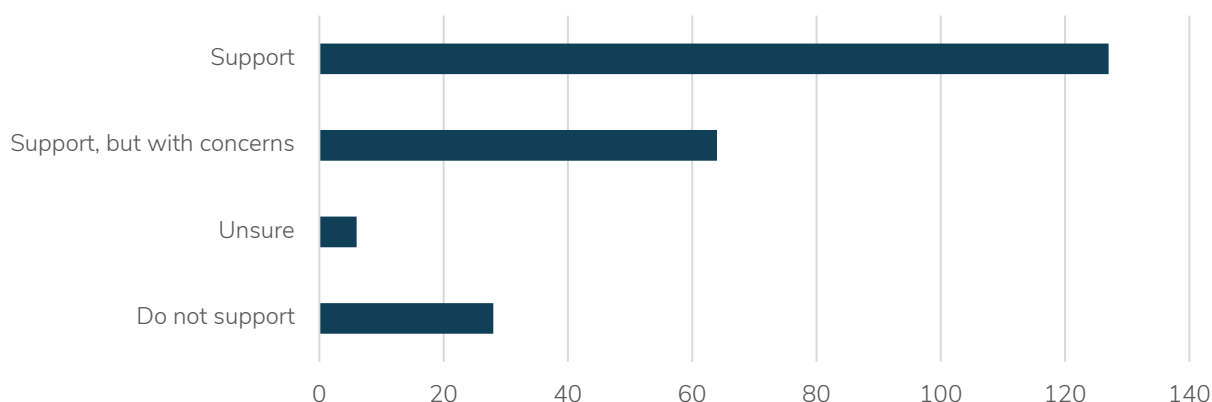


Figure 4 How do you feel about the vision outlined for our transport system in Moving Around Merri-bek?

For those in support of the transport system components, they noted:

- Strong support for electric buses and aim to be zero emissions in the transport system
- Prioritising non-car transport modes, and suggesting for traffic calming measures
- Transition away from private car dominance on Merri-bek streets
- Introduction of hire bike/scooter systems
- Improving safety and accessibility for all, including pedestrians with prams or mobility aids.

Of those indicating support with concerns, requests for changes included:

- Duplication of railway tracks and tram line extension to the northern pocket
- Improving transport services in the northern areas for enhanced accessibility
- Promoting biking and walking as alternative modes of transport
- Focus on addressing environmental concerns associated with car usage
- Improved safety for pedestrians and active transport users, especially on Sydney Road
- Introducing electric vehicle street charging points, possibly through pilot projects

Those who did not support the transport system section noted:

- Concerns over focus on bikes and not public transportation
- Perceived disconnect from the reality of people's needs

- Resistance to reducing vehicle speeds and blocking off smaller roads
- Request to prioritise residents and create dedicated permit parking spots
- Improve the quality of roads and paths in Merri-bek
- Perception that the strategy prioritises everything else above the driving network

Streets for People

75 per cent of respondents indicated support or support with concerns for the new Streets for People framework, a tool for selecting streets for projects. 17 per cent of respondents did not support the framework, with 10 per cent stating that they were unsure of their support.

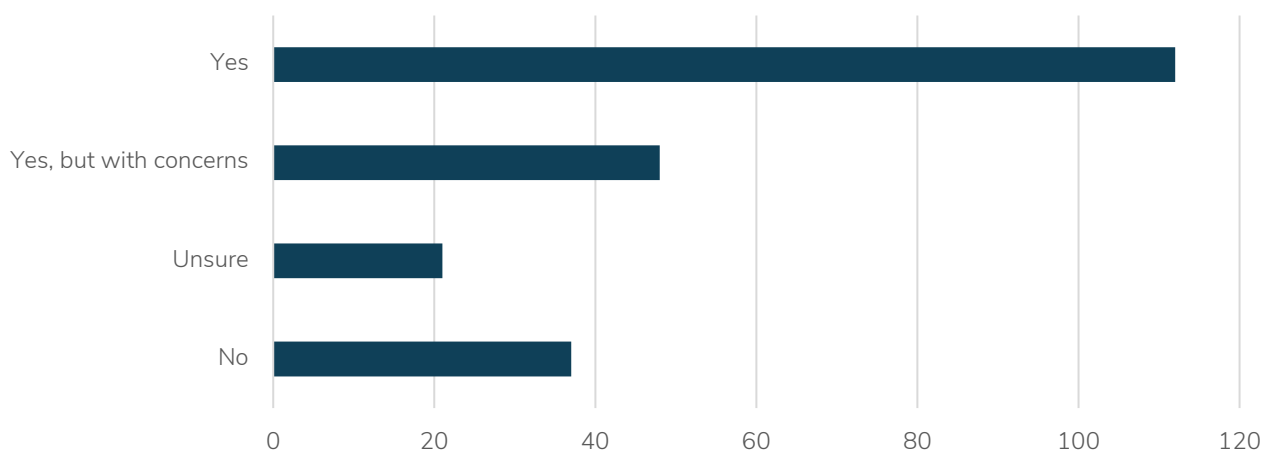


Figure 5 Do you think our Streets for People framework will help improve our streets?

For those in support the Streets for People framework, notes and suggestions include:

- Overall positive reception of the Streets for People framework
- Strong community support for improving safety and streetscape improvements
- Advocacy for prioritising cyclists and addressing driving habits
- Concerns about potential bias in street selection criteria
- Emphasis on efficiency and safety in active transport
- Improving accessibility and walkability within Merri-bek

Of those indicating concerns, requests for changes included:

- Concerns about Streets for People framework vagueness
- Support for separating pedestrians and micro-mobility users
- Recognition of the continued need for cars and concerns about speed limits
- Concerns about methodology, favouring people-focused streets
- Concerns about potential street designations in the southern part
- Requests for a clearer understanding of street investigations

Those who did not support the streets of people framework, expressed:

- Concerns that framework will prioritise cycling over other forms of transport
- Concerns that the framework won't help create safer streets for people
- Concerns, from walking paths to congestion and requests for disability access and safer crossings
- Highlighted the importance of road functionality for broader societal needs

Action Plan

The Action Plan is an accompanying document to the strategy which outlines projects planned over a 12-month period. 71 per cent of respondents indicated support or support with concerns for the action plan. Another 15 per cent did not support the plan, with 14 per cent either neutral or unsure.

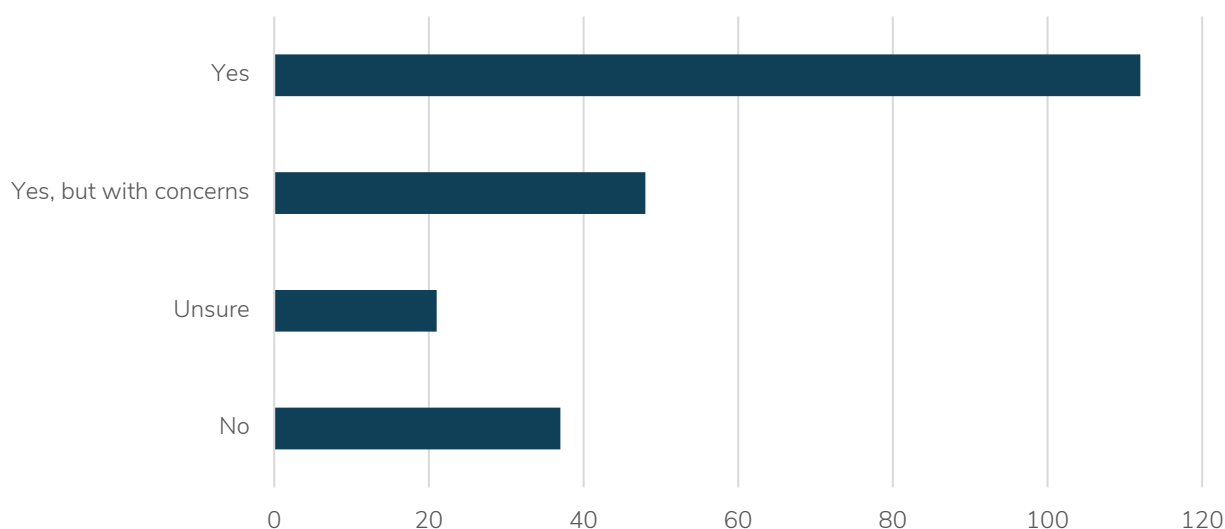


Figure 6 How do you feel about the Action Plan

For those in support of the action plan, they noted and suggested:

- Support for action plan and initiatives including reduced speed limits and traffic calming measures
- Uncomfortable road crossings for people with mobility restrictions
- Increase safety and accessibility when traveling from east to west
- Call for a prioritised project list with increased spending on active travel
- Solutions for car parking around multi-dwelling blocks impacting narrow streets
- Support for trial bike infrastructure with an emphasis on aesthetic and quality

Of those indicating support with concerns, requests for changes included:

- Request for a comprehensive 10-year active transport capital works plan
- More focus on public transport improvements and tram stop accessibility
- Advocacy for separate bike paths, particularly on high-speed limit roads
- Holistic approach to school trips with a focus on safer crossings
- Public transport improvements, especially to accessibility
- Desires for reduced car dependency, lower speed limits, and increased greenery

For those who did not support the action plans, points raised included:

- Imbalance in the strategy's focus, particularly noting an emphasis on bicycles over public transport
- Issues raised about electric vehicle charging for residents without driveways
- Opposition to reducing speeds to 40 or 30 km/h.

Demographics

Questions relating to personal characteristics were included in the survey, such as age, gender, residential suburb, and background. These questions are asked so that we can better understand the different needs our residents have. This section explores differences in age, gender, and cultural and/or linguistic background to better understand any differences within each group compared to the overall results.

Age

There was a multiple choice question to ask the age range of the respondents. Figure 7 highlights the responses provided from the online survey.

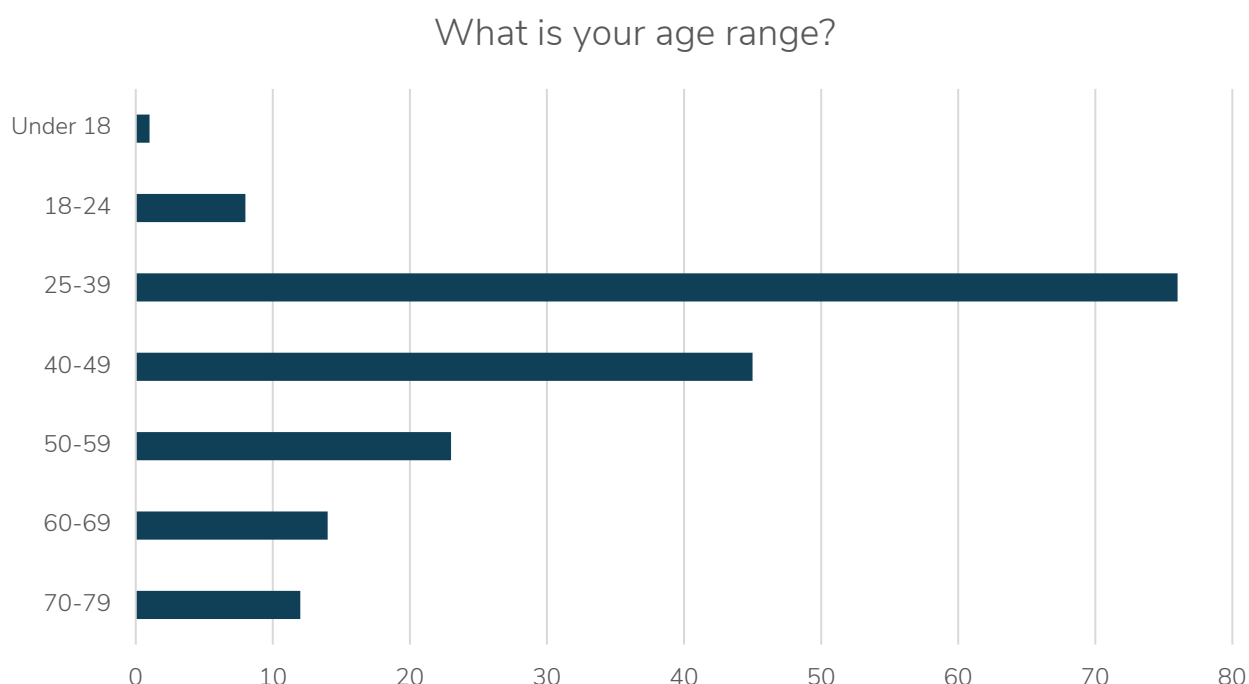


Figure 7 Age range of respondents

The survey indicated an overarching support for the Moving Around Merri-bek strategy. However, the slight differences in feedback across different age groups highlight the importance of taking tailored approaches to individual projects to meet the diverse needs and preferences of the community. The results provide valuable insights for the Merri-bek City Council to refine and implementing into the strategy.

Age 18-24:

- Strong support for the strategy's vision and values
- Calls for evidence-based approaches to enhance walkability and reduce car dependency
- Emphasis on pleasant, safe, and segregated paths for cyclists and pedestrians
- Support for the Action Plan but with recommendations for more substantial infrastructure changes

Age 25-39:

- Preference for practical plans over abstract values
- Concerns about congestion and parking issues due to a perceived focus on alternative transport modes
- Strong support for improving public transport, cycling infrastructure, and pedestrian safety
- Emphasis on the need for clear implementation plans and consistent application of the framework

Age 40-49:

- Mixed opinions on the impact on car users
- Concerns about communication, inclusivity, and potential bias towards more affluent areas
- Suggestions for specific and ambitious goals, re-classifying roads, and adding accountability measures
- Focus on safety infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists

Age 50-59:

- Support for a shift towards public transport, walking, and cycling
- Concerns about feasibility and impact of strategy on residents relying on cars
- Generally supported framework, with specific examples of streets for consideration
- Desire for more community consultation before changes and concerns about transparency

Age 60-69:

- Calls for a bolder vision with concrete goals and specific action plans
- Emphasis on pedestrian infrastructure, lower speed limits, and protected cycling networks
- Importance of clear timelines, budgets, and direct engagement with residents
- Integration of climate targets and creation of vibrant, people-centric streets

Age 70+:

- Support for the strategy's values but a desire for a bolder vision with clear priorities
- Focus on active transport, public transport improvements, and safety for all users
- Strong call to Improved accessibility for all mobility levels.

Gender

A multiple-choice question was asked to ask what gender respondents identify as. Figure 8 highlights the responses provided from the online survey.

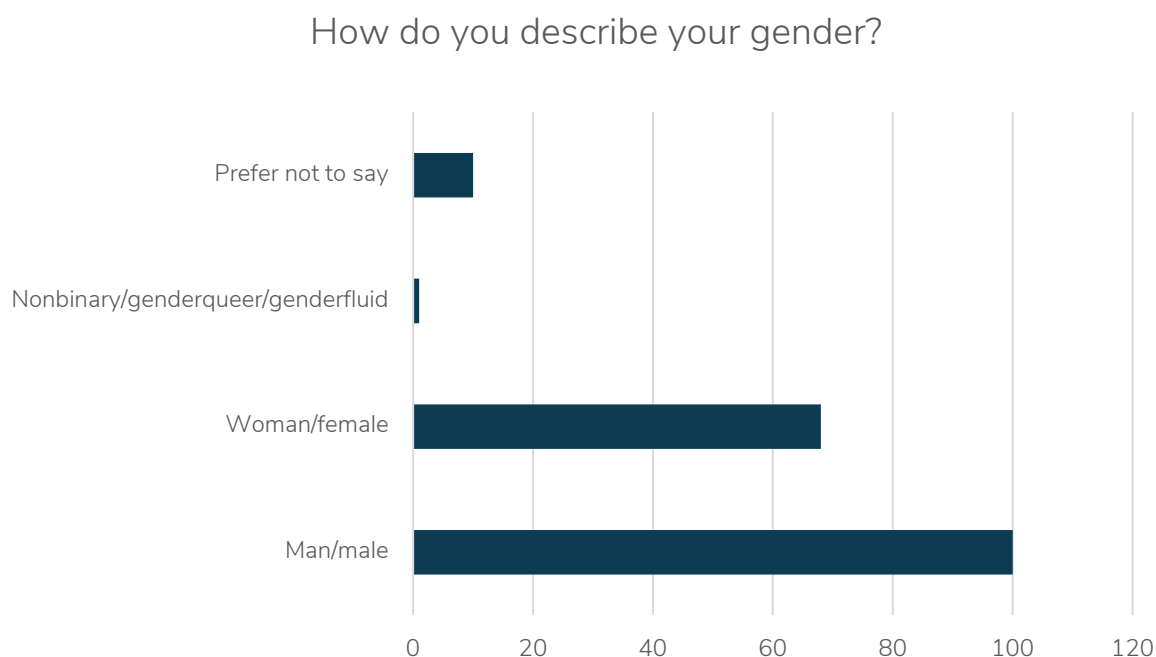


Figure 8 Breakdown in responses by gender

The feedback from different genders reflects a diverse set of perspectives. While men prioritised safety, efficiency, and a balanced approach between various modes of transport, women tended to focus on sustainability, community consultation, and specific precinct needs. Those who selected preferred not to disclose their gender highlighted a mix of concerns, emphasising the importance of addressing diverse needs and ensuring transparent and inclusive planning. We did not receive responses from anyone who selected nonbinary/genderqueer/genderfluid. Future engagements should endeavour to reach this community more efficiently.

Men:

- Residents, especially the elderly, express discomfort crossing roads without footpath ramps, emphasising the need for accessibility improvements
- Mixed opinions on sustainability, with concerns about hindering car transportation
- Desire for specific improvements, including extending tram routes and enhancing connections between train stations (Craigieburn and Upfield train lines)
- Calls for better bus services, longer timings, and improved integration with other transport modes
- Emphasis on community safety, liability, and a balance between cars and pedestrians.
- Observations about inconsistencies between the proposed action plan and current Council implementations
- Concerns about pedestrian safety, and requests for footpath remediation
- Concerns about achieving goals, especially in reducing car dependency

Women:

- Desire for more and safer infrastructure for walking and cycling, including separated bike lanes, lower speed limits, and traffic calming measures
- A push towards making Merri-bek more walkable and cyclable, with concerns about the practicality of reducing car dependency for those relying on cars for essential daily tasks or transporting freight
- Residents of Fawkner feeling neglected and wanting more thorough community consultation
- Highlighting specific areas like the Breese Street precinct and Hope Street for improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and safety measures
- Emphasis on better public transport, including improved bus services and tram extensions
- Addressing climate change, reducing car use, and the need for more green spaces.

Prefer Not to Say:

- Advocacy for balancing the needs of different neighbourhoods and focusing on road safety, bicycles, and pedestrians separately
- Concerns about uneven footpaths, poor lighting, unsafe shared pathways, and the importance of ensuring resident parking options.
- Some support for the strategy's direction but concerns about specific elements and implementation plans

Culturally And Linguistically Diverse

Members of Merri-bek's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community were able to provide feedback on the draft strategy in 7 languages other than English. The survey and relevant materials translated into Urdu, Turkish, Nepali, Italian, Greek, Chinese and Arabic, and advertised in both community facilities and via Council's Community Connector program.

For each section, common themes and priorities for different CALD groups emerged.

Vision and Values

The vision and values of the Moving Around Merri-bek draft strategy received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community. Participants praised its inclusive and sustainable values and, emphasis on accessibility.

Common Themes:

- Generally positive sentiments regarding the strategy's comprehensiveness and community-oriented nature
- Recognition of the significance of accessibility in various forms
- Support for the outlined transport vision with an emphasis on long-term, forward-looking goals
- Identification of infrastructure challenges, such as increased buses, narrow bike paths, poor sidewalks, and dangerous pedestrian crossings

Unique Feedback by Language Groups:

Urdu:

- Requests tram service extension to Campbellfield
- Highlights the importance of consistent bus services

Turkish:

- Suggests specific access points and raises concerns about security and cleanliness, especially on Sydney Road

Nepali:

- Expresses happiness about city-wide implementation aligning with sustainable development goals

Italian:

- Advocates for prioritising car usage, accessibility improvements, and more efficient public transport

Greek:

- Recommends exploring other transport systems for inspiration and seeks more specificity in the strategy

Chinese:

- Suggests improving connectivity between different transportation networks

Arabic:

- Emphasises the importance of an environmentally friendly and easily navigable transport system, including improvements for car roads

Streets for People

Community feedback on the Streets for People framework indicates a mix of positive sentiments and concerns. Residents express support for the initiative but seek more detailed information and improved communication. Safety, accessibility, and parking challenges emerge as primary considerations, emphasising the importance of transparent and community-oriented urban planning.

Common Themes:

- Feedback reflects a generally positive reception of the Streets for People framework
- Residents express concerns about parking
- Emphasis is placed on creating an environment for active community participation and ensuring safety for successful implementation
- Safety and accessibility are recurring themes, with residents advocating for safer environments
- Some residents express frustration over a lack of detailed information about the framework, suggesting a need for increased transparency and clearer communication to address community concerns.

Unique Feedback by Language Groups:**Urdu:**

- Highlights parking concerns, expressing a need for attention and potential solutions

Turkish:

- Emphasises the importance of active community participation for the success of the framework and advocates for increased safety

Nepali:

- Requests specific improvements, indicating a need for leisure centres with convenient walking access and distance from activity centres

Italian:

- Critiques the lack of detailed information on the framework

Chinese:

- Suggests learning from Japanese cities for innovative parking solutions and recommends using electronic road signs in community languages

Arabic:

- Expresses positive sentiments about the framework but raises concerns about Council's past improvement initiatives and seeks clarification on the time frame for the current strategy

Action Plan

Community feedback on the Merri-bek City Council Action Plan highlights a common desire for increased awareness and practical improvements. Feedback featured a specific focus on cyclist safety, transportation enhancements, and concerns about traffic management strategies. The overall sentiment is hopeful, with residents expressing optimism about the potential positive impact of the proposed actions.

Common Themes

- Infrastructure concerns, such as repairing footpaths and organising parking, emerge as a common theme, reflecting a shared desire for tangible improvements within the community.
- Focus on road safety for cyclists and pedestrians
- Improvements to active transport routes and transport infrastructure

Unique Feedback by Language Groups

Urdu:

- Expresses a desire for focus on practical concerns, calling for footpath repairs and improved parking organisation

Turkish:

- Calls attention to cyclist safety concerns, suggesting a need for changes in driver's license tests and emphasising the importance of road designs

Nepali:

- Advocates for transportation improvement suggestions, including enhanced train services and infrastructure upgrades

Italian:

- Criticises traffic management strategies, expressing concerns about increased traffic on Sydney Road and the inefficiencies of public transport

Greek:

- Finds the Action Plan too broad and generic, advocating for more specific and focused recommendations for effective implementation

Chinese:

- Supports the Action Plan but stresses the importance of concrete measures and timing for implementation

Arabic:

- Expresses a hopeful outlook, anticipating positive initiatives and mentioning a desire to see great ideas implemented, especially in specific Council areas

Location

We also asked survey respondents for their residential suburb to understand the specific needs and any differences for residents of each suburb.

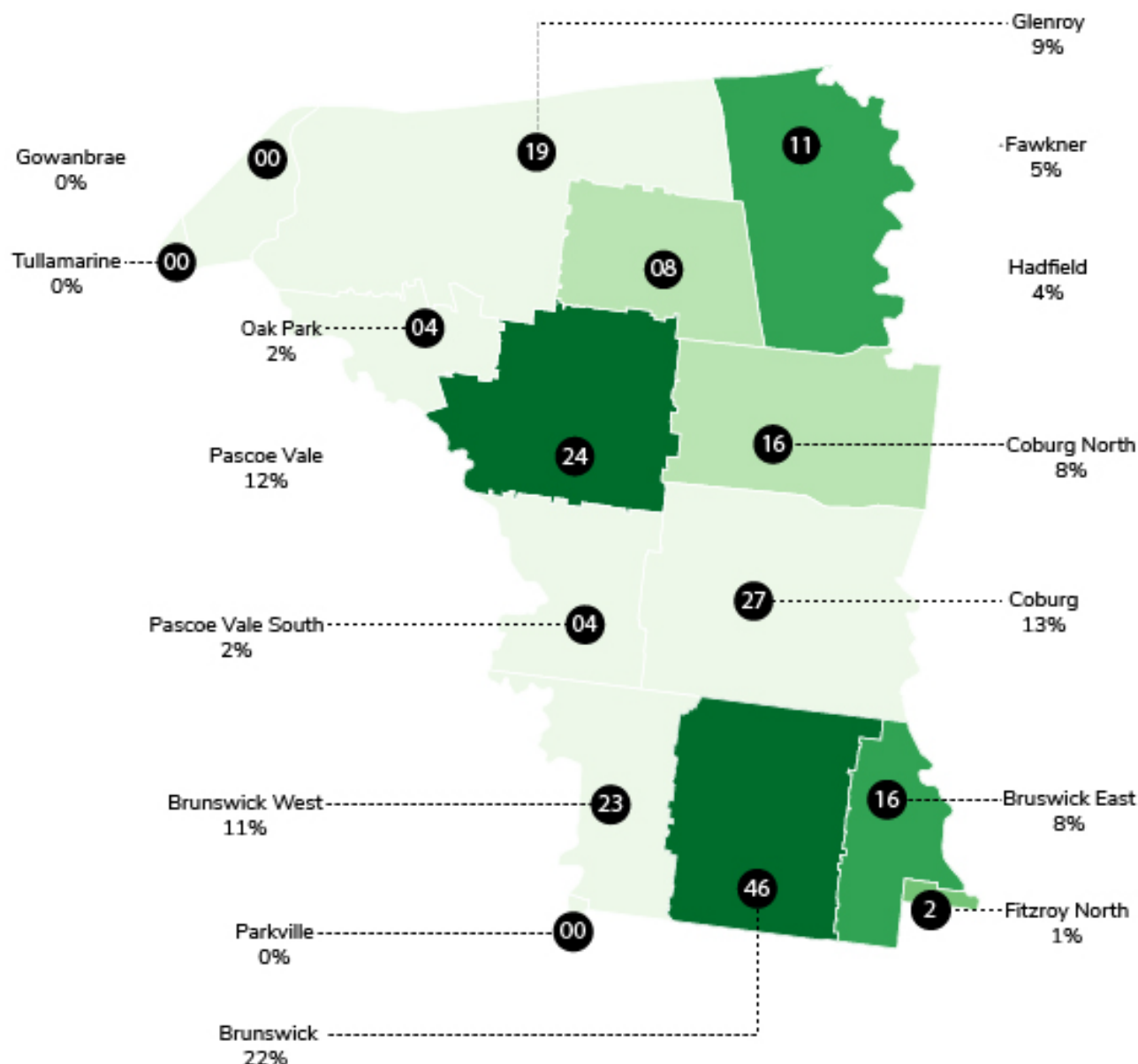


Figure 9 Map of survey responses

The feedback from different residents of different suburbs reflects differing concerns and priorities. While some emphasise infrastructure details and safety, others focus on inclusivity, sustainability, and the balance between different modes of transport. Merri-bek City Council can utilise this suburb-specific feedback to tailor the transport strategy to address the unique needs and aspirations of each community.

Glenroy:

- Most survey participants support the strategy, with a desire for more details, including selection processes for infrastructure and visual representations
- Concerns about potential pushback from drivers, emphasising the need for education and awareness campaigns
- Public transport improvements needed, along with safety and accessibility concerns, especially on Kent Road

Fawkner:

- Emphasis on inclusive approaches, equal treatment, and sustainability considerations for comprehensive planning
- Advocacy for train line duplication, traffic speed concerns, and a balanced, equitable, community-driven strategy
- Highlighted the need for more inclusive approaches, emphasising equal treatment and improved infrastructure in the northern suburbs as in the southern
- Improve east-west connection, accessibility and safety on Sydney Road
- Improve connections between Fawkner station and Oak Park

Hadfield:

- Residents want clear measures for achieving goals outlined
- Expressed concerns about prioritising active transport over drivers' needs
- Worries about increased traffic, parking issues, and feeling overlooked by current options and plans
- Calls to improve public transport in Glenroy, Hadfield, Oak Park and Pascoe Vale

Coburg:

- Concerns about active transport bias, safety for pedestrians and cyclists, poor connections, and traffic congestion
- Call to rectify the lack of accessible tram stops for most of Sydney Road
- Better east-west connection

Coburg North:

- Residents feel council actions contradict stated values, emphasising a need for pedestrian and cyclist prioritisation
- Advocacy for investing in trains, and accessible walking and cycling
- Concerns about 40km/h speed limit's effectiveness.

Brunswick East:

- Suggestions to focus on specific values like accessibility, sustainability, or active transport
- Doubts about car accessibility, parking impact, and potential negative impacts on businesses and residents.

Brunswick:

- Highlighted importance of inclusivity for disabled people and prioritising direct routes and local connectivity
- Emphasis on balancing pedestrian needs with traffic flow and prioritising accessible pilot projects for electric vehicle charging

Brunswick West:

- Strong support for the strategy, with concerns about inconsistent actions
- Calls to prioritise safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and shared streets
- Advocacy for separated bike paths, pedestrian safety, and better integration with other transport modes

Fitzroy North:

- Emphasis on future-facing planning, reducing car usage, and community values aligning with a safer, less car-dependent community
- Recognition of potential community pushback due to challenging existing habits

Pascoe Vale South:

- Concerns about increased congestion, reduced parking, and doubts about meeting all residents' needs
- Concerns about project implementation and a lack of trust in decision-making and Council's effectiveness

Pascoe Vale:

- Many feel the strategy neglects drivers' needs, with concerns about congestion, reduced parking, and lower speed limits
- Uncertainty about public transport meeting all needs, concerns about planning and implementation, and accessibility issues

Oak Park:

- Concerns for Council over-approving subdivisions, leading to parking issues, congestion, and safety concerns
- Requests for stricter parking restrictions, better traffic flow, and pedestrian-friendly areas

Hearing of Submissions

As part of the engagement process, we held a Hearing of Submissions at the Coburg Civic Centre on Tuesday 30 January at 6:00pm. A panel was formed for the Hearing, which included the Mayor and 3 other Councillors. Presenters were provided with 2 minutes each to read out their statement; panel members were able to ask questions to the presenters to clarify anything within the submission. A total of 12 submissions were read out.

Common Themes:

- Call for safer speeds and speed limit reductions
- Requests for an improved bicycle network
- Requests for more opportunities for collaboration between interest groups, and the general public
- Calls for Sydney Road improvements
- Requests for a more sustainable transport network
- Request for public transport improvements
- Request to cater improvements for all kinds of transport users
- Praise for the strategy and the Streets for People framework
- Request for maps and visual plans within the strategy
- Calls for footpath improvements and pedestrian safety prioritisation

Unique calls-to-action:

- Speed limit reduction to 40km/h on Stockage and Pentridge Boulevards
- Address activity centres and their needs explicitly
- Advocate for accessible tram stops on Sydney Road
- More accessible public transport
- Suggested that Council implement a street electric vehicle charging trial project. Specific request for such a trial on McFarlane St in Brunswick where there is strong community support
- Call for Hope Street Brunswick to be reclassified within the road hierarchy and considered for the Streets for People pilot program
- Geo tracking for bus services
- Call for review of engagement practice and surveys
- Said it is hard for the average rate payer or resident to understand what is going on with transport projects. Lining up the action plan, capex plan, and budget can be confusing, as are the multiple policies and other projects
- Request for a section in the strategy specifically supporting older people walking, and potentially cycling
- Requests to lessen the number of push to cross road signals for bike users and pedestrians, with special reference to the Upfield Shared Path

Discussions

This section provides an analysis of the survey results and written submissions, providing insights into the community's sentiments regarding the Moving Around Merri-bek transport strategy. Overall, the community has shown a positive response, with 78 per cent expressing direct support for the strategy and an additional 21 per cent neutral or unsure.

Key Themes and Concerns

The results of the survey reveal key priorities, concerns, and ideas, shedding light on the community's perspectives and needs, and the effectiveness of the draft strategy. These themes can be summarised within the context of the strategy's Values.

Safe

A prevalent concern among respondents is the need for safer and more accessible infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists in Merri-bek. Key suggestions include:

- Implementation of separated cycling paths, especially on busy roads
- Increased frequency of pedestrian crossings for safer movement
- Introduction of refuge islands across Merri-bek to enhance crossing safety
- Traffic-calming measures to create a network of safe and connected paths for active travel

Accessible

Respondents noted the importance of more accessible infrastructure, emphasising:

- Improved frequency and reliability on the Upfield train line during peak hours
- Crucial accessibility features for public transport, especially for people with disabilities.
- Safer and accessible crossings for users of all abilities
- Significant investment in infrastructure to enhance public transport, pedestrian and cycling pathways, and streetscapes
- Better service integration and improved accessibility to make public transport a more viable alternative to driving

Healthy

Community members expressed concerns related to health, emphasising:

- Expanding the network of dedicated pedestrian and cycling paths to encourage active travel and improve air quality by reducing car use
- Investing in parks and green spaces to promote physical activity and mental well-being
- Encouraging sustainable transportation options by promoting public transport, walking, and cycling through campaigns, incentives, and infrastructure improvements

Sustainable

Several respondents advocated for reducing reliance on cars and promoting sustainable transportation. Suggestions include:

- Improving public transport stops, lines and networks
- Implementing traffic-calming measures
- Creating more pedestrian-friendly spaces with wider sidewalks, street trees, and vibrant landscaping
- Installing additional EV charging stations across Merri-bek

Liveable

The desire to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment was a recurring theme. Recommendations include:

- Enhancing streetscapes with wider sidewalks, street trees, and public art
- Implementing traffic-calming measures to reduce car speeds and create safer environments
- Improving connectivity between neighbourhoods through well-maintained paths and walkways
- Noting the reliance that some members of the community have on cars for essential tasks

Identified Areas for Improvement:

Safe

- Address concerns about safety on shared paths by implementing measures to curb illegal motorbike use and irresponsible dog walking, including increased enforcement, signage, and separate paths for high-speed cyclists
- Work towards safer speeds, for example, re-evaluating the appropriateness of a 30km/h speed limit, exploring alternative solutions like traffic calming measures and improved infrastructure to achieve similar safety benefits without significantly impacting driver travel times.
- Conduct a thorough analysis of road infrastructure and safety needs to prioritise areas requiring safety improvements and inform the implementation of effective solutions

Accessible

- Improve the accessibility of public transport, prioritising the Upfield line for increased frequency, better accessibility features, and service integration with other modes of transport
- Ensure wide and well-maintained footpaths by addressing uneven surfaces, obstructions, and lack of maintenance to create a safe and enjoyable walking experience for all users
- Provide accessible parking and drop-off zones to ensure designated parking spots and drop-off zones are readily available near key destinations and services, particularly for people with disabilities.

Healthy

- Expand the network of dedicated pedestrian and cycling paths to encourage active travel and improve air quality through reduced car use
- Invest in parks and green spaces to promote physical activity and mental well-being by increasing access to parks and green spaces throughout the community
- Encourage sustainable transportation options by promoting public transport, walking, and cycling through campaigns, incentives, and infrastructure improvements.

Liveable:

- Enhance streetscapes by creating more vibrant and welcoming streets with wider sidewalks, street trees, public art, and improved landscaping
- Implement traffic-calming measures to reduce car speeds and create a safer and more peaceful environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Improve connectivity between neighbourhoods by developing a network of well-maintained paths and walkways to encourage walking and cycling between different areas.

Sustainable:

- Increase the use of renewable energy sources to power public transport, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and address the climate crisis
- Promote green infrastructure by implementing solutions like rain gardens and bioswales to improve air and water quality and reduce pollution
- Invest in data-driven decision making, utilising data and evidence to identify the most effective solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in our transport system

Appendix

Survey Questions

1: How do you feel about the vision and values of Moving Around Merri-bek?

- Support
- Support with concerns
- Do not support
- Unsure

Open text response: Is there anything you'd like to add about the values?

2. How do you feel about the vision outlined for our transport network in Moving Around Merri-bek?

- Support
- Support with concerns
- Do not support
- Unsure

Open text response: Is there anything you'd like to add about the vision for our transport network outlined in this document?

3. Do you think our Streets for People framework will help improve our streets?

- Yes
- Yes with some concerns
- No

Open text response: Is there anything you'd like to add about the Streets for People framework?

4. Overall, what do you generally feel about the Moving Around Merri-bek strategy?

- Support
- Support with concerns
- Do not support
- I'm not sure
- I'm neutral

5. How do you feel about the Action Plan?

- Support
- Support with concerns
- Do not support
- Unsure
- I'm neutral

6. Is there anything you'd like to add about the actions outlined within the Action Plan?

7. Is there any other feedback you'd like to provide about Moving Around Merri-bek and the Action Plan?

8. Would you like to present your feedback at a hearing of submissions?

- Yes
- No

9. How do you describe your gender?

- Man/male
- Woman/female
- Nonbinary/genderqueer/genderfluid
- Prefer not to say
- Other

10. What suburb do you live in?

- Brunswick
- Brunswick East
- Brunswick West
- Coburg
- Coburg North
- Fawkner
- Fitzroy North
- Glenroy
- Gowenbrae
- Hadfield
- Oak Park
- Pascoe Vale
- Pascoe Vale South
- Tullamarine
- I live outside of Merri-bek

What is your age range?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- Over 80

I identify as?

- A person with disability
- A person who experiences limited mobility
- A carer for someone with a disability
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- LGBTQIA
- Someone who speaks a language other than English at home
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

Were you born in Australia.

- Yes
- No