Merri-bek City Council

Streets for People Plan

Community and stakeholder engagement report – May 2025



Contents

Executive summary 3
Introduction 4
Why we are developing a Streets for People Plan 4
Previous engagement – Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy 4
Purpose of this round of engagement 4
Engagement activities 5
Communications 5
International Association of Public Participation Spectrum 5
Results 6
Feedback on the proposed Streets for People network 6
Feedback on the proposed high priority projects 7
Feedback on the proposed Streets for People design process 8
General feedback about the Streets for People Plan 8
Demographic overview and analysis 9
Age 9
Gender 9
Location 10

Executive summary

Consultation Process

Merri-bek City Council consulted with the community from 28 March to 18 May 2025, seeking feedback on the Streets for People Plan.

We asked people to:

1. Provide feedback on the Streets for People network
2. Provide feedback on the high-priority projects
3. Provide feedback on the Streets for People process

Platforms Used

- Online survey
- Physical advertising
- 3 pop-up sessions
- Reference groups, advisory committees, and community groups

Overview of Engagement



165 survey completions



9 emails received



4 submissions from community groups



3 pop-up engagement sessions

What we heard

- Strong support for Union Street, Brunswick West as a Streets for People corridor and a high priority project
- Support for Shaftsbury Street, Coburg, as a Streets for People corridor and for it to be elevated to be a high priority project
- Requests for Albion Street, Brunswick and Brunswick West, as a Streets for People corridor
- General support for the proposed Streets for People process, and some requests for faster project delivery, more community engagement to be incorporated, and less community engagement
- The Streets for People Plan should contribute to improving safety across the Merri-bek transport network
- Streets for People projects should take into consideration specific elements such as parking, car-share, lighting, street amenity, street trees and intersections

Introduction

The Streets for People Plan is our plan for projects that will make Merri-bek's streets safer, greener and more accessible for everyone.

Why we are developing a Streets for People Plan

The Streets for People Plan is the next stage of our strategic transport planning for Merri-bek. It was developed utilising the feedback gathered during our Moving Around Merri-bek development.

The plan takes the Streets for People framework, which was introduced as part of the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy, and applies it practically to Merri-bek's transport system to guide our future street improvement projects.

These projects will make improvements to streets both as a means of travel, and as a place to visit and live.

The plan has 2 main objectives:

- It identifies which streets in Merri-bek should be improved as Streets for People projects
- It details the role these streets play in Merri-bek's transport network and what changes should be considered to help them adapt as safe, accessible, sustainable, healthy, liveable and inclusive transport connections and places

Previous engagement – Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy

The Streets for People Plan arose as a key action as part of the Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy Action Plan 2024-25. The strategy and action plan underwent community engagement in November-December 2023, and we heard that people wanted to see more holistic transport projects that benefit all road users. We also heard that people found it challenging and stressful at times to move around the municipality, particularly when walking or riding east-west. The Streets for People Plan was included as an action for the Moving Around Merri-bek strategy as a response to some of these issues raised during that stage of consultation.

Purpose of this round of engagement

The purpose of this round of community and stakeholder engagement was to understand community perceptions of the draft Streets for People Plan and to identify potential changes to be incorporated in the final plan. This was done to ensure the plan best meets the needs of the Merri-bek community.

Specifically, we were seeking feedback on:

1. The proposed network of Streets for People corridors
2. The identified high-priority projects
3. The proposed design process for Streets for People projects

Engagement activities



Online survey
The online survey was available on the Conversations Merri-bek website for over seven weeks. The survey received 165 responses



Face to face sessions
3 pop-up sessions in Glenroy, Coburg North, and Brunswick.
Presentations to Older Persons Reference Group, Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee, Youth Committee in Fawkner, Merri-bek Community Connectors.



Emails
4746 emails were sent out to people who follow relevant transport projects on the Conversations Merri-bek platform. All schools in Meri-bek were emailed directly and asked to participate and share the information with their school communities.



Physical advertising
Posters published in regular Council newsletters. Fliers distributed to key Council facilities, such as the Glenroy Hub.



Stakeholder engagement
Key stakeholders were notified and invited to provide feedback, including all the schools in the municipality, The Department of Transport and Planning, all neighbouring councils, Merri-bek Bicycle User Group,

Communications

A communications plan was developed and delivered to notify community members of the Streets for People Plan and invite them to provide their feedback. The main communication methods were:

- Emails sent to 4,746 people who have registered interest in Merri-bek transport projects
- An article in Merri-bek Community News, which was delivered to all Merri-bek households
- An article in My Merri-bek e-newsletter
- English language posters and fliers displayed at key Council facilities, including Neighbourhood Houses
- Translated posters and fliers displayed at key Council facilities, including Neighbourhood Houses in Italian, Arabic, Greek, Turkish and Simplified Chinese
- Targeted social media advertising campaign on Facebook and Instagram to Merri-bek community members
- Targeted translated social media advertising campaign in Italian, Arabic, Greek, Turkish and Simplified Chinese
- Distribution of translated Streets for People Plan summary document and survey through Merri-bek Connectors program

International Association of Public Participation Spectrum

We engaged with our community on this project at the level of ‘Consult’ on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum. 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 concept 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.

Results

The survey had 4 questions that sought feedback on the proposed Streets for People network, the high-priority projects, and the Streets for People process. This section of the report presents the results of the survey, and the submissions received.

Feedback on the proposed Streets for People network

Respondents were asked whether there were any changes that they would like to be made to the proposed network of Streets for People corridors. This provided an opportunity for people to suggest changes to identified routes, suggest new streets, or say why a particular street was not suitable. Some of the key themes or suggestions received were:

1. Support for Union Street, Brunswick as a Streets for People corridor
2. Support for Shaftsbury Street, Coburg as a Streets for People corridor
3. Addition of Albion Street, Brunswick and Brunswick West as a Streets for People corridor
4. Addition of Sydney Road and Lygon Street in Brunswick as a Streets for People corridor
5. Addition of Boundary Road, Coburg North and Murray Road, Coburg as a Streets for People corridor
6. Derby Street be considered instead of Landells Street as a north-south route in Pascoe Vale South
7. Addition of Minnie Street and Ewing Street in Brunswick as a Streets for People corridor
8. Addition of Goff Street, Coburg as part of a Streets for People corridor

Some examples of responses are shown below:

"Breese Street and Ovens Street should be included and prioritized for upgrades based on the increased population and major opportunities it present for place making."

"Please include more streets, we need significant change"

"An extra north-south link between Sydney Rd and Lygon St, preferably Ewing St."

"Derby Street already has bike lanes and is a wider street than Landells Road. I don't understand why this street is not mentioned and used instead of Landells Road."

"The Union Street Corridor is a very important project for the Council to undertake. It desperately needs attention as there is frequent flooding and development of "sink holes". It is totally unfit for current use, never mind as a feeder road for the proposed raised rail line and station between Union St and Dawson St."

"The streets are well chosen, however it would be great to understand more about the thinking on main streets such as Sydney Road and Albion Street. Both are very dangerous for crossing, and vehicle traffic movement is chaotic and aggressive at times."

Feedback on the proposed high priority projects

We provided a list of high-priority projects from the Streets for People Plan and asked whether there were any changes that people wanted to recommend. Some of the key themes or suggestions from the responses received were:

1. Support for Union Street, Brunswick being on the high priority list
2. Addition of Albion Street, Brunswick as a high priority project
3. Support for Stewart Street, Brunswick as a high priority project
4. Support for a connection from the Edgars Creek towards Coburg High School
5. General support for the proposed high priority projects
6. Addition of Shaftsbury Street, Coburg as a high priority project

Some examples of responses are shown below:

"*These priorities are great! Barrow street needs work in particular*"

"*Pascoe vale road pedestrian crossing, at post office place*"

"*Dawson St/Dean St all the way to Moonee Ponds.*"

"*Albion Street - connection to primary schools*
Breese Street - improvements reflective of the level of density increased seen here (increase walkability, shade and trees)"

"*I support making east-west routes better, but I suspect that most movement is north-south. Improving the shimmies should be a priority, in particularly blocking off some of the roads like you have done on Barrow St and John St for the East Brunswick shimmy.*"

"*I would like to see the closure of Shaftsbury street at the intersection with Munro to be added as a high priority project. Given the number of accidents, damage caused to residents vehicles, speed and volume of traffic the street does not function as a residential street. It does not feel safe for pedestrians. A rationale would be that this street can form a bike path connection to the Upfield bike path and improve pedestrian access to Munro, Reynard and the existing services along those roads.*"

"*Union Street should stay at the top of the list please!*"

"*Stewart street should be designed and delivered as close as possible following Hope street works*"

Feedback on the proposed Streets for People design process

Participants were asked to provide any feedback they had on the proposed Streets for People process for designing and delivering projects from the plan. Some of the key themes or suggestions from the responses received were:

1. General support for the proposed process
2. Faster roll-out of projects and shorter timeframes from design to delivery
3. Recommendations for methods of community engagement for Streets for People projects
4. Recommendations for project selection
5. Suggestion that more community engagement be done for each project
6. Suggestion that less community engagement be done for each project

Some examples of suggestions are shown below:

"Let's move this along faster. We know this is good stuff, the quicker we get it implemented the better for the planet, people's wallets, physical and mental health, etc.

"Community engagement should form part of funding. Community should be engaged to prioritise what sections to start with, especially if there is a likelihood that funding may not extend to cover all the proposed plans."

" Feels like too many steps."

"I would consider omitting step 2 of the streets for people projects steps. Ultimately, seeking community feedback too often is wasteful and slows down getting on with these works."

"Multiple dates inclusive of after hours for community engagement"

General feedback about the Streets for People Plan

Respondents were also asked to provide any general feedback they had on the plan if they wanted to. A thematic analysis was done on these responses, as well as all of the responses for the previous questions and submissions. Some of the key themes that arose were:

1. The Streets for People Plan should contribute to safety on Merri-bek's street network
2. General support for the Streets for People Plan
3. Projects need to consider specific elements such as parking, car-share, lighting, street amenity, street trees and intersections
4. The Streets for People Plan should contribute to greening Merri-bek's streets
5. Feedback on specific streets identified in the Streets for People Plan

Some examples of suggestions are shown below:

"I highly support any methods of increasing safety of walking and cycling travel. Removing thoroughfares for vehicles and separation of traffic will be a great way to increase cycling corridor access."

"Junctions with major roads are a safety issue for cyclists - please design these carefully to prioritise safety for cyclists"

"More speed deterrents in general. Anything! Traffic lights, humps, just please get cars to slow down. I feel constantly unsafe walking, with pram and cycling around Coburg"

"More favourable parking conditions for residents near activity centres. Promote more visitors to businesses to use public transport. Increase Upfield train frequencies."

"We need more trees on the streets of merribek as a whole. Compared to many suburbs in Melbourne, our streets completely lack suitable shade and are incredibly hot and oppressive and summer."

Demographic overview and analysis

Questions relating to personal characteristics were included in the survey, such as age, gender, and the suburb where respondents reside. These questions are asked so that we can better understand the different needs our residents have.

Age

Out of the 165 survey responses received, 131 individuals provided their age, and the resulting distribution is displayed in Figure 1 below.

- Strongest representation was from people aged 35 – 44. This age group is often well represented in Council consultations, and demonstrate a keen interest in improving the streets that they live in.
- The low response rate from younger individuals (18-24) suggests the need to explore their travel preferences, such as active transport, or alternative commuting patterns. This was anticipated, and a targeted session with a youth committee in Fawkner was organised to get detailed insights from younger people. Younger people tended to report concerns with street lighting and driver behaviour, creating barriers for them for their daily local travel requirements.
- Similarly, a targeted session was held with the Older Persons Reference Group to ensure perspectives from older people in the community were heard. From this age group, concerns were raised with footpath conditions and accessibility, street lighting, and desire for streets to be used more for public space to build community.

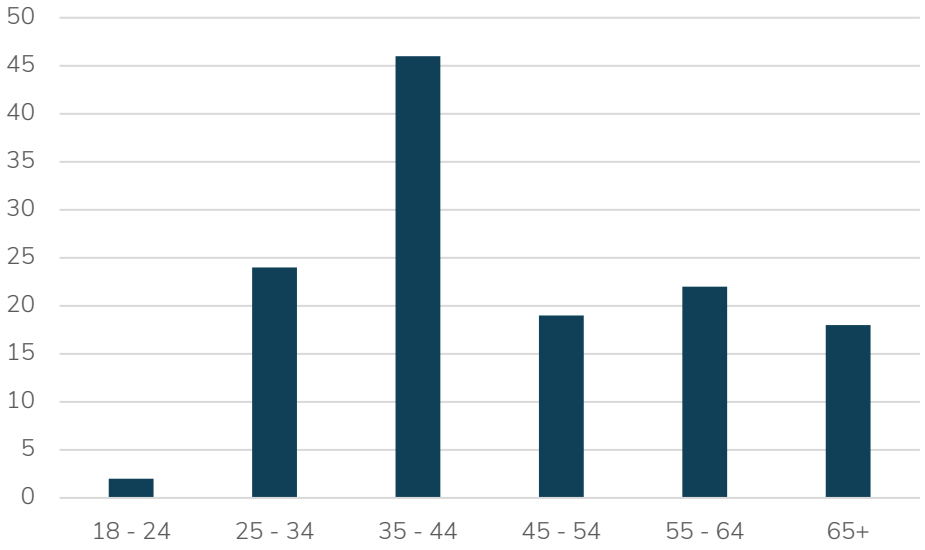


Figure 1 Age distribution of survey respondents

Gender

A multiple-choice question was aged to ask what gender respondents identify as. Figure 2 highlighted the gender distribution of the responses. 50 per cent of respondents reported being women or girls, 2 per cent reported being non-binary, and 41 per cent stated that they were men or boys, representing a relatively representative distribution. There was not a statistically significant difference in responses from participants of different genders. However, through discussions with Council's *Gender and Equity Impact Assessment Circle*, some of the key gendered issues with street design revolved around street lighting, and ensuring that infrastructure was designed for the use for all people.

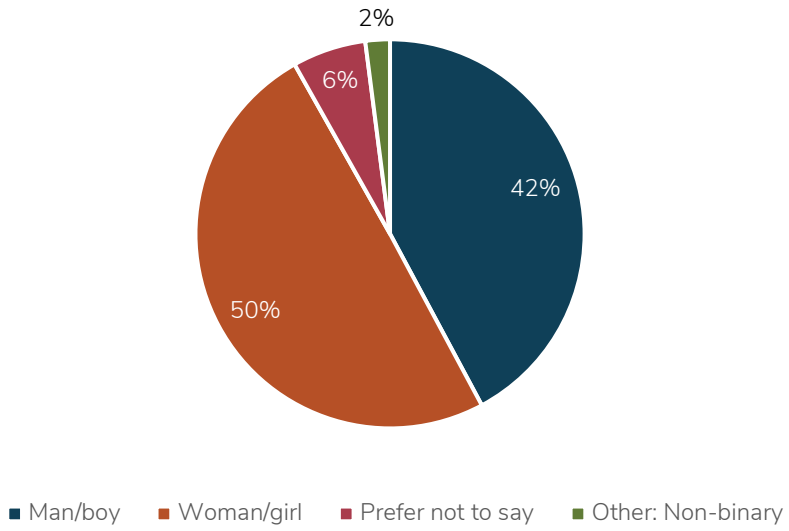


Figure 2 Gender distribution of survey respondents

Location

Figure 3 shows the suburbs where participants live. The suburbs where most respondents live, we Brunswick (32%), Coburg (19%) and Brunswick West (13%). Responses typically focused on identified streets or gaps in the network in the local areas where people lived. At in-person events in Glenroy, people were more likely to report concerns with general safety, both in terms of road safety and anti-social behaviour. At the pop-up engagement in Brunswick, a number of people mentioned the need for better east-west connectivity for people walking and riding, particularly across Sydney Road.

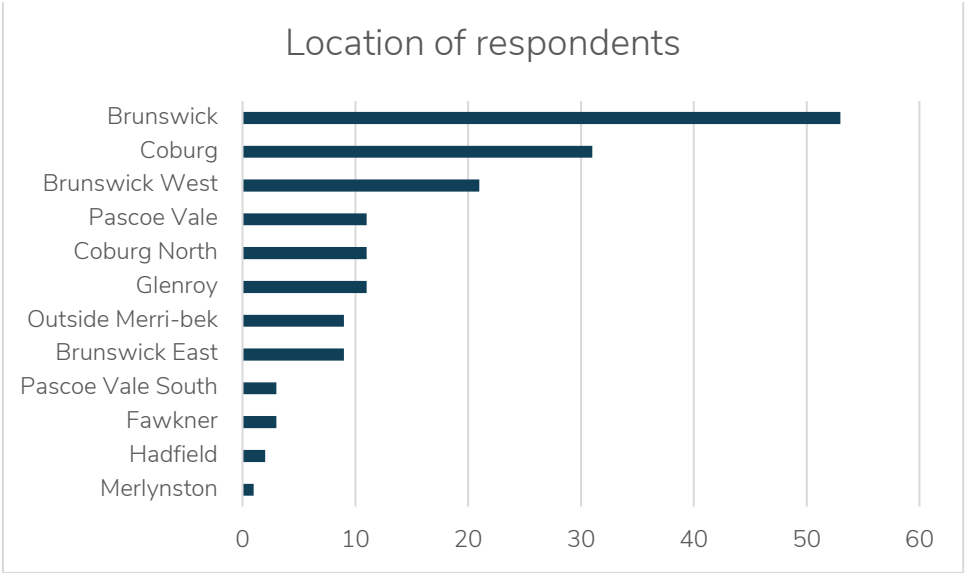


Figure 3 Location distribution of survey respondents