Merri-bek City Council

Moving Around Merri-bek

Discussion Paper-Consultation Findings Report

Chatterbox Projects

ChatterBox Projects was engaged by Merri-bek City Council to support the development and delivery of an engagement plan to seek community feedback to inform the development of the draft Strategy, Moving Around Merri-bek. Council staff and the ChatterBox Team worked in partnership to design the engagement program and to deliver engagement activities.

ChatterBox Projects was also engaged to undertake independent data analysis which has informed the findings of this report.

ChatterBox Projects is a highly skilled and experienced community engagement consultancy with extensive knowledge in delivering end-to-end community engagement services.

Our work focuses on community consultations, including place-based and online engagement, facilitation, planning and visioning, master plan development, urban activations, survey design, data gathering, analysis and reporting and the development of innovative engagement methods and tools. We also provide training in planning and implementing community engagement strategies.

Over the past 9 years, ChatterBox Projects has undertaken over 250 small, medium and large-scale community engagement projects for 26 local government organisations, 6 state government agencies as well as projects for the not for profit, education and retail precinct sectors.

Acknowledgement of traditional custodianship

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.

Contents

Chatterbox Projects 2
Acknowledgement of traditional custodianship 3
Version control 5
1. Executive Summary 6
1.1 Key findings 7
2. Project/Engagement Overview 11
2.1 Project background 11
2.2 Project stages 11
2.3 What we did – engagement program 13
2.4 Communications and engagement reach 16
2.5 Who we heard from 17
3. Engagement findings – moving around Merri-bek now 22
3.1 Overview 22
3.2 Ease of movement around Merri-Bek 22
3.3 Modes of transport currently used and reasons why 23
3.4 Modes of transport that could be used more often and main barriers 25
4. Engagement findings – looking to the future 33
4.1 Overview 33
4.2 Preferred themes for a new transport system for Merri-bek 33
4.3 Transport system theme - Safety 37
4.4 Transport system theme – Accessibility 41
4.5 Transport system theme – Sustainability 44
4.6 Transport system theme – Health 48
4.7 Transport system theme – Liveability 51
4.8 Transport system theme – Collaboration 54
4.9 Noteworthy insights about transport at the Suburb level 57
4.10 Advocating for transport improvements 60
5. Engagement findings – spotlight on gender 65
5.1 Assessing gender impacts 65
5.2 Key insights 65
6. Appendices 67
6.1 Survey 67

Version control

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Section
0.1	03/08/2023	Vaughn Allan	New report to present the engagement methodology and results	Entire document
0.2	20/09/2023	Robyn Cochrane	Draft V#1 – high level overview of findings with some gaps	Entire document
0.3	21/10/2023	Robyn Cochrane/ Sam Walsh	Final draft	Entire document
Final	23/10/2023	Robyn Cochrane, Sam Walsh and Angela Walter (ChatterBox Projects)	Final	Entire document

1. Executive Summary

Council is developing a new Strategy. This new Strategy will guide future transport projects in Merri-bek and aim to provide community members with greater transport choice in how they move around the municipality.

This new Strategy will replace the previous transport strategy, which was adopted in 2019

Community engagement is a critical component to this project, with the new Strategy being informed by 3 stages of engagement. This report includes the community and stakeholder feedback from Stage 2.

The Stage 2 engagement program, which ran for 6 weeks from 24 July to 2 September, included a range of ways for people to get involved, be informed and provide feedback. This stage of engagement was supported by a Discussion Paper which encouraged conversation and explored transport challenges, opportunities and ideas in Merri-bek across 6 core themes: Safety; Accessibility; Sustainability; Health; Liveability and Collaboration.

The engagement program was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign, that resulted in over 1,000 people providing feedback, as outlined in the table below.

Engagement activities	Led by	Participation
Survey (online and hard copy) Available on the Conversations Merri-bek project page, at engagement activities and in Council facilities	ChatterBox Projects	532 (incl 58 surveys in other languages)
Interactive map to identify safety issues (online) Available on the Conversations Merri-bek project page	Council	82
Post your ideas (online) Available on the Conversations Merri-bek project page	Council	36 ideas
Place-based pop-up engagements 6 pop-up engagements with the ChatterBox Projects trailer (see table 2 for more details)	ChatterBox Projects	300 (approx.)
Workshops with key stakeholders • CALD Connectors (1.5 hrs online) • Traders (1.5 hrs online) • Community Groups (2hrs in-person)	ChatterBox Projects	20
Workshops with Council groups/committees • Age-Friendly Reference Group • Children's Reference Group • Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee • Gender Equity Reference Group • Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee	Council	26
Workshop with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung	Council	4
Workshop with Youth Ambassadors		15
Written submissions		5
TOTAL		1,020

Please note: Some individuals may have participated in more than 1 engagement activity.

Based on demographic information, overall, the consultation successfully engaged a broad cross-section of the community including people of all age groups, from a range of backgrounds, as well as over 100 people who either have disability, limited mobility or who are a carer of someone with disability.

1.1 Key findings

In relation to moving around Merri-bek now, survey participants told us that the top 5 modes of transport that people use are:

WALK	298 respondents
BIKE	222 respondents
CAR	194 respondents
TRAM	155 respondents
TRAIN	98 respondents

When asked what modes of transport people would like to use more often the top 5 responses all involved active/public transport options.

BIKE	296 respondents
WALK	228 respondents
TRAM	215 respondents
TRAIN	194 respondents
BUS	142 respondents

The key reasons why people do not choose these modes of transport more often involved the lack of safety and lack of convenience (the journey takes too long, and services are not near people).

The theme of safety featured strongly throughout the feedback and was the most prominent challenge in moving around Merri-bek and a major barrier to choosing more active or sustainable modes of transport.

This was reflected in people selecting '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%).

Additional themes for the new Strategy that were suggested during the engagement included:

- Affordability/Equity – ensuring transportation options are affordable and equitable for all.
- Connectivity – ensuring efficient and seamless movement of people and goods.

The following provides a summary of the key challenges and issues as well as opportunities and ideas raised throughout the engagement in relation to the top 4 priority themes.

Safety

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
• Dangerous and speeding vehicles, creating safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists • Lack of bike paths/safe, separated, connected bike paths • Lack of crossings/safe/supervised crossings • Poor, uneven, unsafe, narrow footpaths • Unsafe/dark spaces and anti-social behaviour • Dangerous and speeding cyclists, scooters, e-bikes	• Increase bike paths, protected, separated, connected bike paths • Prioritise pedestrians at signalised crossings to provide more time • Increase crossings/safer crossings/ supervised crossings • Improve footpaths • Reduce speed limits • Increase lighting • Improve safety around Merri-Creek and schools

Liveability

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
• Poor design of parking/lack of parking in some shopping strips • Lack of space for deliveries/loading, unloading • Poor roads/potholes • Poor bus services especially for older people trying to access services	• Increase green spaces, trees, mini-parks, gardens • Revitalise shopping strips and increase amenities – toilets, seating, drinking fountains, signage • Lower speed limits • Transport planning by suburb • Support transport needs of businesses – deliveries/freight • Walkable/rideable streetscapes • Reconsider car parking • Advocate for cheaper public transport

Accessibility

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
• Lack of accessible public transport stops • Lack of amenities like seating, shade, public toilets (at public transport stops, long roads, key locations) • Poor, unsafe, uneven footpaths • Obstructions on footpaths • Narrow paths to accommodate all users/ types of bikes/mobility aids • Lack of information about accessibility/ way-finding signage	• Increase accessible parking spaces in key locations • Advocate for accessible public transport stops • More bike parking for different types/sizes of bikes (for all users/abilities) • Improve footpaths • Prioritise pedestrians at crossings to give more time to cross • Increase amenities on roads/paths/stops - seating, toilets, shade, signage

Sustainability

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
• Cars creating pollution/emissions • Some public transport services are unreliable, irregular and not connected • Not enough funding for bike paths	• Plan for the increase of electric bikes and EVs – charging stations, subsidies etc • More bike parking in better locations/ increased/connected bike paths • Funding/education/incentives to encourage active transport options • Increase trees, green spaces to combat heat island and encourage active transport • Continue to support/expand carshare

Suburb insights

The following information provides a high-level overview of the different priorities and ideas that emerged for some of the different suburbs within Merri-bek (featured suburbs had more than 10 survey responses).

Suburb	Brunswick	Brunswick East	Brunswick West	Coburg	Coburg Nth	Fawkner	Glenroy	Pascoe Vale
Mode they want to use more (Most people)	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle Train Tram	Train Tram Bus	Train Tram Bus	Walk Cycle Train Tram

Reflecting the overall feedback, most suburbs had the following key ideas/priorities in common:

- Safer, better, increased paths for cycling and walking
- Increased, improved, extended public transport services (with Brunswick West, Glenroy and Fawkner mentioning bus services)
- Advocating for accessible public transport stops/services
- Traffic calming and slowing cars down/reducing speed limits

Brunswick East and Brunswick participants specifically mentioned improving Sydney Road, making it more attractive and safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Brunswick, Brunswick West, Glenroy, Coburg North, and Pascoe Vale participants mentioned improved connections for bikes and public transport either East West and/or North South.

Coburg participants prioritised safety, increased lighting and more/safer crossings.

Objectives and advocacy

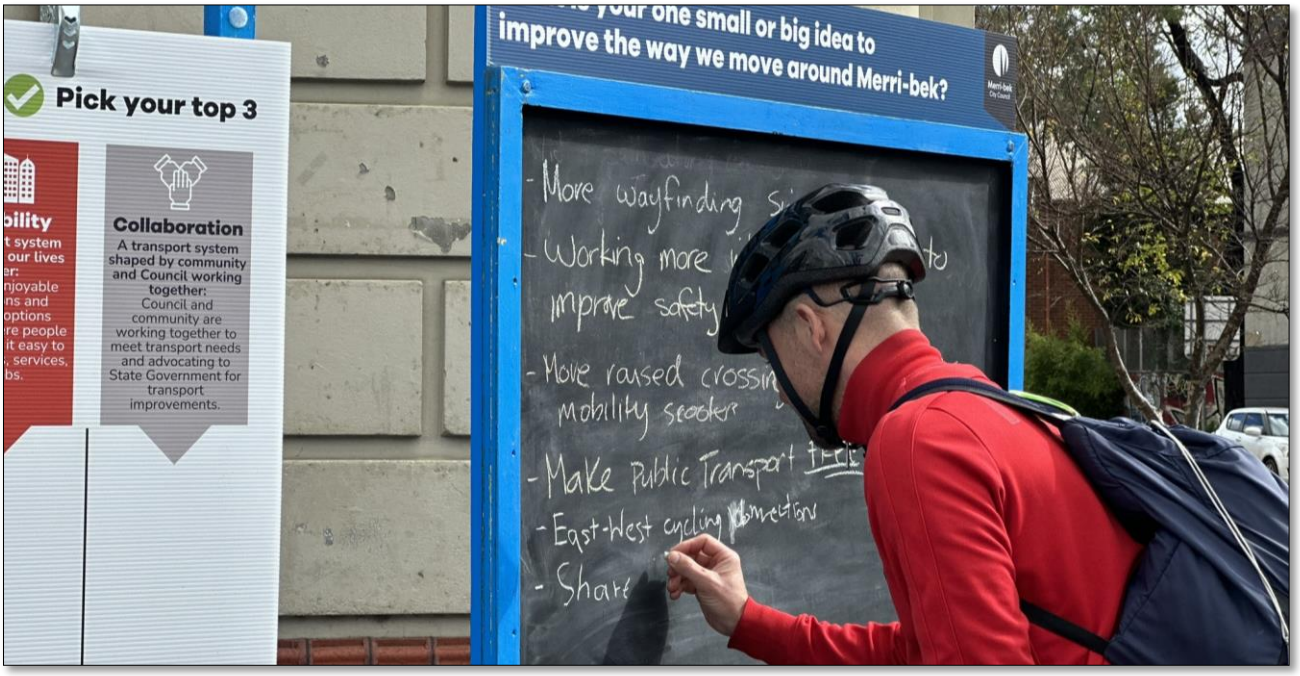
Survey participants expressed strong support for the transport objectives that were presented in the Discussion Paper as well as confirming the importance of Council's advocacy work to improve transport outcomes in Merri-bek.

Three advocacy ideas presented in the survey scored highly in terms of importance including advocating for:

- increased public transport services (87.5% Very Important/Important);
- increased accessible public transport and low-floor vehicles (83.2% Very Important/ Important); and
- improved safety and security on public transport (79.4% Very Important/Important).

Other advocacy ideas put forward by survey participants included: safe and protected pedestrian and bike movements on major roads; and decreasing speed limits, car traffic/parking to improve safety and make streets more liveable and easier to move around.

Some participants across the engagement activities suggested more consultation activities, particularly to inform the Collaboration and Accessibility themes, development of the Strategy and its implementation. The importance of developing a Strategy that is clear, easy to understand and includes measures to ensure tracking, reporting and accountability was also suggested.



2. Project/Engagement Overview

2.1 Project background

Council is developing a new Strategy. This new Strategy will guide future transport projects in Merri-bek and aim to provide community members with greater transport choice in how they move around the municipality.

This new Strategy will replace the previous transport strategy, which was adopted in 2019. Many actions from the 2019 Strategy have now been completed or are currently underway. In addition, in April 2021, Merri-bek Councillors resolved to revise the 2019 Strategy following its decision to abandon 2 actions related to parking provisions.

Developing a new Strategy will also enable Council to take into consideration changes that have occurred since 2019, upcoming projects and developing trends including things like COVID-19 and more people working from home more often; projects such as the Suburban Rail Loop and Level Crossing Removals as well as the increasing use of electric vehicles, e-bikes and car share services.

Council has also updated key policies that will need to be incorporated into the new Strategy including a new Community Vision and new more ambitious Zero Carbon Merri-bek targets for 2030.

Community feedback on the previous transport strategy and other transport-related projects, Council's Promise document and Community Vision will guide the direction of the new Strategy, which aims to take a more people-centred approach, addressing the needs of all transport users moving around Merri-bek.

Other key inputs that will be taken into consideration to inform the development of the new Strategy include:

- State and Federal policy and legislation;
- Council adopted strategies;
- inter-Council policies and transport projects;
- results of recent community consultation; and
- social research.

2.2 Project stages

The project plan to develop a new Strategy includes 3 rounds of consultation to gather community and stakeholder feedback (see Figure 1).

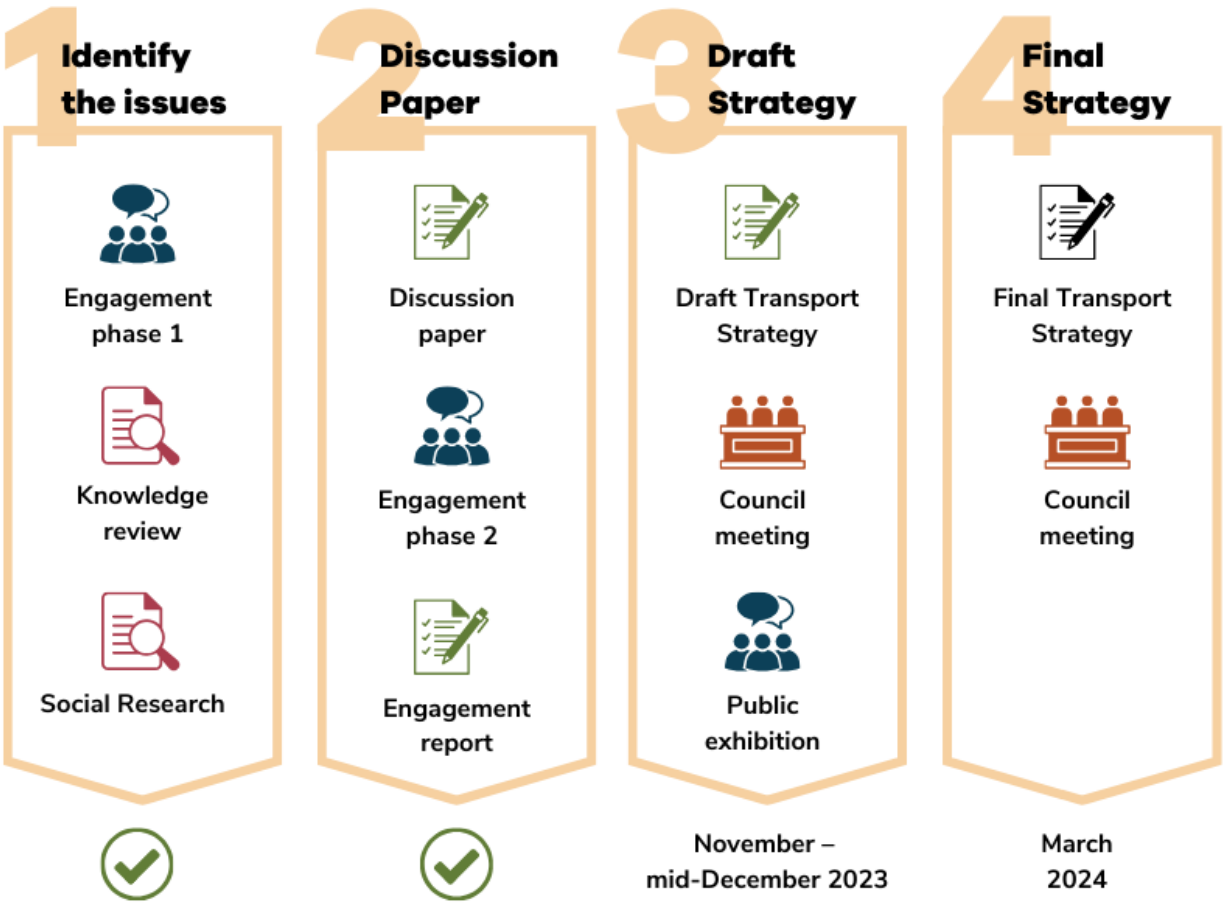
- Stage 1: (now complete) involved undertaking the social research from January to March 2023 to gain information about how people move around Merri-bek and barriers and challenges impacting their transport choices.

- Stage 2: (now complete) involved undertaking community consultation from 24 July to 2 September 2023 to discuss transport needs, challenges, opportunities and ideas (with the support of a discussion paper) and gather feedback to inform the development of a draft Strategy.

- Stage 3: (Public Exhibition scheduled for November 2023 to mid-December 2023) will involve consultation on the draft Strategy to inform finalisation of the document.

This report focusses on the findings from community and stakeholder feedback from Stage 2 consultation.

Figure 2.1: Project Stages



Social Research

In preparation for the development of Moving Around Merri-bek, Council commissioned independent research to better understand the community's existing travel patterns, the challenges they face with the transport system, and the opportunities to improve it.

The research consisted of 2 elements. First, 6 focus groups were conducted among a cross-section of Merri-bek residents. The focus groups occurred in late January and early February 2023. Second, a randomised sample survey of 600 residents was undertaken in the first half of March 2023. Survey quotas for different ages, genders, and backgrounds were sought to ensure the results were representative of Merri-bek's population.

This research, which will be used to inform the new Strategy, was presented in a report available on Council's website: Understanding transportation perception and behaviours in the City of Merri-bek (May 2023).

The social research was also used to inform the development of a Discussion Paper that was used to generate discussion and support Stage 2 community consultation activities.

2.3 What we did – engagement program

In partnership with Council, ChatterBox Projects designed a comprehensive communications and engagement program which aimed to gather feedback from a broad range of community members and stakeholders including those who live, work, study, visit or own/operate a business in Merri-bek.

Stage 2 community consultation was undertaken over 6 weeks, from 24 July to 2 September 2023.

Engagement objectives

The engagement objectives for Stage 2 consultation were:

- Inform people about the project, the different approach that Council is taking to develop the new Strategy and how to participate and provide feedback.
- Update people about new transport related information including results of social research, technical information, policy updates, and new trends (opportunities and drivers) to help inform conversation and discussions.
- Provide the community with information and a range of opportunities to participate to ensure Council hears from many different people across the community.
- Listen to community and stakeholders through the engagement activities as they share their lived experiences and challenges in relation to how they travel, where and when they travel and why they choose certain modes of transport.
- Consult and gather feedback on the transport challenges, opportunities and ideas for Merri-bek, using the discussion paper as a guide to inform the development of a draft Strategy.

Discussion Paper

The Moving Around Merri-bek Discussion Paper was developed to support the Stage 2 engagement activities by generating discussion and guiding topics of conversation as people were asked to provide feedback on their transport challenges, aspirations, opportunities and ideas for improvement.

The Discussion Paper, which was informed by research, policy, and previous community feedback, explores transport challenges, opportunities and ideas for Merri-bek across 6 core theses:

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

Engagement program and participation

The engagement program provided a range of opportunities for the community and stakeholders to get information and provide feedback. Some activities were delivered by Council staff and others were delivered in partnership with ChatterBox Projects.

Council's promotional campaign and efforts to inform and involve the community achieved significant reach. Around **1,020 engaged participants provided feedback** via online and in-person activities including.

Engagement activities included:

- Survey (online and hard copy)
- Online Interactive map and post your ideas (via Conversations Merri-bek project page)
- Place-based pop-ups
- Workshops with key community groups, Advisory Committees, Reference Groups
- Written submissions

Pop-ups

The place-based pop-ups were designed to intercept community members and to encourage people to learn about the project, ask questions and provide feedback and ideas. Feedback at the pop-ups could be provided via hard copy surveys, a chatboard, 2 dotmocracy boards and a voting pod.

The chatboard (where people can write their responses on a board with chalk) asked 'What is your one small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek'.

The dotmocracy activities (where people can place an allocation of dots on a board to indicate their priorities) included 2 separate activities.

The first dotmocracy activity asked:

- Thinking about transport in Merri-bek, what is the most important to you – Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, Collaboration (participants could choose their top three).

The second dotmocracy activity asked:

- Which modes of transport would you like to use more often? – Walking, Car, Motorbike, Cycle, Scoot/Skate, Tram/Train/Bus.
- What is the main reason why you can't use this mode of transport right now? (participants could select all relevant options)

• Not near me	• Does not feel safe	• Physically not possible for me
• Not affordable for me	• Not reliable or regular	• Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
• Takes too long	• No accessible	

The voting pod (where people can indicate their preference by placing 1 ball into a tube) asked how easy it was for people to move around Merri-bek. This engagement activity provided an interactive way to start conversations and to get people to think about how they move around Merri-bek.

Community sentiment at the pop-ups

At the pop-ups, general sentiment was recorded after each interaction to get a sense of how community members were feeling about the project. Of the interactions recoded (122) 84% were either positive or very positive about the project, 6% were neutral, and 10% were negative or very negative.

51%	33%	6%	6%	4%

Table 2.1 provides more details about the 6 place-based pop-ups that were held around the municipality.

Table 2.1: Overview of place-based pop-up engagement activities and participation

Pop-up	Details	Participation
1 - Morgan Court, Glenroy	Saturday 19 Aug, 10am - 2pm	25
2 - Bonwick Street, Fawkner	Saturday 19 Aug, 1:30pm - 3:30pm	20
3 - Fleming Park, Brunswick East	Sunday 20 Aug, 12pm - 2pm	100
4 - Brunswick Town Hall, Sydney Road, Brunswick	Thursday 24 Aug, 12pm - 2pm	70
5 - Snell Grove, Pascoe Vale	Thursday 24 Aug, 3:30pm - 5:30pm	25
6 - Victoria Mall, Coburg	Friday 25 Aug, 10am - 12pm	60
TOTAL		300

2.4 Communications and engagement reach

Council implemented a broad promotional program to raise awareness of the project and engagement opportunities and encourage people with different perspectives and backgrounds to participate. As shown in Table 2.2, Council's promotional campaign and efforts to inform the community achieved significant reach.

Table 2.2: Overview of communication activities with participation outcomes (Council to provide details)

Promotional methods (inform and raise awareness)	People reached
Conversations Merri-bek project page	▪ Unique visitors - 2,241 ▪ Total page visits - 3,391 ▪ Followers of the page - 77
Material downloads	▪ Downloads of the Discussion Paper - 351 ▪ Downloads of the Social Research Report – 106 ▪ Easy English version of the Discussion Paper - 9
Information webinar	▪ Attendees – 6
Social media coverage and interaction	▪ Click throughs from translated social media ads – 1,171 ▪ Click throughs from English social media ad – 493
E-newsletter/newsletter articles	▪ Article in the e-Business e-news - 6,000 subscribers ▪ Article in the Merri-bek News delivered to 70,000 households ▪ Article in the all-staff e-newsletter emailed to 1,000 staff
Email campaign/direct emails	▪ Email sent to Conversation Merri-bek's 3,795 subscribers ▪ 5 emails send to 39 community groups
Displays of A3 posters and A5 posters	▪ Coburg Civil Centre (Town Hall) ▪ Sporting clubs/venues (in Fawkner, Oak Park and Coburg) ▪ Merri-bek Libraries x 5 ▪ Neighbourhood houses, community halls and youth spaces (in Coburg, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick, Brunswick East, Oak Park, Fawkner, and Glenroy) x 14 ▪ Cafes surrounding the Civic Centre x 4
Delivery of A3 posters and A5 postcards (online and hard copy)	▪ Sydney Road Brunswick Association (SRBA) ▪ Coburg Traders Association

Promotional methods (inform and raise awareness)	People reached
Distributed of translated materials - online and hard copy surveys, and in-language posters	▪ Community Connectors ▪ Merri-bek Libraries x 5 ▪ Pronia (Greek Community Organisation) ▪ Alevi Community Federation (Turkish Community Organisation) ▪ Arabic Welfare ▪ Patronato INCA (Italian Community Organisation) ▪ Neighbourhood Network Neighbourhood Houses x 7 ▪ Merri Health ▪ Service Provider Network

2.5 Who we heard from

Snapshot

We heard from:

- Mostly local Merri-bek residents (94.3%)
- All age groups with strong representation from those aged between 25-59 years
- A good spread of both women (52%) and men (40.7%)
- A diverse range of people including:
    - 166 people who were born outside of Australia from 42 different countries
    - 81 people who speak a language other than English at home
    - 64 people who identified as LGBTQIA+
    - 74 people with disability or who are a carer of someone with disability
    - 31 people who experience limited mobility
    - 5 people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- A range of local groups including the Brunswick Residents Network, CALD Connectors, Climate Action Merri-bek, Coburg High Walking and Cycling, Coburg Trader Association, Merri-bek BUG, Sydney Road Brunswick Association, Upfield Transport Alliance, and Walk on Merri-bek

Detailed demographic information

Around 1,020 individuals provided feedback. The survey was the most comprehensive data gathering activity, capturing demographic information as well as in-depth feedback on key topics of interest. This section describes the demographic profile of the participants. Not all engagement activities captured participant demographic information or the same information, so this profile is mostly based on the survey (online, hard copy, and translated versions) unless stated otherwise.

Residential suburb: Figure 2.2 shows most of the survey participants (479 or 94.3%) live within Merri-Bek, many in Brunswick (134). Other suburbs well represented included Coburg (82), Brunswick East (64), Coburg North (41), and Brunswick West (39).

Gender: Figure 2.3 shows a good spread between female participants (279) and male participants (217) and 9 participants identified as Non-binary/genderqueer/genderfluid.

Age: Figure 2.4 shows all age groups were represented and many survey participants (192 or 36.7%) were aged 25 to 39 years. The 40 to 49 years age group was well represented (137) and 99 participants were aged 50 to 59 years. Younger voices were also represented and captured via the survey and place-based pop-up engagement. The place-based pop-up activities (voting pod) also engaged 17 children and young people under 18 years.

Diversity: Figure 2.5 shows all diversity and other categories were represented. Some participants identified as a Person who speaks a language other than English at home (81), LGBTQIA+ (64), Person with disability (37), Carer of someone with disability (37), Person who experiences limited mobility (31), and/or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (5). Regarding birthplace, 166 participants reported they were born outside of Australia of which many reported New Zealand (17), United Kingdom (14), United States (9), England (7), Germany (6), and France (5).

The consultation also attracted participants representing community segments as well as local groups that provided a written submission including Brunswick Residents Network, CALD Connectors, Climate Action Merri-bek, Coburg High Walking and Cycling, Coburg Trader Association, Merri-bek BUG, Sydney Road Brunswick Association, Upfield Transport Alliance, and Walk on Merri-bek.

Figure 2.2: Participant residential suburb (Survey)

Residential locations were not recorded for the 29 participants who selected 'Outside of Merri-bek'.

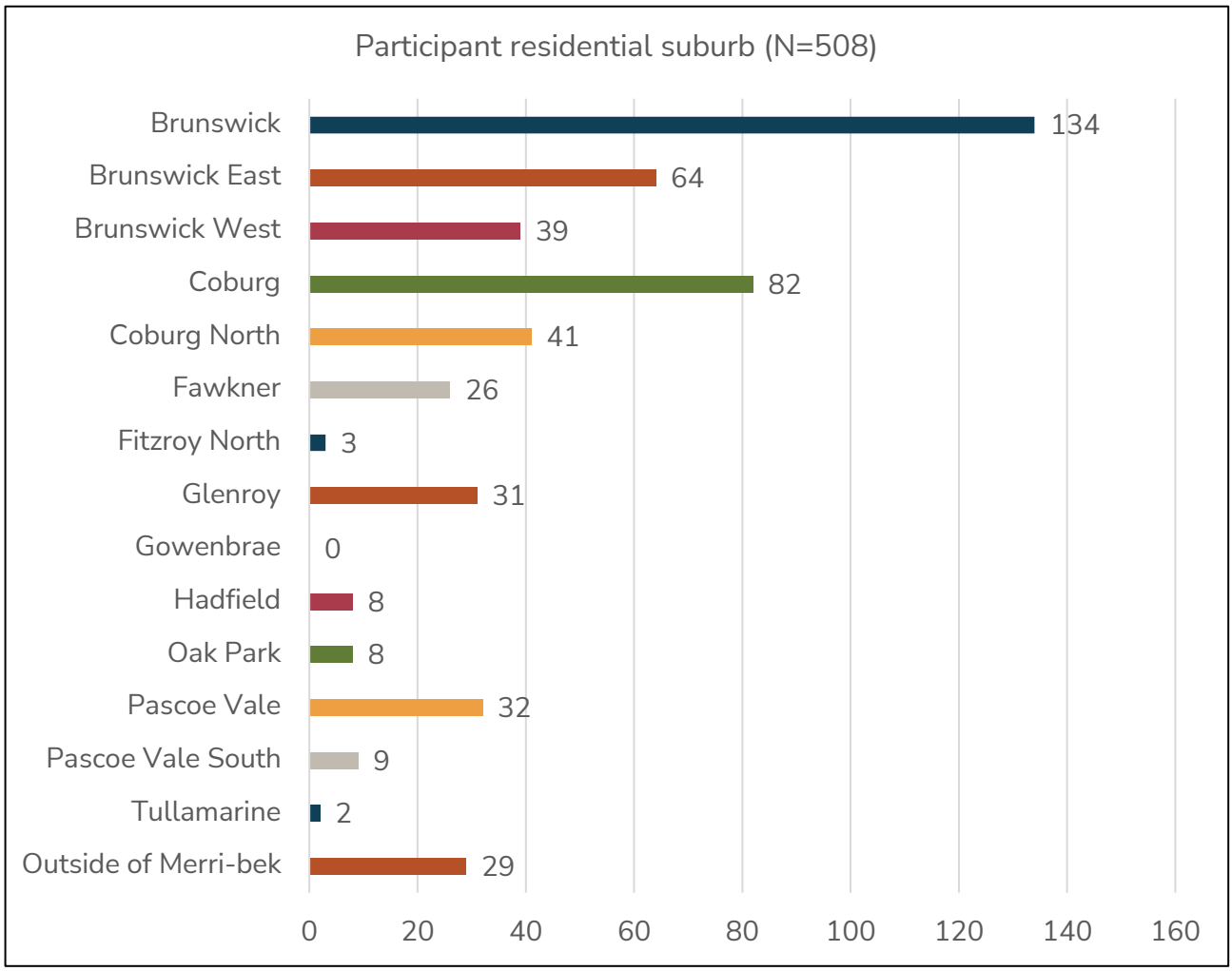


Figure 2.3: Gender of participants (Survey)

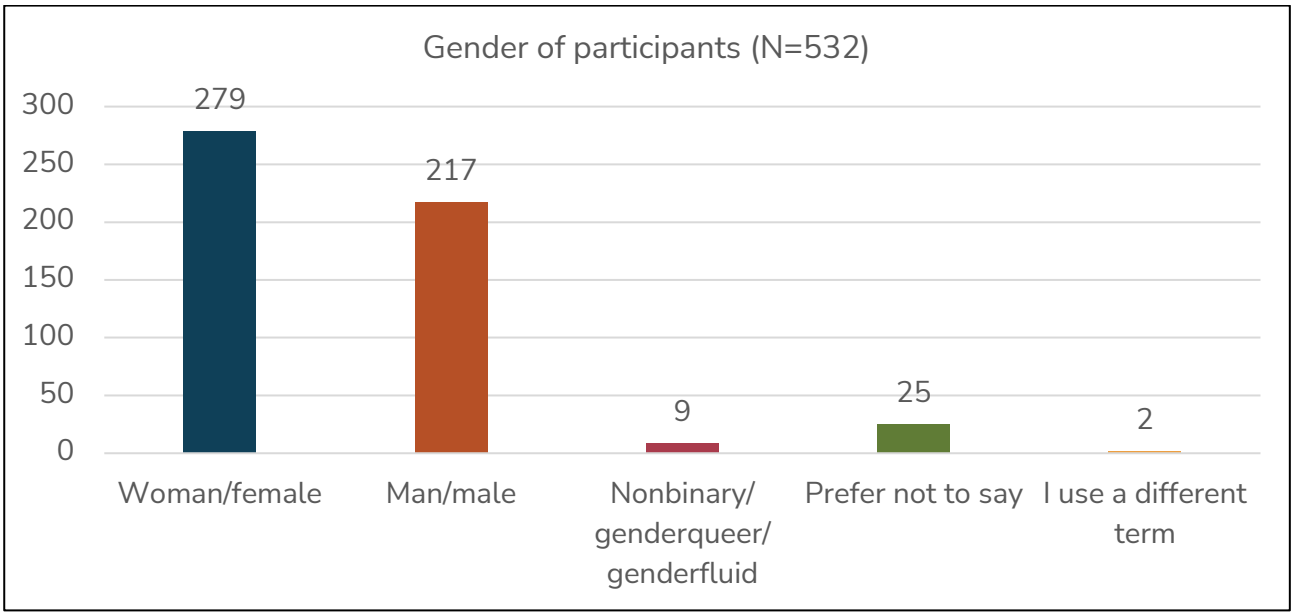


Figure 2.4: Age of participants (Survey)

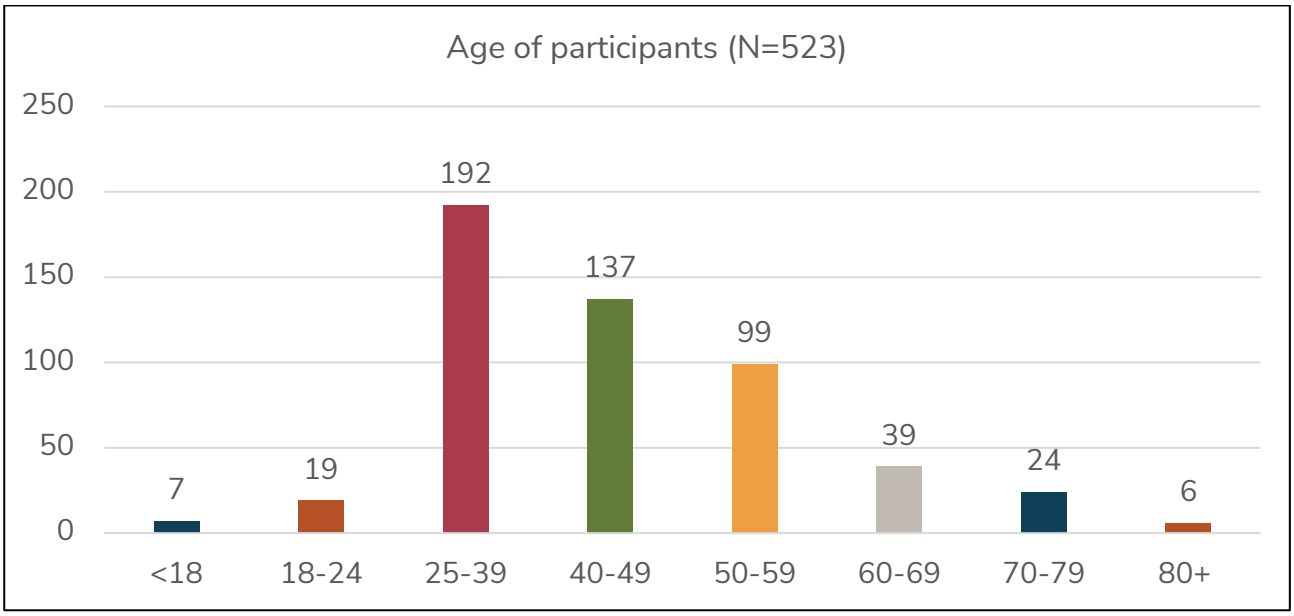


Figure 2.5: Age of participants (Pop-ups)

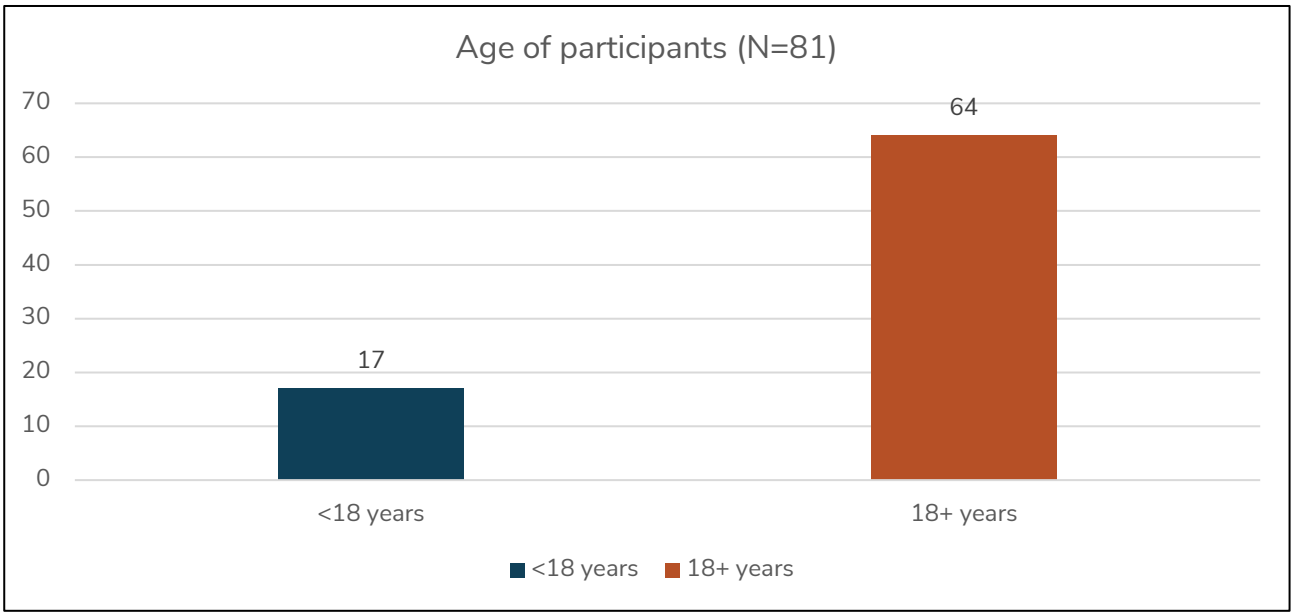
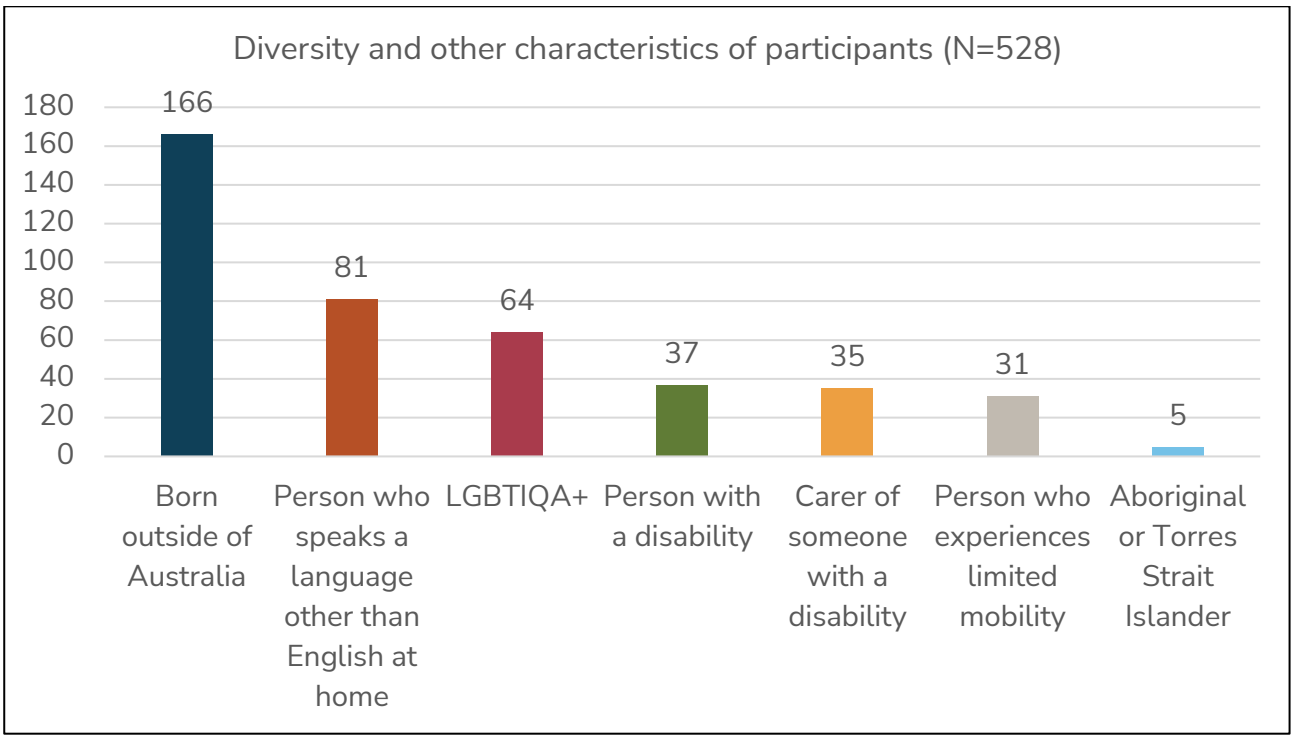


Figure 2.6: Diversity and other characteristics of participants (Survey)



Of the 166 participants who indicated they were born outside of Australia, 114 reported the following locations (where a location was reported by multiple participants this is indicated in brackets):

Argentina	Hong Kong (3)	Norway
Belgium	India	Papua New Guinea (2)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iraq	Philippines (2)
Brazil	Ireland (2)	Poland
Brunei	Italy	Qatar

Canada (4)	Japan (2)	Russia (2)
Chile (2)	Lebanon	Scotland (2)
China (4)	Malaysia (2)	Singapore (2)
Colombia (2)	Malta	Sri Lanka
England (7)	Mauritius	Taiwan (2)
Europe	Mexico	Thailand
France (5)	Middle East	United Kingdom (14)
Germany (6)	New York City	United States (9)
Greece (2)	New Zealand (17)	Venezuela

Overall, the consultation successfully engaged a broad cross-section of the Merri-Bek community.

There were some segments of the community that had no or low levels of engagement including:

- no feedback from people living in Gowanbrae, Fitzroy North, and Tullamarine; and
- lower levels of feedback from people aged under 24 years and over 70 years

In addition, other than 2 submissions from Traders Associations (representing over 800 businesses), the response rate from individual business owners in Merri-bek is unable to be determined.

Ideas to target these groups for future consultation:

To target specific suburbs:

- Letter box drops
- Targeted social media advertising
- Place-based pop-ups in more locations

To target specific age groups:

- Targeted social media advertising
- Customised consultation such as school's workshops or on-site pop-ups at youth facilities, skate parks, drop-ins at libraries, seniors' centres, leisure centres etc
- Advertising on public transport

To target business owners

- Trader drop-ins at shopping strips to drop off information and answer questions
- Continued communications via Economic Development channels

3. Engagement findings – moving around Merri-bek now

3.1 Overview

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the community feedback with a focus on moving around Merri-bek now. Findings and insights are presented regarding how easy it is to move around Merri-bek; modes of transport currently used and reasons why; and modes of transport that participants would like to use more often and main barriers.

When asked at pop-up events **how easy it is to move around Merri-bek**, most participants of all ages (64 or 79.0%) reported Very Easy or Easy with 16 (or 19.8%) reporting Very Easy. 10 (or 12.3%) reported it is Difficult or Very difficult for them to move around Merri-bek.

Participants were asked via the survey **how often they currently used specific modes of transport** to move in, out or around Merri-bek. Participants use all transport modes (Walk, Cycle, Car, Tram, Train, Bus, Uber/taxi, Scoot/skate, Motorbike) to varying degrees to move in, out or around Merri-bek. Most participants (298 or 57.0%) reported they walk All of the time or Most of the time, and 107 (or 20.5% of 523) reported All of the time. Many participants reported that they cycle All of the time or Most of the time (222 or 43.9% of 506) and/or use a car All of the time or Most of the time (194 or 36.7% of 529). Most participants reported they Rarely or never use a motorbike (484 or 96.2% of 503) or scoot/skate (458 or 91.4% of 501).

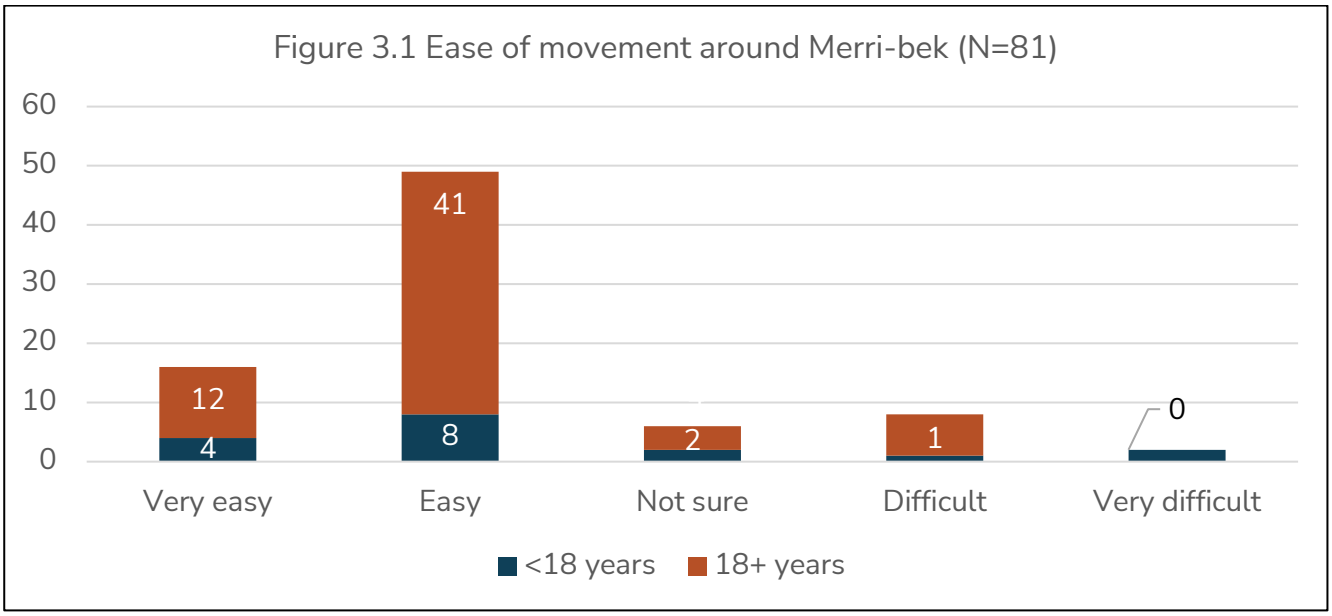
Participants were asked via the survey and pop-up events **which modes of transport they would like to use more often**. Participants selected all transport modes (Walk, Cycle, Car, Tram, Train, Bus, Uber/taxi, Scoot/skate, Motorbike) to varying degrees. Participants most frequently reported they would like to Cycle more often (296 or 54.3%), Walk more often (228 or 41.8%), and/or use a Tram more often (215 or 39.4%). A lower level of interest was reported for Motorbike (4 or 0.7%), Uber/taxi (15 or 2.8%), and Scoot/skate (29 or 5.3%).

3.2 Ease of movement around Merri-Bek

Place-based pop-up engagement participants (voting pod) were asked how easy it is for them to move around Merri-bek and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 3.1, participants aged under 18 years and 18 years and over selected response options to varying degrees. Most participants of all ages (64 or 79.0%) reported Very Easy or Easy with 16 (or 19.8%) reporting Very Easy. 10 (or 12.3%) reported it is Difficult or Very difficult for them to move around Merri-bek.

Figure 3.1: Ratings for ease of movement around Merri-bek (Pop-up)

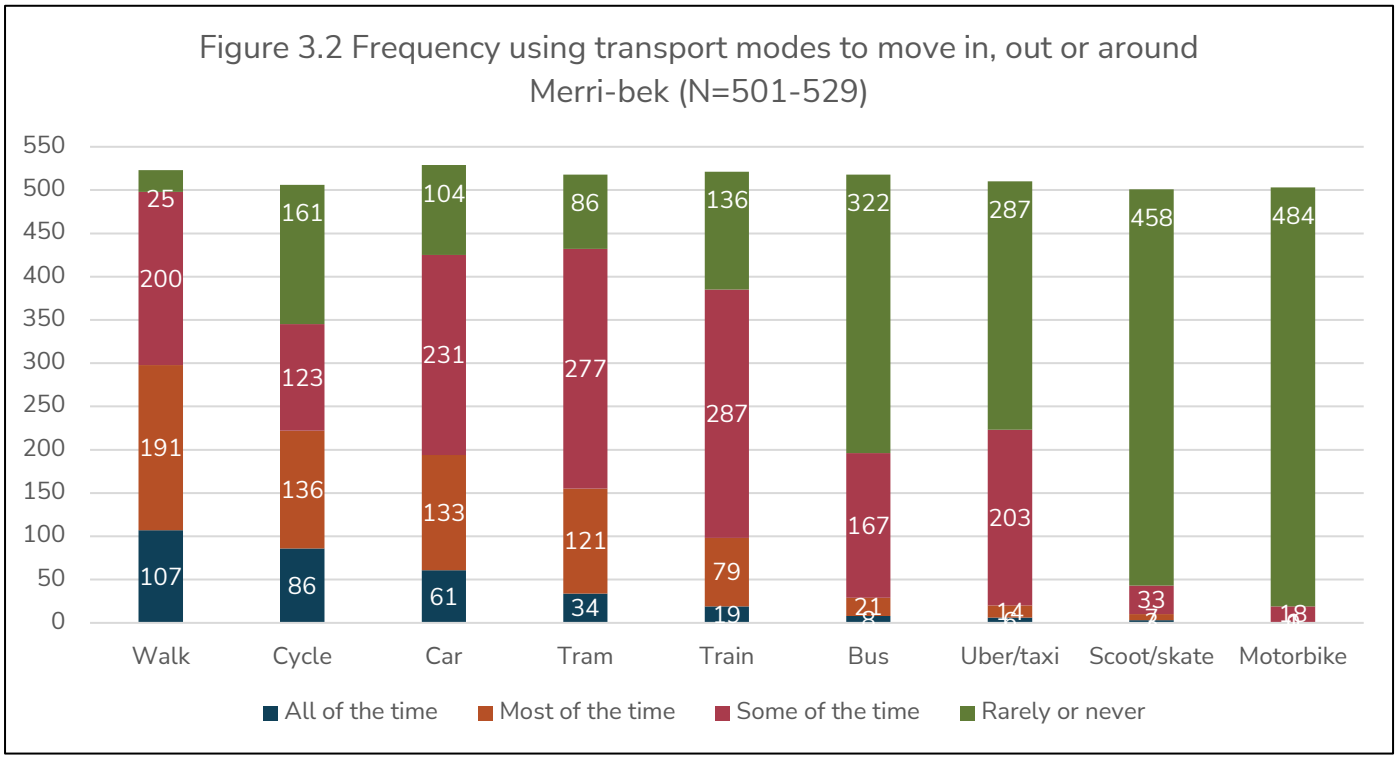


3.3 Modes of transport currently used and reasons why

Survey participants were asked how often they currently used specific modes of transport to move in, out or around Merri-bek and presented with 9 transport modes and 4 response options.

Figure 3.2 shows participants use all transport modes to varying degrees to move in, out or around Merri-bek. Most participants (298 or 57.0%) reported they walk All of the time or Most of the time, and 107 (or 20.5% of 523) reported All of the time. Many participants reported that they cycle All of the time or Most of the time (222 or 43.9% of 506) and/or use a car All of the time or Most of the time (194 or 36.7% of 529). Most participants reported they Rarely or never use a motorbike (484 or 96.2% of 503) or scoot/skate (458 or 91.4% of 501).

Figure 3.2: Modes of transport currently used to move in, out, or around Merri-bek (Survey)



Survey participants were asked in relation to the transport mode that they use most often, why is this the best way to travel around Merri-bek and 443 participants provided a personalised response which referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped using the transport modes as themes, as presented in Table 3.1. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 3.1: Themes in reasons why participants choose a specific transport mode/s (Survey)

Main transport mode referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
1. Walk	
• Walking is an easy, quick, and convenient way to access shops and public transport from my house. • Enjoy walking for exercise, while exercising the dog, and for mental and physical health reasons. • Most things and places are within walking distance or close to home, so walking is fast and efficient. • Walking as I can no longer drive.	*"Most things I require are close to my house, so walking is fast and efficient".* *"I love walking for mental and physical health and most of what I need is within walking distance".* *"On foot because I can't drive at my age".*
2. Cycle	
• It keeps a car off the road, has the lowest carbon intensity, is better for the environment, is a sustainable option and as it does not use fossil fuels there is a low environmental impact which is good for the planet. • Cycling is convenient, efficient to get around within Merri-bek, and an effective way of travelling for most of my day-to-day purposes. • Like that it keeps me active, healthy (mentally and physically), and is good exercise outdoors. • Cycling is free, affordable, or the cheapest transport mode. • Cycling avoids contributing to traffic congestion and it is good not having to locate a car park. • E-bikes are good. • Don't have a driver's license.	*"Cycling is convenient, efficient and it's faster to get around within Merri- bek. I like that it keeps me healthy, keeps a car off the road and it's faster to park and go in and out of places".* *"Affordability, convenience, good exercise".* *"It is the most environmentally and cost-effective means of transportation".*
3. Car	
• Easy, quick, safe, reliable, most cost-effective, and not overcrowded. • Most convenient because of my physical condition, chronic illness, mobility issues, due to being time poor, being employed with shift work, or having access to disabled car parking. • Most flexible for carrying large loads such as groceries, because of young children, or the need to travel to multiple destinations for work and family obligations.	*"Gives flexibility and ability to carry large loads e.g. groceries. Also, it's much easier since I have 2 kids under 3".* *"Car is fast, convenient and reliable".* *"Due to a lot of travel with my job, time restrictions and weight of items I need to carry".*
4. Tram	
• Trams are safe, easy to travel, fast to reach my destination, and parking is easy. • Tram stop is located near my home. Tram route is conveniently close to home and work. • Trams are frequent, reliable, and the best option.	*"It is the most direct route into the city and back home from the city".* *"Trams are conveniently located, affordable and quick".* *"Because it easy and fast to reach in my destination and easy for parking".*

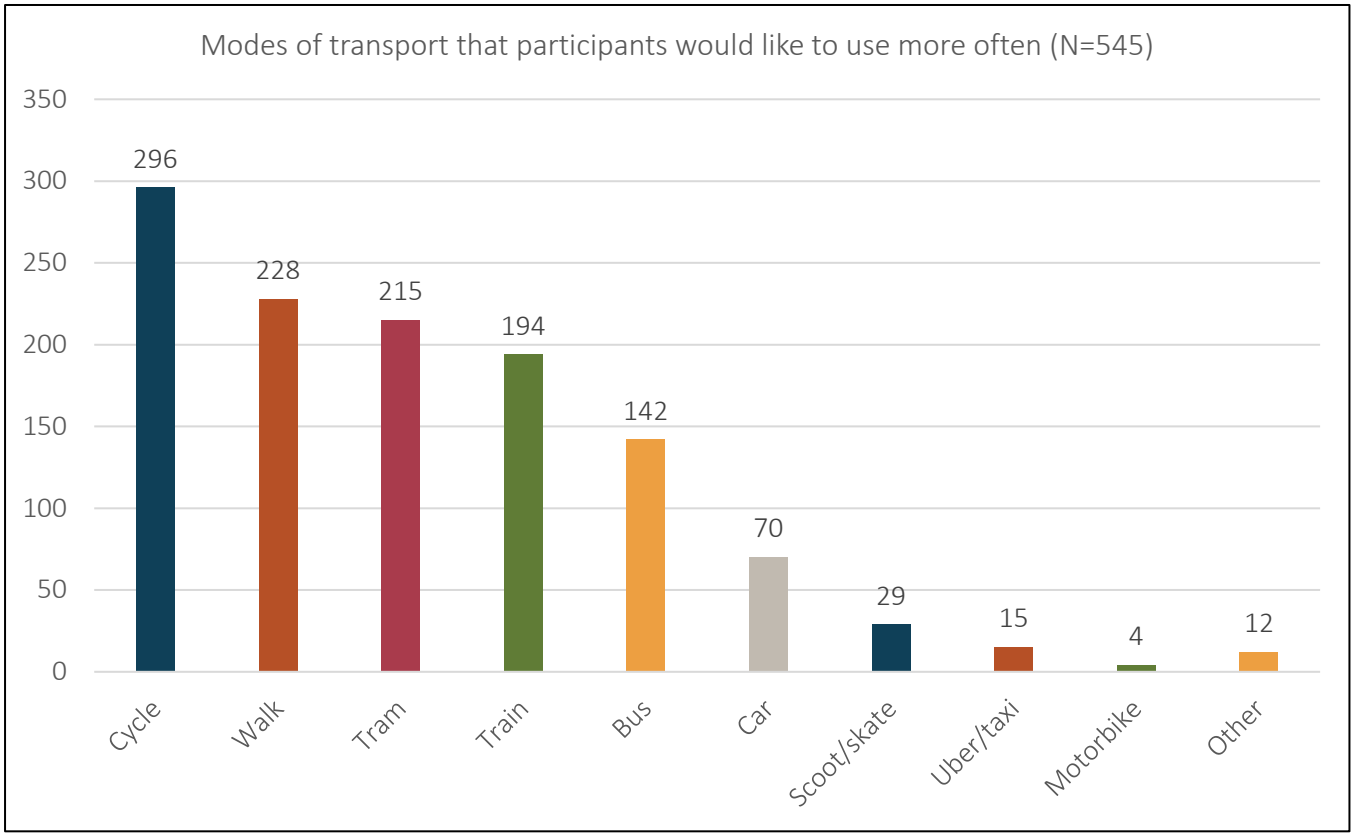
• Trams are quick and the most direct route to and from the city.	
5. Train	
• Trains get me to work, the city or my destination quickly. • Train is a convenient option, more reliable and faster than buses. • A station is located near my home and the places I want to go are connected to the train or tram system. • Because I do not, or prefer not, to drive.	*"I prefer not to drive, it is better for health, sustainability and more social".* *"The most convenient option for me'.* *"Train transport gets me quickly to work".*
6. Bus	
• The service that is closest to home. • The most direct services to destinations.	*"Buses are closest to home in Fawkner".* *"Bus is more direct to where I need or want to go".*
7. Uber/taxi	
• A flexible service that meets my personal transport needs.	*"Only service to accommodate my needs".* *"I always take the train or an uber into and out of the city if I need to go there".* *"Uber for after hours or where public transport does not go".*
8. Scoot/skate	
• Gets me to around for day-to-day shopping and commuting to work. • Use the Upfield and OHea Street bike paths daily and it's a safe route and faster than public transport. • Living in West Brunswick and it is faster than a car or the tram.	*"I can get to shops for day-to-day shopping, also going to the pool as well as commuting into the city or our suburban office for work".* *"E-scooter on the Upfield and OHea Street bike paths daily to and from work. It's a safe route that allows me to avoid riding on the road, It's faster than public transport".* *"I use an electric scooter because I live in West Brunswick, and it is faster compared to a car or the tram".*

3.4 Modes of transport that could be used more often and main barriers

Survey participants and place-based pop-up participants (dotmocracy) were asked which modes of transport they would like to use more often in Merri-bek and presented with 9 response options as well as an "Other" option for personalised feedback.

As shown in Figure 3.3, participants selected all response options to varying degrees. Participants most frequently reported they would like to Cycle more often (296 or 54.3%), Walk more often (228 or 41.8%), and/or use a Tram more often (215 or 39.4%). A lower level of interest was reported for Motorbike (4 or 0.7%), Uber/taxi (15 or 2.8%), and Scoot/skate (29 or 5.3%).

Figure 3.3: Modes of transport that participants would like to use more often (Survey, Pop-ups)

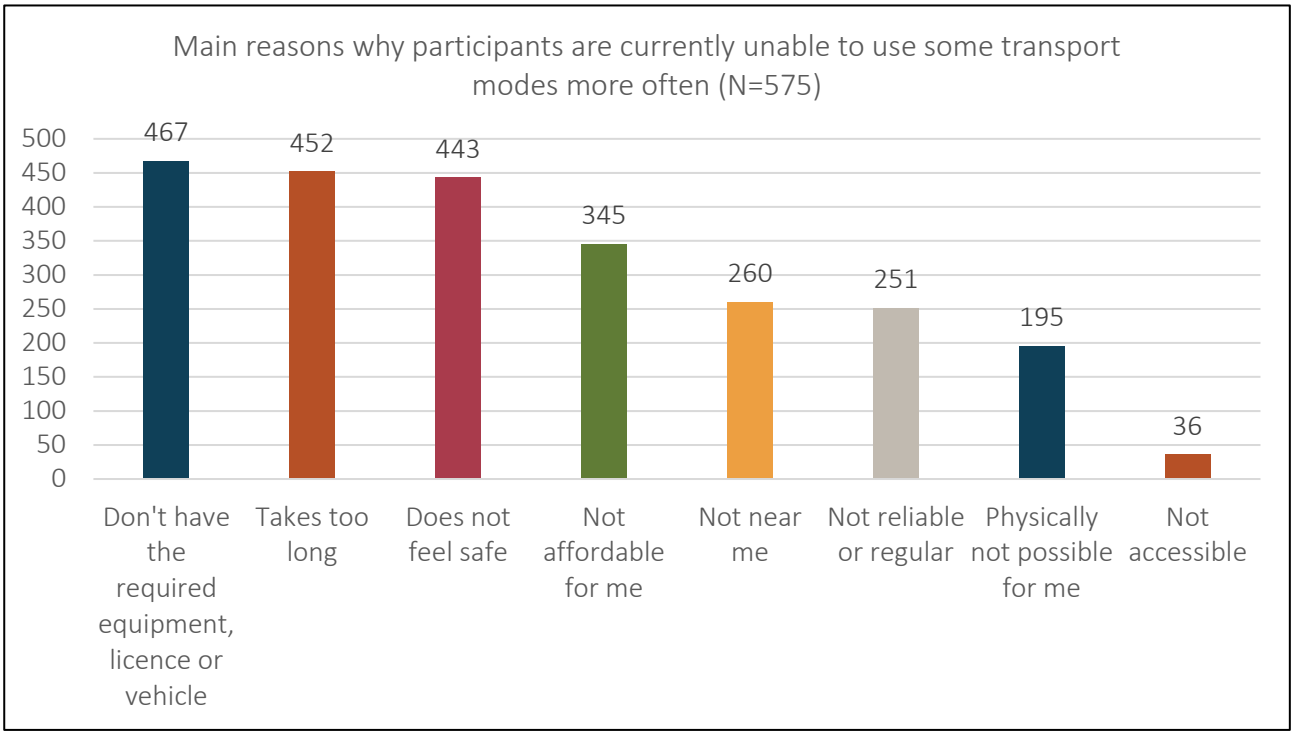


The 12 survey participants who selected 'Other' provided the following responses: Carpooling to work; Don't feel the need to use transport more often; Electric bike/E-bike (3); Happy with options chosen; Have close access to train, tram and bus and GoGets when I need to hire a car; Motorised scooter; None (3); Rickshaw; Walking or public transport at night.

Survey participants and place-based pop-up participants (dotmocracy) were also asked for the main reasons why they are currently unable to use this mode or these modes of transport (Bus, Motorbike, Scoot/skate, Train, Uber/taxi, Cycle, Car, Walk, Tram) and presented with 8 response options.

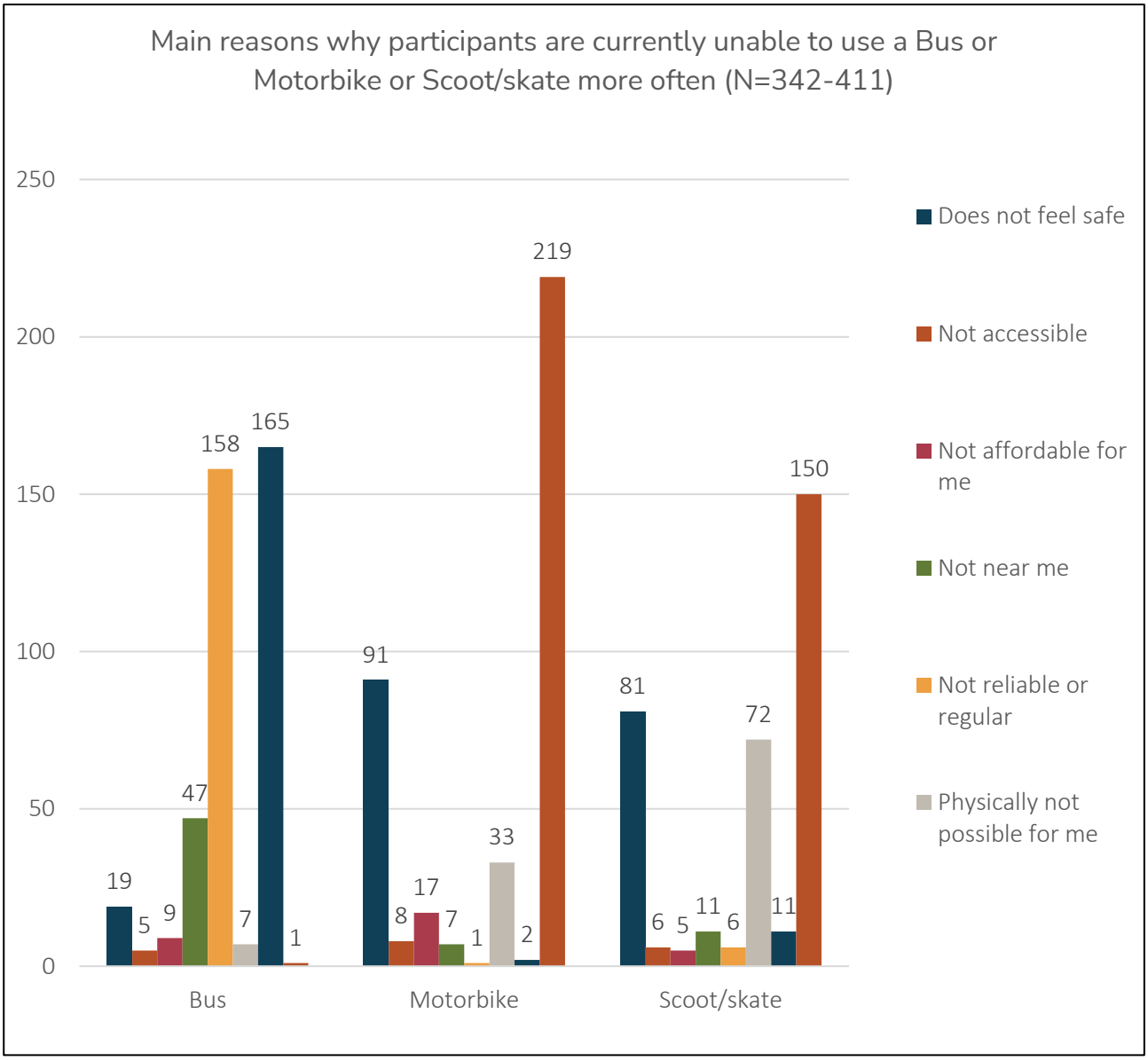
As shown in Figure 3.4, the most frequently reported overall main barriers or reasons why participants are currently unable to use some modes of transport are Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle (467 or 81.2%), Takes too long (452 or 78.6%), and Does not feel safe (443 or 77.0%). Figures 3.5 to 3.7 show the main barriers or reasons reported for each mode of transport.

Figure 3.4: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use some transport modes more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



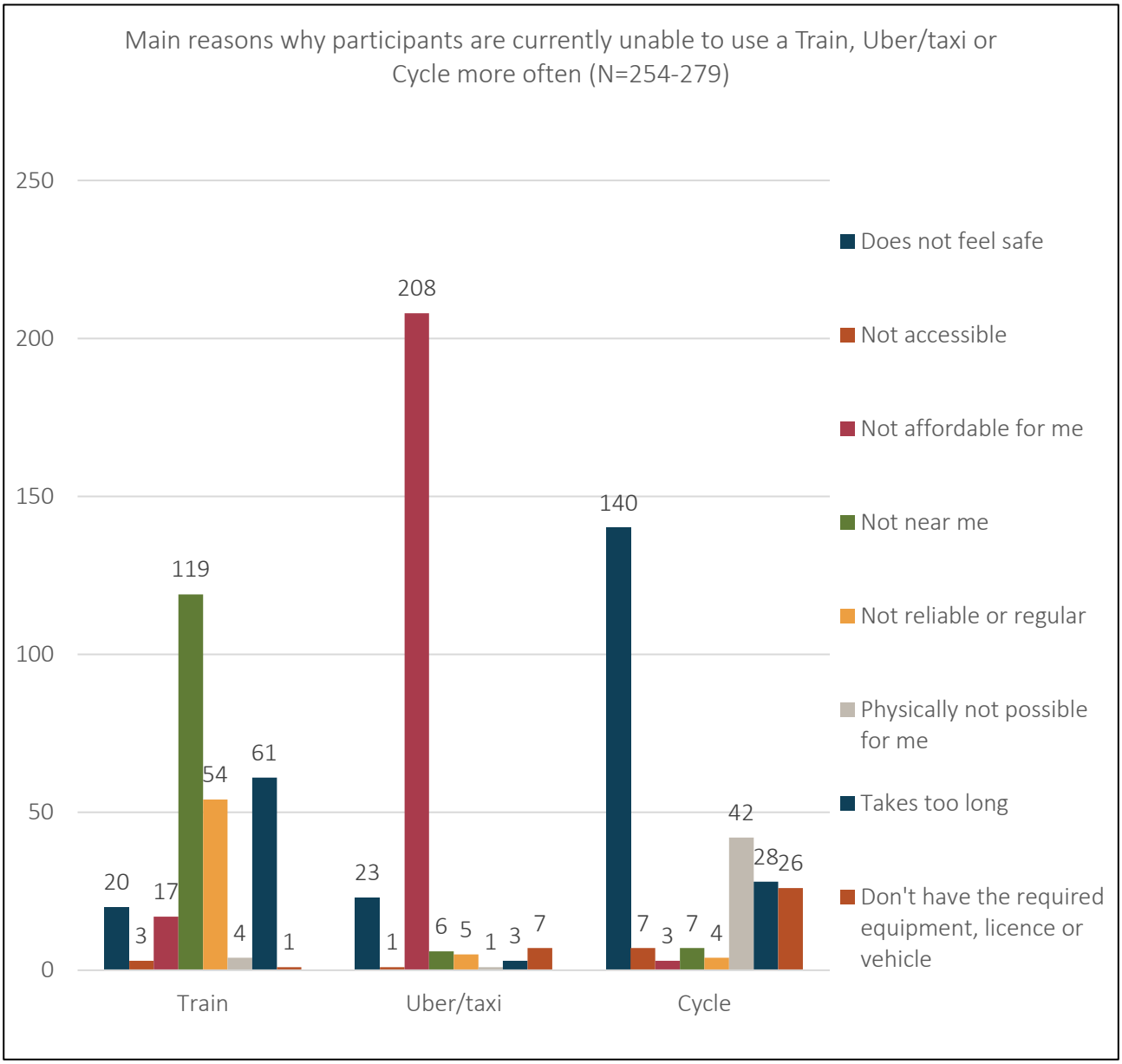
As shown in Figure 3.5, the most frequently reported main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Bus more often are Takes too long (165) and Not reliable or regular(158). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to use a Motorbike more often are Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle (219) and Does not feel safe (91). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to Scoot/skate more often are Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle (150) and Does not feel safe (81).

Figure 3.5: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Bus or Motorbike or Scoot/ skate more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



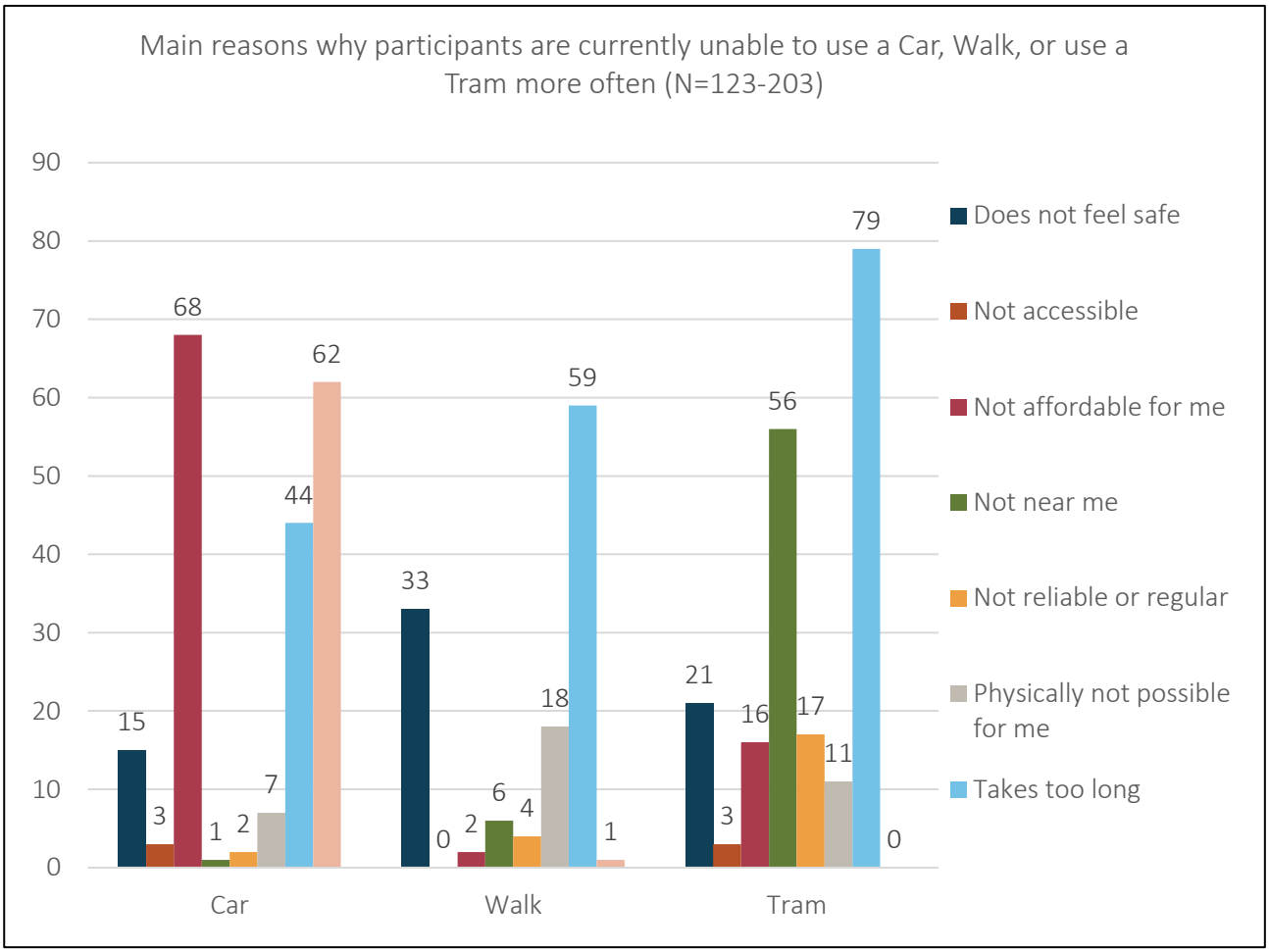
As shown in Figure 3.6, the most frequently reported main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Train more often are Not near me (119) and Takes too long (61). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to use an Uber/taxi more often are Not affordable for me (208) and Does not feel safe (23). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to Cycle more often are Does not feel safe (140) and Physically not possible for me (42).

Figure 3.6: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Train, Uber/taxi or Cycle more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



As shown in Figure 3.7, the most frequently reported main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Car more often are Not affordable for me (68) and Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle. The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to Walk are Takes too long (59) and Does not feel safe (33). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to use a Tram more often are Takes too long (79) and Not near me (56).

Figure 3.7: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Car, Walk, or use a Tram more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



Survey participants were asked if there is another reason why they are unable to use a specific mode of transport and to indicate which mode and why. 202 participants provided a personalised response of which 8 generally indicated nothing further to add. The responses from the remaining 194 participants referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped into themes. Four themes emerged during the analyses and are presented in Table 3.2. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 3.2: Themes in other reasons why participants are unable to use some modes of transport (Survey)

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
1. Safety is a significant issue and concerns vary by transport mode	
• Cycling: Preferred transport mode, however, safety concerns relating to road conditions, lack of protected space and inadequate infrastructure. A desire for safer and more cycling-related infrastructure to encourage cycling. • Walking: Desirable transport mode, however, some walking paths are in potentially dangerous condition. Walking is generally considered safe during the day, but there are safety concerns at night due to no or poor lighting. A desire for safer pedestrian-related infrastructure to encourage walking. • Trains: Safety-related concerns associated with waiting times due to poor connections, overcrowding, and the risk of COVID-19 transmission. • Cars: While generally considered a safer option, cars are also associated with chaos on roads and footpaths. Safety concerns associated with the behaviours of some car drivers. • Buses: Safety concerns associated with infrequent and unreliable services. Infrequency leads to longer waiting times and personal safety concerns. • Trams: Sometimes seen as unsafe, particularly when crossing busy roads. • Overall transport environment: General safety concerns relating to anti-social behaviours, gender-based violence and lack of speed-restricting devices.	*"Access to safe walking paths is incredibly important to me, including good lighting in the evening. I've been followed home after getting off a tram after work on a winter afternoon as it was getting dark, which was very scary".* *"Sometimes it doesn't feel safe to cycle to certain places so I might need to choose another form of transport if there isn't a good, safe way to get there".* *"I would like to use the car more but the 60km limit on Moreland Road is very dangerous for cars turning in and needs to become 50km".* *"Security, because of people disturbing people on public transport".*
2. Inconvenience, inefficiency, and affordability are concerns in relation to public transport services	
• Buses: Concerns about infrequent and unreliable schedules, and suboptimal connections to other modes of transportation • Trains: Generally preferred for city visits or family trips, but their infrequency and limited usefulness for local travel are issues. • Trams: Regarded as unaffordable for short trips, concerns about overcrowding and uncomfortable seating at stops. • Overall public transport services: Generally viewed as irregular, slow, or not providing direct routes or connections to destinations. The cost of public transport is seen as a barrier to use.	*"The train service is too infrequent and unaffordable".* *"Better public transport in the evenings and weekends, especially buses, would be helpful. I cannot drive for medical reasons".* *"Would love east-west tram connection between route 58 and Route 19/Upfield train line along Moreland Road".*
3. Accessibility is an issue, due to physical limitations or lack of infrastructure across transport modes	
• Cars: Viewed as accessible and convenient, especially in areas where amenities are easy to access. Yet there is a preference to reduce car usage due to the negative impact on the roads and difficulty parking is also a concern.	*"Reluctant to use the bus routes that run East-West because they can be very unreliable".* *"I would love accessible trams for my friends with disabilities who cannot access the current trams".*

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
• Cycling: Desire for safer roads, better cycling infrastructure to improve connectivity between modes of transport, and more bike parking stations. • Buses: Regarded as generally inaccessible due to infrequent and unreliable schedules, and lack of bike racks.	
4. Environmental concerns which often motivate a preference for more sustainable transport modes	
• Cycling and walking: Active transport modes are desirable and environmentally friendly, yet use may be limited due to safety concerns and limited supporting infrastructure. • Cars: Generally viewed as environmentally unfriendly, contributing to pollution and congestion. • Buses: Concerns about exhaust emissions and a call for more electric buses. • Overall transport environment: General sentiment is current transportation infrastructure prioritizes motor vehicles over other modes, leading to unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Leading to environmental concerns and a desire for more sustainable and safe transportation options.	*"Car - I avoid as much as possible for environmental reasons and being stuck in traffic".* *"I would avoid using all single person transport that uses fossil fuels".*

Workshop participants reported:

- Cycling: Many youth participants would like to cycle more. They have friends and family living to the north and north-west of Merri-bek and there is a lack of viable transport connections, for instance between Coburg and Broadmeadows. Train stations and bus stops often felt unsafe for young people, with poor lighting and a lack of covered waiting areas reducing the attractiveness of catching public transport. Some relied on ride share services (Youth Ambassadors).
- Cars: Some youth participants noted the importance of driving as a social activity, particularly in areas such as Fawkner with limited options for young people at night and on weekends. Reasons for preferring to drive include feeling unsafe when it's dark (commonly held belief by female participants), that it is quicker and more convenient, that the buses are poor and run infrequently, and switching between various forms of public transport is often necessary which makes it difficult.
- Uber/taxi: Some older participants must catch a taxi as public transport would take too long and they don't drive. On-demand bus services, like those operating in Melton, may work well in under-serviced areas of Merri-bek.
- Multi-modal travellers, not single mode users: Many residents use different modes of transport (public transport, walking, cycling and driving) at different times and for different purposes.

4. Engagement findings – looking to the future

4.1 Overview

This Section presents the findings from the analysis of the community feedback with a focus on the 6 Draft Themes (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and proposed Objectives, looking to the future. Findings and insights are presented regarding the level of support for the Draft Themes and the most important Objectives and advocacy initiates for Council. Other ideas and general feedback provided to inform the Strategy is also presented.

When asked to indicate the 3 most important Themes of a future transport system for Merri-bek, participants selected the Themes to varying degrees. Safety was most frequently selected as Priority 1 (189 or 34.2%) and ranked the highest priority overall (378 or 68.5%). Safety was followed by Liveability which was ranked as the second highest priority overall (343 or 62.1%) and the third highest priority overall was Accessibility (318 or 57.6%). Survey participants were asked to share their own suggestions and ideas if they thought an important priority was missing. Some participants indicated they had nothing further to add or the priorities are good. Suggestions included reconsidering or expanding the scope the 6 current themes and considering the addition of Affordability and Connectivity as other important priorities.

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the proposed Objectives for each Draft Theme and presented with 5 response options. Most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of all objectives as shown below:

- Safety objectives: 91.1% to 93.8%
- Accessibility objectives: 93.0% to 95.5%
- Sustainability objectives: 89.6% to 90.9%
- Health objectives: 88.8% to 93.0%
- Liveability objectives: 87.3% to 94.1%
- Collaboration objectives: 89.0% to 93.4%.

4.2 Preferred themes for a new transport system for Merri-bek

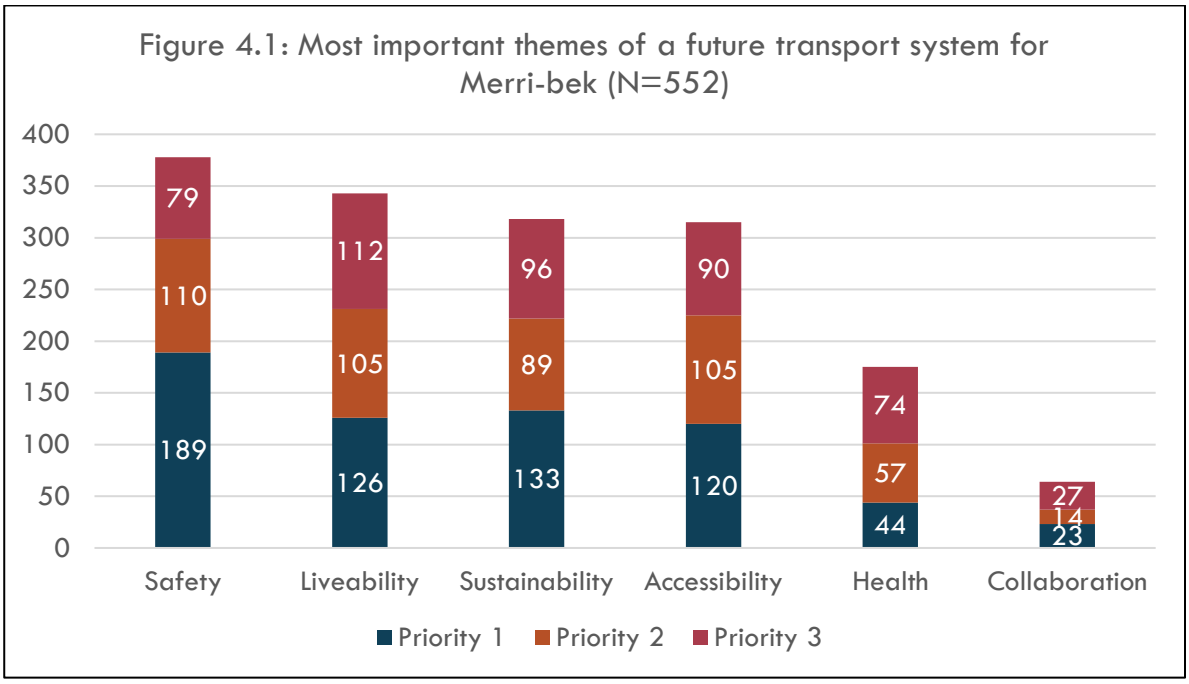
Survey participants and place-based pop-up (Dotmocracy) participants were asked to indicate the 3 most important elements of a future transport system for Merri-bek and presented with the following listing of 6 themes and theme descriptions.

- Accessibility: An accessible transport system – all people can use different modes of transport no matter their age, background, or abilities.
- Collaboration: A transport system shaped by community and Council working together – Council and community are working together to meet transport needs and advocating to State Government for transport improvements.
- Health: A transport system to contributes to our health – there are more easy options to walk or ride for fitness, fun and everyday trips as well as places for us to come together as a community.
- Liveability: A transport system that makes our lives better – there are enjoyable connections and transport options close to where people live, making it easy to access shops, services, and jobs.

- Safety: A safe transport system – people are safe travelling in all kinds of ways on local roads, streets, and paths.
- Sustainability: A sustainable transport system – there are more easy options to travel sustainably, whether by foot, bike, e-scooter, public transport, or zero-emission vehicles, helping to reduce transport emissions.

As shown in Figure 4.1, all statements were selected to varying degrees. Safety was most frequently selected as Priority 1 (189 or 34.2%) and ranked the highest priority overall (378 or 68.5%). Safety was followed by Liveability which was ranked as the second highest priority overall (343 or 62.1%) and the third highest priority overall was Accessibility (318 or 57.6%).

Figure 4.1: Most important themes of a future transport system for Merri-bek (Survey, Pop-ups)



Survey participants were asked to share their thoughts if an important priority is missing (from the themes shown above in Figure 4.1). 436 participants provided a personalised response of which 188 generally indicated nothing further to add or the priorities are good. The responses from the remaining 248 participants referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped into themes. Eight themes emerged during the analyses and are presented in Table 4.1. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 4.1: Suggested for revisions and additional themes as transport system priorities (Survey)

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
1. Reconsider or expand the scope of Safety as an important priority to consider	
Safety is a key consideration and directly impacts the well-being and confidence of road users and the success of the transportation system. • Prioritizing safety can encourage active and sustainable modes of transport, reduce accidents and injuries, and enhance the overall quality of transportation for all users. • Prioritizing safety is important for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and children. Merri-bek needs safe	*"Good quality paths for cycling and walking that are maintained and big enough for pedestrians and cyclists on the same path. Well-lit paths to allow for visibility at nighttime".* *"Bike priority and walking priority. Cars should not have*

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
pedestrian crossings, pathways, bike lanes, and road infrastructure to protect all road users. • Safety extends beyond physical protection to include the feeling of security when using different transport modes. When people feel unsafe, they are less likely to choose a mode of transport, leading to increased car usage and congestion.	*right or way or priority in any urban planning setting".* *"By safety I mean lessening the risk I'll be hit by a car when walking or getting off a tram".*
2. Reconsider or expand the scope of Accessibility as an important priority to consider	
Accessibility is a key consideration and fundamental aspect of transport planning and policymaking to create a system that is inclusive, efficient and provides equal opportunities for everyone to move around independently. • Prioritizing accessibility ensures transportation options are available and usable for all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities, socioeconomic status, or location. This promotes equal opportunities for travel and societal participation. • Prioritizing accessibility fosters inclusivity and social equity by enabling everyone including those with limited mobility, prams or wheelchairs, to access essential services like healthcare, education, employment, and recreational activities. • Accessibility enhances safety by reducing the risk of accidents and injuries through accessible infrastructure and promotes the use of sustainable transportation and more environmentally friendly modes of transport.	*"Accessibility - impossible to use trams when you have a pram as there are no accessible tram stops".* *"Accessibility is a human right and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency first".* *"Equality. There are many people in our community who cannot drive. Walking, cycling and access to public transport should not be treated as a lefty life-style choice. Our young and older residents need lots of safe choices for moving around independently".*
3. Reconsider or expand the scope of Sustainability as an important priority to consider	
Sustainability is a key consideration due to its potential to reduce emissions, improve livability, enhance long-term planning, and contribute to global efforts to combat climate change and achieve environmental goals. Transportation is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, and sustainable practices can help reduce these impacts. • Prioritizing sustainable transportation systems supports the creation of vibrant and inclusive communities by providing accessible, safe, and efficient transportation options. It also considers the long-term impacts of transportation decisions to ensure systems can adapt and remain efficient in the face of future challenges and embraces new technologies. • By prioritizing sustainability, transportation systems can become more environmentally friendly, socially equitable, and resilient, ultimately benefiting both individuals, the community, and planet.	*"All these themes need to be resilient/agile enough to withstand extreme weather events. The whole transport system doesn't catastrophically fail under heatwaves or flooding".* *"Can we have more electric charging infrastructure as well please and ensure that the charging infrastructure we have is working".* *"Reduce vehicle use and associated pollution and risk".*
4. Affordability is another important priority to consider	
Affordability is a key consideration to promote social equity and its impacts are wide-ranging. By ensuring that transportation options are affordable for all, transportation systems can become more inclusive, sustainable, and beneficial for individuals and community members, regardless of their socioeconomic status, as well as local businesses and industries. • Affordability influences the choice between private vehicles and public transportation. If public transportation is more affordable, it becomes a more attractive option, leading to reduced traffic congestion, air pollution, and carbon emissions.	*"Affordability - $5 is a lot to pay for a short tram ride, for example. Extended off-peak fares and short-trip tickets would be great for people on low incomes".* *"Affordability is also an important consideration! the lack of regular and reliable wheelchair accessible public transport near me means I often must rely on taxi services. I'm*

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
• Affordability is closely linked to accessibility. Affordable transportation options and fares ensure that vulnerable populations can access essential services and activities, promoting social inclusion and reducing transportation-related barriers. • Affordability supports economic growth and development by facilitating the movement of goods and services, supporting local businesses and industries, and enabling efficient commuting to work.	*lucky enough to be able to afford to do this, but many wheelchair users aren't in that position of financial privilege".* *"Affordability. Public transport should not be a financial burden".*
5. Reconsider or expand the scope of Livability as an important priority	
Livability is a key consideration, with a focus on creating a transport system that enhances the overall quality of life for individuals and communities. It encompasses factors such as accessibility, convenience, comfort, and safety, all of which contribute to creating a pleasant and enjoyable transportation experience. • Prioritising livability aims to provide efficient and reliable options for people to move around, reducing reliance on private cars and promoting sustainable modes of transportation. It emphasizes the creation of safe and inclusive spaces for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users. Furthermore, it recognizes the importance of creating vibrant and attractive streetscapes that enhance the overall aesthetics and character of a community. • By prioritizing livability, communities can enhance their overall quality of life, promote healthier and more sustainable modes of transportation, and create vibrant and enjoyable public spaces.	*"A transport system that improves our livability should be sustainable and improves our health".* *"As a category, or in the descriptions, we are missing independence. For example, children/youth accessing transport independently; elderly accessing transport to maintain independence; people with issues accessing certain modes of transport for reasons of health and disability to gain or maintain independence".* *"I guess this is associated with livability, but timeliness and convenance would also be important".*
6. Connectivity is another important priority to consider	
Connectivity is a key consideration due to its role in ensuring efficient and seamless movement of people and goods within a transportation system. Transportation planners and policymakers can create a comprehensive and integrated network that meets the diverse needs of individuals and promotes sustainable and livable communities. • Prioritizing connectivity enhances accessibility by providing well-connected transportation options, allowing individuals to reach various destinations easily. It also improves the efficiency of transportation systems by reducing unnecessary transfers or long waiting times. • Prioritizing connectivity enhances the overall reliability and effectiveness of transportation systems by making it easier to coordinate schedules, optimize routes, and improve service frequency and punctuality. It indirectly fosters social cohesion and community interaction by enabling people to easily connect with one another.	*"Connected Network - high coverage of Merri-bek by cycle networks and public transport networks (also frequent)".* *"Connected. Dedicated cycling lanes that are connected, Tram, Train and Bus timetables connected and coordinated to make the use of more than one mode of public transport easier without the need to wait longer than 3 minutes".* *"Connectivity includes notions of safety, reliability, speed of service and access to services within the broader transport system".*
7. Reconsider or expand the scope of Collaboration as an important priority to consider	
Collaboration that involves raising awareness and education about transportation requirements can lead to safer, more efficient, and	*"Education about road rules for all transport and mutual respect".*

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
more inclusive transportation systems that benefit individuals, communities, and the environment. • Prioritising transport awareness increases understanding about the needs and challenges of different modes of transportation, fostering empathy and understanding among road users. It improves safety by promoting safer behaviors and practices among drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. • Prioritising transport awareness enhances efficiency by encouraging informed choices about modes of transportation, leading to more efficient use of resources and infrastructure. Promote and support active transport, alternative transport modes, and community collaboration in transport planning. This will contribute to environmental sustainability by raising awareness about the environmental impact of different modes of transportation, encouraging greener choices. • Prioritising transport awareness promotes social inclusion by ensuring that transportation systems are accessible and accommodating for all individuals, regardless of their abilities or circumstances.	*"We need to cut down on car use, so promoting other forms of transport is really important".* *"Glad to see collaboration in there - this is important for building ownership by the Merri-Bek community, leading to increased use".*
8. Reconsider or expand the scope of Health as an important priority to consider	
Health could also address disease mitigation. Transportation systems can contribute to controlling the spread of diseases, protecting public health, and creating a more resilient and sustainable community. • Prioritising actions such as improving air quality in public transport vehicles and implementing cleaning protocols is essential for the overall safety and well-being of the community. Learning from countries like Japan, where air cleaning systems are implemented in public transport, can help ensure the safety and inclusion of all individuals. • Prioritising disease mitigation addresses the spread of airborne diseases on public transport, which directly impacts the health and safety of individuals. This is important in enclosed spaces like public transport vehicles where the potential for disease transmission is high. In the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, disease mitigation is very relevant. Failure to consider disease mitigation can lead to discrimination and exclusion of vulnerable individuals who are at a higher risk of contracting diseases or experiencing long-term health effects.	*"Health. Control of disease spread".* *"Totally ignoring a current major issue under the banner of health and safety - the lack of mitigation against transmission of airborne diseases on public transport".* *"Keeping services frequent, well ventilated, clean, and providing private vehicles are necessary to the health of vulnerable members of the community, and to avoid making healthy people chronically ill".*

4.3 Transport system theme - Safety

Theme – Safety: A safe transport system – people are safe travelling in all kinds of ways on local roads, streets, and paths.

Proposed Safety objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Improve road safety outcomes and create safe streets for all people to walk, ride and drive in Merri-bek.
- Prioritise, where possible, creating streets suitable for walking and cycling for people of various skills and abilities.
- Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.

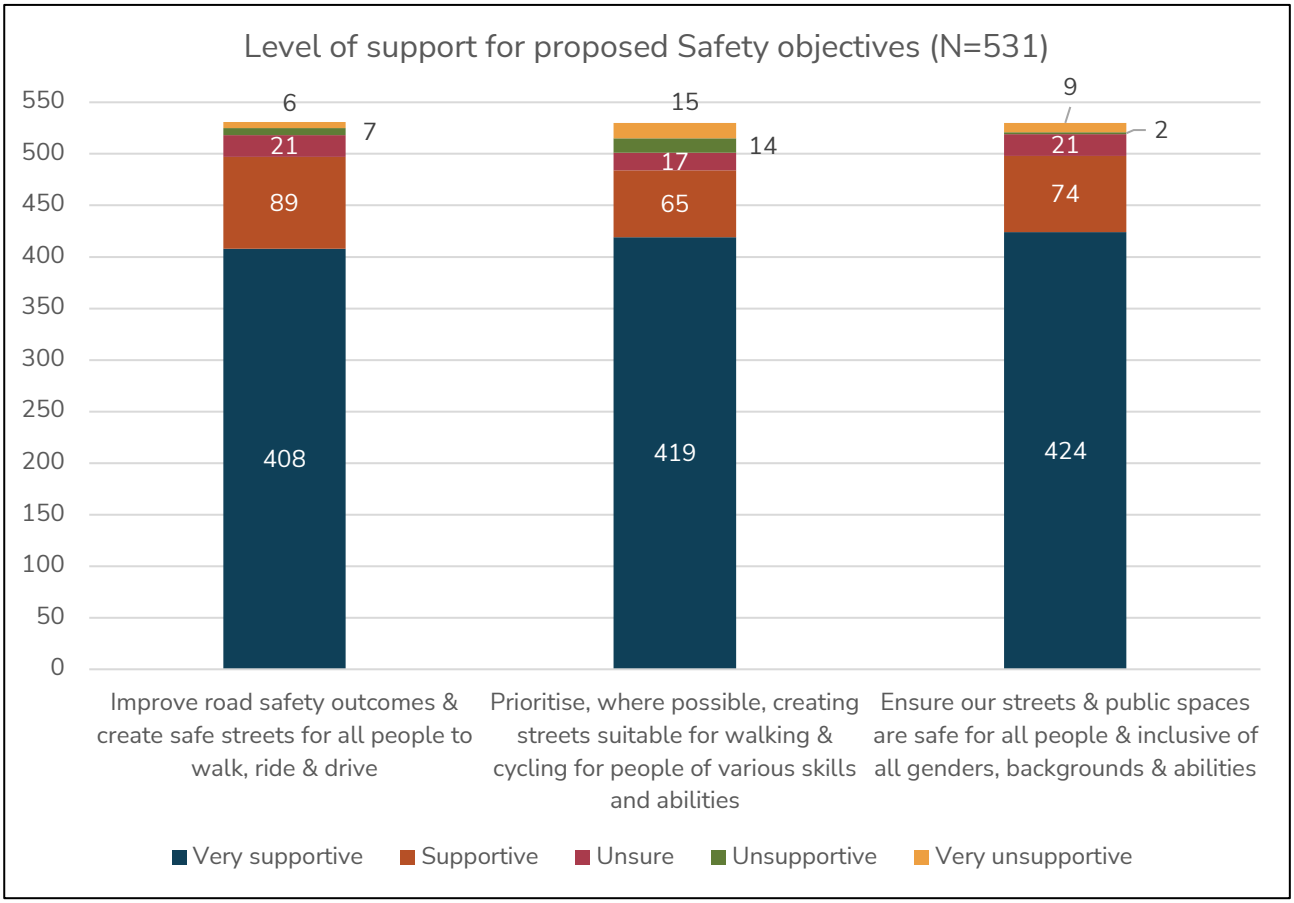
4.3.1 Support for proposed Safety objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Safety objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.2, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Safety objectives:

- 497 or 93.6% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Improve road safety outcomes and create safe streets for all people to walk, ride and drive in Merri-bek.
- 484 or 91.1% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Prioritise, where possible, creating streets suitable for walking and cycling for people of various skills and abilities.
- 498 or 93.8% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.

Figure 4.2: Level of support for proposed Safety objectives (Survey)



4.3.2 Challenges, opportunities, and ideas for Safety

Online mapping participants were asked about their experiences of safety when moving around Merri-bek, and 82 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of safety-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
Dangerous or speeding vehicles: Road accidents: Merri-bek is one of the worst municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne for pedestrian road trauma. Dangerous on Lynch Road, Murray Road, Bell Street intersection. Design of streets that permit cars to go fast makes local streets unsafe, including large vehicles that are driven over speed humps. Drivers cutting through local roads makes it unsafe. Car speed both at legal and illegal speeds, make me feel unsafe on Sydney Road from Gaffney to Boundary which is mostly 60km. Lots of car accidents and near misses with pedestrians, reduce to 40km. The area is becoming more built up residentially with schools, childcare, aged care and more food outlets and speed limit needs to reflect community here and be enforced. Cars are often parked dangerously close to roundabouts on Major Road obstructing view and making it hard for vehicles to pass. Cars from Park Street turning on Sydney Road and The Avenue are not watchful of cyclists crossing to continue along Park Street and near-misses are common here and it does not feel safe. Cars speed through zebra crossings. Drivers frequently go through pedestrian lights outside a school, despite the visibility of crossing guards. Drivers often speed through roundabouts especially when going straight.
Cyclists, bike lanes, and bike paths: Some bike riders ride dangerously and there is no way to identify them (no number plates). Some students don't feel safe riding to school. Safety issues with car doors opening, large cars and trucks, and speeding drivers that do not consider cyclists on the roads. Cycling along Sydney Road feels unsafe due to potholes and drivers who don't give much room. It is difficult to see traffic from either direction when turning into Pearson Street due to parked cars. Also, the traffic flow has been growing steadily, making for long waits to be able to turn. Bike riding under the train line feels safe. The increasing number of survey holes with metal caps added into bike lane has created additional hazards. Turning left from Nicholson into Sumner is hard for cyclists, turning out of Sumner is dangerous as oncoming vehicles ignore you and cycling along Sydney Road feels unsafe. Lack of safe and connected bike paths. There are narrow shared bike and pedestrian path where cyclists and particularly ebikes and scooters do not slow down. Traveling East to West on a bike is dangerous as the road narrows and the bike lane disappears.
Walking and pedestrian crossings: Some areas of Merri-bek have long roads and no crossings or traffic lights and people will cross anywhere which is dangerous (i.e., Murray, Road, West Street). Speeding cars making it unsafe for walkers. Crossings can be quite challenging with children - busy roads, wide crossings, and parked cars. Lack of lighting of the Sydney Road and Hume Highway were identified has having unsafe pedestrian crossings and intersections. Crossing the road on foot feels unsafe because traffic is too fast on Moreland Road. Need pedestrian lights near the IGA supermarket as it is a busy intersection with Cornwall Street. Some pedestrian crossings are good. Footpath northside of Albion between Sydney Road and Upfield line needs regrading to be flat. Feel unsafe walking with my children down some narrow laneways.
Footpaths: Having narrow footpaths nearby fast motor vehicles is an issue, particularly on arterial roads. The poor quality of some footpaths is a major concern, particularly for older persons who may be vulnerable to falls, those with prams, or those with mobility challenges. Older persons may be deterred by e-scooters and bicycles being used on footpaths. Need to ensure footpaths are even and clear of obstructions, including vehicles, e-bikes and scooters, and only used by pedestrians by building protecting bike lanes. Uneven and unsafe footpaths impact people with prams, people with mobility issues and older people (i.e., Fawkner, Sydney Road in Brunswick).
Street lighting: Street lighting could be improved particularly for activity centres, where there are many pedestrian crashes at nighttime. Feeling unsafe at night and in deserted streets can be

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
addressed in part by good design, investment in infrastructure and by creating more of a walking culture.
Locations that feel unsafe (dark, anti-social behaviours, isolated or unkempt): Along Merri Creek trail/path especially at night/early hours and flooding, Spider Place in Brunswick, Victoria Mall Coburg, area next to Dimmy's in Coburg, shared bike path at Bell Street, Coburg railway station, Pentridge in Coburg, Sydney Road in Coburg.
Car parking: Need ample parking to find a space and park safely (difficult to find parking in Brunswick East). Need to remove on-street parking or allow it on one side only (and not close to roundabouts, traffic islands and the shopping precinct on Major Road).
Bus: Bus stop vandalism makes people feel unsafe when catching the bus and vandalised, or smashed bus stops need to be reported.
Other: Safety issues for specific cohorts – children, older people. Being able to walk on paths safely is a big issue for the elderly.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: There is a strong call for enhanced safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users. Improvement ideas include focusing on the safety of bike lanes with more protected cycling infrastructure, and the need for safer pedestrian crossings through measures such as pedestrian refuges, lower speed limits for cars, traffic calming structures and well as high quality footpaths. Other ideas include improving safety around school areas, with suggestions for car-free zones. Overall, there is a desire for a transportation system that prioritizes safety for all users, regardless of their mode of transportation, and that ensures streets are always safe for travel, including areas being well lit at night.
Improve cyclist safety, bike lanes and paths: The community in Merri-bek has advocated for safer ways to move around by bicycle and shown support for Council to design and build more protected bike lanes. Construct safe and connected high-quality bike links and connections. Introduce a targeted safety campaign across Merri-bek to minimise dooring incidents and encourage cycling. Plan to roll out separated bike paths through Brunswick. One-way streets should have bike contra-lanes. Better separation of car and cyclist lanes to improve safety. Car park spaces along Royal Parade increase risk, work with State Government and/or Melbourne City Council to fix this serious issue. Separate bike lanes or paths from vehicles or use physical barriers like curbs, bollards, or planters can help prevent vehicle encroachment. Ensure bike paths are well-lit, especially during low-light conditions or nighttime, to enhance visibility for cyclists and improve overall safety. Create separated paths for bikes and e-scooters. Cyclists/ pedestrians need right-of-way to cross north-south safely and for traffic efficiency along the linear trail.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Improve pedestrian safety and crossings: Pedestrian safety should be a priority safety concern. Support for pedestrian priority at signalised intersections. More safe crossings and supervised crossings near schools. Guard rail and raised footpath along Murray Road to improve safety. Have extra pedestrian crossing for elderly residents. Lynch Road needs speed breakers to make it safer for pedestrians. Hilton Street needs safer crossing or lights. Install a pedestrian crossing along Albion from Sydney Road to Barrow Street which is very busy and near Woolworths. The pedestrian lights across Sydney Road do not allow enough time to cross both north and southbound lanes, particularly for older people.
Improve footpaths: Develop a Strategy that guarantees footpaths will be built and maintained to a certain standard (width and quality), with enforcement to ensure developers repair adjoining roads and footpaths to an adequate standard. Improve footpaths on Sydney Road to make them safer.
Reduce vehicle speed limits: Prioritise reducing speeds to 30kph for local residential streets, all roads through shopping centres and densely populated areas. Reduce speed limit to 40km/h along Blyth Street which is a major east/west thoroughfare for cars, bikes and buses and riding a bike along here is scary. Reduce speed limits to have a safer area for residents as well as active transport users. There needs to be a speed limit for cyclists and electric bikes and scooters in Coburg Lake Reserve.
Install more lighting: Need more themed lighting in Spider Place in Brunswick making it safer and more customer friendly and in parks generally. Add lighting to Sydney Road to make it safer. Add some type of sensor light to the Merri Creek trail.
Consider safety interventions: Lighting, emergency phone, in quiet places. Bright LED lights makes walking home feel much safer. More enforcement to make sure dogs stay on leads, especially along the Merri Creek.
Improve traffic management and surveillance: Better traffic management measures during morning and afternoon school rush hours. Need cameras along Merri Creek to improve safety. Better line marking for parking spaces especially around schools to increase safety. Low-cost action is to reduce speed on local roads.

4.4 Transport system theme – Accessibility

Theme – Accessibility: An accessible transport system – all people can use different modes of transport no matter their age, background, or abilities.

Proposed Accessibility objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.
- Advocate strongly to State Government for accessible transport services and stops.

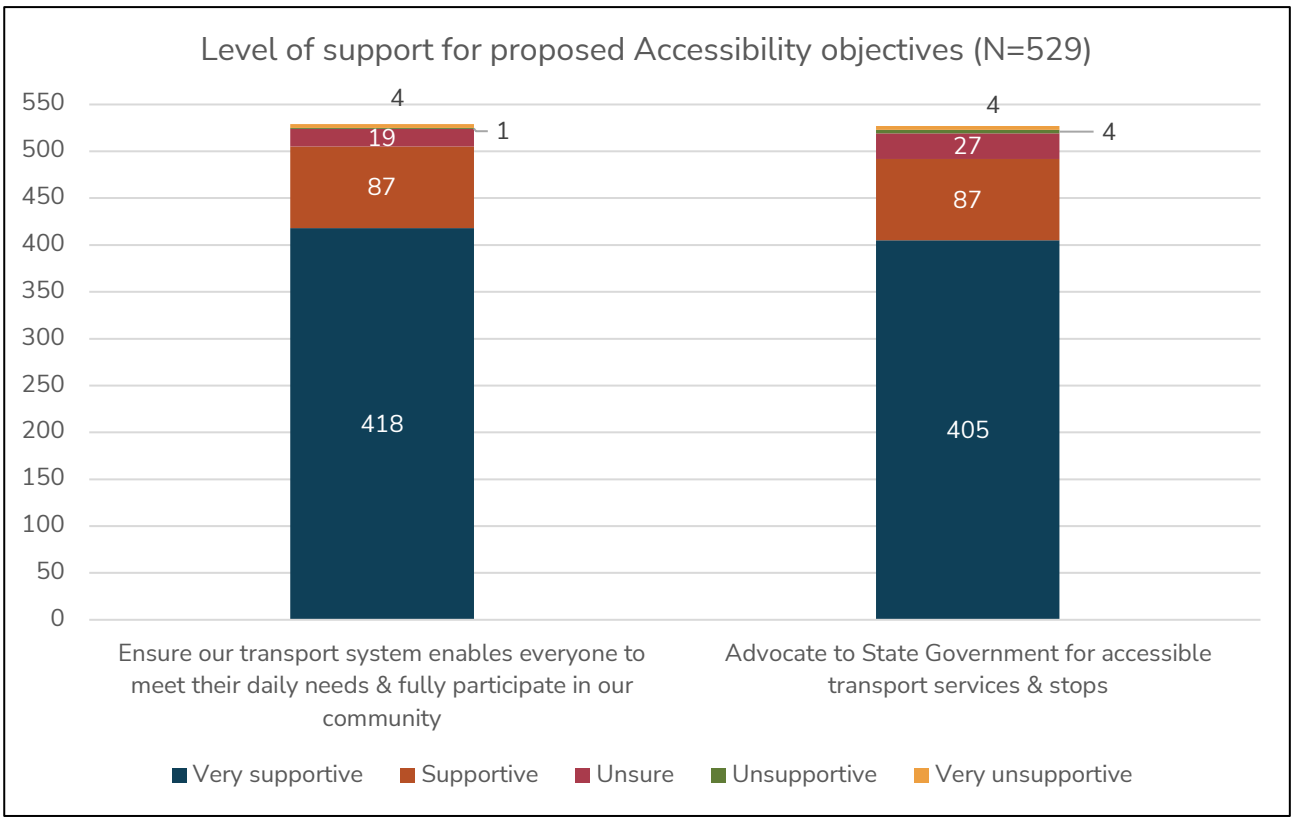
4.4.1 Support for proposed Accessibility objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Accessibility objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.3, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Accessibility objectives:

- 505 or 95.5% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community
- 492 or 93.0% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Advocate strongly to State Government for accessible transport services and stops.

Figure 4.3: Level of support for proposed Accessibility objectives (Survey)



4.4.2 Challenges, opportunities, and ideas for Accessibility

Online visioner participants were asked about their experiences of Accessibility when moving around Merri-bek, and 8 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of accessibility-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online visioner, Workshops, Written submissions)
Public transport: Accessible public transport is urgent whether the Upfield sky rail goes ahead or not. Easy access to public transport is important for many people who cannot or will not drive cars, including young people, due to age, disability or low incomes. Many residents do not have a licence or access to a car and some not to drive or walk to save money. Shade and seating at transport stops are important for accessibility, particularly on rainy or hot days. Mothers with prams/people with disability trying to access public transport (getting on and off) and accessing public transport stops (in the rain etc). Bus routes do not operate frequently enough and are unintuitive routes. Refuges for pedestrians to get to the bus and more seating at bus stops. Create hubs to connect buses and trams.
Footpaths/driveways: Uneven footpaths and footpaths that dip sharply to roads are not accessible for people with limited mobility (i.e., Brunswick, Lawsons Street, some streets in Glenroy). Cars being parked over the footpath makes it harder for people with prams or people with disability. More units mean more cars parking on the side of the road and across driveways, making it hard to walk on footpaths. Make all footpaths accessible by getting rid of obstacles, adding more ramps, grinding down bluestone footpaths and driveways, and managing obstructions (bins, hard rubbish, construction signs, road signs). Flush dropped kerbs or raised intersections on all corners.
Cycling network and infrastructure: Lack of safe and connected bike paths. Disjointed planning with shared paths. Need a bike network for less confident riders and to get more people riding. Create a public and active transport network that facilitates a complete first and last-mile journey. Rebrand bike lanes as mobility lanes. Make them wide enough for more than just bikes. Need wheeling infrastructure to accommodate tricycles and adapted bicycles as three-wheeled bikes (trikes, hand cycles, cargo bikes) have different requirements.
Trams: No accessible tram stops. All stops need adequate seating and cover (i.e., Route 96 tram stops on Nicholson Street)
Inadequate connections: Connections between destinations are not good (i.e., in Coburg, between Coburg and Pentridge).
Amenities and information for pedestrians: Install public toilets and seating on pedestrian routes. Create accessibility maps and install wayfinding signs for informal walking paths.
Street blockages: Wide vehicles obstructing streets are an accessibility hazard. Promote or create process for removing temporary blockages on streets.

Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: The feedback about transportation accessibility is diverse. Improvement ideas focus on cyclist movements and bike infrastructure, creation of car-free zones, better and unobstructed footpaths, and have pedestrian-friendly areas with amenities and seating. There is a desire for increased green spaces and tree planting, especially along walking and cycling paths. The need

Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
for safer and more accessible footpaths and pedestrian crossings is also highlighted. Public transport improvements include more frequent services, better connectivity, and better signage. Other ideas include improving accessibility for key workers and low-income earners and improving accessibility infrastructure, such as wheelchair-friendly pathways, providing a supportive environment for persons of all-abilities, and accessible public transport.
Improve cycling: Ensure temporary footpath and road occupancy permits consider safe and accessible access for everyone including those who cannot dismount and walk their bicycle, nor push them. Provide more accessible parking bays at key locations with accessible ramps and additional bike parking that provides space for bicycles of a range of sizes and shapes so that adapted bicycles, recumbent tricycles, tricycles and other bikes with wider and longer wheelbases can be manoeuvred by all abilities and parked.
Improve footpaths/driveways: Support for auditing of footpaths to ensure accessibility. Support for investigating and enforcing vehicles blocking footpaths. Need a footpath on Murray Road on the Pentridge side for secondary school students. Council officers to investigate problems spots for those in a wheelchair and address areas where pedestrians are forced onto a narrow, uneven footpath with no ramps up/down kerbs.
Provide amenities and information for pedestrians: Add seating along long streets where crossings or traffic lights are far apart to assist older people and people with disability. More, clearer signs for people with vision impairment within popular bus stops in local suburbs. Need an updated pedestrian network based on consultation, actual use and desired use.
Improve accessibility for people of all abilities: Improve accessibility for those with disability aids include mobility devices such as wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Install ramps or lifts for people with disability. Accessible and safe access to medical centres from the road regardless of mode of transport. Prioritize pedestrian crossings at busy intersections to allow more time to cross.
Improve connections: Improve connectivity between Sydney Road and the railway line so it can be one connected precinct improving access for everyone.
Improve tram stops: Council to support the Sydney Road Accessible Tram Stops campaign around the municipality

4.5 Transport system theme – Sustainability

Theme – Sustainability: A sustainable transport system – there are more easy options to travel sustainably, whether by foot, bike, e-scooter, public transport, or zero-emission vehicles, helping to reduce transport emissions.

Proposed Sustainability objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Support community to reduce transport emissions as rapidly as possible by providing increased transport choice.
- Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.

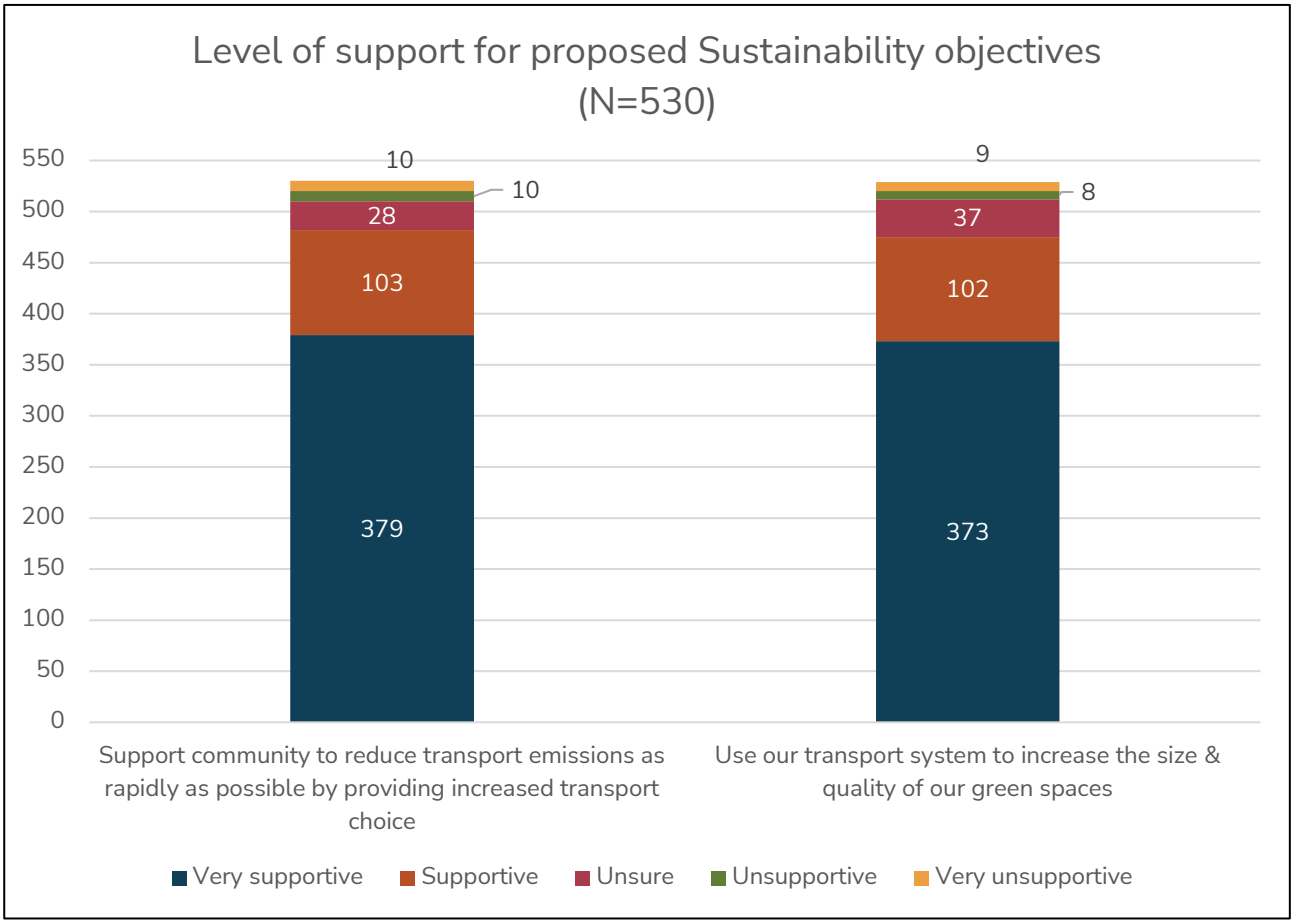
4.5.1 Support for proposed Sustainability objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 2 proposed Sustainability objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.4, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 2 proposed Sustainability objectives:

- 482 or 90.9% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Support community to reduce transport emissions as rapidly as possible by providing increased transport choice.
- 475 or 89.6% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.

Figure 4.4: Level of support for proposed Sustainability objectives (Survey)



4.5.2 Challenges, opportunities, and ideas for Sustainability

Online visioner were asked about actions to take to reduce transport emissions, and 17 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of sustainability-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online visioner, Workshops, Written submissions)
Cars: Cars driving around/circling looking for a park increases pollution (Bonwick Street).
Public transport: Some public transport is not good and can be irregular (i.e., Hadfield, Fawkner train, buses arrive late and are irregular in Fawkner).

Cycling: With bike paths, cycling funding is insufficient.
Bus: Bus network is not a good, coordinated service.

Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: Ideas about sustainability in transport focussed on the need for improved infrastructure and facilities to support active transport, such as cycling and walking, as well as electric vehicles. Improvement ideas included more designated bike paths, increased safety of bike lanes on roads, and provision of separated cycle lanes. There is also a desire for the creation of a comprehensive bike network that connects existing paths for safe and fast travel throughout Merri-bek. Greening ideas included creating green, leafy, and shaded walking and cycling corridors, particularly along the Merri Creek, to make these modes of transport more attractive. Other ideas included better connectivity between public transport options and emphasising the importance of reducing reliance on cars, promoting active transport, and creating a safe and sustainable transportation network to improve the overall liveability and health of the community.
Plan for cycling and e-bikes: Make bike riding safer. Create a connected cycle network plan using a mixture of off-road paths, protected bike lanes and bicycle boulevards on quiet local streets, to provide local and direct connections within a larger network. Plan for the growth in e-bike users and connect to the safe bicycle network. On wider roads, move or build bike lanes to the inside of car parking. Install secure and convenient bike racks near bike paths and popular destinations to encourage cycling and provide safe places for locking bikes. Better connections between bike paths. Priorities bikes and other active transport over cars including EVs. Build a functioning transport system for bikes by ensuring there is bike parking at destinations. Provide electric bike subsidies. Encourage increased cargo bike usage for freight.
Cars and e-vehicles (EVs): Create an electric vehicle charging plan to meet our current and future needs, without impacting spaces used to move around. How about charger infrastructure at car share parking spots. Consider rolling out EV chargers. Half of Merri-Bek (largely south) does not have access to garages and can't guarantee a house-front park. Educate that EVs are not a magic wand to fix the climate crisis or transport emissions. HUGE mode shift is required. Carshare is already fantastic in Merri-bek - let's continue to expand these services to more areas. Reduce speed limits as an interim measure to make safer and better use of existing transport infrastructure.
Public and green spaces: Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of green spaces. Purchase land and leave the roads for transport. Work with shopping centres to instal solar panels over carparks (i.e., Barkly Square): reduces heat, shades cars, facilitates car charging. Address the urban heat island effect to make walking more amenable (including increase tree canopy). Use some space in very wide streets to plant more mid-street rows of trees to reduce the Urban Heat Island effect. To reduce emissions, general transport projects such as re-sheeting should aim to reduce the overall hard standing by using permeable grids for parking, porous surfaces and installing rain gardens to narrow streets and make them safer.

Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Encourage and prioritise active transport and public transport: Most people are multi-modal using a range of options depending on the circumstances. Prioritise a transition to active transport and public transport and provide more funding to encourage active transport. Affordability is an attraction of sustainable transport. Educate people that private car use at current level is not safe or sustainable and explain why.
Improve connections: Improve the integration between different modes of transportation (i.e., connecting buses with trains) to create a seamless journey for commuters. Add more green space on Sydney Road so people connect and stay longer.
Make sustainability the overarching theme: We are facing a climate emergency. Climate impacts have accelerated, and other environmental problems are increasing. It is urgent that we make our transport system sustainable. Incentivise active modes of transport through subsidy.
Walking: Increase education about sustainable transport options, encourage mode shift with safe built environments and collect data on mode shift. More incentivised active transport through schemes such as Ride and Stride programs.
Car usage and parking: Make driving less convenient. Aiming to reduce car usage while increasing road capacity with level crossing removals. Restrict parking permits where off-street parking is available to create more room for others.

4.6 Transport system theme – Health

Theme – Health: A transport system to contributes to our health – there are more easy options to walk or ride for fitness, fun and everyday trips as well as places for us to come together as a community.

Proposed Health objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Work to reduce noise and air pollution where possible and mitigate the harms caused by them.
- Support transport choice that contributes to improving the mental and physical health of people in Merri-bek.
- Create streets and public spaces that encourage socialisation amongst local communities.
- Increase opportunities, through transport options, for people to meet their daily exercise needs.

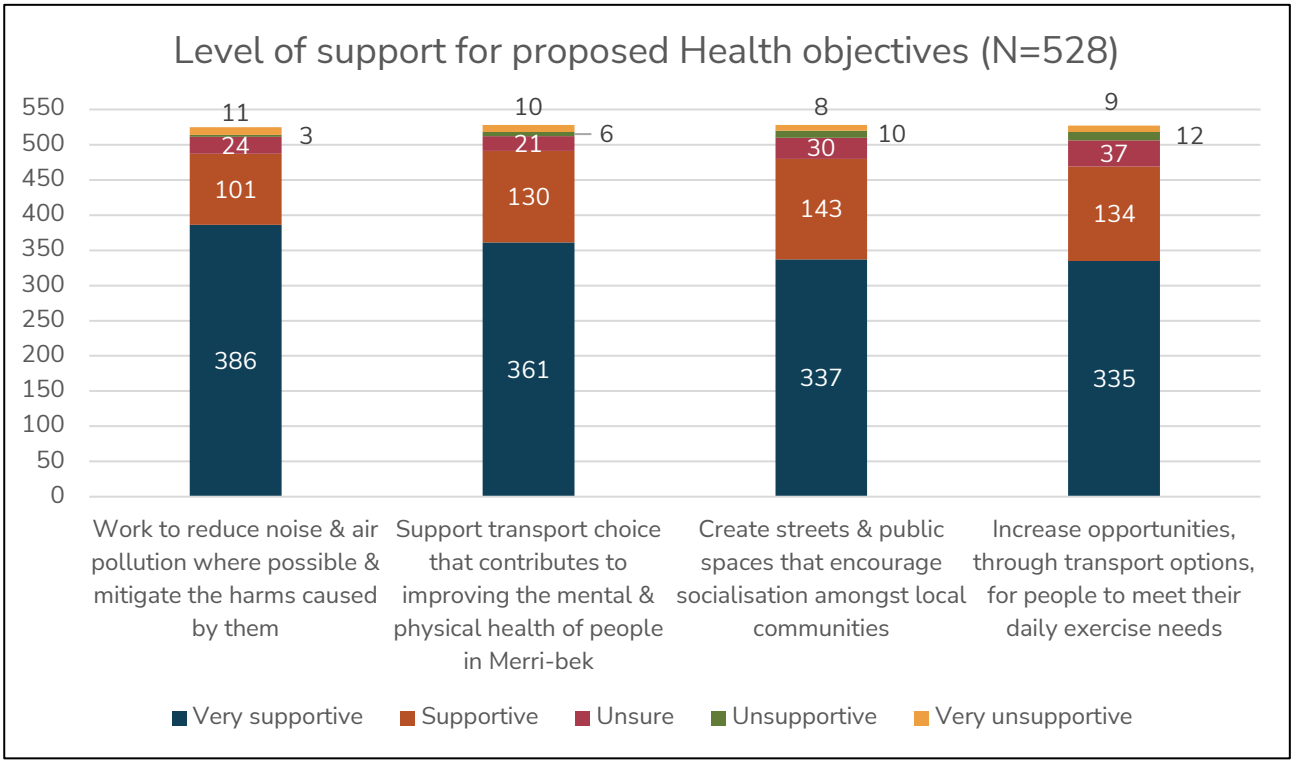
4.6.1 Support for proposed Health objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 4 proposed Health objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.5, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 4 proposed Health objectives:

- 487 or 92.2% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Work to reduce noise and air pollution where possible and mitigate the harms caused by them.
- 491 or 93.0% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Support transport choice that contributes to improving the mental and physical health of people in Merri-bek.
- 480 or 90.9% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Create streets and public spaces that encourage socialisation amongst local communities.
- 469 or 88.8% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Increase opportunities, through transport options, for people to meet their daily exercise needs.

Figure 4.5: Level of support for proposed Health objectives (Survey)



4.6.2 Challenges, opportunities and ideas for Health

Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of health-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Workshops, Written submissions)
Noise: Improve the surface of some roads like Newlands Road for less noise.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: Improvement ideas relating to health proposed included some overlap with sustainability and accessibility. Ideas to address air pollution included calls to reduce private car use and promote alternative modes of transportation to improve air quality. The importance of promoting active transportation to improve physical activity levels and overall health is mentioned. Accessibility is a concern for people with health issues and disabilities, with suggestions for more benches and seating around the municipality, especially at public transport interchanges. Other ideas included focusing on creating people-centered, non-vehicle-centered places to improve mental health and well-being, which will support the mitigation of climate change and heat effects, noise and improve community safety.
Climate change and heat effects: There are health impacts from climate change, vehicles causing global warming and road surfaces producing urban heat effects. Although relevant to "liveability", these impacts reinforce the urgency of ceasing use of internal combustion engines and redesigning roads. Reducing the urban heat island effect should be an important health consideration as major contributors are bitumen roads and car parks. Provide more shade (tree canopy) around bus shelters to create healthier environments for those waiting (especially the elderly, who may be more susceptible to the heat).
Create safer streets for people to be active: Consider creating wider footpaths, increasing tree canopy, increasing compliance and surveillance, creating a desire for increased amenity and safety, safe and open driveways to combat EVs that are silent. Implement a Play Street program where residents can apply to open a street for people (Dandenong has this). Provide safe spaces for teenagers and children to use and to move around by foot and independently. More road closures.
Information and education: Provide and improve education for parents on the health benefits of active transport for their children (and themselves). Educate our community about bikes, bike and bike repair workshops, bike education, and learn to ride a bike classes. Provide Council-mapped routes to schools. Promote active transport as a form of preventative health care that improves mental and physical health. Needs to promote how much money is saved by driving less.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Provide opportunities for people of all ages to be healthy and active: Do not limit organised sport to 'closed-off' stadiums, host and encourage sports and movement in our streets. Engage with sports people/professionals who could become good examples and champions of active transport (i.e., Dohertys Gym). Focus on seniors, as for many, walking is the main form of exercise. Provide more seating.
Increase safety around schools: Provide safe crossings, especially around schools. Improve streets around schools and install modal filters in front of schools. Every school to have at least one car-free frontage (or a one-way street with expanded people-space).

4.7 Transport system theme – Liveability

Theme – Liveability: A transport system that makes our lives better – there are enjoyable connections and transport options close to where people live, making it easy to access shops, services, and jobs.

Proposed Liveability objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Create high-quality and well-designed spaces that are vibrant and well-loved by all.
- Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community.
- Help reduce cost of transport for residents by having an increased range of travel options.

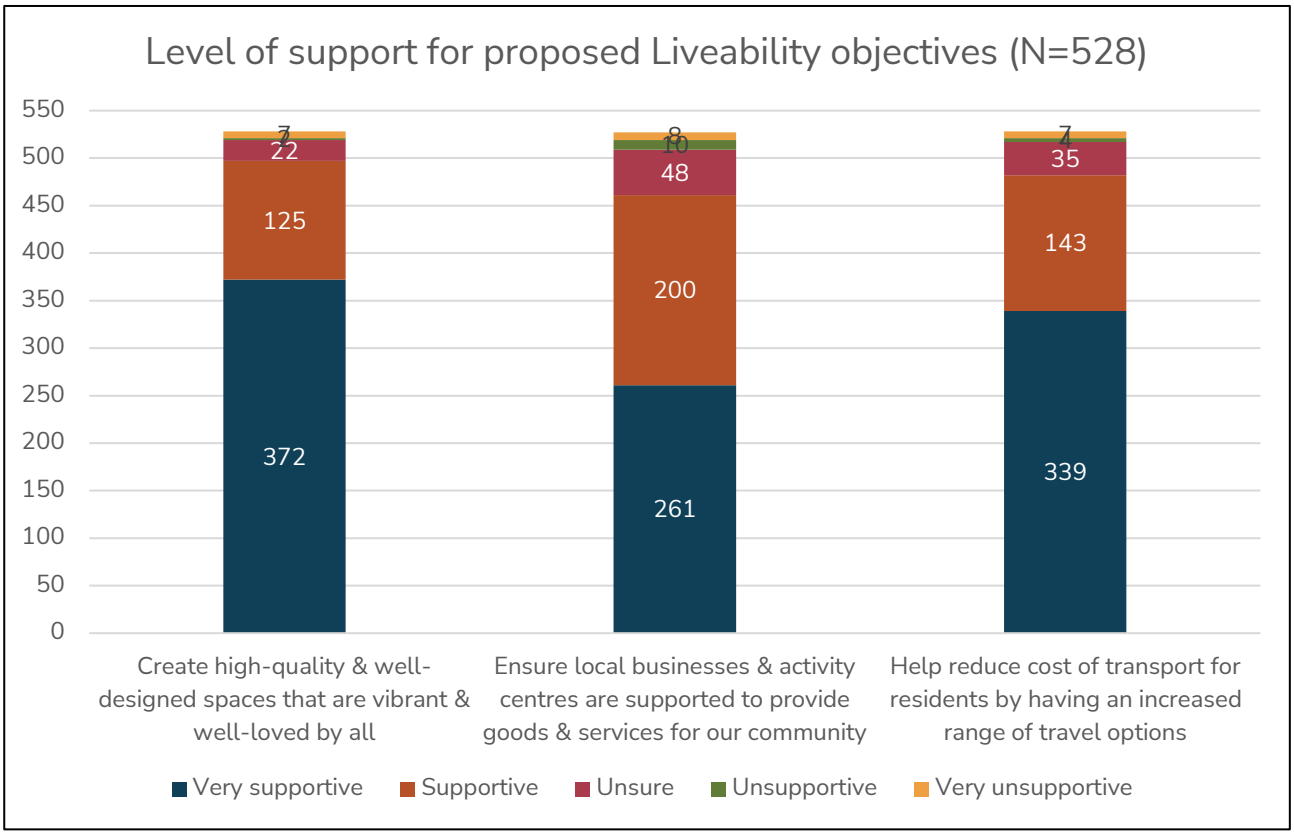
4.7.1 Support for proposed Liveability objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Liveability objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.6, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Liveability objectives:

- 497 or 94.1% reported Very supportive for Create high-quality and well-designed spaces that are vibrant and well-loved by all.
- 461 or 87.3% reported Very supportive for Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community.
- 482 or 91.3% reported Very supportive for Help reduce cost of transport for residents by having an increased range of travel options.

Figure 4.6: Level of support for proposed Liveability objectives (Survey)



4.7.2 Challenges, opportunities and ideas for Liveability

Online mapping participants were asked how transport impacts the liveability of Merri-bek, and 11 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of liveability-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
Local economy and shopping strips: Bonwick street shopping strip parking is worse than before. It could have been designed better. West Street also lacks parking and people drive around/ circle around looking for a park. Deliveries, loading and unloading is an issue for businesses on Sydney Road. This issue has recently caused a major business to relocate. Pavement dining is compromised by cars that zoom by. The basics need to be addressed - safe footpaths, well thought out bike paths with clear wayfinding, maintained parks and playgrounds and graffiti removal to get people out and supporting local businesses and keeping active in a safe and clean community.
Cars: Glenroy is too car centric. Modern suspension systems mean older-style low speedhumps are useless, with cars going over them at 60pkh with no reduction of speed. If you do slow down traffic, the actual time taken in car journeys barely rises but it contributes to a safer and more vibrant community. Lower speeds would help people feel safe and reduce noise.
Walking and pedestrian safety: Keen to walk more and use public transport more but the crossings and stops feel unsafe (I.e., near Barkly Street/Brunswick Road). Residents have spoken out about not feeling safe walking around Merri-bek due to insufficient lighting, graffiti and anti-social behaviours.
Public and green space: Feel more comfortable walking and cycling around areas with lots of tree cover such as around Glencairn tennis club. Developers need to be required to include more green spaces available to the public and not permitted to build up against the pavement. With a warming climate we will need more green space for the area to be liveable.
Car parking and roads: Roads need resurfacing, potholes need fixing, and planning permits need to give appropriate reductions to off-street parking provision so there is proper planning suburb by suburb.
Trams: Accessible tram stops are needed on Sydney Road.
Footpaths: Rubbish bins left on the footpaths create a barrier for people who can't move them out of the way.
Bus: Need to improve bus transport for older people to access social outings, hospital, services.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: Ideas relating to liveability focus on improving streetscapes, public and green spaces, and supporting the local economy and shopping strips. Other ideas focussed on reconsidering and sharing available space, the affordability of transport modes, and creating a more vibrant and community-centric and pedestrian friendly environment.
Improve streetscapes, public and green spaces: Pay more attention to public spaces closed to vehicle traffic such as the mall in Victoria Street Coburg. Encourage active transport by making our streets green, shady, and pleasant to walk through. Expand programs of planting shady street trees. Re-allocate bitumen road space to garden space. Facilitate management and design of street gardens by neighbours. Make residential streets a place to live, not transit, by facilitating neighbourhood cohesion and connections. Remove large unnecessary areas of bitumen can also create mini parks. Council to plant more trees and encourage residents to plant trees in their yards and stop removing existing trees. Consider greening and public realm evaluation in planning approvals. Revitalise Coburg Lake and increase active transport options around Coburg Lake. Landscaping to include and consider shade and trees. Start blocking off through routes in Merri-bek to reclaim our neighbourhoods from the car.
Consider the local economy and shopping strips: Revitalise shopping strips to support small businesses. Provide safe protected access to and within shopping strips for cyclists. Undertake periodic surveys to understand customer travel and shopping behaviour in key activity centres. Support the transport needs of businesses including delivery of goods and freight access. Ensure access to goods and services. Create walkable, ridable and vibrant streetscapes. Facilities at shopping areas need to include public toilets, seating, and drinking fountains. Consider linking social and affordable housing areas with activity centres through good public spaces and paths. Big box stores are poorly accessible except by car. Delivery trucks are dangerous. Designated loading areas for freight should be made to combat this.
Affordability: Need to consider transport affordability as worsening transport affordability often has the greatest impact on those in the community who already have their transport mode choices limited for other reasons. The people who are most vulnerable to transport accessibility pressures are also those shown to benefit the most from active travel improvements and especially protected bike lanes. Women, the elderly and disabled.
Reconsidering car parking: Share the available space more fairly. The cost of providing car parking is borne by the whole community. Free car parking encourages people to drive short distances to the shops thereby worsening the situation for people walking and cycling. Suggest distinguishing between car parking and car storage.
Incorporate the Movement and Place Framework: The hierarchy for the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users in the Movement and Place Framework needs to be incorporated within the Strategy.
Uber/taxi: Create designated loading areas for uber and other ride share options.

4.8 Transport system theme – Collaboration

Theme – Collaboration: A transport system shaped by community and Council working together – Council and community are working together to meet transport needs and advocating to State Government for transport improvements.

Proposed Collaboration objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
- Work with neighbouring councils and other levels of government to provide coordinated solutions to transport challenges.
- Actively co-create solutions to transport issues with local communities and stakeholders.

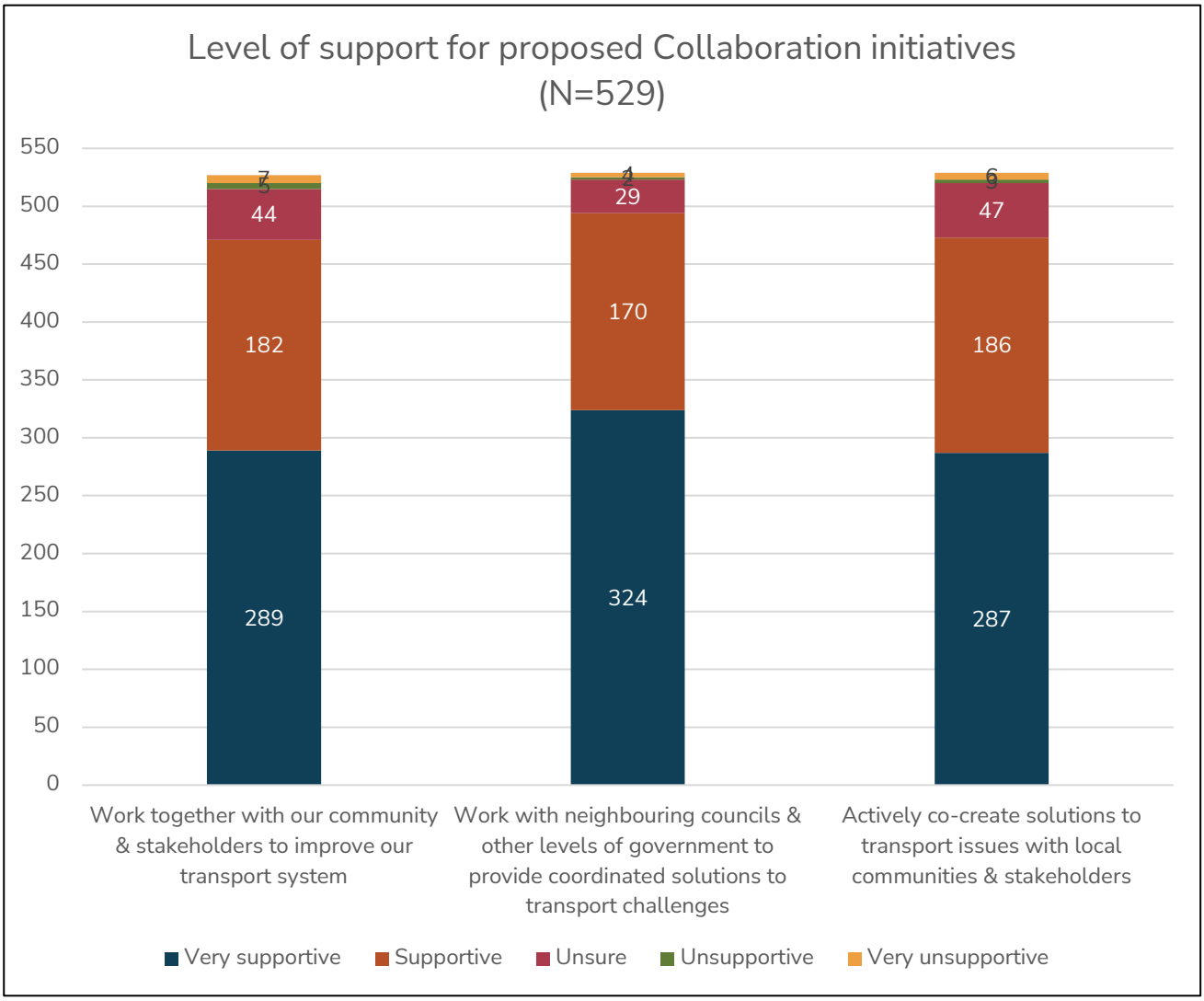
4.8.1 Support for proposed Collaboration objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Collaboration objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.7, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Collaboration objectives:

- 471 or 89.0% reported Very supportive for Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
- 494 or 93.4% reported Very supportive for Work with neighbouring councils and other levels of government to provide coordinated solutions to transport challenges.
- 473 or 89.4% reported Very supportive for Actively co-create solutions to transport issues with local communities and stakeholders.

Figure 4.7: Level of support for proposed Collaboration objectives (Survey)



4.8.2 Challenges, opportunities and ideas for Collaboration

Online mapping participants were asked about their experiences of safety when moving around Merri-bek, and 82 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of collaboration-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
Information and consultation: Lack of information about paths and location of paths. The loudest voices often get the most influence. Some residents feel that Council doesn't listen to them despite having lots of ideas.
Resourcing: Merri-bek Council officers are under-resourced and need to find ways and projects to get communities involved.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: Ideas to support collaboration include more consultation with community groups, local cyclists, pedestrians, and diverse cross-section of the community including persons of all-abilities, to ensure effective decision-making, to understand lived experiences about different transport modes. Other improvement ideas include raising awareness about transportation option, applying best practice consultation approaches and more communication and signage, particularly for public transport routes and bike paths. There is also a desire for Council to create a Strategy that is clear and measurable to guide and monitor transport in Merri-bek.
Raise awareness and apply best practice consultation approaches: Raise public awareness about the benefits of sustainable transportation options through campaigns and educational programs. Educating the right sense of road or shared paths is very important. Commit to funding best practice consultation and participatory research that is transparent with timely provision of information; shares traffic and transport data; involves Council officers doing on-site visits, liaising with community groups, and reaching out to interested residents to hear about local lived experiences of moving around Merri-bek. Engage with, and consider the views of, non-residents who are customers and visitors. Consider funding 'Local Highway Initiative' community-led programs. Provide good, easy, simple communications to educate on the benefits of active transport and why cyclists do what they do. Consider collaborative advocacy and inform the community how they can help Council advocate. More wayfinding signage. Write some stories from people who live in closed streets outlining the benefits.
Create a Strategy that is clear and measurable: Keep the Strategy simple and ensure it has longevity. Ensure the Strategy has a clear vision for staff and Councillors to follow. Accountability and measures are important as is progress reporting to the community. Set percentage targets for the trips via each mode (i.e., walking, riding, public transport to school), and set goals of

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
percentage reduction of transport emissions. Track modal shift to low carbon options to stay accountable to the environment. Consider equity and acknowledge people aren't one type of road user they use multiple modes. Consider creating a vision for the whole of Sydney Road.
Engage young people: Would like to see more collaboration with young people in Merri-bek, especially those aged 12 to 21 years. From 12 years it can be expected that most people should be able to move around independently (and for many families this happens much earlier) and the only barriers to them doing so would be those in the transport system.
Partner with community groups: Involve the Merri Creek Management Committee and use research provided by community groups (such as BRN/MBUG).

4.9 Noteworthy insights about transport at the Suburb level

This section presents a brief overview of noteworthy insights and differences observed about transport at the suburb level across the municipality, presented in alphabetical order. Insights are not presented for suburbs with fewer than 10 identifiable responses, namely Fitzroy North, Gowenbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, and Pascoe Vale South.

Suburb Insights
Brunswick: Many participants walk most of the time and use a train or tram some of the time or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus or uber/taxi, sometimes use a car, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a train or tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Accessibility, Safety and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included improving east/west connections for bike routes and trams, wider and safer paths for cyclists and pedestrians, considering accessibility and safety for older persons, increasing the frequency and accessibility of public transport services, traffic calming on streets to stop the rat runners, fixing Sydney Road to prioritise pedestrians, bike riders and trams, making streets more attractive with greenery, improving the condition of footpaths, installing wayfinding signage and having walking maps (digital) with safe walking routes .
Brunswick East: Many participants use a train or tram some of the time or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle and walk. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus or uber/taxi, sometimes or most the time use a car, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety,

Suburb Insights
Sustainability, and Accessibility are priority themes. Participant ideas included improving movement along Sydney Road (i.e., accessible tram stops, reduce on-street parking or trams and bikes only), improving cyclist safety by separated bike lanes on Lygon Street to meet Cardigan Street lanes.
Brunswick West: Many participants walk and use a tram some or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they use a car and cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus, train or uber/taxi, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety, Liveability and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included making it safer to cycle, improving current shared cycling/walking paths, having safe east-west cycling routes and protected bike lanes integrated with parks and reserves, and having more frequent and reliable bus services.
Coburg: Many participants walk most of the time, use a car sometimes or most of the time, and use a train or tram some of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus or uber/taxi, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a train or tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety, Sustainability, and Accessibility are priority themes. Participant ideas included providing more transport options, improving safety with more lighting on bike paths, parks, opens spaces and in car parks. Having more school crossing supervisors (Reynolds/Reynard) and reverting Derby Street speed limit to 50km/hour, other than the area outside the school (which is 40km/h).
Coburg North: Many participants walk, use a car, train or tram some of the time or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes scoot/skate and rarely use an uber/taxi or motorbike. Many participants would like to cycle, train, tram or walk more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included better east-west cycle ways, more safe bike lanes, increasing and extending public transport services and making them more accessible and having green, shaded walking and cycling corridors
Fawkner: Many participants use a car some of the time or most of the time. Many participants use an uber/taxi, train or walk some of the time others use a bus, tram, or cycle rarely or sometimes. Many participants rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to use a train, tram or bus more. While all transport system themes are important, Accessibility and Liveability are priority themes. Participant ideas included having more public transport options

Suburb Insights
including more frequent buses and trains and extending the tram line to Fawkner, having safer streets for cyclists, and slowing car traffic.
Glenroy: Many participants walk or use a car some of the time or most of the time. Many participants rarely or sometimes cycle or use a tram or uber/taxi, and many sometimes use a train. Most rarely use a bus, motorbike, or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to use a train, tram, or bus more. While all transport system themes are important, Accessibility and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included having more frequent buses, a tram that goes from Glenroy toward Preston, more accessible trams and tram stops on Sydney Road, improving cyclist and pedestrian safety, and having a north-south and east-west grid pattern with wider streets and designated cycling paths.
Pascoe Vale: Many participants walk or use a car some or most of the time and use a train some of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus, tram, or uber/taxi, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Many participants would like to walk, cycle, use a train or tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Liveability, Accessibility, and Safety are priority themes. Participant ideas included having safer, protected bike paths on Kent Road, reducing car speed limits, remove Pascoe vale railway crossings, extending the 58 tram to increase north-south options, increasing, or improving cycling infrastructure and east-west connections .

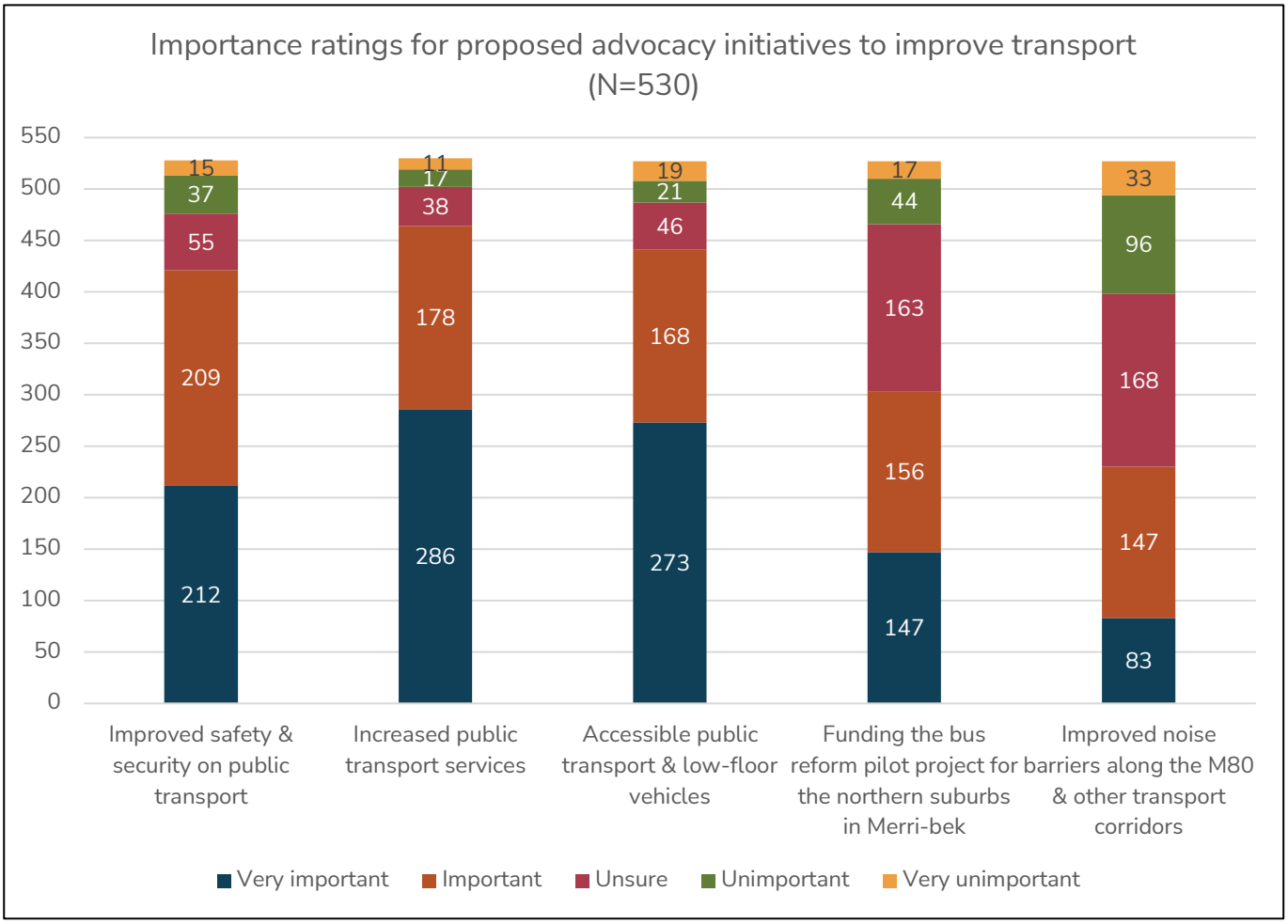
4.10 Advocating for transport improvements

Survey participants were asked how important Council advocacy is for transport improvements and presented with a listing of 5 advocacy ideas and 5 responses options.

As shown in Figure 4.8, all statements were regarded as important to varying degrees. Most participants rated 4 of the 5 initiatives as Very important or Important:

- 421 or 79.4% rated Improved safety and security on public transport as Very important or Important.
- 464 or 87.5% rated Increased public transport services as Very important or Important.
- 441 or 83.2% rated Accessible public transport and low-floor vehicles as Very important or Important.
- 303 or 57.2% rated Funding the bus reform pilot project for the northern suburbs in Merri-bek as Very important or Important.
- 230 or 43.4% rated Improved noise barriers along the M80 and other transport corridors as Very important or Important.

Figure 4.8 Importance ratings for proposed advocacy initiatives to improve transport (Survey)



Survey participants were asked to share their thoughts about other important advocacy ideas for Council to improve movements around Merri-bek (in addition to the ideas shown above in Figure 4.8). 256 participants provided a personalised response of which 29 generally indicated nothing

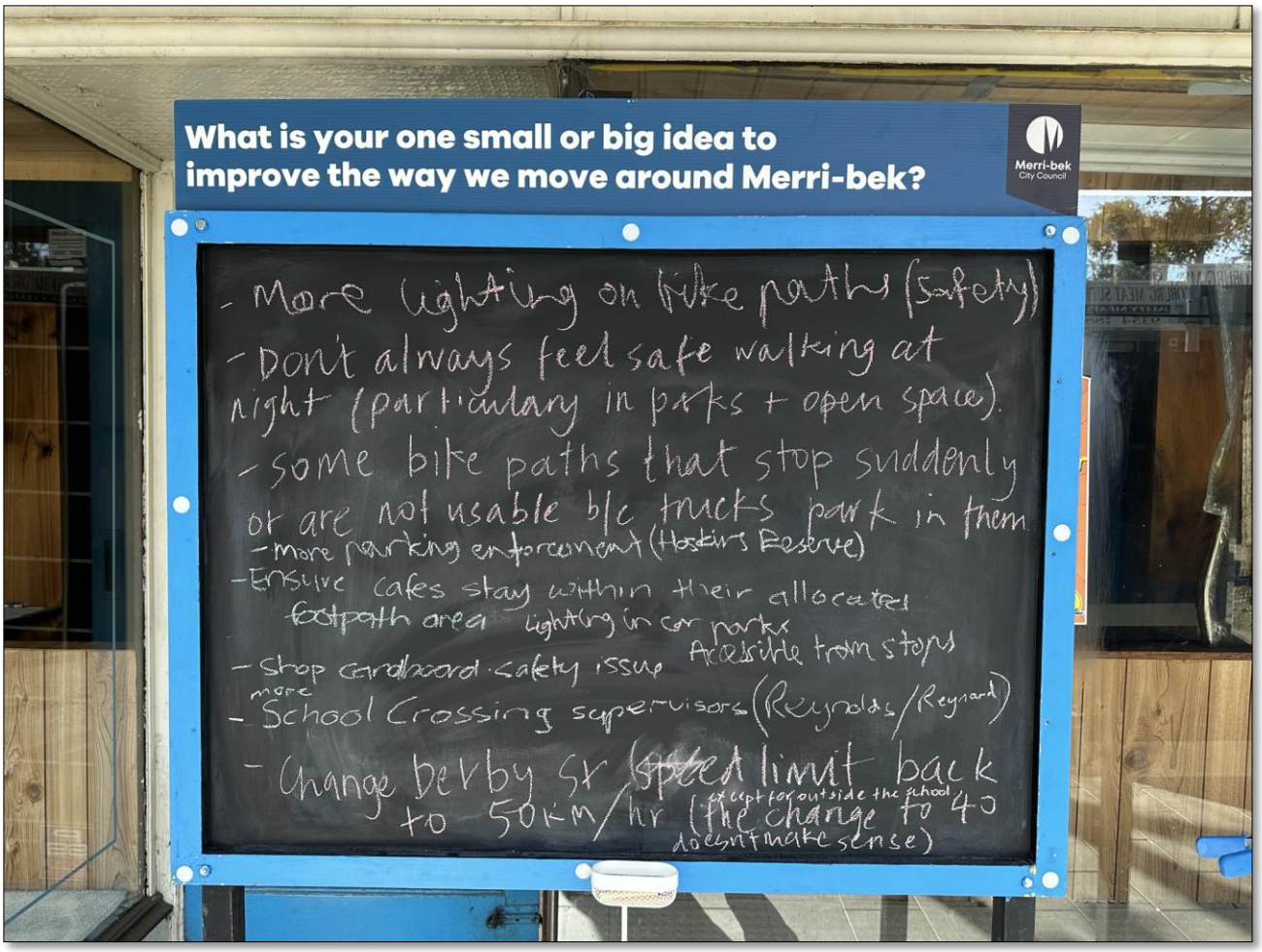
further to add. The responses from the remaining 227 participants referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped into themes. Five themes emerged during the analyses and are presented in Table 4.2. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 4.2: Themes in other important advocacy ideas for Council to improve movements around Merri-bek (Survey)

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
1. Safe and protected bike and pedestrian movements on major roads	
• Challenge: Cyclist and pedestrian safety and the need for improved cycling and walking infrastructure. Desire for more wider footpaths, protected bike lanes on major roads involving the removal of on-street parking to expand bike lanes, separation of bike lanes from moving vehicles, improved road surfaces in bike lanes, and physically separated bike lanes on major roads. • Advocacy ideas and requests: More signage, policing, and cameras at pedestrian crossings, and reduced vehicle size and speed on council roads. Improving cycling infrastructure on existing cycle highways, reducing the number of heavy and large vehicles on the roads. Advocating for better roads in collaboration with state government agencies and having roads that are safe for all transport modes. Improving pedestrian crossings, accessible tram stops to ensure accessibility for all, including the elderly and people with mobility issues. Integrate cycling infrastructure with public transport and neighboring municipalities.	*"Advocate for safe bike lanes on Sydney Rd and other major arterials through the LGA - especially during the LXRA work on the Upfield Line".* *"Advocate with Vic Roads for protected bike lanes".* *"Pedestrian crossings. There are not enough safe pedestrian crossings in the Brunswick East Village of Lygon Street. Too often people are crossing the road into four lanes of speeding traffic".*
2. Reducing car traffic to improve livability and road safety	
• Challenge: Reducing car traffic to improve movements in Merri-bek. Reducing car traffic and improving movements around Merri-bek, with a focus on promoting active transport and improving road conditions to enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Improving road safety, including reducing speed limits, implementing traffic calming measures, and increasing enforcement of road rules to protect vulnerable road users like cyclists and pedestrians is also a key point. • Advocacy ideas and requests: Advocating for reduced car speed limits and improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Creating car-free zones near schools, implementing parking maximums, and encouraging the use of electric buses. Transforming sections of Sydney	*"Traffic calming in Nicholson Street between Moreland and Bell Street, especially near the IGA supermarket".* *"Increase electric vehicle infrastructure".* *"Advocating for better roads in Coburg with VicRoads. I have just moved from the eastern suburbs and the difference is shocking".*

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
Road to be more pedestrian and cyclist friendly. Advocating for improved road surfaces, reduced car traffic, active and sustainable transport in new developments and infrastructure projects.	
3. Removing on-street car parking on busy streets to improve active transport movements	
• Challenge: Removing of on-street parking to prioritize the safety and efficiency of different modes of transportation, promote active transportation, and improve the overall mobility and accessibility of Merri-bek. However, mixed views were reported. • Advocacy ideas and requests: Enhance safety by reducing visibility issues for drivers and pedestrians, thus decreasing the risk of accidents. Improve traffic flow by reducing congestion and travel times, particularly in busy areas. Create dedicated cycling infrastructure, encouraging more people to cycle and reducing reliance on cars. Enhance pedestrian access by creating wider footpaths and safer pedestrian crossings, promoting active transportation.	*"Have permanent bike lanes on Sydney Road and restrict parking. Research has shown that there is a lot of off-street parking in the vicinity of Sydney Road".* *"Council purchasing land to create many low impact, low cost, conveniently located public parking lots to enable on-street parking to be eliminated on Sydney Road, Lygon Street and Nicholson Street".* *"Think you're transport system is forgetting the number one people mover – cars - the only practical solution for some of us. You end up removing lanes, making green areas to block off streets, that change free flowing traffic to being bottlenecked".*
4. Adjusting car parking to increase greenery and green infrastructure	
• Challenge: Increasing greenery, trees, and green space to create a more pleasant and comfortable environment to move around Merri-bek. • Advocacy ideas and requests: Trees are important for creating a pleasant and comfortable environment for pedestrians, which can encourage more people to walk and improve movement. Seeking more green spaces which contribute to a more attractive and enjoyable environment, including spaces with seating areas for individuals with mobility issues to rest and relax. Advocating to improve green spaces and create better bike lanes to promote healthier modes of transportation and enhance movement within the area.	*"Eliminate on-street parking on Sydney Rd, Lygon St and Nicholson St to open those thoroughfares up for increased pedestrian, tram and bicycle use, and allow relevant businesses to increase their curbside footprint on those streets to create vibrant, green and community-centric transit arteries".* *"Improved pedestrian/cycling/green space infrastructure along Murray Road".* *"I love the walking and cycling tracks under the raised rail tracks. More spaces like this with welcoming greenery and away from traffic for walking and cycling".*
5. Improving public transport services and infrastructure	
• Challenge: Improving public transport options and infrastructure, including hygiene, bus frequency and reliability, and bus stops. • Advocacy ideas and requests: Advocating for more accessible tram stops, better-designed bus stops, and improved pedestrian infrastructure around public transport. Installing more benches and seating	*"Any better public transport infrastructure is appreciated".* *"Improved east-west public transport".* *"Installing air filtration systems and CO2 monitoring in all modes of public transport".*

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
especially at public transport interchanges, so it is easier for people with health issues and disabilities to get around and rest. Advocating for better transport options in collaboration with state government agencies.	



Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. These participants referred to a variety of advocacy-related topics. These responses have been grouped where relevant and are presented below.

- Public transport: As a priority Council needs to address the north/south divide in Merri-bek in relation to public transport by partnering with the City of Hume and advocating to the State Government
- Buses: Better buses in specific areas (i.e., Fawkner) with Sunday and evening bus services. Re-consider the Blue Orbital bus route. Improve interchanges, ease of transfer. Ensure adequate and efficient bus replacement services particularly in the northern suburbs of Merri-bek when the Upfield Line is closed for the removal of level crossings. Review bus services and routes across the northern suburbs, increase the frequency of bus services in the northern suburbs including links to Campbellfield Shopping Plaza, and build bus shelters at Campbellfield Shopping Plaza
- Train: Duplication of Upfield line allowing more frequent services, ensure the entire Upfield Line has parity with other Metro Rail Lines where passengers are enjoying a 10-minute service. Address the immediate duplication of the rail track between Gowrie and Upfield, particularly during the closure of the Upfield Line for the removal of level crossings in Brunswick. Build a railway station at Campbellfield to provide easy access to the Shopping Plaza and link to the airport. Extend the Upfield Line to the northern growth areas between Upfield and Wallan.
- Tram: Accessible tram stops on all routes. Tram light extensions. Install accessible tram stops along North Coburg, East Coburg and West Coburg tram routes before the Upfield Line is closed for level crossing removal.
- Cars: Advocate for safer speeds on arterial roads. This can be linked to safer access to public transport (much of which runs along arterial roads). This is particularly for younger and older residents who may be more reliant on public transport
- Pedestrians: Advocate for more signalised pedestrian crossings on arterial roads with a list of priorities.

5. Engagement findings – spotlight on gender

This section examines the consultation findings with a focus on gender and presents key insights to consider in the development of the Strategy and supporting actions.

5.1 Assessing gender impacts

Merri-bek City Council aims to ensure all new or updated policies, programs, and services address requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (the "Act") and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In assessing the impacts of the policy, service, or program, it is important to acknowledge impacts may vary significantly across different people within a single group. Section 6(8) of the Act indicates "gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes." By recognising the concept of intersectional gender inequality, the Act aims to address discrimination, disadvantage, and inequity.

To determine whether notable differences were apparent for gender, six data screening and interpretation steps were taken:

- Omit "Prefer not to say" responses and missing responses to the Gender and Age questions from the dataset.
- Convert responses into a format suitable for statistical analysis (IBM SPSS program)
- Re-run results charts to segment the responses for all closed-ended questions by the three gender sub-groups.
- Convert results from numbers to rounded percentages (no decimal points) to create proportions for comparative purposes.
- Compare the percentages and observe differences between the three gender sub-groups.
- Note differences of 10% or more in the responses from Woman/Female (278 participants) and Man/Male (217 participants). Due to the substantially lower number of responses for Other genders (11 participants - non-binary, gender- queer, gender-fluid, or use different term), report high level observations only.

5.2 Key insights

Participant characteristics by gender: Some gender differences greater than 10% are noted regarding participant age and diversity characteristics. Proportionally more Woman/Female participants are aged 40 to 49 years, 50 to 59 years, 60 to 69 years and 70 to 79 years. In contrast, more Man/Male participants are aged 18 to 24 years and 80 years and over. Proportionally more Woman/Female participants identify as a person with a disability (including limited mobility), Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, LGBTIQA+, and having a birthplace outside of Australia. Regarding Other genders, 45% (5 of 11) are aged 25 to 39 years, 27% (3 of 11) identify as a person with a disability (including limited mobility), and 82% (or 9 of 11) identify as LGBTIQA+.

Notable findings differences by gender:

- Cycle: Woman/Female participants are more likely to cycle “Rarely or never” (37%, Man/Male=20%). Man/Male participants are more likely to want to Cycle more often (65%, Woman/Female =53%).
- Reasons currently unable to Scoot/skate more: “Physically not possible for me” is more likely to be reported than Woman/Female participants (18%, 7% Man/Male).
- Proposed objectives: Woman/Female participants are more likely to be supportive for:
    - Accessibility – 1. Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community (85%, 69% Man/Male).
    - Collaboration – 1. Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system (59%, 48% Man/Male).
    - Liveability – 2. Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community (54%, 43% Man/Male).
    - Safety – 3. Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities (85%, 73% Man/Male).
- Importance of transport improvements advocacy: Woman/Female participants are more likely to report the following advocacy ideas are very important:
    - Improved safety and security on public transport (44%, 32% Man/Male).
    - Accessible public transport and low-floor vehicles (59%, 44% Man/Male).

Observations for Other genders:

- More likely to Walk “All of the time”, Cycle, Walk and use a Tram “Most of the time”, use a Bus, Car, Uber/taxi “Some of the time” and use a Train “Rarely or never” than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Less likely to want to use a Car more often or use a Train more often than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Reasons currently unable to use transport modes more: More likely to report Bus is not reliable or regular, Car takes too long, Cycle and Motorbike do not feel safe, Train is not near me or takes too long, and Walk does not feel safe than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Preferred themes: Liveability is less important; Sustainability is more important than reported by Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Proposed objectives: Overall more supportive of all proposed objectives than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Importance of transport improvements advocacy: More likely to report Increased public transport services are very important.

6. Appendices

6.1 Survey

socialpinpoint

October 23, 2023

Moving around Merri-bek Survey

How you move around Merri-bek

01. How often do you currently use the following modes of transport to move into, out of and around Merri-bek? Required

Bus
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never
Car
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never
Motorbike
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never
Cycle
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never
Scoot/skate
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time

Moving around Merri-bek Survey

Page 1 of 14

◯ Rarely or Never
Train
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never
Tram
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never
Uber/taxi
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never
Walk
◯ All of the time
◯ Most of the time
◯ Some of the time
◯ Rarely or Never

02. Regarding the transport mode that you use most often, why is this the best way for you to travel? Required

03. Which modes of transport would you like to use more often in Merri-bek? Required

Select all that apply

Select all that apply
☐ Bus
☐ Car
☐ Motorbike
☐ Cycle
☐ Scoot/skate
☐ Train
☐ Tram
☐ Uber/taxi
☐ Walk
☐ Other

04. For the modes of transport you are unable to use, what is the main reason why?

Bus
○ Not near me
○ Not affordable for me
○ Takes too long
○ Does not feel safe
○ Not reliable or regular
○ Physically not possible for me
○ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Car
○ Not near me
○ Not affordable for me
○ Takes too long
○ Does not feel safe
○ Not reliable or regular
○ Physically not possible for me
○ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle

Motorbike
◯ Not near me
◯ Not affordable for me
◯ Takes too long
◯ Does not feel safe
◯ Not reliable or regular
◯ Physically not possible for me
◯ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Cycle
◯ Not near me
◯ Not affordable for me
◯ Takes too long
◯ Does not feel safe
◯ Not reliable or regular
◯ Physically not possible for me
◯ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Scoot/skate
◯ Not near me
◯ Not affordable for me
◯ Takes too long
◯ Does not feel safe
◯ Not reliable or regular
◯ Physically not possible for me
◯ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Train
◯ Not near me
◯ Not affordable for me
◯ Takes too long
◯ Does not feel safe
◯ Not reliable or regular

◯ Physically not possible for me
◯ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Tram
◯ Not near me
◯ Not affordable for me
◯ Takes too long
◯ Does not feel safe
◯ Not reliable or regular
◯ Physically not possible for me
◯ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Uber/taxi
◯ Not near me
◯ Not affordable for me
◯ Takes too long
◯ Does not feel safe
◯ Not reliable or regular
◯ Physically not possible for me
◯ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Walk
◯ Not near me
◯ Not affordable for me
◯ Takes too long
◯ Does not feel safe
◯ Not reliable or regular
◯ Physically not possible for me
◯ Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle

05. If there is another reason why you are unable to use a specific mode of transport, please indicate which mode and why.

Our future transport vision

What kind of transport system do you want for Merri-bek in the future?
We know these 6 draft themes are important features of a transport system.

1. **Safety:** a transport system where people are safe travelling on local streets and paths, and people feel safe while in public spaces.
2. **Accessibility:** an accessible transport system where all people can use different modes of transport no matter their age, background, or abilities.
3. **Sustainability:** a sustainable transport system that has more easy options to travel sustainably, whether by foot, bike, e-scooter, public transport, or zero-emission vehicles, helping to reduce transport emissions.
4. **Health:** a transport system that contributes to our health by providing more easy options to walk or ride for fitness, fun and everyday trips. As well as places for us to come together as a community.
5. **Liveability:** a transport system that makes our lives better. There are enjoyable connections and transport options close to where people live, making it easy to access shops, services, and jobs.
6. **Collaboration:** a transport system shaped by community and Council working together. Council and community work together to meet transport needs and advocating to State Government for transport improvements.

06. Please select your top three priorities for creating an improved transport system for the future. Required

Select 3 answers	
☐	Accessiblity
☐	Collaboration
☐	Health
☐	Liveability
☐	Safety
☐	Sustainability

07. Please share your thoughts if you think an important theme or priority is missing. Required

To what extent do you support the proposed objectives as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper?

08. Safety objectives Required

Improve road safety outcomes and create safe streets for all people to walk, ride and drive in Merri-bek.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Prioritise, where possible, creating streets suitable for walking and cycling for people of various skills and abilities.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive

09. Accessibility objectives Required

Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Advocate to State Government for accessible transport services and stops.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive

10. Sustainability objectives Required

Support community to reduce transport emissions as rapidly as possible by providing increased transport choice.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive

11. Health objectives Required

Work to reduce noise and air pollution where possible, and mitigate the harms caused by them

◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Support transport choice that contributes to improving the mental and physical health of people in Merri-bek.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Create streets and public spaces that encourage socialisation amongst local communities.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Increase opportunities, through transport options, for people to meet their daily exercise needs.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive

12. Liveability objectives Required

Create high-quality and well-designed spaces that are vibrant and well-loved by all.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive

◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Help reduce cost of transport for residents by having an increased range of travel options.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive

13. Collaboration objectives Required

Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive
Work with neighbouring councils and other levels of government to provide coordinated solutions to transport challenges.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive

◯ Very Unsupportive
Actively co-create solutions to transport issues with local communities and stakeholders.
◯ Very Supportive
◯ Supportive
◯ Unsure
◯ Unsupportive
◯ Very Unsupportive

Advocating for transport improvements

Council is not responsible for all transport modes in Merri-bek. Other levels of government, in particular the State Government, are responsible for transport modes such as public transport and major roads.
How important are the following ideas for Council to advocate for?

14. Improved safety and security on public transport Required

In these questions, the slider is set to the centre to start. You will need to click on it to make sure your response is recorded, even if you are submitting an answer of 'unsure'

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

15. Increased public transport services Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

16. Accessible public transport stops and low-floor vehicles Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

17. Funding the bus reform pilot project for the northern suburbs in Merri-bek Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

18. Improved noise barriers along the M80 and other transport corridors
Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

19. Please share your thoughts if an important advocacy idea for Council is missing and will improve movements around Merri-bek.

20. What is your one small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek? Required

About you

Merri-bek is a very diverse community. By telling us a little bit about you, you are helping us understand who we are hearing from as we aim to hear from a diverse range of people.
Your information will not be used for any other purposes. For details on how Merri-bek City Council collects and protects your personal information, refer to our Privacy Policy.

21. How do you describe your gender?

Select one answer only
◯ Man/male
◯ Woman/female
◯ Nonbinary/genderqueer/genderfluid
◯ Prefer not to say

◯ I use a different term (please tell us)

22. What suburb do you live in?

Select one answer only
◯ 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

23. What is your age range?

Select one answer only
◯ Under 18
◯ 18-24
◯ 25-39
◯ 40-49
◯ 50-59
◯ 60-69
◯ 70-79

◯ 80+

24. I identify as

Select all that apply

Select all that apply
☐ A person with a disability
☐ A person who experiences limited mobility
☐ A carer of someone with a disability
☐ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
☐ LGBTIQA+
☐ Someone who speaks a language other than English at home
☐ None of the above
☐ Prefer not to say

25. Were you born in Australia?

Select one answer only
◯ Yes
◯ No (please let us know where you were born)

26. If you would like to receive email updates about this project please enter your email