



Merri-bek
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday 12 June 2024

Commencing 7 pm

Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg

Language Link

This is the Agenda for the Council meeting.
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Acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the City of Merri-bek

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, and pays 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.

Information about Council Meetings

These notes have been developed to help people better understand Council meetings. All meetings are conducted in accordance with Council's Governance Rules.

WELCOME The Mayor, who chairs the meeting, formally opens the meeting.

APOLOGIES Where a Councillor is not present, their absence is noted in the minutes of the meeting. Council may also approve leaves of absence in this part of the meeting.

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS INTERESTS A Councillor has a duty to disclose any direct or indirect financial or other interests, they may have in any matter to be considered by Council that evening.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES The minutes of the previous meeting are put before Council to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS At each Council Meeting provision of 10 minutes will be made in the Agenda for the Mayor and Councillors to acknowledge and recognise achievements of local individuals and organisations; and raise matters considered important to Council.

PETITIONS Council receives petitions from citizens on various issues. Council formally accepts petitions at Council meetings.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME This is an opportunity (30 minutes), for citizens of Merri-bek to raise questions with Councillors.

COUNCIL REPORTS Council officers prepare detailed reports, which are considered by Councillors and a Council position is adopted on the matters considered. The Mayor can invite firstly Councillors, secondly Officers, and then citizens in attendance to identify Council reports which should be given priority by the meeting and considered in the early part of the meeting.

NOTICES OF MOTION A motion which has been submitted to the Chief Executive Officer no later than 12 pm (noon) 10 business days prior to the meeting which is intended to be included in the agenda. The motion should outline the policy, financial and resourcing implications.

NOTICE OF RESCISSION A Councillor may propose a motion to rescind a resolution of the Council, provided the previous resolution has not been acted on, and a notice is delivered to the CEO or delegate setting out the resolution to be rescinded and the meeting and date when the resolution was carried. If a motion for rescission is lost, a similar motion may not be put before the Council for at least one month from the date it was last lost, unless the Council resolves that the notice of motion be re-listed at a future meeting.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS This is an opportunity for Councillors to raise items proposed to be submitted as Notices of Motion at future meetings.

URGENT BUSINESS The Chief Executive Officer or Councillors, with the approval of the meeting, may submit items of Urgent Business (being a matter not listed on the agenda) but requiring a prompt decision by Council.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS Whilst all Council meetings of Council are open to the public, Council has the power under the *Local Government Act 2020* to close its meeting to the public in certain circumstances which are noted where appropriate on the Council Agenda. Where this occurs, members of the public leave the Council Chamber or Meeting room while the matter is being discussed.

CLOSE OF MEETING The Mayor will formally close the meeting and thank all present.

NEXT MEETING DATE The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 July 2024 commencing at 7 pm, in the Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg. The next Planning and Related Matters meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 June 2024 commencing at 6.30 pm.

WELCOME

1. APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

2. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTE CONFIRMATION

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 May 2024 be confirmed.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

5. PETITIONS

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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9. NOTICE OF RESCISSION

Nil.

10. FORESHADOWED ITEMS

11. URGENT BUSINESS

7. COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 OPTIONS TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE ARTS IN MERRI-BEK

Director Community, Eamonn Fennessy
Cultural Development

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Requests the development of a Merri-bek Public Art Policy in 2025, that includes a percentage for public art to be allocated from the Council capital works budget.
2. Receives a report in 2025 into mechanisms for how Council could request inclusion of public art and arts infrastructure in significant developments through the planning process.
3. Receives a future briefing in 2025 about the benefits and risks of establishing a Council-initiated philanthropic fund for the arts.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Research and consultation have been undertaken to explore innovative ways that Council could increase its funding for the arts in Merri-bek. The research explored examples of arts and culture funding models across the Australian local government sector, with a focus on Victoria. A number of approaches were investigated to explore their relevance to Merri-bek, including:

- Percentages for public art in Council's capital works budgets
- Public art and/or arts infrastructure funded by developers
- Council aligned philanthropic trusts
- Partnerships.

Previous Council Decisions

Notice of Motion - Funding the arts in Merri-bek – 13 March 2024

That Council requests a report by June 2024 on innovative ways Council could increase funding for the arts in Merri-bek, including public art, arts infrastructure, grants and other opportunities for artists and arts organisations. Options the report may examine could include:

- *Partnerships with charitable trusts and/or other organisations.*
- *A percent cost contribution for public art from major Council capital projects, as per the 2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy.*
- *An Arts levy on developments.*

2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy – 13 September 2023

That Council:

1. *Adopts the Arts and Culture Strategy 2023-2030, provided as Attachment 1.*

2. *Notes that the arts centre in the North (Fawkner or Glenroy) of the municipality referenced in the Strategy is informed by needs identified in Council's Community Infrastructure Plan 2022, and envisages an indoor performance space and creative production space, subject to future community engagement and planning.*
3. *In addition acknowledges community requests a larger performing arts venue in Coburg and receives a future report on how such a facility might be achieved, including options for improvements to Coburg Town Hall or a shared facility with Coburg High School.*
4. *Notes that officers are working with Coburg High School to explore an agreement on shared use of community facilities including school access to the Coburg Town Hall.*
5. *Notes that the 2023/24 Action Plan is funded within existing operational budgets.*
6. *Refers funding recommendations contained in the final strategy for consideration as part of the 2024/25 budgeting process.*

1. Policy Context

- Community Vision: Merri-bek is enhanced by all of us supporting our local businesses, arts communities and social organisations.
- Council Plan 2021-2024, Theme 4: Vibrant spaces and places in Moreland, Strategy 4.11 "Make Moreland a creative and cultural destination within Melbourne, significantly contributing to local vibrancy, cohesion and inclusion.
- 2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy
- 10 year Asset Plan 2022/23 to 2031/32
- Merri-bek Planning Scheme
- Open Space Strategy
- Community Infrastructure Plan

2. Background

One of the key priorities of the Arts and Culture Strategy is investment – creating a city that invests in the creative community and generates opportunities for artists and the creative sector. The need for increased investment in the arts in the municipality was demonstrated through the community consultation for the Arts and Culture Strategy and through benchmarking against other Council's arts and culture programs.

This report responds to a Council resolution from 13 March 2024 seeking to explore ways that Council could increase funding for the arts in Merri-bek.

3. Issues

Public art – Council capital works programs

Public art is currently included in some Merri-bek capital works projects. In recent years between two and four commissions have been completed each year as part of urban design, open space design or major capital projects, including Glenroy Community Hub, 33 Saxon Street, and 260 Sydney Road.

Outside of these projects, Council has limited ongoing budget for public art commissions: \$40,000 for its Renuwall street art mural program, and a \$19,000 public art maintenance budget. Council's public art collection is valued at \$2.2 million.

Of the seven Victorian Councils researched for their significant public art collections and policies, six of them (Casey, Yarra, Melbourne, Knox, Maribyrnong, Banyule, Wyndham) have a percentage for public art built into the capital works project.

Councils who use this model calculate the allocation to public art in one of two ways:

- Percentage of budget allocated to public art for all projects over a certain threshold, sometimes capped per project or artwork, and sometimes only to new projects or new projects and upgrades; or
- Percentage of total capital works budget allocated to public art.

The new Merri-bek Arts and Culture Strategy has a commitment for public art to be built into Council capital works, urban design and open space projects. Additionally, there is a 2024/2025 action plan item to develop a new Public Art Policy including allocating a percentage for public art in Council capital budgets and identifying a process for increasing the public art maintenance budget.

Given this strategic alignment and the significant number of Councils that are already doing this best-practice work, it is recommended that a new public art policy is developed which includes a percentage for public art allowance in the capital budget from 2025/2026. The appropriate percentages would be determined through the development of the policy to align with benchmarking. There could be an option to scale the percentage over the life of the arts and culture strategy to reach these outcomes by 2030.

It is worth noting that in the context of inclusion of public art in Council projects, a broad definition of public art would be used to include not just sculptures and murals, but also artist-designed furniture and fittings, leading to potential offsets for the budget allocated.

Public art – developers

At Merri-bek, developers are occasionally required to include public art as part of their planning permit conditions, but it is not part of Council's planning policy. A recent example of where this has occurred is for the planning permit for 33 Saxon Street, where an artwork is required for a large public-facing wall.

Three Victorian Councils researched for this report (Port Phillip, Yarra and Knox) either have a fixed percentage that developers must spend on public art, or they negotiate on a case-by-case basis.

City of Port Phillip lead in this area, with a 0.5 per cent public art spend required on all commercial developments over \$2,000,000. This is in their planning policy and planning scheme. Council approves the public art proposals and artworks are delivered and maintained by the developers.

Yarra and Knox negotiate on a case-by-case basis with developers during the planning permit approval process. At Yarra, public art guidelines come into effect if developments are more than five stories high, mixed use and/or have significant amount of publicly accessible space. Knox negotiate for a 1.5 per cent public art spend on all projects over \$2,000,000.

As part of the creation of a public art policy, an action will include undertaking further research to investigate what percentage developers could provide towards public art and suitable mechanisms for how Council could request this through the planning process.

Philanthropic trusts and partnerships

In Victoria there are 12 local councils that maintain charitable funds with the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (Banyule, Brimbank, Casey, Melbourne, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Hume, Kingston, Manningham, Mornington Peninsula and Wyndham).

Each Council sets their purpose of their fund to support a particular need in the community. Yarra's is the only one that has a specific arts focus, funding creative infrastructure for the municipality. Each year grants are provided from the fund to organisations with a registered DGR status.

Councils donate an amount to start the fund and then annual contributions are also made. The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation sometimes matches the initial donation to establish the fund. Different Councils have different ways of raising money for their funds, and generally it includes an option for people to donate directly to the fund in a tax deductible way.

Further investigation and a future briefing on the possibility of Merri-bek developing a philanthropic trust could be further investigated for Council consideration in 2025.

Council officers are proactive in seeking partners to be able to access grant funds not available directly to Council. For example, partnering with schools that can receive State government funding for artist programs or partnering with local NFP organisations on creative projects that could receive funding from philanthropic foundations.

Other funding models

Other funding models were investigated, including ratepayer's levies – an initiative undertaken by Sunshine Coast Council in Queensland – but are not actionable in the Victorian legislative environment.

Community impact

All of these funding models will provide increased investment in the arts in Merri-bek and increased employment opportunities for artists.

Public art enhances civic pride, expresses community values, explores social issues, celebrates Merri-bek's diverse community, reduces graffiti, creates vibrancy and increases liveability.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Arts and cultural activity create opportunities to highlight the issues of climate emergency and environmental sustainability. The new Public Art policy will address the environmental sustainability of Council-commissioned public art projects.

Economic sustainability implications

Arts and cultural activity has significant economic impact, bringing customers to local businesses and providing employment, both within the creative industries but also in complementary industries such as hospitality and design.

Legal and risk considerations

Legal and risk considerations for the Public Art Policy, developer guidelines and philanthropic funds will be explored further.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Key sections in the Charter that are relevant to this report are the right to freedom of expression, cultural rights, the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Extensive community engagement was completed through the Arts and Culture strategy process in 2023 to inform the need for increased arts funding in the municipality, as well as the inclusion of percentage for public art into capital works projects.

In addition to research and policy comparison, direct consultation for this report was undertaken with a number of inner-city councils.

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.

Affected person include artists, arts organisations, audiences and general community members.

Communications

Communication plans will be created as part of the process of creation of the new Public Art Policy and for any other arts funding initiatives that are established in the future as required.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There is currently no financial or resource implication for this report.

The percentage for public art funding required as part of the proposed Public Art Policy will form part of the Capital Works Program budget.

Further research to investigate mechanisms for developer funding of public art and/or arts infrastructure may require additional budget to engage appropriate expertise. This will be addressed in future reports on this topic.

7. Implementation

- July 2024 to March 2025 – Development of new Public Art Policy including internal consultation on percentage for public art, projects and format and possibilities for negotiating with developers for endorsement by Council in 2025.
- Early 2025 – Further research and Council briefing into potential establishment of philanthropic fund.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.2 SHARED MOBILITY (E-SCOOTERS) UPDATE

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves in principle Merri-bek's participation in the development of an inter-council shared mobility procurement process
2. Seeks a report to Council in the first quarter of 2025 for a decision on enabling a shared mobility trial, with a designated parking approach that restricts parking to specific locations so that shared mobility devices do not impact pedestrian accessibility
3. Notes that there are both expenditure and revenue implications from pursuing shared mobility schemes, with required staffing resources expected to be offset through the collection of fees from operators, and
4. Refers the initial resource need of \$78,397 to the final 2024/25 Budget.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Shared mobility services, including e-scooters and e-bikes, have grown in popularity and matured in service provision since the Victorian Government trial began in February 2022. The trial area includes the Cities of Melbourne, Port Phillip, and Yarra. Since beginning, over 8 million trips have been taken by e-scooter and e-bike. The trial is due to end on 4 October 2024, after which shared mobility will become legal should an agreement between shared mobility operators and the relevant council be in place.

Though the scheme has been successful, errant rider behaviour and improper parking have persisted. In response, participating councils and operators have put in place measures to mitigate against improper behaviour. Cognitive tests to prevent drink-riding at night, sensors to detect and prevent 'dinking', and camera sensors to detect footpath riding have all been implemented through the trial. Geo-fencing and designated parking zones have been rolled out as well to prevent improper parking of e-bikes and e-scooters.

Reducing errant parking is a point of particular concern. For example, a disability advocate in the City of Yarra has taken council to VCAT over the issue. As such, this report recommends a designated parking zone approach that reduces parking issues by restricting shared mobility parking only in areas identified as being appropriate, enforced by geo-fencing, line marking and, when on-street, with additional protective bollards.

In preparation for the end of the trial phase, participating and prospective councils have begun informal discussions about a future inter-council procurement process. This process will investigate a future inter-council model to consider the number of operators, key performance indicators, service levels to respond to complaints, fee structures, and other common operating principles.

Significant work is required to develop council capacity to enable and manage a future shared mobility scheme in Merri-bek, and to actively participate in an inter-council procurement process. Additional staff resources are required and have been included in the draft council budget 2024/25 for consideration. Staff costs would be re-couped and additional funding provided by operator fees.

Previous Council Decisions

Electric Scooter Trial in Moreland – 12 May 2021

That Council:

1. *Notes its former resolution (NOM66/19) to request the State Government facilitate the safe and legal use of electric scooters on roads and bike lanes, and to receive a report on the merits of a Council-led trial of e-scooters in Moreland following the conclusion of a trial that was to occur in the City of Port Phillip.*
2. *Notes that no trial of e-scooters has occurred in the City of Port Phillip to date, and that the State Government has invited Council to submit an expression of interest to participate in a trial of e-scooters to occur in two metropolitan and one regional local government areas.*
3. *Approves an expression of interest to be made for Council seeking to participate in the State Government trial of e-scooters.*
4. *Subject to Moreland being selected as trial area by the State Government, receives a further report prior to commencing a trial and partnering with an e-scooter provider, including the considerations for a further report as detailed in NOM66/19.*
5. *Notes that if Council is not successful in being selected for the trial, that the report required in NOM66/19 will be expanded to include the results for this broader trial (when available) noting the trial is anticipated to be in place for 12 months commencing in the Spring of 2021.*

Notice of Motion - Electric Scooters - Updating the Regulatory Framework – 11 December 2019

That Council:

1. *Writes to the Secretary of the Department of Transport Paul Younis and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety Hon. Jaala Pulford MP seeking a review of the regulatory framework for electric scooters to ensure the public can travel on electric scooters on roads and bike lanes legally.*
2. *Receives a report assessing the merits of conducting a Council-led trial of electric scooters in the City of Moreland with particular reference to:*
 - a) *Geographically defined areas of the City of Moreland to conduct any such trial where the benefits of micro-mobility are best able to be assessed;*
 - b) *Parameters of an open and competitive Expression of Interest process to award a permit to electric scooter operators for any such trial;*
 - c) *Numbers of permits to issue to operators for any such trial, with reference to comparable trials proposed or underway;*
 - d) *The duration of any such trial;*
 - e) *A sufficient number of electric scooters to be deployed in the City of Moreland to allow for Council officers to sufficiently assess the potential benefits of micro-mobility across the totality of the municipality; and*
 - f) *Consideration to the trial of electric scooters in the City of Port Phillip.*
 - g) *safety aspects and impacts e-scooters have for all users on footpaths, particularly more vulnerable users such as older people, people living with disabilities and children.*
 - h) *speed limits for electric scooters on shared paths*
3. *Council receives the report work once the City of Port Phillip trial of electric scooters is completed and available to utilise and build upon.*

1. Policy Context

Moving Around Merri-bek 2024

The Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy was adopted at the March 2024 Council Meeting. The Strategy seeks to ensure all actions impacting the councils transport network contribute to objectives aligned to the values of Safe, Accessible, Sustainable, Healthy, Liveable, and Inclusive.

Moving Around Merri-bek supports the future provision of shared mobility services, stating that “We will undertake a feasibility study to determine whether shared mobility is suitable for Merri-bek, and what policies may be needed to reduce footpath parking and riding by users.”

The *Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan* states that potentially by August 2024, Council will have “determined its position on allowing e scooter hire schemes in Merri-bek, following the completion of the State Government trial in April 2024” and “as applicable, progressed implementation of e scooter hire schemes in Merri-bek.”

Zero Carbon Merri-bek

Zero Carbon Merri-bek outlines Council’s framework for reducing our emissions. It has three pillars:

- Efficient and 100% renewably powered energy
- Active and zero emissions transport
- Circular economy with zero waste

Supporting shared mobility services aligns with the second pillar of Zero Carbon Merri-bek. Surveys conducted by operators have found that around 28 per cent of e-scooter trips in metropolitan areas and up to 40 per cent of trips in Ballarat replaced a vehicle trip (private car or rideshare vehicle) on the riders’ most recent e-scooter ride.

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan sets out Council’s and community’s vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.
 - 2.1. Build safe, accessible, and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand, especially the Coburg to Glenroy bike path.
 - 2.5. Facilitate substantially increased use of active transport in the community through targeted programs which include a focus on children, young people, families and older people.
 - 2.6. Collaborate with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on a case-by-case basis.

2. Background

Shared mobility schemes involve the hiring of e-scooters and / or e-bikes from the public realm. Shared mobility is used in this report as a catch-all for what may also be known as bike share, scooter share, and similar systems where a personal mobility device can be rented per trip from the public domain.

Early schemes were usually owned by government and operated by a contracted third-party. These were standard bicycles that used docking stations to store the bicycles while not in use. From 2015, private operators emerged using a 'floating' model, where bicycles did not need to be returned to a station, and instead used a locking device to secure the rear wheel while not in use.

Early iterations of private 'floating' schemes were plagued by rogue operators with poor quality bicycles and services, resulting in their disuse and high levels of vandalism. This is most evident with the o-bike scheme in Australia, which prompted a crackdown by governments and government agencies, notably the EPA.

A subsequent wave of shared mobility schemes focused on electric devices, including e-scooters and e-bikes. Operators of these schemes entered into service agreements with the governments they operated in, including the setting of service requirements and holding fees to prevent poor operator behaviour. Improvements to operator technology, including geo-fencing and device tracking have significantly reduced instances of vandalism and inappropriate parking.

Geo-fencing is the use of geospatial technology and GPS trackers embedded in each shared mobility device to restrict or permit the use and parking of the devices. Geo-fencing can be used to restrict parking in inappropriate locations, designate specific parking zones, to reduce the speed in certain areas, or to cut power to the motor entirely.

Victorian Trial

Prior to the introduction of e-scooters in Victoria, legislation only permitted the use of motorised personal mobility devices on footpaths at a maximum speed of 10 km/h. This did not provide for the legal use of e-scooters on Victorian roads or shared paths.

The Victorian Government facilitated a trial of shared e-scooters in Victoria, which began on 1 February 2022. It includes the Cities of Melbourne, Yarra, and Port Phillip in the inner-city, and Ballarat in regional Victoria. This provided for an exemption from existing legislation and provided a framework for shared mobility operators to enter into an agreement with the councils participating in the trial.

The current trial allows for the use of e-scooters on Victorian roads up to 60 km/h, on shared paths, and bike lanes. Shared e-scooters are capped at 20 km/h while private e-scooters are capped at 25 km/h (in line with e-bike restrictions).

Yarra and Port Phillip allow for 500 e-scooters within each of their boundaries, while Melbourne allows for 1,500 e-scooters. There are two operators in the trial, Lime and Neuron who have equal share of the e-scooter provision. Lime also operates 1,000 e-bikes across the three councils and part of Stonnington (stopping at Burke Road).

A third operator, Beam, currently operates shared mobility schemes in other parts of Australia, including shared e-bikes in Hobsons Bay.

Private e-scooter use was subsequently made legal state-wide on 5 April 2023. Shared e-scooters remain in a trial state and will be made permanent from 4 October 2024. From this date, shared e-scooters will be allowed in areas where an operator has entered into an agreement with the council covering the operating area.

The operators in Melbourne use the platform Ride Report to track and provide dashboard statistics on their use. It is the global industry standard platform for shared mobility operators. Melbourne is currently ranked as the most popular scheme globally, with an average of 4 trips per device per day being undertaken. More information, including heat maps of their use can be found here:

<https://public.ridereport.com/melbourne>.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the inner-Melbourne councils and the operators includes service provision requirements for the operator to attend to broken and poorly parked devices. It also sets out fees for the operator, currently set at \$1 per e-scooter per day.

All participating councils have dedicated staff resources to developing the Council components to managing the scheme and ongoing management of the operators.

Moonee Valley and Darebin City Councils have recently resolved to participate in a multi-council procurement process to enable shared mobility in their municipalities.

3. Issues

Parking

Errant parking of shared mobility devices persists, though instances have reduced as users become more aware of proper parking etiquette and geo-fencing is employed to restrict parking in problem areas and create priority parking areas.

The current approach in the trial area is for shared mobility to be parking on the footpath, within the street furniture zone. This can also lead to illegal footpath riding incidents, as shared mobility users start or finish their trip by transitioning from the road to the footpath to find a suitable parking location.

Councils and operators have begun using shared mobility parking 'hubs' using geo-fencing and line marking to delineate shared mobility parking areas (Figure 1). This approach has been effective at reducing parking issues.



Figure 1 A designated parking area in Richmond using line marking and geo-fencing (Source: City of Yarra)

Another approach is the conversion of on-street parking for shared mobility parking (Figure 2). Funding from which could be drawn from the fees raised by the operators.

One issue raised by participating councils is that the trial roll-out did not initially focus on providing parking in the roadway, making it difficult to shift user parking behaviour as the trial progressed. A greater focus on providing dedicated shared mobility parking areas from the outset is preferred to ensure errant parking behaviour is minimized and that accessibility conflicts with parking devices do not occur.



Figure 2 A designated parking area on-street in Seattle USA (Source: City of Yarra)

A 'designated parking' approach is recommended, where most shared mobility parking occurs only in designated parking areas, rather than the current 'free floating' approach where users can park their shared mobility device anywhere within the footpath area.

A designated parking approach would use line marking, bike hoops, and signage in addition to geo-fencing to restrict bike parking to designated areas. This would employ a mixture of dedicated zones within the street furniture zone of the footpath and by reallocating on-street parking where there is insufficient space off-road.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

User surveys conducted by share scheme operators found that around 28 per cent of e-scooter trips in metropolitan areas and up to 40 per cent of trips in Ballarat replaced a vehicle trip (private car or rideshare vehicle) on the riders' most recent e-scooter ride. However, the accuracy of these figures cannot be verified and do not consider life-cycle emissions for the shared mobility devices against the estimated emission savings from mode shift.

Economic sustainability implications

A future shared mobility scheme will include a fee structure for shared mobility providers to operate in Merri-bek. Revenue from these fees is expected to exceed staff resources and material costs to manage the scheme.

Crash risk

Shared mobility, in particular shared e-scooters, have drawn significant media and institutional attention from the higher crash risk associated with their use. Differences in legislation across jurisdictions complicate comparisons; other states in Australia allow footpath riding while Victoria does not. Helmet laws apply in Australia and New Zealand, which generally do not apply internationally.

Inconsistencies with how crash data is recorded across Australia also make it difficult to interrogate e-scooter and shared e-scooter crashes. Analysis by the Australian Automobile Association¹ (AAA) found that people killed riding e-scooters in Victoria and NSW are recorded by the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE) as motorcyclists, while WA and the ACT report them as "other". Queensland e-scooter rider deaths are recorded as drivers or passengers.

¹ <https://www.aaa.asn.au/newsroom/data-failings-prevent-e-scooter-safety-analysis/>

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) research² found that most injuries from e-scooters were from falls not collisions with other modes of transport and that most people injured were aged 20-34. The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons noted that e-scooter riders were twice as likely to be injured as bicycle riders. Inexperience was listed as a significant factor to e-scooter collisions, particularly among shared e-scooter operations. Low compliance with helmets on shared e-scooters was also listed as a factor contributing to higher head injuries.

Service levels

The current trial agreement³ includes service response times, monitoring and evaluation for various metrics, and operating requirements. The current response time requirement for dangerously parked scooters is two hours, with broken, and inappropriately parked e-scooters needing to be moved within 12 hours. E-scooters may be idle for up to three days, after which the operator must provide incentives to users or move the e-scooter to a more appropriate location. E-scooters left idle beyond six days may be impounded by council with a release fee to be paid by the operator. These service levels will be reviewed as part of a future multi-council agreement based on findings from the current trial.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and improving access to transport options is seen to improve the *Right to the freedom of movement*.

So that this right is not infringed, it will be important to ensure that shared mobility devices do not hinder pedestrian accessibility or crossing points.

It will be important to consult with Merri-bek's Disability Reference Group, Council's disability and social cohesion staff, and the broader disability and pedestrian community to ensure that a prospective shared mobility scheme does not infringe on others ability to freely move and access premises.

It will also be important to ensure that economic and geographic equity is centred in a future shared mobility scheme in Merri-bek.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Officers have briefed the Disability Reference Group at their last meeting on Tuesday 14 May, outlining our proposed approach. We received positive feedback and further issues identified to work through with prospective operators, such as helmet compliance, discriminatory risks with cognitive tests, and improvements to parking operations.

We will work with all relevant advisory committees and reference groups as we progress through the development of a scheme proposal to ensure our approach to shared mobility enhances the rights and access to shops and services.

Further community engagement details will be presented at the March 2025 Council meeting, where officers will present a draft scheme proposal.

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.

² https://research.qut.edu.au/carrsq/wp-content/uploads/sites/296/2022/08/e-scooter-safety_edits.pdf

³ <https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/the-area/getting-around/escooters#accordion-why-has-yarra-signed-up-to-the-e-scooter-trial>

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

An additional \$78,397 has been included in the final budget 2024/25 for adoption. This will provide for requisite staff resources to develop internal capacity to enable and manage a future shared mobility scheme in Merri-bek.

A future shared mobility scheme will include a fee structure for shared mobility providers to operate in Merri-bek. In future years, revenue from these fees will offset staff resources and material costs to manage the scheme.

To illustrate the possible revenue stream, assuming the introduction of shared mobility in Merri-bek has the same fee structure as the existing trial MOU scheme, and 500 e-scooters are permitted in Merri-bek (as is in the Cities of Port Phillip and Yarra), Council would receive \$182,500 per annum in fees from the operators.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's decision, officers will proceed with establishing and leading a working group to identify and develop actions required to enable and manage and future shared mobility scheme in Merri-bek, including development of technical notes and maps to identify suitable and not-suitable parking locations for shared mobility devices.

We will begin initial engagement with Council's relevant advisory committees and reference groups to identify and mitigate any issues that arise.

We will begin engagement with existing and prospective councils to develop an inter-council procurement process.

We will then report back to Council in March 2025 with a draft proposal for consideration, including proposed community consultation on the draft proposal.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.3 O'HEA STREET BIKE LANE EXTENSION

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Proceeds with the extension of the bi-directional bike lane on O'Hea Street between Sussex Street and Irvine Street shown at Attachment 1, noting that the designs are planned to be completed by the end of 2024 and construction is planned to commence in the first half of 2025.
2. Delegates minor changes to the proposed designs to the Director of City Infrastructure.
3. Writes to Department of Transport and Planning and VicTrack to advocate for a safe bi-directional cycling crossing on the south side of O'Hea Street at the O'Hea Street / Upfield Railway Line crossing.
4. Notes the community engagement report (Attachment 2) detailing the methodology and findings of community engagement on the proposed designs and thanks the community for their participation in this engagement.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report proposes a westerly extension of the O'Hea Street bike lane between Sussex Street and Irvine Street that has been subject to discussion for more than 10 years. It fills in the missing link between the existing bike lane east of Sussex Street and the existing shared path west of Irvine Street. In addition, the proposed extension offers safer crossing options for cyclists at the Sussex Street / O'Hea Street intersection and the Derby Street / O'Hea Street roundabout.

The extension will be a two-way bike lane on the north side of O'Hea Street, replacing an on-street car parking lane. A 0.8 m buffer will protect cyclists from vehicles and provides bin zones for residents to store their bins on collection day. Parking studies undertaken in 2019 and 2022 found that on-street parking occupancy is generally low (max. 37%) and all dwellings have driveways and off-street parking.

A diagonal crossing with a dedicated signal phase is proposed for the intersection at Sussex Street. Final designs for this intersection are subject to detailed design and approval from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

Council has undertaken community engagement for this project in April 2024. Some 190 letters were sent to residents and property owners along O'Hea Street. Community members had the opportunity to fill out a survey on the Conversations Merri-bek website.

Council received 212 survey submissions. The survey results show that 72 per cent of the respondents feel 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed bike lane extension. The most common concern raised is the safety of cyclists and pedestrians crossing side streets of O'Hea Street. Respondents report motorists often fail to give way and maintain a high speed when exiting a side street to drive onto O'Hea Street.

Based on the community engagement, Council officers recommend proceeding with the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lane for the entire section between Irvine Street to Sussex Street. The design has been updated to address community concerns regarding safety of crossings.

The design has also been updated to retain 10 well-established trees between Irvine Street and Hatter Street on the south side of O’Hea Street. This means that 13 parking bays for that section will not be constructed. A further 6 additional parking bays will be constructed further east (without tree loss) to offset this. This aspect of the design has been updated since the community engagement. Together with the removal of kerbside parking on the north side of O’Hea Street, there will be a 220 metre section with no on-street parking.

Should the recommendations be adopted, Council officers will proceed to the detailed design stage of the project. The designs and a signal plan for Sussex Street / O’Hea Street are planned to be finalised by the end of 2024 so construction can start in the first half of 2025.

Previous Council Decisions

Kent Road Separated Trial Bike Lane – 9 March 2022

That Council:

...

5. *Endorses the proposed process for future bike projects to engage with the community at multiple times throughout the strategic and design process of bike lane infrastructure in accordance with Council’s Community Engagement Policy 2020.*

...

1. Policy Context

Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy (2024)

The Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy was adopted at the March 2024 Council Meeting. The Strategy seeks to ensure all actions impacting the council’s transport network contribute to objectives aligned to the values of Safe, Accessible, Sustainable, Healthy, Liveable, and Inclusive. O’Hea Street is one of the backbones of Merri-bek’s cycling network and this project is part of the Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan. The proposed bike lane extension contributes to achieving the following specific objectives of the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy (2024):

- Create streets where everyone feels safe.
- Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roads.
- Create a transport system in Merri-bek that allows everyone to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.
- Reduce air and noise pollution generated from vehicles.
- Create streets and public spaces that encourage physical activity and socialisation amongst local communities.
- Improve access to shops, services and employment for our local community.
- Work collaboratively with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
- Work to make our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.

As outlined in Moving Around Merri-bek, Council aims to increase the number of trips by bike and to encourage new people to take up bike riding. This means we will extend and leverage off our existing cycling network so new links are not isolated from the broader system.

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council plan sets out Council's and community's vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

Strategic Objective 2: To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport:

- 2.1 Build safe, accessible and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand, especially the Glenroy to Coburg bike path
- 2.2 Scope and implement suburb based active transport (bike and pedestrian) improvements (prioritising Fawkner, Gowanbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy)
- 2.5 Facilitate substantially increased use of active transport in the community through targeted programs which include a focus on children, young people, families and older people
- 2.6 Collaborate with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on a case-by-case basis

Zero Carbon Merri-bek

Council's Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework outlines the community vision and strategic directions for the transition to zero carbon in Merri-bek by 2040. In 2019/20, transport was recorded to contribute 17 per cent of all carbon emissions in the Merri-bek local government area and 13 per cent were from private motor vehicles. The 2040 vision for Sustainable Transport includes:

- Most people choose to walk or cycle to get around locally because its healthy, free, safe and convenient
- Merri-bek is known for its pedestrian and cycle-friendly streetscapes

This overarching Framework informed 5-yearly action plans to drive the transition to zero emissions including:

- Investing in infrastructure to support active travel and public transport
- Reallocate space used for private vehicle travel and parking to support sustainable transport use and other purposes.

In addition, Council resolved in December 2021 to adopt an interim target towards the Zero Carbon by 2040 goal of a reduction of emissions by 75 per cent by 2030.

Urban Forest Tree Policy (2023)

Section 2.2.2 states:

"Merri-bek City Council will investigate tree management options before considering tree removal wherever possible. There are circumstances, however, in which tree removal is an acceptable management option when required to protect human health and safety, to protect infrastructure, to facilitate approved development and infrastructure improvements, or to enhance and maintain a healthy urban forest."

Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan (2016)

In 2016 Council adopted the Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan to create a city more resilient to urban heat and climate change. Protecting and enhancing tree canopy cover and green spaces are important considerations for future bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Community Engagement Policy (2020)

Council has adopted a new Community Engagement Policy (2020) to align with the new Local Government Act 2020. It sets directions for how Council will engage with the community on decisions that impact them, including future bicycle and pedestrian projects.

The 'Future bike projects engagement process' was adopted by Council on 9 March 2022 and has informed the approach to engagement on the O'Hea Street bike lane project.

2. Background

In 2008, Council finished the reconstruction of O'Hea Street, Coburg, between Sussex Street and Sydney Road. As part of this, a two-way off-road bike path on the southern side of the road was installed. The bike path is approximately 1.5 km in length and provides an east-west cycling connection within Merri-bek. The route is well used by cyclists and forms an important backbone to Merri bek's cycling network.

O'Hea Street is predominantly a residential street. O'Hea Street also functions as an important walking and riding link for local schools. Coburg North Primary School is located on O'Hea Street and students from Coburg High School use the existing bike lanes. O'Hea Street is classified as a collector road and carries between 7,000-9,000 vehicles a day. It has a speed limit of 50 km/h.

Ever since the bike lanes were installed in 2008, the benefits of an extension to the bike lane has been identified. The project is part of Council's 5-year Capital Works Program and it has been included as an action in the Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy (2024). Figure 1 shows the proposed bike lane (Sussex Street to Derby Street) and a further extension that is also the subject of this report (Derby Street to Irvine Street).

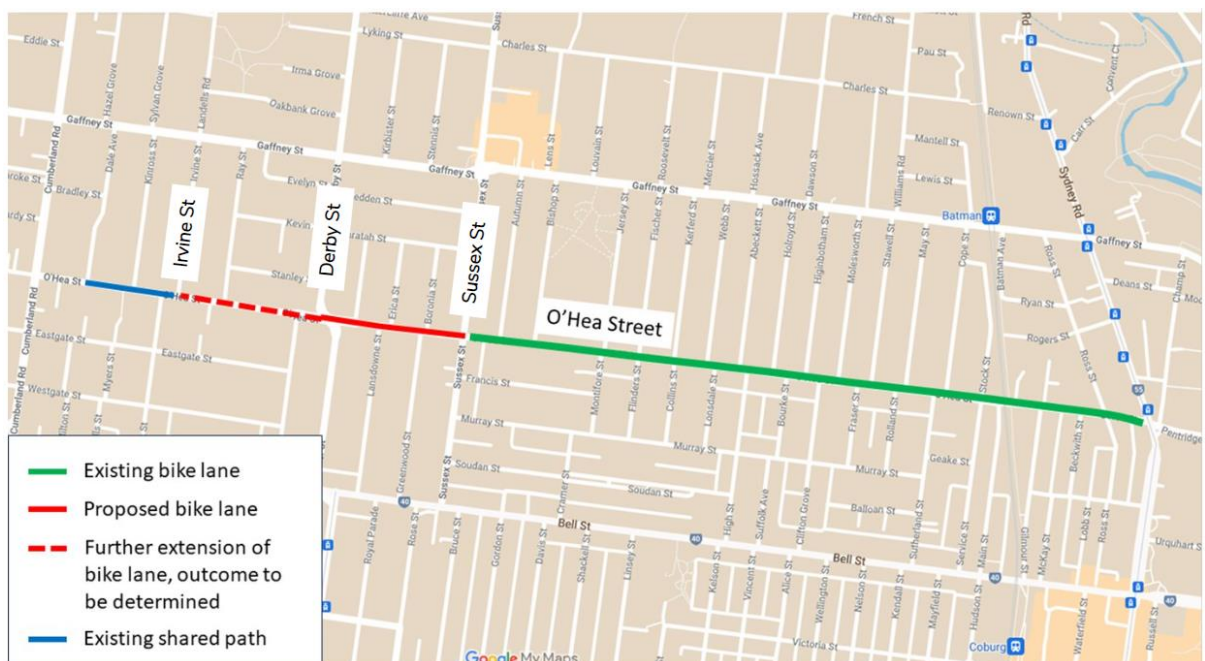


Figure 1: Bike lane extension proposal for O'Hea Street, Coburg

In 2018, an options assessment was undertaken by consultants. The road reserve varies in width and is narrower west of Derby Street. The provision of a two-way bicycle lane on the north side of O'Hea Street was deemed most suitable with several benefits. Firstly, this option minimises the loss of car parking. Secondly, swapping the bike lane to the north side of the street protects more established trees. Finally, the northern leg of the Derby Street roundabout offers more opportunity for a safe crossing than the southern leg of the roundabout.

In order to guide cyclists from the existing bike lanes on the south side of the street to the north side, a diagonal cycling crossing with a dedicated signal phase is proposed for the Sussex Street/O’Hea Street intersection. Council officers are currently obtaining DTP advice regarding this treatment and will seek their approval when the signal design plan has been completed. As part of the new intersection design, pedestrians and cyclists will have to merge onto a shared path on both approaches to the intersection due to the lack of space to keep them separated.

A conventional shared crossing is proposed for the northern leg of the Derby Street roundabout. Cars have priority and a refuge island allows pedestrians and cyclists to cross in two stages. Derby Street has recently been downgraded to a 40 km/h road by DTP. Pedestrians and cyclists share the path on both approaches of the crossing due to the lack of space.

Figure 2 shows the proposed cross-section of O’Hea Street between Derby Street and Sussex Street. A 3-metre-wide bi-directional bike lane is proposed on the north side of O’Hea Street. This bike lane is protected with a 0.8 m wide buffer with bike lane separators in them. A 2 m clearance is maintained on each side of a driveway so residents can easily enter and exit their driveways. Every property on the north side of O’Hea Street will have a dedicated bin zone marked up in the buffer zone where they can store their bins on collection day.

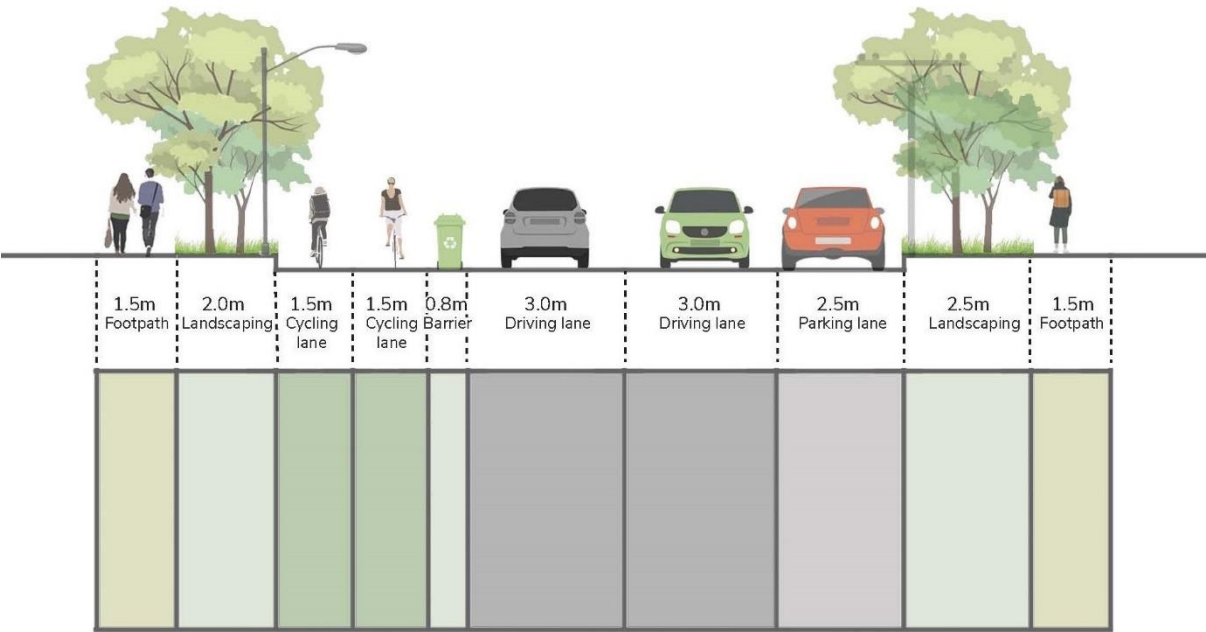


Figure 2: Cross-section proposed design Derby Street-Sussex Street O’Hea Street, Coburg

On 12 June 2020, the State Government announced that they would provide painted bicycle lanes and other upgrades along Derby Street, Pascoe Vale, rather than protected bicycle lanes on Cumberland Road, as previously announced by the State Government in May 2018. This announcement resulted in a scope exclusion of the section between Derby Street and Irvine Street. This section was reconsidered to be within scope for the project in March 2024 as Council officers believe the bike lane on this section will strengthen and support connections for bikes riding to Glenroy, Pascoe Vale South, Strathmore, Coburg and the Moonee Ponds Creek trail while improving streetscape amenity along O’Hea Street.

The cross section between Derby Street and Irvine Street looks slightly different as the road width becomes narrower further west. A 2.1 metre wide parking lane can be created on the south side of O’Hea Street between Derby Street and the first driveway west of Hatter Street. This creates 7 new parking bays. Between this driveway and Irvine Street there is a section of 220 metres where we are unable to maintain car parking due to the road width and well-established trees on the nature strip. The cross section for this section is shown in Figure 3. This is discussed further in the Issues section.

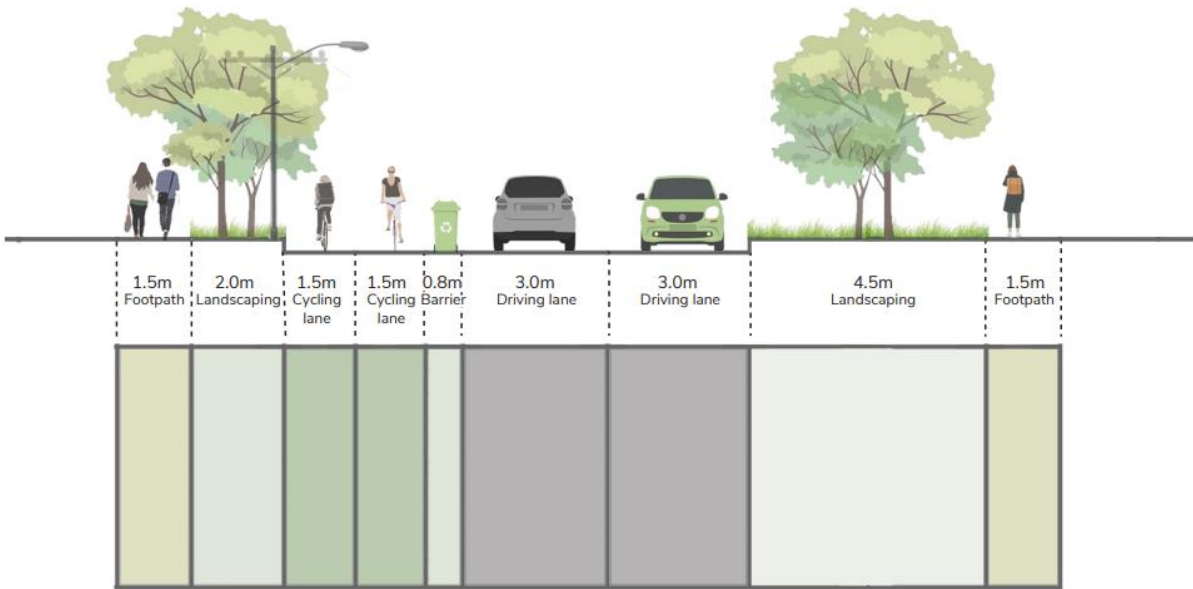


Figure 3: Cross section Irvine St - Hatter St

3. Issues

Safety issues at side streets

Council has received multiple Customer Requests for Service (CRS) in the past years regarding the safety of the existing bike lane crossings on O’Hea Street. These CRSs report motorists often failing to give way to pedestrians and cyclists sometimes resulting in accidents. As a response to this, speed cushions, ‘look bikes’ line, and give way signs have been installed at most intersections. However, this has not improved the safety of the crossings sufficiently as accidents still occur.

The issue has become even more clear to Council officers after undertaking community engagement for this project. 33 per cent of all survey respondents (212 total) mention that they feel unsafe crossing the side streets on the existing bike lane on O’Hea Street. A school principal notified Council of 2 students involved in a crash on O’Hea Street in the past month. In both instances, a motorist coming out of a side street driving onto O’Hea Street failed to give way and hit the student on the bike. Section 4 and **Attachment 2** will elaborate on this concern.

Council officers undertook site inspections to gauge the risk of the bicycle lane crossings and found cars speeding out of side streets and not giving way to cyclists. Sightlines are poor at some of the intersections as there are blind corners or high hedges and fences blocking visibility.

To address this safety issue and concern of the community, updates have been made to the proposed design. The designer was asked for advice to mitigate the risk of motorists speeding out of side streets and failing to give way to pedestrians and cyclists. The designer advised and included speed humps with a Watts profile on the approaches to O’Hea Street in the updated concept design. In addition, the implementation section of this report includes the suggestion to identify a new project to improve existing bike lane crossings on O’Hea Street.

Parking changes

The proposed two-way bike lane will be installed where there currently is a car parking lane on the northern side of O’Hea Street.

Parking surveys have been undertaken in October 2019 and December 2022. The results are presented in **Attachment 3**.

The December 2022 parking study was conducted between Derby Street and Sussex Street, and part of the adjacent side streets. The parking survey took place 24-hours per day between Thursday 1 December and Sunday 4 December 2022.

Parking occupancy peaked on Friday at noon, with 37 per cent of the available spaces occupied at this time. Thursday had the highest parking occupancy of the four days recorded, averaging 27 per cent occupancy, while 9:00 and 17:00 had the highest average occupancy throughout the day at 25 per cent.

When accounting for the loss of the northern parking lane on that section of O’Hea Street, the study still showed parking availability over 50 per cent in the study area. This indicates that residents should have no issue finding street parking within a block of their home.

Importantly, all properties have access to off-street parking which likely contributes to the finding of the low car parking occupancy on O’Hea Street. Site inspections have shown that parking in surround streets are low, as such, there may be capacity in the side streets for any displaced vehicles. Council officers therefore find it appropriate to remove the northern parking lane on O’Hea Street and build a bi-directional bike lane.

Tree protection

The road reserve between Derby Street and Irvine Street is narrower than the section between Derby Street and Sussex Street. To accommodate the same cross section and to retain car parking on the south side of O’Hea Street, part of the nature strip between Hatter Street and Irvine Street would need to be removed to create indented parking bays. To install 13 bays, 10 trees would need to be removed. An additional 2 trees will need to be cut at the Derby Street roundabout to allow for sufficient space to build a shared crossing on the northern leg of the roundabout. However, these trees (# 11 & 12) are new and low in amenity value as shown in Figure 4.

An arborist report was done in 2020 that determined which trees were in poor condition or of low value. Based on this assessment, the indented car parking bays were designed for this section. However, multiple years have now passed since this section was designed and in the meantime the trees that were assessed as low value have grown in size and value.

Council’s arborist has undertaken a new assessment in April 2024, shown in Figure 4. This includes 10 trees on the southern side of O’Hea Street between Hatter Street and Irvine Street (# 1-10) plus 2 trees proposed to be removed at the Derby Street roundabout (# 11-12). The total amenity valuation for all 12 trees is estimated at \$29,259.86.

Tree #	DBH (cm)	Amenity valuation (\$)
1	12	1,252.81
2	34	10,057.3
3	17	2,514.32
4	15	1,957.51
5	22	4,210.84
6	15	1,957.51
7	17	2,514.32
8	11	1,071.61
9	16	2,227.23
10	10	870.01
11 (roundabout)	6	313.2
12 (roundabout)	6	313.2
Total		29,259.86

Figure 4: Estimated Tree Amenity Valuation, April 2024

In August 2023, Council's Urban Forest Tree Policy came into effect. Section 2.2.2 states:

"Merri-bek City Council will investigate tree management options before considering tree removal wherever possible. There are circumstances, however, in which tree removal is an acceptable management option when required to protect human health and safety, to protect infrastructure, to facilitate approved development and infrastructure improvements, or to enhance and maintain a healthy urban forest."

If there is no option but to remove the 12 trees, the amenity value should be included into additional greening along O'Hea Street or alternative locations.

Given the trees along O'Hea Street are in good health and will continue to grow in amenity value, it is Council officer's recommendation to retain the 10 trees between Irvine Street and Hatter Street and therefore to not install 13 indented car parking bays. This will support Council with reaching its tree canopy cover goals and improve overall amenity and quality of O'Hea Street.

Seven new car parking spaces can be created between the driveway of property 257 O'Hea Street and the Derby Street roundabout, as shown on page 2 of **Attachment 1**. This means that Council can retain 10 trees with the loss of 6 car parking spaces.

The section with no on-street car parking proposed has a length of 220m. This means that if the worst affected resident requires access to on-street parking, they would have to walk 150 metres to available parking spaces on a side street.

The car parking assessment undertaken and outlined in the previous paragraph supports the protection of trees as on-street car parking has low occupancy on O'Hea Street and residents along this section of the street also have a driveway and/or private garage. It is therefore considered more beneficial and aligned with council policy and strategic objectives to retain the 10 trees along this area of O'Hea street at the expense of six on-street parking spaces.

Railway line crossing

Council has received some requests in recent years regarding the eastbound cycling crossing arrangement for the Upfield Railway Line on O’Hea Street. The concerns were echoed by the community engagement results, which will be further discussed in Section 4 and **Attachment 2**. Eastbound travelling cyclists feel unsafe crossing O’Hea Street twice and opt therefore to use the westbound bike lane on O’Hea Street.

As the section of road with the at-grade railway crossing is not the responsibility of Council, the Council officer’s recommendation is to write a letter to DTP and VicTrack to advocate for a safer railway crossing on the south side of O’Hea Street.

Further extension of bike lanes

On 12 June 2020, the State Government announced that they would provide painted bicycle lanes and other upgrades along Derby Street, Pascoe Vale, rather than protected bicycle lanes on Cumberland Road, as previously announced by the State Government in May 2018. This decision resulted in the Derby Street – Irvine Street section being taken out of scope of the project.

However, given recent works on the Glenroy to Coburg bike route project and strategic cycling connection aspirations outlined in Moving Around Merri-bek (2024), there is good reason to reinclude this section in the project scope. Figure 5 shows for example how the proposed bike lane on O’Hea Street could contribute to a safer cycling route for students at Strathmore High School. The extension would also provide a valuable connection to Irvine and York Street which provide good access through to Pascoe Vale South and the Moonee Ponds Creek trail to the south, as well as St Oliver Plunkett Primary School to the north of O’Hea Street.

In addition, the extension between Derby Street and Irvine Street is well-supported by the community and stakeholders (as can be read in **Attachment 2**) with 28 survey respondents requesting the extension to continue to Irvine Street or further west.

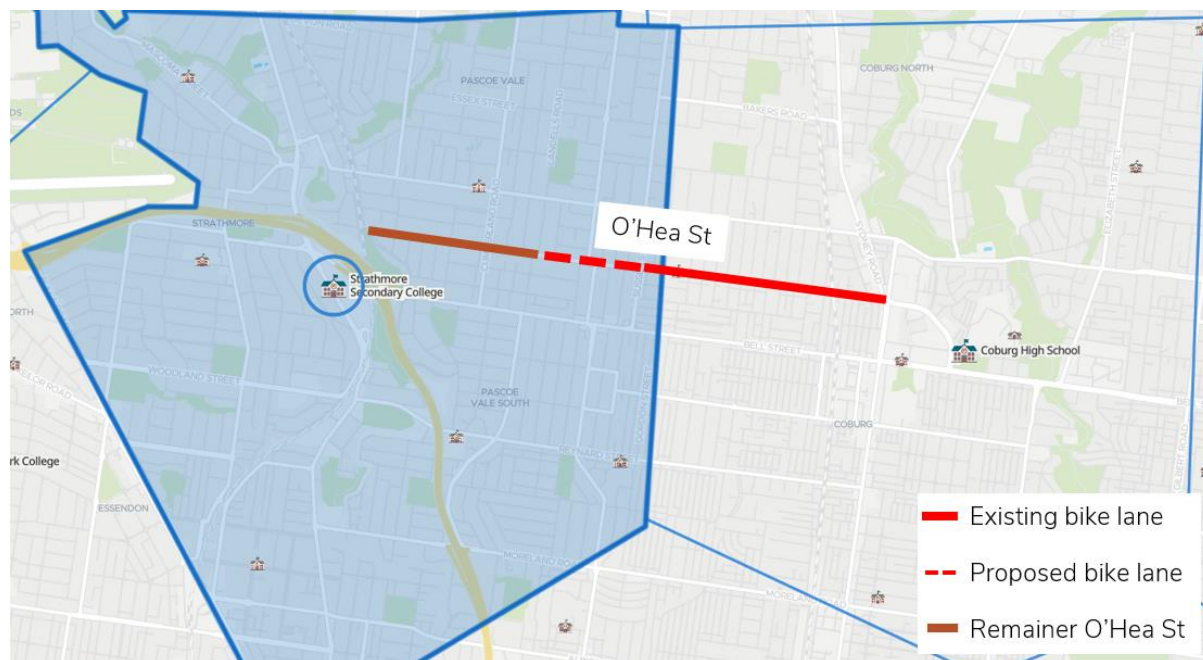


Figure 5: O’Hea Street secondary school zones

Sussex Street diagonal crossing

As the option assessment found it most favourable to extend the two-way bike lane on the north side of O’Hea Street, cyclists have to cross O’Hea Street at the Sussex Street intersection. Cycling movements are intended to move diagonally from the north-west corner to the south-east corner with a change to the traffic signal function and cycle. The designer investigated several options with SIDRA analysis for the Sussex Street/O’Hea Street intersection design and completed traffic counts on 31/3/2021 to inform this analysis. The results showed that the intersection has capacity to cater for a dedicated signal phase for cyclists.

The design proposes to do this via a diagonal crossing with a dedicated signal phase for cyclists. This proposal is currently being discussed with the DTP signals team.

Derby Street roundabout

The second large intersection cyclists will have to cross with the extension of the O’Hea Street bike lane, is the Derby Street roundabout. Cyclists and pedestrians will merge onto a shared path on the approaches to the northern leg of the roundabout. A conventional crossing with a refuge island has been proposed so cyclists and pedestrians can cross in two stages. This design requires the removal of 2 small trees as there is inadequate space to provide for a shared path and maintain the trees.

After the community consultation, the refuge island has been widened to 3.2 metres to accommodate more comfortably pedestrians and bicycles. In addition, handrails have been proposed to offer physical protection from vehicular traffic.

Initially, the manoeuvring bay of one of the properties located on the Derby Street roundabout was removed. However, after feedback from residents and an investigation of Council officers, the manoeuvring bay has been reinstated in the design. Due to lack of space, residents will have to use a small part of the shared path to manoeuvre out of their driveway, before entering the Derby Street roundabout.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Transport accounts for more than one third of an average household’s carbon emissions in Merri-bek, and almost one fifth of overall carbon gas emissions in Victoria and Australia. Extending the O’Hea Street bike lane in a manner that will support safe, efficient and accessible alternatives to private vehicle trips; will significantly contribute to reduced emissions and reducing the impact of global warming on future generations.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Key sections in the Charter that are relevant to this report are recognition and equality before the law (section 8), freedom of movement (section 12) and taking part in public life (section 18).

The majority of the actions proposed in this report contribute positively to freedom of movement by making walking and bike riding safer and more accessible options for moving around Merri-bek for more people.

Where treatments to improve the freedom of movement of people using some modes reduce the freedom of movement of other people, these impacts need to be weighed up and mitigated as much as possible. It is considered that the right to freedom of movement has not been unreasonably limited by the recommendations in this report.

4. Community consultation and engagement

This section summarises the community consultation and engagement undertaken for this project. **Attachment 2** outlines all the details of the community engagement process.

Community Engagement Methodology

The community consultation and engagement for this project lasted 30 days and took place in April 2024. On the Conversations Merri-bek project page, the community could view the proposed concept designs, read about the project, and fill out a survey with 9 questions. The survey asked people about their relationship with and use of O’Hea Street. It also asked people about their experience with the existing bike lanes, as well as their opinion on the proposed bike lane extension. The Merri-bek BUG, Bicycle Network, Coburg North Primary School and Coburg High School were informed about the project as stakeholders.

Council sent 190 letters to affected properties on O’Hea Street or within one block of the project area. Posters were displayed along O’Hea Street throughout April with brief project information and a QR-link to the Conversations Merri-bek project page.

Community Engagement Results

Council received 212 survey submissions, 3 emails, 3 phone calls and 1 stakeholder submission. Overall, the support of the proposed bike lane extension is strong, with 71 per cent of respondents stating that they feel ‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ about the proposed designs.

We also asked about the existing section of O’Hea Street, with 68 per cent of the respondents feel ‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ about the existing bike lanes. A total of 78 per cent of the respondents think the project will make it easier for people to ride bikes in the area.

The largest concern for the existing and proposed bike lanes is the lack of safety at cycling and pedestrian crossings on side streets as motorists fail to give way, with 33 per cent of all respondents mentions this as a concern. Less common points raised are the bike lane swapping sides at Sussex Street, safety of the Derby Street roundabout crossing, traffic volume and speed on O’Hea Street, loss of car parking, and tree retention.

People who indicated that they never ride a bike on O’Hea Street are more likely to feel negative about the existing and proposed bike lanes, with 18 per cent of the respondents feeling ‘negative’ or ‘very negative’ about the proposed bike lanes on O’Hea Street. People aged 54-66 feel more negative than average on the existing and proposed bike lane designs. This group also has the highest share of people never riding a bike.

Changes made based on community engagement

Based on the community engagement results and feedback received, Council officers have made multiple changes to the proposed concept designs.

Firstly, as the main concern of residents and users of O’Hea Street is the safety of bike lane crossings on both the existing and proposed side street intersections, advice has been sought from the designer to mitigate the risk of motorists speeding out of side streets and failing to give way to pedestrians and cyclists. Speed humps and signing on all approach side streets of O’Hea Street have been added to the design. In addition, the identification of a new project will be raised in the Implementation section to improve safety on existing bike lane crossings along O’Hea Street.

Secondly, a manoeuvring bay for a property at the Derby Street roundabout has been reinstated. Residents expressed their concern having to reverse out of their driveway into the roundabout. After Council officer’s review, it was agreed that this is not a safe manoeuvre for this location. Therefore, the design has been updated. The residents will have to use a small part of the shared path to manoeuvre out of their driveway due to the lack of space.

In addition, the refuge island on the northern leg of the Derby Street roundabout has been increased to 3.2 metres in width to accommodate for bike and pedestrians more comfortably. Handrails have been added to the notes to offer physical protection for pedestrians and cyclists. The safety of the crossing is a concern from the community.

Finally, Council officers will continue to work with DTP on a diagonal crossing at Sussex St intersection and communicate decision and reasoning to the community.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

A total of \$43,170 has been allocated this financial year to develop concept design, detailed design including schedule of quantities and a signal plan. \$20,000 has been applied as a carry forward into FY2024/25 to finish the detailed design and signal plan.

As per the Capital Works Program, there is \$492,000 nominated in the 2024/25 financial year and \$108,243 nominated in the 2025/26 financial year for new infrastructure to extend the bike lanes on O'Hea Street between Sussex Street and Irvine Street. Subject to the outcome of the schedule of quantities additional budget for construction might be sought. Officers will seek additional external funding as well if needed.

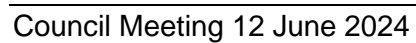
7. Implementation

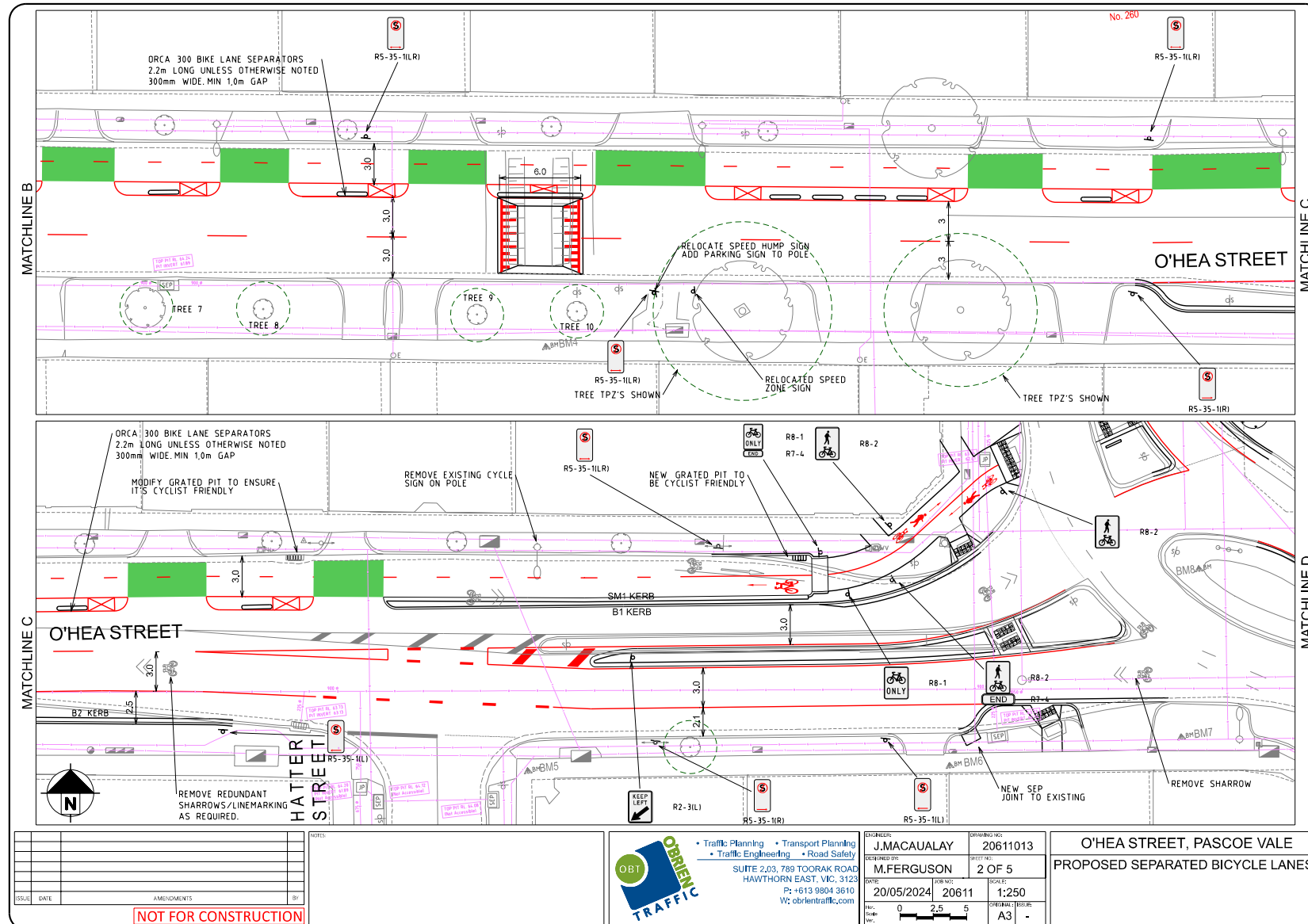
Subject to Council's decision, Council officers will:

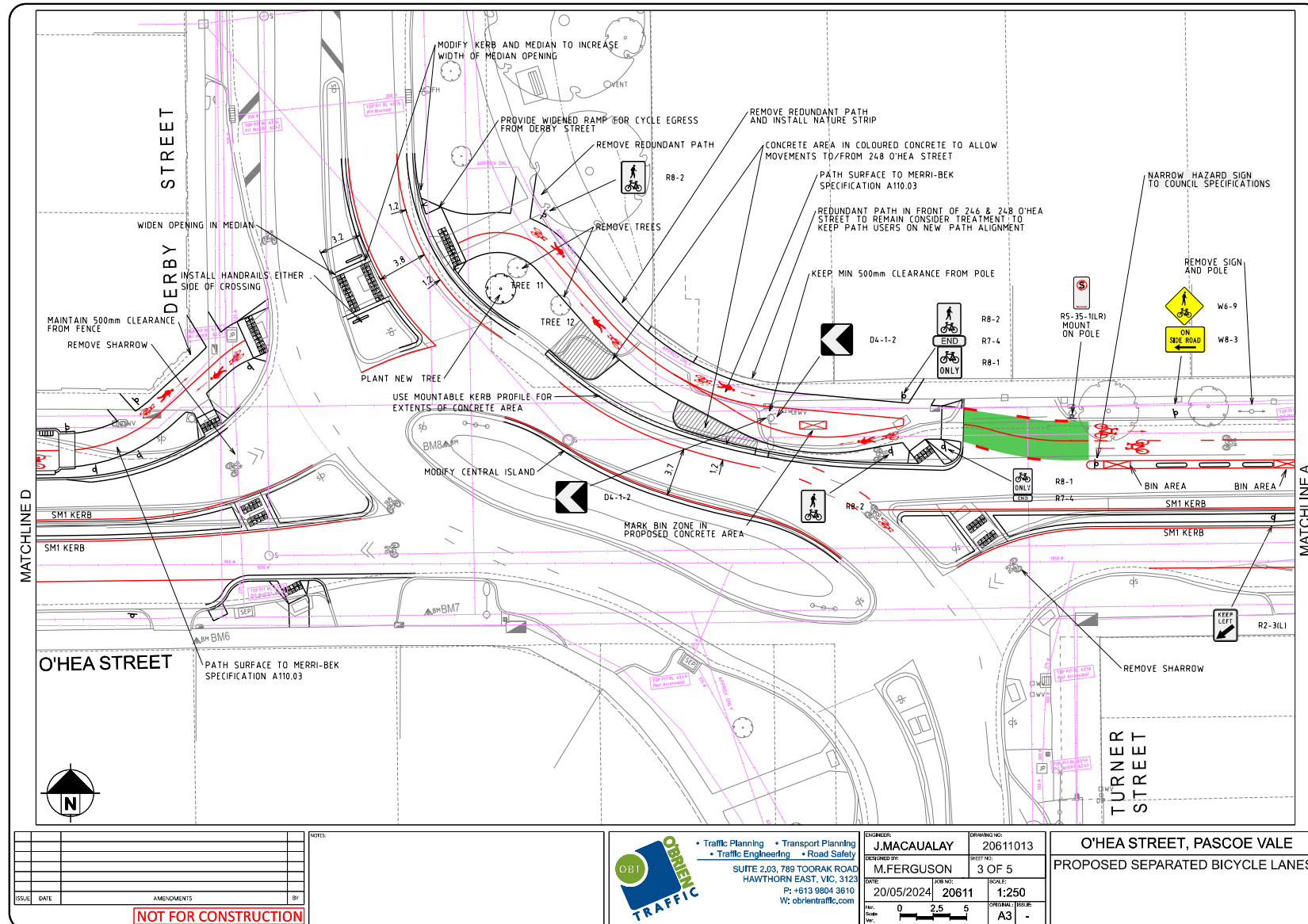
- Continue to work with DTP to obtain signal plan approval for the O'Hea Street/Sussex Street intersection
- Inform the community on the community consultation and engagement outcomes and explain design choices made where necessary
- Complete the detailed design development and request a schedule of quantities before December 2024
- Aim to start construction of the extension in the first half of 2025
- Add this project to Council's Streets for People Plan
- Identify a new project to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians on existing bike lane crossings on O'Hea Street
- Identify a new project to investigate to further extend the O'Hea Street bike lane west, to connect it to the Cumberland Road shops, the Moonee Ponds Creek and Strathmore Secondary College
- Investigate opportunity for additional tree planting and greening on O'Hea Street to offset the loss of two trees at the Derby Street roundabout

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------------|
| 1 ↓ | O'Hea Street bike lane extension - Concept Designs | D24/233661 |
| 2 ↓ | Community Engagement Report - O'Hea Street bike lane extension - May 2024 | D24/233780 |
| 3 ↓ | O'Hea Street Parking Survey - Sussex Street to Derby Street | D23/74228 |













Merri-bek
City Council

O'Hea Street bike lane extension Engagement Report

May 2024





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Acknowledgement of Country

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



Executive summary

Consultation Process

Merri-bek City Council consulted with the community from 1 April to 30 April 2024, seeking feedback on the O'Hea Street bike lane extension project.

We asked people to:

1. Share their thoughts on the proposed designs
2. Provide feedback on the existing bike lanes on O'Hea St

Platforms Used

- Online survey
- Direct mailing
- Physical advertising

Overview of Engagement



212 survey
responses



3 emails
received



3 phone calls
received



1 stakeholder
submission

What you told us



- 212 people provided feedback and participated in the online survey
- 71% of the respondents feel 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed designs
- 68% of the respondents feel 'positive' or 'very positive' about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street
- 78% of the respondents think the extension project will make it easier for people to ride bikes in the area
- The largest concern for the existing and proposed bike lanes is the lack of safety on cycling and pedestrian crossings on side streets as motorists fail to give way
- People who never ride a bike on O'Hea Street are more likely to feel negative about the existing and proposed bike lanes
- People aged 54-66 feel more negative than average on the existing and proposed bike lane designs. This group also has the highest share of people never riding a bike
- Smaller points of concern raised are the bike lane swapping sides at Sussex Street, safety of the Derby Street roundabout crossing, traffic volume and speed on O'Hea Street, loss of car parking and tree retention

Introduction

We're proposing an extension to the O'Hea Street bike lane and a new bike crossing to allow more people ride their bikes east-west in Merri-bek.

O'Hea Street in Coburg currently has a two-way off-road bike lane on the south side of the road between Sydney Road and Sussex St. The bike lane is approximately 1.5km in length and provides an important east-west connection for cyclists. The route is well-used by cyclists and forms an important backbone to Merri-bek's cycling network.

O'Hea Street also functions as an important walking and riding link for local schools. Coburg North Primary School is located on 180 O'Hea Street and students from Coburg High School use the existing bike lanes.

Figure 1 shows the proposed extension of the O'Hea Street bike lane between Sussex Street and Irvine Street. It fills in the missing link between the existing bike lanes and the already existing shared path. In addition, it offers safer crossing options for cyclists at the Sussex Street/O'Hea Street intersection and the Derby St/O'Hea Street roundabout.

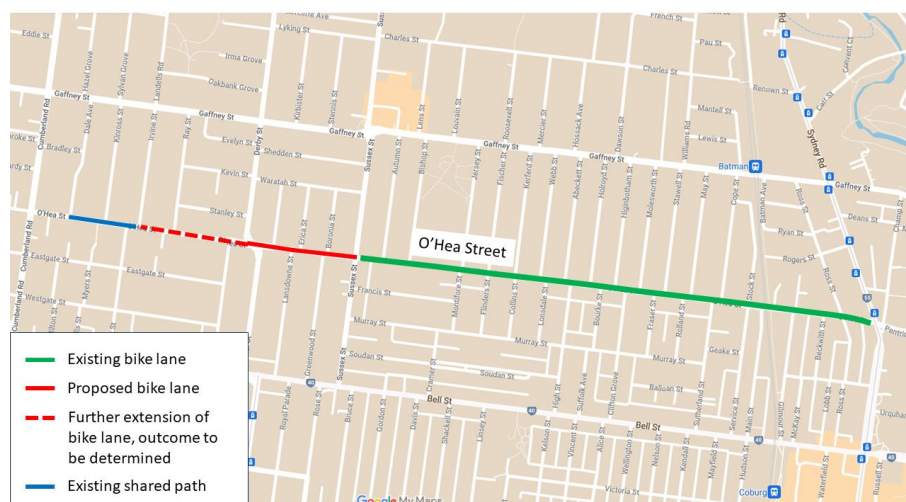


Figure 1: Proposed bike lane extension on O'Hea Street

In order to guide cyclists from the existing bike lanes on the south side of the street to the north side, a diagonal cyclist crossing with a dedicated signal phase is proposed for the Sussex Street/O'Hea Street intersection. Council officers are currently obtaining Department of Transport (DTP) advice regarding this treatment and will seek their approval when the signal design plan is completed. On the approaches of the diagonal crossing, the footpaths and bike lane merge to a shared path, as there is insufficient space to keep the two separated near the intersection lights.

A conventional shared crossing is proposed for the northern leg of the Derby Street



roundabout. Cars have priority and a refuge island allows pedestrians and cyclists to cross in two stages. Derby Street has recently been downgraded to a 40km/h road by DTP. Lack of space is the reason for the merge of the footpath and bike lane.

Streetscape changes

Figure 2 shows the proposed cross-section of O'Hea Street between Derby Street and Sussex Street. A 3-metre-wide bi-directional bike lane is proposed on the north side of O'Hea Street. This bike lane is protected with a 0.8m wide buffer with bike lane separators in them. A 2m clearance is maintained on each side of a driveway so residents can easily access and exit their driveways. Every property on the north side of O'Hea Street will have a dedicated bin zone marked up in the buffer zone where they can store their bins on collection day.

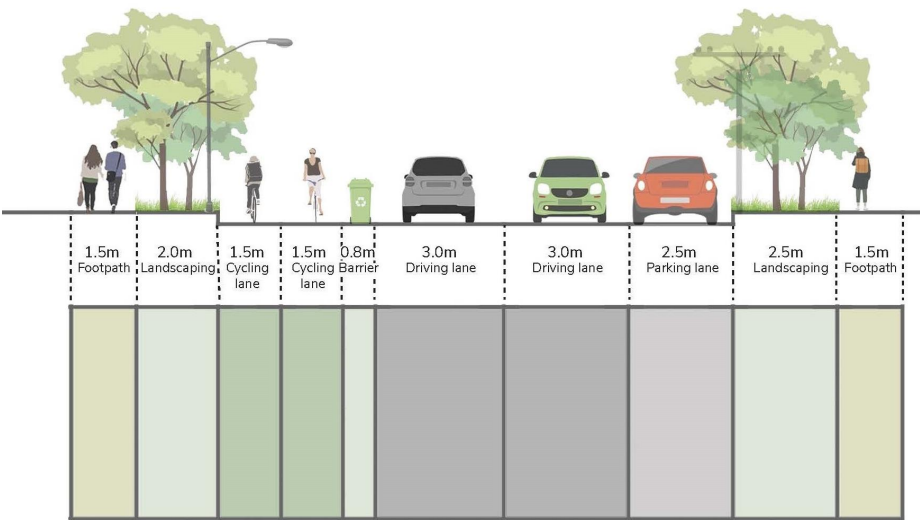


Figure 2: Cross-section Derby Street - Sussex Street

The cross section between Derby Street and Irvine Street looks slightly different as the road width becomes narrower further west. A 2.1m wide parking lane can be maintained on the south side of O'Hea Street between Derby Street and the first driveway west of Hatter Street. Between this driveway and Irvine Street there is a section of 220 metres where we are unable to maintain car parking due to the road width and well-established trees on the nature strip as shown in Figure 3. This trade-off will be further discussed in the Issues sections.

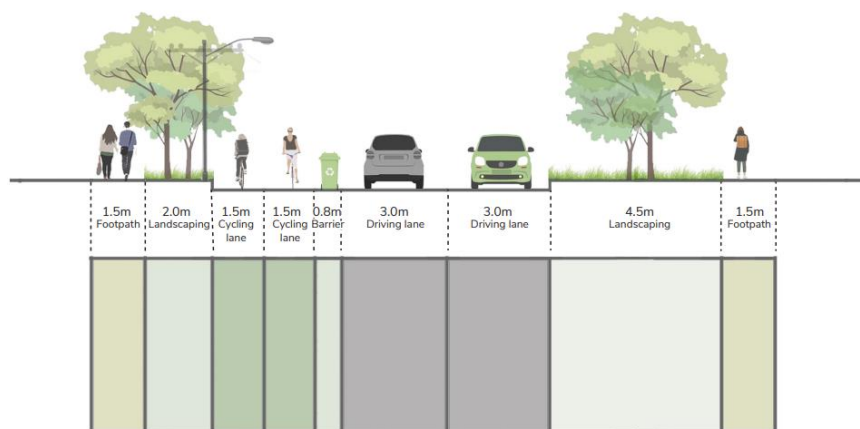


Figure 3: Cross section Irvine St - Hatter St

Why are we doing this?

Ever since the bike lane on O'Hea Street was installed in 2008, there has been talk about extending it further west. The project has been included in Council's 10-year Capital Works Bike Program.

During our engagement on the Moving Around Merri-bek transport strategy, we heard frequently from our community about the struggles people face when walking and riding to travel east-west in Merri-bek.

We also heard from children of school age, their parents and schools that safety riding to and from school is a major concern. The extension of the bike lane on O'Hea Street has been included in the strategy's Action Plan (2024).

This project is important as it helps open up east-west travel in Merri-bek for bike riders, offering a safe, relaxed alternate route to Bell Street, which is not suitable for riding bikes.

The lanes will also help students from Coburg North Primary School journey to and from school using active transport options.

Purpose of this engagement

- To gather community feedback and understand how the community feels about the project
- To understand how the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street are viewed
- To understand if the community would like to see any changes made to the proposed designs

Level of engagement

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation that depicts five levels of increasing influence that the public can have on an outcome or decision, the obligations of the organisation undertaking the consultation and



the techniques that can be used in the process. These levels include inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

This engagement used the 'consult' level, which means the public participation goal is to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. The role of the community is to contribute.

Community members had the opportunity to provide feedback on the existing and proposed bike lane designs for O'Hea Street. Based on this feedback, Council officers have made changes to the proposed bike lane design.



Engagement Activities

Merri-bek City Council used a variety of engagement and communications methods to gather feedback from the community on the proposed designs for O'Hea Street. These methods included:



Online survey

An online survey was made available to the public for a little over four weeks, from 1 April to 20 April 2024. The survey received 212 responses.



Letter to residents

A letter drop of 190 letters with information about the O'Hea Street bike lane extension project and a link to the online survey was distributed to residents and business owners on the affected part of O'Hea Street or within one block.



Emails

3,313 emails were sent to people that are registered with Conversations Merri-bek and who have expressed an interest in transport.



Physical advertising

Posters were displayed along O'Hea Street for the entire consultation period.



School engagement

The Conversations Merri-bek page and survey was shared on the Compass app of Coburg North Primary School and Coburg High School.



Stakeholder engagement

Merri-bek City Council reached out to several key stakeholder including Merri-bek BUG, Bicycle Network, Coburg North Primary School and Coburg High School. The Conversations Merri-bek webpage was shared via Coburg North Primary School app Compass.



Survey Results

A survey with 9 questions was provided to gather feedback on the proposed designs for O'Hea Street and to ask people about their current experience with the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street. This section will discuss the results of that survey.

This survey was open for the community from Monday 1 April to Tuesday 30 April 2024.

We asked people to review the draft concept designs. A survey was provided that asked them questions about their relationship to and use of O'Hea Street, their current experience with the existing bike lanes, and feedback on the proposed designs.

Question 1

The first question asked how people generally use O'Hea Street. Respondents could select one answer. Figure 4 shows that the majority of respondents (42%) use O'Hea Street to travel to other places. 26% of the respondents lives within 400m of O'Hea Street and 11% of the respondents lives on O'Hea Street. The same share of respondents (8,5%) visits O'Hea Street or attends or works at Coburg North Primary School. The same share of respondents (8,5%) visits O'Hea Street or attends or works at Coburg North Primary School.

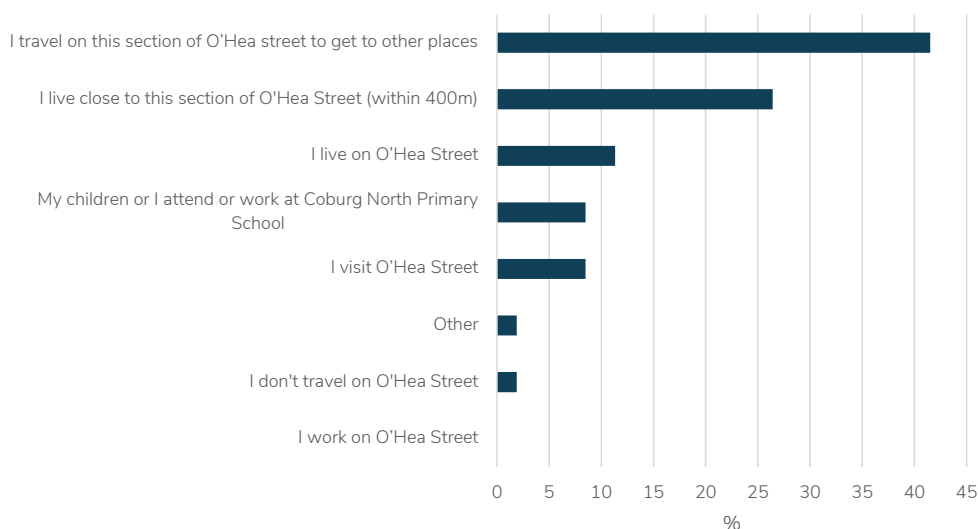


Figure 4: What best described you and your relation to this section of O'Hea Street?

Question 2

The second question asked where respondents usually travel on O'Hea Street to determine if there is a difference in support of the extension of the bike lanes east or west of Derby Street. Figure 5 shows only 5 respondents state they usually travel west of Derby Street. All 5 respondents are 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed bike lanes. Respondents only travelling east of Derby Street are also positive. Only 13% feels 'negative' or 'very negative' compared to 22% of respondents travelling both east and west of Derby Street. These results



show that there is no clear preference for the extension of the bike lanes east or west of Derby Street.

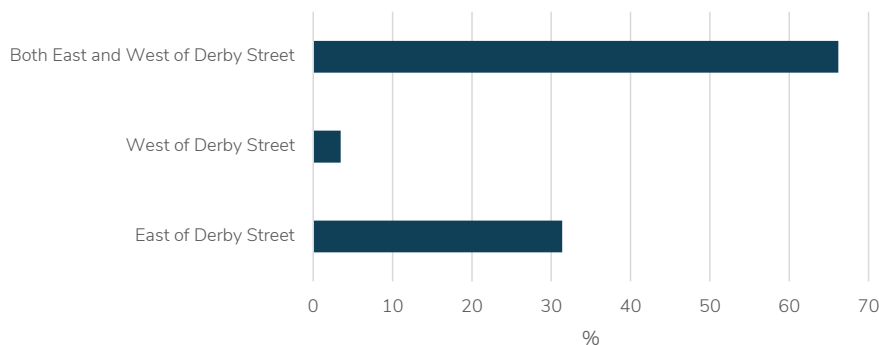


Figure 5: Where do you usually travel on O'Hea Street?

Question 3

The third question asked how people generally travel on O'Hea Street. People could select multiple answers, and these are displayed in Figure 6. Most people (76%) that filled out the survey use a bike, scooter or other wheeled transport mode to travel on O'Hea Street. The second most popular mode of transport on O'Hea Street is driving (61%) followed by walking (46%). Just over half the people (51%) that indicated they ride on O'Hea Street also drives on O'Hea Street as a driver or passenger. Only 12% of respondents reports to use the bus. Only 12% of respondents reports to use the bus.

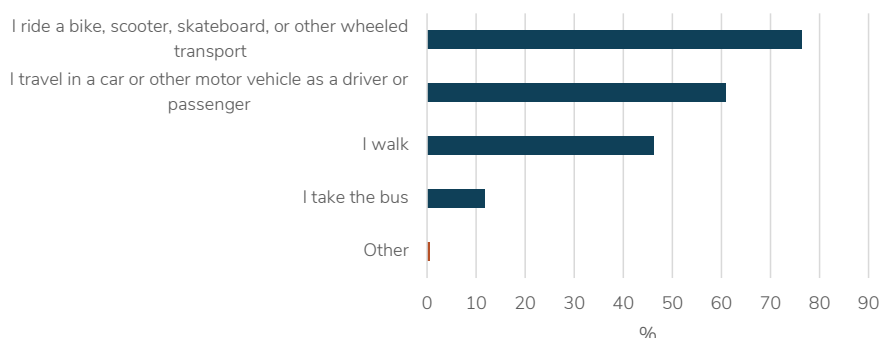


Figure 6: How do you generally travel on O'Hea Street? (select all that apply)

Question 4

Respondents were then asked if they ride, and how often they do so. As shown in Figure 7, most survey respondents use the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street every week (30%). 18% of the survey respondents do not use the existing bike lanes at all. The next chapter will



elaborate on how people with different riding patterns feel about the existing and proposed bike lane.

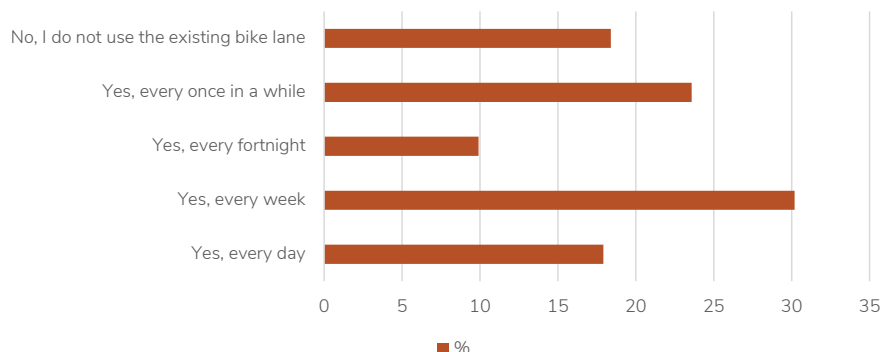


Figure 7: Do you use the existing bike lane on O'Hea Street? If so, how often?

Question 5

Respondents were then asked how they feel about the existing bike lane on O'Hea Street. 68% of the survey respondents felt 'positive' or 'very positive' about the existing bike lanes as shown in Figure 8. 20% of the survey respondents 'negative' or 'very negative' about the existing bike lanes.

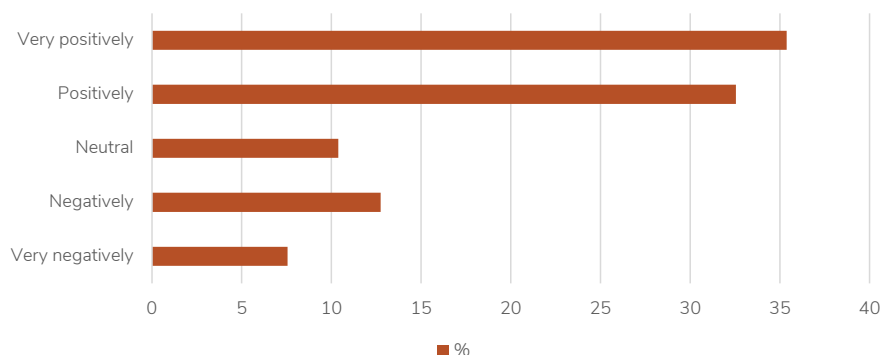


Figure 8: How do you feel about the existing bike lane on this section of O'Hea Street?

Question 6

Question 6 was an open-ended question asking "Is there anything you would like to say about the existing bike lane on O'Hea Street?". The comments are generally positive about the existing bike lanes. However, two main issues stand out:

1. Concerns regarding safety at crossings

70 survey respondents (33% of all respondents) mentioned they feel unsafe riding on the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street because drivers often fail to give way at side



streets. Some reported they had been in accidents or regularly experience near misses:

"We have lived in an O'Hea side street for 12 years, and in that time I've been run off my feet twice as a pedestrian by cars rushing out into O'Hea without giving way, and my wheel-chair using child has been nearly taken out several times too! It is not just the bike riders that are at grave risk!"

Some drivers also mentioned they find it hard to see cyclists as visibility is not always clear:

"As a resident I am always nervous driving onto O'hea street from a side street where the bike lanes are as visibility to see cyclists is poor."

Some solutions suggested by the respondents are more (effective) speed humps, more paint, stop signs, traffic mirrors and clearer sightlines.

2. Main Street/railway crossing concerns

Just before Service Street, cyclists travelling eastbound on O'Hea Street have to cross O'Hea Street to get to the north side in order to cross the railway line. After the railway line, cyclists willing to continue along the Upfield Shared Path southbound have to cross O'Hea Street again.

A total of 31 survey respondents mentions this intersection to be an issue. Respondents mention that they feel unsafe crossing O'Hea Street or that they have experiences or seen accidents happening.

Question 7

The next question asked how respondents feel about the proposed designs and the results are displayed in Figure 9. A total of 71% of the survey respondents stated they feel 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed designs for the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lanes. 18% of the survey respondents feels 'negative' or 'very negative' about the proposed designs. 8% is neutral and 3% is unsure.

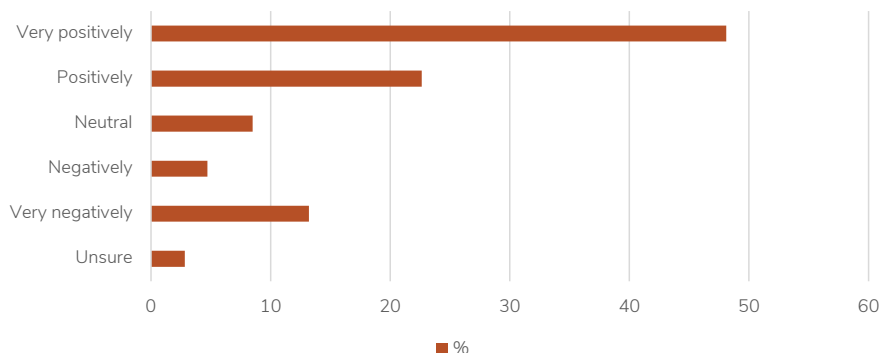


Figure 9: How do you feel about the proposed designs for the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lanes?



Question 8

Respondents were then asked if they think the proposed extension will make it easier for people to ride bikes in the area. Figure 10 shows that 78% of the respondents state they think the project will make it easier for people to ride in the area. Just under 15% did not think so and 7,5% was unsure.

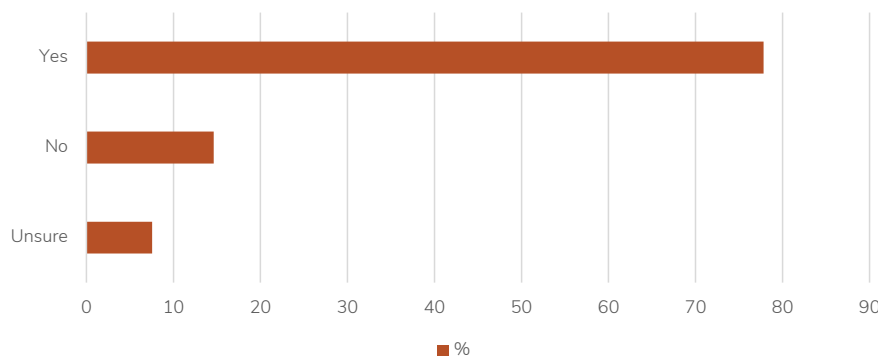


Figure 10: Do you think the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lanes will make it easier for people to ride bikes in this area?

Question 9

The final question is an open-ended question asking: "Is there anything you would like to add about the proposed designs for the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lanes?"

Most responses are about how the respondent thinks the proposed extension is going to make it safer to cycle on O'Hea Street. For example, someone wrote:

"I live in the section of the proposed works & I believe this will benefit the street. There are so many bikes riding by & cross unsafely in traffic to get to the south path. Also for the children riding to school."

28 people wrote that they supported the extension to Irvine Street. Several respondents wrote how they would like the bike lanes to continue further west than Irvine Street, to Cumberland Road or to the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail.

A point of concern raised is why the bike lane swaps from the south side of the street to the north side of O'Hea Street. Some respondents were unsure about the proposed scramble crossing at Sussex Street. Others expressed they would like the bike lanes to continue on the south side of O'Hea Street for convenience.

Another common concern raised is the same concern raised with the existing bike lanes in the answers on question 6. Respondents worry that motorists will not yield at side streets and speed into O'Hea Street without looking.

13 respondents were concerned or questioning what the impact is on on-street car parking. One respondent states: *"I am very concerned about parking for myself and my children. In my opinion it is unfair to remove parking for very bike riders along the street."*

In contrast, another respondent stated a preference to protect trees over car parking: *"Retention of high-quality trees with good useful life expectancy should be prioritised over"*



provision of parking spaces. In that section of O'Hea St, where all houses have driveways, the loss of a few parking spaces should not be a problem."

Other comments raised include concerns regarding the safety of the proposed crossing at Derby Street, the impact of the project on traffic flow on O'Hea Street and surrounding streets, suggestions for more trees and planting, concerns regarding high traffic volumes and speed on O'Hea Street and concerns about the proposed barrier between the bike lane and traffic lane not being protective enough.



Demographics

The survey was only accessible for people registered with Conversations Merri-bek. Most people have filled out demographic questions when setting up their account. This section explores differences in age, gender, and cultural and/or linguistic background to better understand any differences within each group compared to the overall results.

Age

Figure 11 displays the age groups of survey respondents. 165 people provided their age and 37 have been included in the graph as 'not provided'. Most people surveyed were aged 30-54.

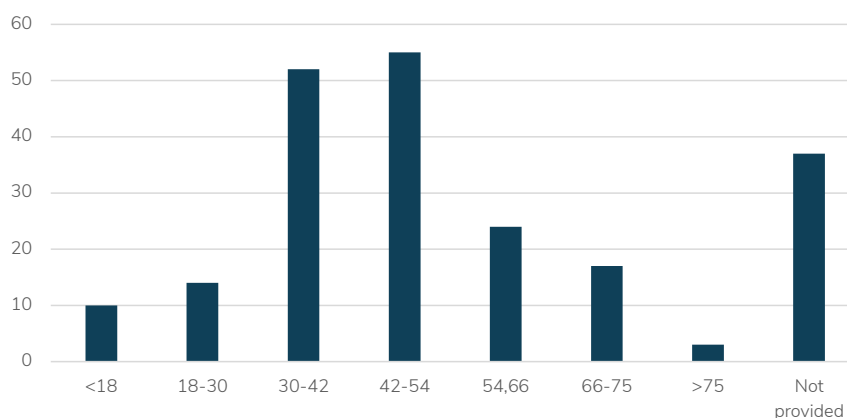


Figure 11: What is your age group?

Age <18:

- Are more likely to use the bus on O'Hea Street
- 8 out of 10 respondents from this age group ride on O'Hea Street
- 7 out of 10 respondents from this age group feel 'positive' or 'very positive' about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street
- 9 out of 10 respondents from this age group feel 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed bike lane designs

Age 18-30:

- Not one respondent from this age group uses the bus on O'Hea Street
- This age group feels very positive about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street (92% feels 'positive' or 'very positive')
- This age group feels more positive than average about the proposed bike lane designs

Age 30-42:

- Only 10% of this age group feels 'negative' or 'very negative' about the existing bike lanes, compared to an average of 18%



- This age group feels slightly more positive than average about the proposed bike lane designs

Age 42-54:

- This age group has the largest share of people driving (73%) while also having a large share of people riding (82%). This age group also rides most frequent
- This age group is generally positive about the existing bike lanes (65%) and proposed bike lanes (68%)

Age 54-66:

- This age group is most likely to never ride on O'Hea Street (26%)
- This age group feels most negative about the existing bike lanes (39% feels 'negative' or 'very negative'). 57% feels 'positive' or 'very positive' about the existing bike lanes.
- This age group also tends to be slightly more negative about the proposed bike lane designs (22% feels 'negative' or 'very negative' compared to 18% on average)

Age 66-75:

- Respondents aged 66-75 feel positive about the existing bike lanes (72%)
- People in this age group (18 total) feel more positive or very positive about the proposed bike lane designs than the average (89% compared to 71%)

Age 75+:

- All people aged 75 or older (3 in total) indicate they use a form of wheeled transport on O'Hea Street
- All three people feel 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed bike lane designs

Age Not Provided:

- This group tends to be more negative about the existing bike lanes (30%), but 62% feels 'positive' or 'very positive' about them
- This group tends to be more negative about the proposed bike lane designs. 27% feels 'negative' or 'very negative' compared to the 18% average



Gender

Another standard question that people get asked when they register with Conversations Merri-bek is what gender the respondent identifies as. Figure 12 highlights the responses provided from the online survey.

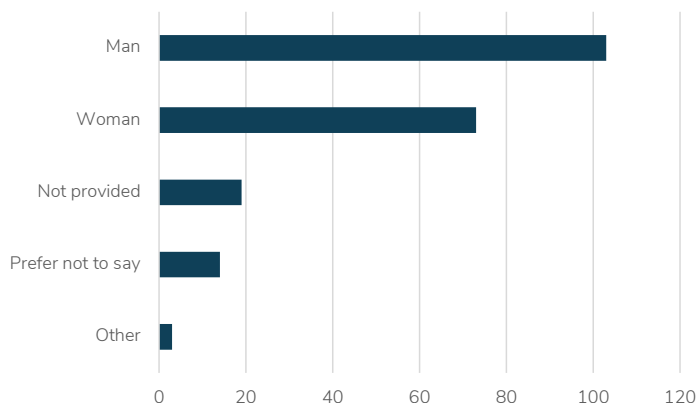


Figure 12: How do you describe your gender?

Men (103 total):

- 74% of men surveyed feels 'positive' or 'very positive' about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street
- 75% of men surveyed feels 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed bike lanes on O'Hea Street
- 83% of all male respondents use O'Hea Street to ride (or use another form of wheeled transport), 53% (also) drives, 38% (also) walks and 10% (also) takes the bus

Women (73 total):

- Women surveyed are slightly less positive about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street than men, 59% feels 'positive' or 'very positive' about the existing bike lanes.
- Women surveyed are more positive about the proposed bike lane designs; 71% feels 'positive' or 'very positive'
- Female respondents are more likely to drive on O'Hea Street (74%), 66% (also) rides on O'Hea Street, 55% (also) walks and 16% (also) takes the bus

Prefer Not to Say or Not Provided (33 total):

- People that chose 'prefer not to say' or did not provide their gender identity are most negative about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street. 30% feels 'negative' or 'very negative' about the existing bike lanes
- People that chose 'prefer not to say' or did not provide their gender identity are more positive about the proposed designs. 54% is 'positive' or 'very positive' and 27% is 'negative' or 'very negative'



- 82% of this group uses O'Hea Street to ride, 58% (also) drives and 52% (also) walks on O'Hea Street. Bus usage was low for this group with 6%

Other (non-binary, genderfluid) (3 total):

- All non-binary and genderfluid respondents are 'positive' or 'very positive' about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street
- All non-binary and genderfluid respondents use O'Hea Street to ride, 2 (also) walk on O'Hea Street and 1 (also) drives as a driver or passenger

User groups

The survey asked a question about what the respondent's relationship is to O'Hea Street. This gives the opportunity to see if for example people living on O'Hea Street feel different about the proposed designs than people travelling on the street.

Figure 13 shows that people living on O'Hea Street feel much more negative about the project than people travelling, visiting or going to school on O'Hea Street. Respondents stating "I do not use O'Hea Street" were excluded as respondent numbers were too low to include in the analysis.

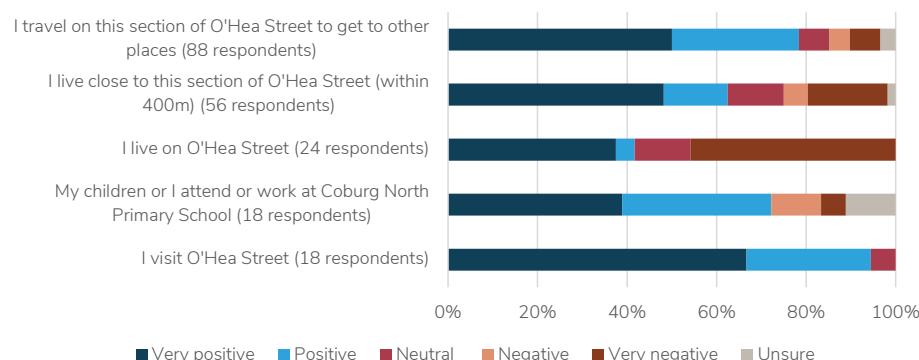


Figure 13: How do you feel about the proposed bike lane designs?

The results are slightly different when respondents were asked how they feel about the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street. Respondents living on O'Hea Street feel much more positive about the existing bike lanes than about the proposed bike lanes as shown in Figure 14. In contrast, people travelling to or attending Coburg North Primary School were more negative about the existing bike lanes and more positive about the proposed bike lanes.

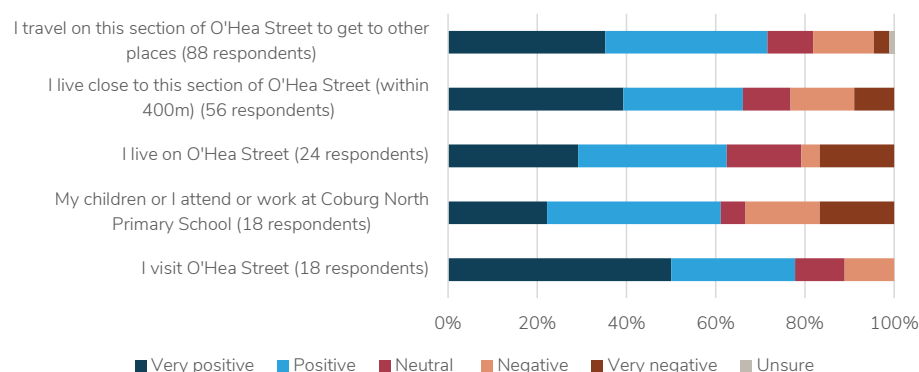


Figure 14: How do you feel about the existing bike lane designs?

Type of user

One of the questions in the survey asked how people travel on O'Hea Street. Respondents could select multiple modes of transport. Figure 15 presents how people feel about the proposed bike lane designs versus how they travel on O'Hea Street. If someone selected multiple modes, their view is included in all the modes selected. People who use the bus on O'Hea Street (25 respondents) are most likely to feel very negative about the bike lane extension (44%). More than half of the people of all other modes chosen were very positive or positive about the proposed extension.

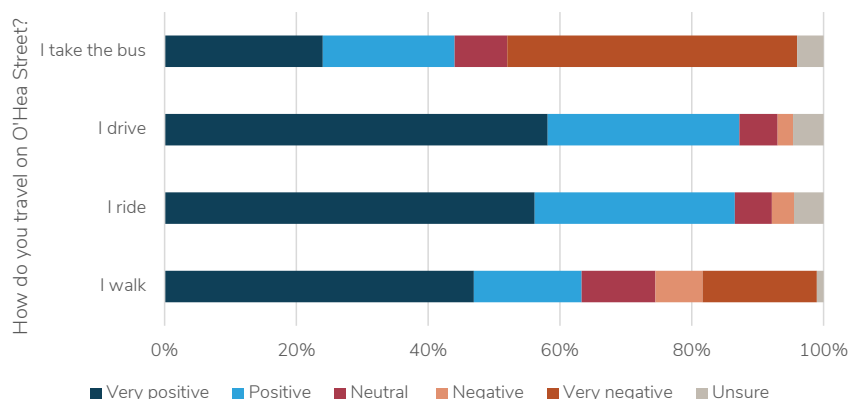


Figure 15: How do you feel about the proposed bike lane designs?

Question 4 of the survey asked if and if so, how often people ride on the existing bike lanes on O'Hea Street. This allows us to find out if people that do not ride a bike, view the project different compared to people that ride often or every once in a while.

Figure 16 shows how respondents feel about the proposed bike lane designs compared to if and if so, how often they ride on O'Hea Street. Respondents that never ride are clearly more negative than people that do ride. 54% of respondents that never ride feel 'negative' or 'very negative' about the proposed bike lane design.

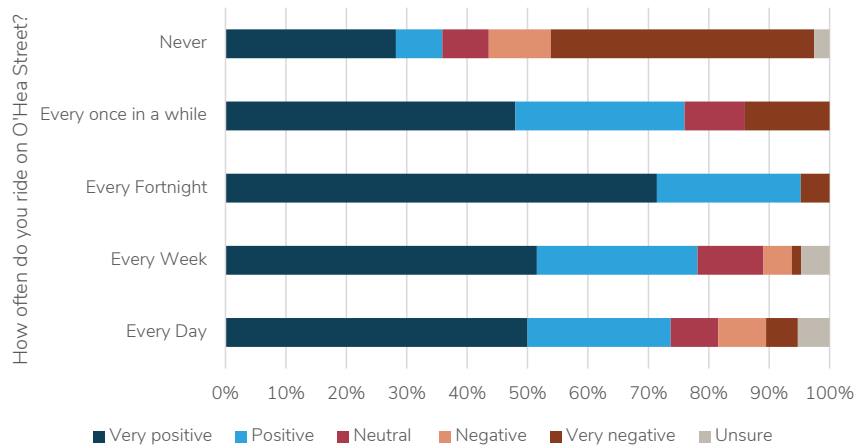


Figure 16: How do you feel about the proposed bike lane designs?

In contrast, respondents that never ride a bike are less negative about the existing bike lanes. 26% feels 'negative' or 'very negative' about these as shown in Figure 17. A much larger portion feels 'Neutral' about the existing bike lanes (26%). People that do ride, feel slightly more negative about the existing bike lanes than they do about the proposed bike lane designs. This is especially the case for respondents that report to ride more frequent (every day or every week). Respondents that ride less often (every fortnight or every once in a while) are generally very positive about the existing and proposed bike lanes, but some are slightly more negative about the proposed designs.

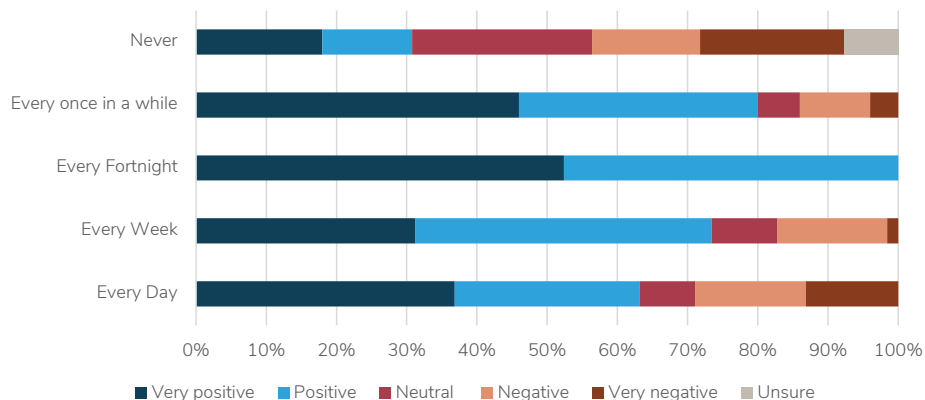


Figure 17: How do you feel about the existing bike lane designs?



Stakeholder Engagement

Merri-bek City Council officers have informed several stakeholders about this project including Merri-Bek Bicycle User Group (BUG), Bicycle Network, Coburg North Primary School and Coburg High School. This section will discuss the key themes and recommendations that emerge.

Extension support

Stakeholders welcome the proposed extension of the bike lanes on O'Hea Street and support the extension to Irvine Street. A stakeholder suggested further west extension of Irvine Street to connect to shops on Cumberland Road.

Intersection treatments

The stakeholders echo the concerns raised by survey respondents. They report motorists failing to give way at intersections of side roads where the bike lane crosses. This is reported as a wider issue within Merri-bek and a stakeholder states that in other areas of Merri-bek treatments to avoid this have been implemented successfully. One of the school principals made Council aware of 2 accidents in the past month where students were involved in on O'Hea Street. In both instances, a motorist failed to give way to the student on the bike when driving out of a side street onto O'Hea Street. As the students did not require hospitalization, these accidents do not get recorded in the Victorian Crash Statistics.

A countdown light was suggested to be added at the proposed scramble crossing at Sussex Street. This has been raised with DTP. The Derby Street roundabout is perceived as a dangerous intersection and that stakeholders would like further improvement to this in the future, as the proposal does not significantly improve the safety of the crossing. Finally, there is a request to include more planting and trees of which the entire community would benefit.

Railway crossing

Another issue that was also raised in the survey is the crossing of the Upfield Railway line. First, the Main Street/O'Hea Street intersection and railway crossing is deemed unsafe by the and a stakeholder states to have more than one report of a Coburg High School student being hit by a car at this intersection. Driver behaviour at this intersection should be addressed to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.



Discussions

This section provides an analysis of the survey results, written submissions and phone calls, providing insights into the community's sentiments regarding the O'Hea Street bike lane extension project. Overall, the community has shown a positive response, with 71% expressing direct support for the proposed design and an additional 11% neutral or unsure.

Key Themes and Concerns

The community consultation reveals key concerns and ideas, shedding light on the community's perspectives and needs for O'Hea Street.

Proposed extension

As mentioned above, the support of the project is high with 71% of the respondents feeling 'positive' or 'very positive' about the proposed extension. Some respondents asked for an even further extension of the bike lanes west of Irvine Street. There was no clear difference in people travelling east or west of Derby Street and their feelings about the proposed bike lanes. There was a clear difference in people that never ride on O'Hea Street and people that do so sometimes or often. 54% of respondents that report to never ride a bike feel 'negative' or 'very negative' about the proposed bike lanes.

Based on these results, Council officers' recommendation is to extend the O'Hea Street bike lane and include the Derby St-Irvine St section in this extension. As some survey respondents and stakeholders asked for a further extension west of Irvine Street, Council officers recommend to look into further extending the route once this project has been completed.

Bike lane crossings

The biggest concern of the community is safety of the bike lane crossings of the existing bike lanes as well as the proposed bike lane extension. 33% of all survey respondents mentions safety at the existing crossings as a concern in the open-ended question. According to the respondents, motorists do not give way to pedestrians and cyclists, and they speed coming out of side streets, despite some speed cushions.

In response to this concern, the designer has been asked for advice to mitigate the risk of motorists failing to give way to cyclists and pedestrians. Speed humps have been added to the proposed designs on the approach side of O'Hea Street on side streets. Additional signage has been added as well. In addition, Council officers recommend to identify a new project to upgrade the existing bike lane crossing and build additional safety measures.

Railway crossing

The second concern that stood out regarding the existing bike lane on O'Hea Street is the crossing arrangement for eastbound cyclists near the Upfield railway line. Many respondents mention that it is a very inconvenient arrangement and some mention that it is unsafe to cross a busy street twice. Figure 18 is an aerial image that explains the alignment.



Figure 18: Crossing arrangement eastbound travelling cyclists on O'Hea St

As a result, many cyclists continue on the south side of O'Hea Street, crossing at Main Street. One respondent says:

"The intersection at the train line is inadequate and not safe for cyclists. The need to change to the north when heading east is unsuitable and very unsafe, as the splitter 'safety' island is far too small to safely accommodate even one bike. This 'requirement' prioritises vehicles over bikes, while a better option would be to allow both east and west headed cyclists to stay on the south of the street. I appreciate the train line/Metro may make it difficult for Council, but you only need to come to look at the intersection to realise that what's required is not feasible."

One of the Council officer's recommendations is to advocate for a safer crossing on the south side of the O'Hea Street railway crossing with Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), VictTrack and DTP.

Sussex Street intersection

Regarding the proposed bike lane extension, some people raised questions regarding the layout and need for a diagonal crossing at Sussex Street. Council officers will clearly communicate back to the community why this diagonal crossing has been proposed when they update the community on the engagement outcomes of this project. The design of this intersection and signal phase is still a work in progress with DTP.

Derby Street roundabout

The Derby Street roundabout was also mentioned as a concern for safety. The proposed design does not give priority to pedestrians and cyclists. As a response to this concern, the designer has updated the design to widen the refuge island so bikes and pedestrians can store more comfortably. A note has been added to state that handrailing should be installed on both sides of the refuge island, to give pedestrians and cyclists greater physical protection from traffic.



In addition, residents were concerned about the removal of a manoeuvring bay at the Derby Street roundabout in order to create space for the shared path. The design has been updated to reinstall the manoeuvring bay for as much as possible to allow for a safer reverse out of a driveway on the Derby Street roundabout. The bike lane has been pushed up closer to the property line to allow for more space.

Other concerns

Other concerns mentioned in response to the proposed design were loss of car parking (mentioned by 13 people), high volume and speed of cars on O'Hea Street. Six respondents asked for tree retention, additional planting, and tree canopy to provide shade over the bike lanes.

While there is some concern about the loss of car parking, the design has been updated to protect 10 trees between Derby Street and Irvine Street.



Appendix

Survey Questions

1: What best describes you and your relation to this section of O'Hea Street?

- I live on O'Hea Street
- I live close to this section of O'Hea Street (within 400m)
- I visit O'Hea Street
- My children or I attend or work at Coburg North Primary School
- I work on O'Hea Street
- I travel on this section of O'Hea street to get to other places
- I don't travel on O'Hea Street
- Other

2: Where do you usually travel on O'Hea Street?

- East of Derby Street
- West of Derby Street
- Both East and West of Derby Street

3: How do you generally travel on O'Hea Street? (select all that apply)

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

4: Do you use the existing bike lane on O'Hea Street? If so, how often?

- Yes, every day
- Yes, every week
- Yes, every fortnight
- Yes, every once in a while
- No, I do not use the existing bike lane

5: How do you feel about the existing bike lane on this section of O'Hea Street?

- Very positively
- Positively
- Neutral
- Negatively
- Very negatively
- Unsure

6: Is there anything you would like to say about the existing bike lane on O'Hea Street?

Open text box

7: How do you feel about the proposed designs for the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lanes?



- Very positively
- Positively
- Neutral
- Negatively
- Very negatively
- Unsure

8: Do you think the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lanes will make it easier for people to ride bikes in this area?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

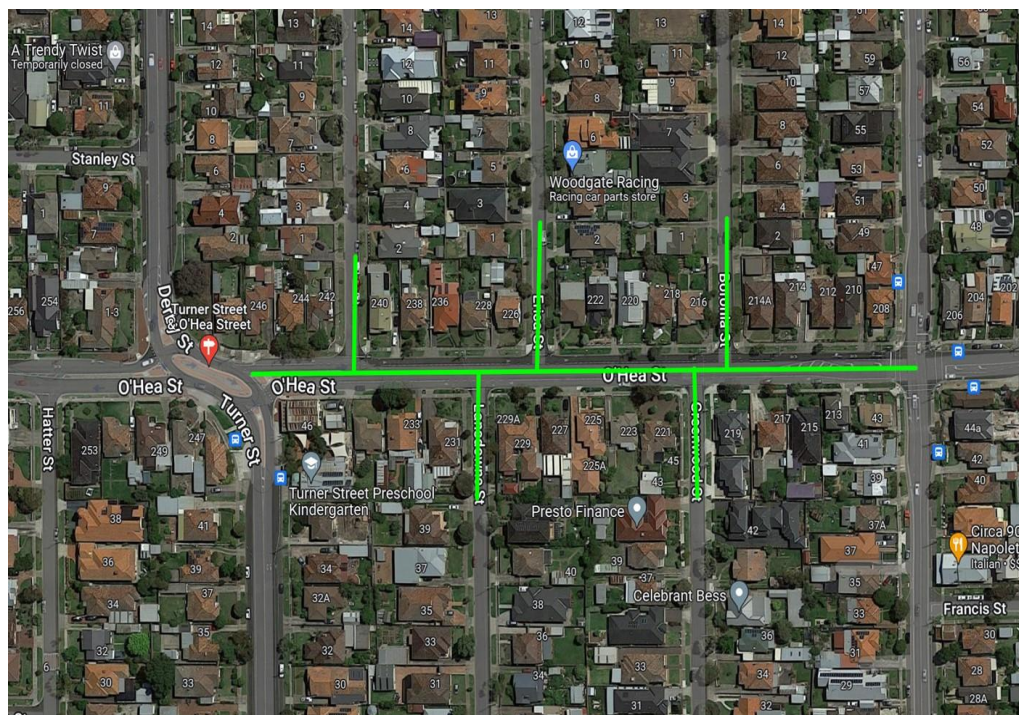
9: Is there anything you would like to add about the proposed designs for the extension of the O'Hea Street bike lanes?

Open text box

O'Hea Street and Surrounding Area Parking Survey

Ref: D23/74228

Council performed a parking survey along O'Hea Street, between Sussex Street and Derby Street, and the adjacent side streets to assess the availability of street parking in the area. The parking survey took place 24-hours per day between Thursday 1 December and Sunday 4 December 2022. The proposed separated bicycle lanes on O'Hea Street will remove approximately 15 parking spaces in the area, so it is a priority that street parking remains available for those who need it. **Figure 1** shows the limits of the study.

Figure 1: Map of Parking Survey Limits

The results of the parking survey are displayed in **Table 1**. Parking occupancy peaked on Friday at noon, however only 37% of the available spaces were occupied at this time. Thursday had the highest parking occupancy of the four days recorded, averaging 27% occupancy, while 9:00 and 17:00 had the highest average occupancy throughout the day at 25%.

Table 1: O'Hea Street Parking Occupancy – Existing Conditions

O’Hea Street Parking Occupancy – Existing Conditions																									
Date	0:00	1:00	2:00	3:00	4:00	5:00	6:00	7:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00	23:00	Average
Thursday 01/12/22	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	21	28	32	32	33	33	32	33	32	31	32	33	28	27	27	23	23	27
Friday 02/12/22	25	25	25	25	24	24	24	25	25	33	35	36	37	36	32	32	35	33	23	20	17	12	15	13	26
Saturday 03/12/22	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	17	17	19	15	16	17	15	20	17	20	20	20	19	20	19	19	17	18
Sunday 04/12/22	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	17	12	12	9	11	12	12	13	16	16	13	16	15	17	19	16
Average	21	21	21	21	20	20	20	21	23	25	23	24	24	23	24	23	25	25	23	20	20	18	18	18	

*Values shown as a percentage of parking spaces occupied

Table 2 shows the proposed parking occupancy following the construction of the separated bicycle lanes on O'Hea Street (i.e. reducing the number of available spaces from 75 to 60). Even during the peak of the study, parking availability remains over 50% in the study area, indicating that residents should have no issue finding street parking within a block of their home.

Table 2: O'Hea Street Parking Occupancy – Proposed Conditions

O’Hea Street Parking Occupancy – Proposed Conditions																									
Date	0:00	1:00	2:00	3:00	4:00	5:00	6:00	7:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00	23:00	Average
Thursday 01/12/22	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	27	35	40	40	42	42	40	42	40	38	40	42	35	33	33	28	28	33
Friday 02/12/22	32	32	32	32	30	30	30	32	32	42	43	45	47	45	40	40	43	42	28	25	22	15	18	17	33
Saturday 03/12/22	22	22	22	22	22	22	20	22	22	23	18	20	22	18	25	22	25	25	25	23	25	23	23	22	22
Sunday 04/12/22	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	22	15	15	12	13	15	15	17	20	20	17	20	18	22	23	20
Average	26	26	26	26	25	25	25	26	28	32	29	30	30	29	30	29	31	32	29	25	25	23	23	23	

*Values shown as a percentage of parking spaces occupied

Figures 2-5 show the results of the study by day of the week in graphical form.

Figure 2 – Thursday, 1 December 2022

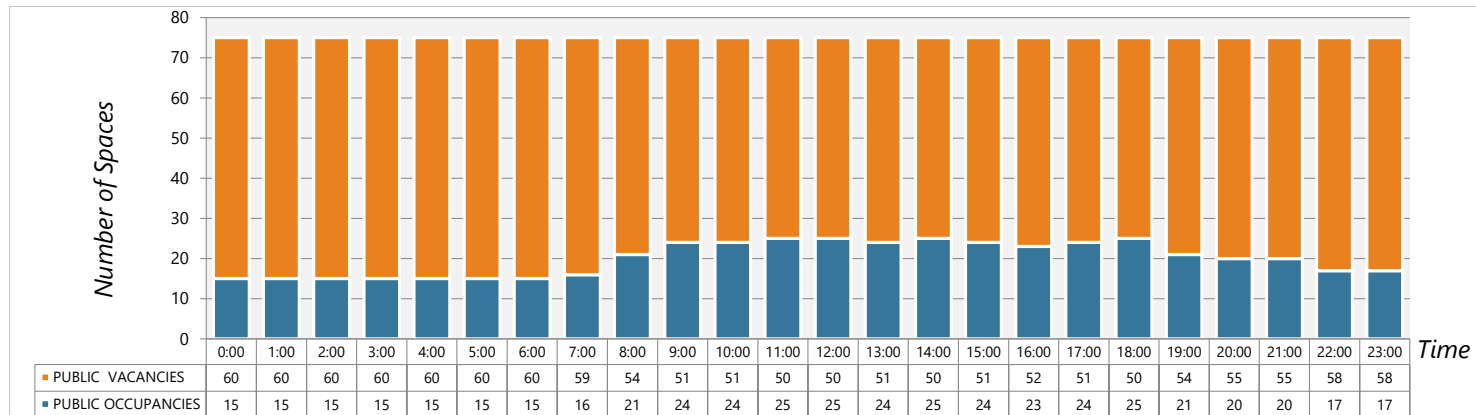


Figure 3 – Friday, 2 December 2022

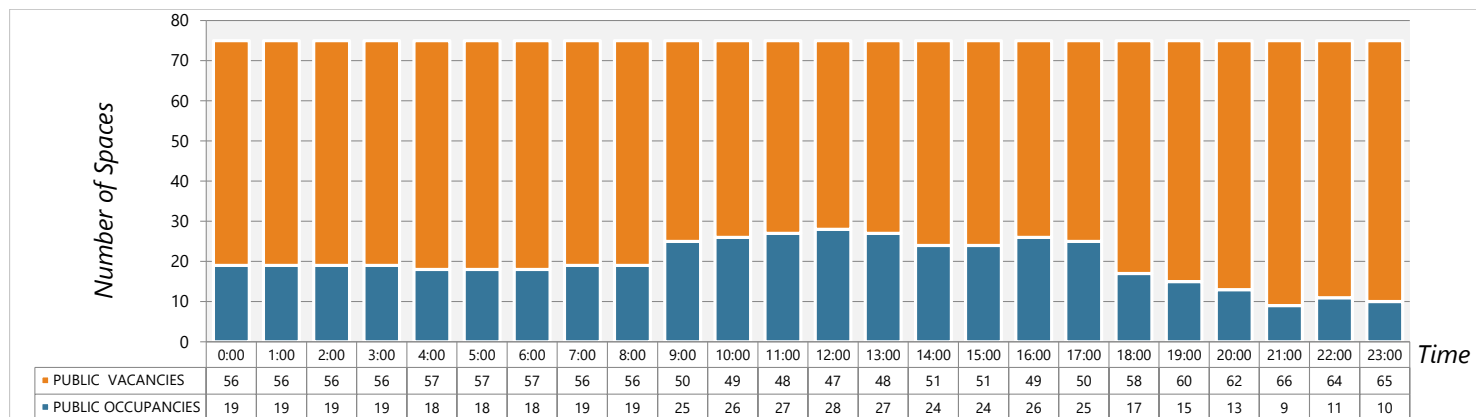


Figure 4 – Saturday, 3 December 2022

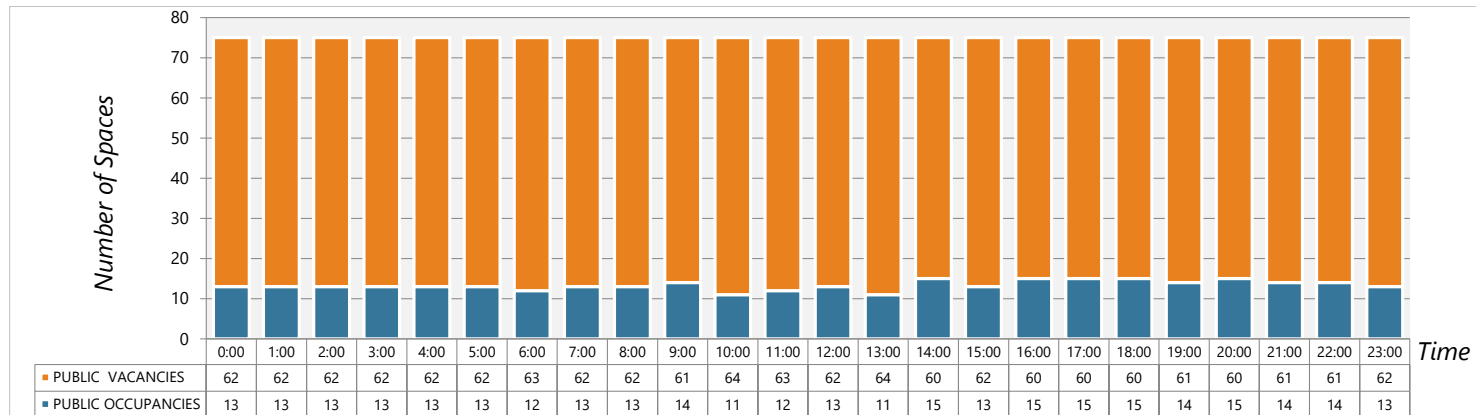
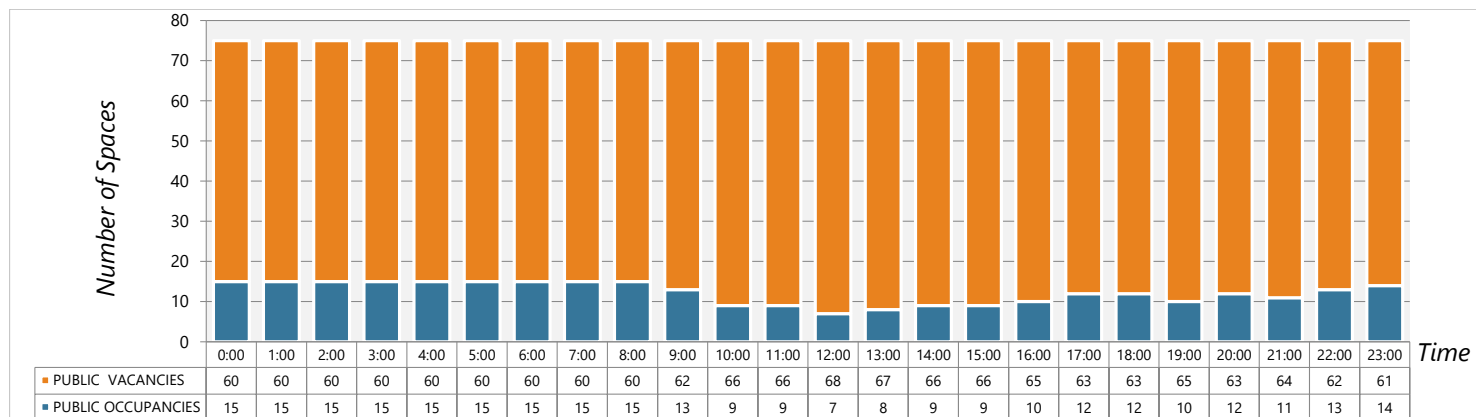


Figure 5 – Sunday, 4 December 2022



An additional parking survey was performed along O'Hea Street (between Sussex Street and Derby Street) and the adjacent side streets over the span of three days in October 2019. The results of this study, shown in **Table 3**, reinforce the data collected in December 2022, indicating that sufficient street parking is available on O'Hea Street.

Table 3: O'Hea Street Parking Occupancy – October 2019 Survey

O'Hea Street Parking Occupancy – October 2019 Survey																		
Date	6:00	7:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00	Average
Thursday 10/10/19	33	33	33	26	22	37	37	37	30	30	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	32
Friday 11/10/19	33	33	33	33	30	41	44	41	33	33	30	30	30	37	37	33	33	34
Saturday 12/10/19	30	30	26	26	22	30	33	30	33	19	15	19	19	26	26	26	20	26
Average	32	32	31	28	28	36	38	36	22	27	26	27	27	32	32	31	29	

*Values shown as a percentage of parking spaces occupied

7.4 GLENROY TO COBURG BIKE ROUTE SURVEY OUTCOME

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the community-preferred current route (via Kent Road and Derby Street) as the Glenroy to Coburg bike route, without any new infrastructure commitments.
2. Confirms the use of the 2024/25 Kent Road trial outcome budget to:
 - a) resurface Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road;
 - b) install a raised zebra pedestrian crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre; and if possible with the funding available; and
 - c) install lighting in the KW Joyce Reserve shared user path linking Northumberland Road to Kent Road to make it more practical for bike riders at night.
3. Writes to Department of Transport and Planning in response to community feedback to request safe cycling infrastructure along Pascoe Street and Boundary Road to support east west bike movements along the state's Strategic Cycling Corridor.
4. Upgrades wayfinding signage and linemarking to support the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route as it provides an important local connection to many destinations including the Pascoe Vale Community Centre.
5. Continues to monitor speed of vehicles and compliance with the new 40 km/h limit along the endorsed Glenroy to Coburg route as well as the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route, and where 85th percentile speeds are not below 40 km/h, design and seek funding opportunities for infrastructure to support the 40 km/h speed limit to improve safety of people riding bikes on these routes, including particular consideration of speed humps in Irvine Street between O'Hea Street and Gaffney Street.
6. Approves construction of speed humps on all approaches to the intersection of Olive Grove and Sylvan Grove following repeat crash reports and discussions at the community drop in sessions, as part of annual road safety traffic management works in 2024/25 or 2025/26 as funds allow.
7. Receives a report on a comprehensive plan for a safe, direct and comfortable bike network between Glenroy and Coburg as part of the Streets for People Plan being prepared in the 2024/25 Financial Year.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Between 1 March and 1 April 2024 feedback was sought from the community on how to connect the Glenroy to Coburg bike route through Pascoe Vale, with the aim of creating a safe, connected and convenient experience for bike riders. This consultation followed the conclusion of the Kent Road separated bike lane trial and the consequent removal of bike lanes in December 2023. Feedback was sought from the community on 6 potential routes that could create this connection, taking riders between Rhodes Parade and O'Hea Street.

Council officers had recommended a route (referred to as the Shimmy Route) and provided concept plans for treatments intended to support the adoption of that route for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route (a route intended to support and attract new and less confident riders).

Feedback was provided via 78 survey responses (online with option of a physical survey on request). In addition, 40 community members attended two community drop-in sessions and provided input. Most of these people lived along or near the recommended Shimmy Route option.

The results of the survey showed that the preferred route was the current route (via Kent Road and Derby Street), with second preference being Alternative route 2 (via Pascoe Street and Boundary Road to Derby Street).

Community groups Climate Action Merri-bek and the Merri-bek Bicycle User Group (BUG) provided formal submissions to the consultation. Climate Action Merri-bek was in support of Alternative route 2 (via Pascoe Street and Boundary Road). Merri-bek BUG did not offer a preference for any of the routes in the consultation, instead opting to provide recommendations for the area which included installing the treatments that were proposed to support the Shimmy Route, as well as seeking improvements for safer bike options for north-south movement along a Landells Road route and east-west movement along a Warwick Road route while presenting other opportunities for improving the bike network in the area.

Given the survey respondents' preference for the current Kent Road and Derby Street route alignment, it is recommended to continue to refer to this as the Glenroy to Coburg bike route and apply the 2024/25 funding for the completion of the Kent Road Trial to resurface Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Cornwall Road, provide a pedestrian crossing in front of Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre and improve lighting in KW Joyce Reserve. Further measures to address traffic issues and improve wayfinding near local destinations will help to improve the quality of bike riding in the area. This will allow council to make minor improvements to in the short-term while investigating more significant opportunities for bike network and streetscape improvements as part of the Streets for People Plan in the 2024/25 financial year.

Previous Council Decisions

Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and Next Steps for Coburg to Glenroy Bike Route – 8 November 2023

That Council:

1. *Declares the trial of the Kent Road separated bike lanes complete.*
2. *Approves the removal of the Kent Road separated bike lane infrastructure along the north (eastbound) side of Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road, and along the south (westbound) side of Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Cornwall Road noting that officers will endeavour to achieve this before the end of March 2024.*
3. *Approves consultation with the community in early 2024 on the following proposals:*
4. *To establish and provide wayfinding aids for a Glenroy to Coburg bike route for less confident bike riders by using a Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route as shown at Attachment 1 of item 7.1 of the 13 September 2023 Council Meeting.*
5. *To implement a range of measures along the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route south of Kent Road to support its use by less confident bike riders.*
6. *To protect less confident bike riders on the short Kent Road section of the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route by installing a separated bidirectional bike lane involving the removal of parking along the south side of Kent Road between Valerie Street and Cornwall Road.*
7. *To modify the Cornwall Road and Kent Road intersection including redesign of the splitter island and kerb outstand on the south side of Cornwall Road so that the bike and pedestrian crossing points are clarified.*

8. *To recognise that more confident bike riders are likely to continue to use the Kent Road route from Cornwall Road to Derby Street, and then Derby Street from Kent Road to O’Hea Street as an alternative way to cycle between Glenroy and Coburg, and therefore provide bike “sharrow” markings on the section of Kent Road west of Cumberland Road in keeping with the Department of Transport and Planning treatment to the east of Cumberland Road.*
9. *To install a zebra crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre.*
10. *As part of the above consultation, invites community feedback on the alternative routes 1, 2, 3 and 4 considered and shown in Figure 4 Glenroy to Coburg Bike Route Alternative Options at item 7.1 of the 13 September 2023 Council Meeting.*
11. *As part of the above consultation, Council engages and collaborates with, and advocates to State Government, including elected representatives for Pascoe Vale, on design and funding options for safe cycling routes, both on and off road for Kent Road Corridor and Glenroy to Coburg cycling link.*
12. *Receives a report on or before May 2024 documenting the community feedback on the proposed Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route and treatments along Kent Road outlined in point 3 above and feedback on alternative routes 1, 2, 3 and 4 outlined in point 4 above, with recommendations on next steps.*
13. *Acknowledges and thanks the community for their time and effort over the extended two-year trial in both identifying issues and working on solutions, which has provided valuable insight into the application of on-road physically separated bike lanes in the local context.*

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council plan sets out Council’s and community’s vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport:
 - 2.1. Build safe, accessible and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand, especially the Glenroy to Coburg bike path
 - 2.2. Scope and implement suburb based active transport (bike and pedestrian) improvements (prioritising Fawkner, Gowanbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy)
 - 2.5. Facilitate substantially increased use of active transport in the community through targeted programs which include a focus on children, young people, families and older people
 - 2.6. Collaborate with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on a case-by-case basis

Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy and Action Plan (2024)

Moving Around Merri-bek is a long-term strategic document that guides the way Council manages and makes changes to Merri-bek’s transport system. The strategy sets out 6 key values that guide transport systems in Merri-bek. They are:

- Safe
- Accessible
- Healthy
- Liveable

- Sustainable
- Inclusive

Moving Around Merri-bek established a new framework for how we make changes to our streets. The framework is called Streets for People, and it takes an holistic approach to understanding the function of our streets in the wider transport network, and to informing changes to streets to ensure benefits to all road users.

Zero Carbon Merri-bek (2018)

Council's Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework outlines the community vision and strategic directions for the transition to zero carbon in Merri-bek by 2040. In 2019/20, transport was recorded to contribute 17 per cent of all carbon emissions in the Merri-bek local government area and 13 per cent were from private motor vehicles. The 2040 vision for Sustainable Transport includes:

- Most people choose to walk or cycle to get around locally because its healthy, free, safe and convenient
- Merri-bek is known for its pedestrian and cycle-friendly streetscapes

This overarching Framework informed 5-yearly action plans to drive the transition to zero emissions including:

- Investing in infrastructure to support active travel and public transport
- Reallocate space used for private vehicle travel and parking to support sustainable transport use and other purposes.

In addition, Council resolved in December 2021 to adopt an interim target towards the Zero Carbon by 2040 goal of a reduction of emissions by 75 per cent by 2030.

Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan (2016)

In 2016 Council adopted the Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan to create a city more resilient to urban heat and climate change. Protecting and enhancing tree canopy cover and green spaces are important considerations for future bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Community Engagement Policy (2020)

Council has adopted a new Community Engagement Policy (2020) to align with the new *Local Government Act 2020*. It sets directions for how Council will engage with the community on decisions that impact them, including future bicycle and pedestrian projects.

2. Background

At the July 2020 Council meeting, Council allocated an additional \$1.68 million in the 2020/21 budget for walking and cycling projects in response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency in Victoria.

This investment aimed to encourage as many people as possible to walk or ride a bike particularly for shorter trips to local shops, parks and amenities. This was particularly relevant as social distancing requirements would lead to a significant decrease in public transport use.

It also reflected the need to provide high quality and safe active travel infrastructure to ensure that walking and riding can be considered as legitimate viable travel options for all members of our community to provide choice in how they travel, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. It is important that all sectors of our community have the same opportunities to travel, and physically separated bike lanes are specifically intended to create a more encouraging bike riding environment for those "interested but concerned" members of the community that would take up cycling if safe options were provided. This is particularly important for the female cohort in our community who ride bikes for transport significantly less often than males.

The Glenroy to Coburg bike route is envisaged to be a connected, safe and efficient route suitable for bike riders of all confidence levels. It connects many major and local destinations including Glenroy and Coburg Activity Centres, local shopping centres, Pascoe Vale Girls Secondary College and open spaces.

The review of the Glenroy to Coburg route between the existing shared user path in Rhodes Parade and the O’Hea Street bike path is an outcome of the Kent Road trial bike lanes between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road. The background relating to traffic and usage data during the trial period in 2021 and 2022, along with previous engagement activities is summarised in the Council Report from August 2022.

Table 1: Summary of Kent Road Trial and Glenroy to Coburg re-route consultation Timeline

Activity or Milestone	Date/s
Identification of the need for a bike route and planned a route for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route.	10 Year Bicycle Strategy, adopted in 2011
Decision to implement trial separated bike lanes on Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road as part of the COVID-19 active transport trials.	July 2020
Evaluation of trial lanes (survey counts of bikes, pedestrians and vehicles across five time periods, and community engagement activities).	December 2020 – June 2022
Installation of trial lanes.	June 2021
Report to Council on alternative design options for trial section of Kent Road, that retain physical separation.	September 2021
Decision to complete the 12-month trial period for the Kent Road separated lanes in same format in order to collect data on usage by pedestrians, cyclists, and car drivers for all four seasons.	March 2022
Report to Council on 12-month trial outcome.	10 August 2022
Council decision to adjust the lanes to respond to feedback and extend the trial, and to look at alternative alignments for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route to report back mid-late 2023.	10 August 2022
Adjustment of lane configuration	December 2022
Surveys on the effectiveness of the adjusted bike lane configuration.	February to May 2023
Report to Council on Kent Road trial lane survey and alternative alignments investigated for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route	September 2023
Council decision to end Kent Road bike lane trial and consult with community on re-route option for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route	November 2023
Trial Kent Road bike lane infrastructure removed	December 2023
Online survey seeking feedback on proposed Glenroy to Coburg Bike Re-Route options (options for in person or physical survey provided)	4 March to 1 April 2024
Community Drop-in sessions at Sussex Neighbourhood House	13 and 16 March 2024

For non-riders the top three factors influencing decisions not to ride were availability of other transport options (57%), transporting passengers (50%) and lack of interest (50%).

Responding to an open question “What specific considerations or improvements could make you more inclined to consider cycling in the future?”, the following themes were common:

- lower speed limits (some say 30 km/h others welcome 40 km/h but raised concerns over diverting Derby Street traffic),
- separated lanes,
- shared paths along footpath instead of separation,
- more direct routes,
- improved wayfinding and linemarking,
- to leave roads as they are,
- more bike infrastructure in general in the north

Survey responses relating to preferred alignment for Glenroy to Coburg bike route

Specific questions were asked about perceptions of the ‘current route’ (Kent Road and Derby Street) and the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route, noting that 22 per cent of respondents said they lived along the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route. The responses revealed:

- 61 per cent of respondents felt that the **current route** (via Kent Road and Derby Street) was unsafe (very or slightly unsafe), with the main two reasons being “No physical separation from traffic on busy roads” (cited by 63%) and “Road crossing points or road intersections along the route” (58%).
- 64 per cent of respondents felt the **Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route** was unsafe (very or slightly unsafe), even including the proposed upgrades to the route, with the main two reasons being “No physical separation from traffic on busy roads” (cited by 40%) and “Road crossing points or road intersections along the route” (37%). A wide range of other reasons were also provided including indirectness of the route. These other reasons possibly revealed a misunderstanding that there would be separated bike lanes along the entire Shimmy Route.

To determine the favoured route option, respondents were asked to put them in order of preference. This could be analysed many different ways – first preference, a weighted average of rankings, a ‘preferential voting’ approach.

On first preference, the order of preference is Current route (37%), Alternative route 2 (22%), Shimmy Route (17%). This order of preference did not change when the preferential voting process was applied, with Current route ending up with 56 per cent of votes.

On weighted ranking (where 1 is highest and 6 is lowest), the order of preference is Current route (2.6), Alternative route 2 (3.0), Alternative route 1 (3.1).

The reason the third-placed route changed between the different approaches was that the Shimmy Route had a significant number of people (53%) ranking it last or second last out of 6.

Further analysis of the data shows that people who said they lived along the Shimmy Route overwhelmingly (79%) ranked it at 5 or 6, with a similar sentiment from those who commented on the indirectness of this route (83%).

There were also submissions from two community groups – the Merri-bek Bicycle User Group (BUG) and Climate Action Merri-bek. Their input is detailed in Attachment 3 and is now considered at high level ahead of officer conclusions about the future approach to the Glenroy to Coburg bike route.

Input from Merri-bek Bicycle User Group

The Merri-bek BUG submission does not provide an endorsement of any of the routes in the consultation but offered a comprehensive assessment of the Shimmy Route and other options considered in the survey.

A summary of the recommendations proposed by the Merri-bek BUG on this project include the following;

1. Delivering the improvements recommended by officers to the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route except for any works through Rogers Reserve (instead prioritising Prospect Street bike facilities)
2. Install lighting through KW Joyce Reserve to improve safety of the route before and after daylight hours
3. Upgrade Landells Road / Irvine Street and Warwick Road / Dorset Road to create north-south and east-west spines.
4. Improve the Rhodes Parade to Northumberland Road section of the Glenroy to Coburg cycling route.
5. Advocate to Department of Transport and Planning for a protected bike lane solution along Pascoe Street and Boundary Parade as a more direct route.
6. Consider other improvements to make bike riding in the area cohesive, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive, including opportunities on Hilton Street in Glenroy.

While the BUG does not identify the Shimmy as the preferred route for travel between Glenroy and Coburg, it does note that the Pascoe Vale Shimmy provides local access to community facilities, schools and shops and that improved facilities have a role to play in making these bike trips more safe and attractive. The BUG submission identifies several opportunities that council will address as part of the recommendations in this report.

As part of both the current route and the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route, it is agreed that lighting options should be explored for the KW Joyce Reserve shared path given its strategic importance linking Northumberland Road to Kent Road. Lighting will need to be sensitive to the reserve and tree protection zones, but it appears there should be options to upgrade lighting along that path given its alignment along the north property boundary rather than closer to the creek.

The BUG suggested Landells Road / Irvine Street and Warwick Road / Dorset Road routes that could create spines for bike travel through Pascoe Vale. These routes could be considered as local access bike routes in future planning for good riding options but would require investigating more significant infrastructure improvements to create a high quality bike riding environment. It is proposed that the viability and options for improving this route for bike riding be considered as part of the Streets for People Plan development.

The Rhodes Parade / Northumberland Road intersection has recently received infrastructure upgrades to improve the crossing point for bike riders over Rhodes Parade to access the bidirectional bike lanes in Northumberland Road. Further improvements to the existing Northumberland Road bike lane materials is being progressed to align with other road renewal works along Northumberland Road.

The BUG expressed that the state's Strategic Cycling Corridor route along Pascoe Street and Boundary Road was as a suitably direct east west connection, but that it should not be pursued without a separated solution for Pascoe Street and Boundary Road given traffic volumes and parking activity on Pascoe Street at the shopping strip and school. Council officers agree that the quality of the cycling environment along this corridor is poor and should be addressed by the state government. Advocacy on this matter is appropriate to ensure the state government is progressing meaningful improvements to their network of Strategic Cycling Corridors.

Input from Climate Action Merri-bek

Climate Action Merri-bek made a detailed submission which concluded that Alternative Route 2 along Pascoe Street and Boundary Road should be pursued as the Glenroy to Coburg bike route and identified a number of opportunities for improvements to this route that would support walking and riding.

The submission from Climate Action Merri-bek recognises the safety issues along this corridor and identified a range of opportunities for improvements that council can pursue in advocacy to the state government. Officers propose to address this with the Department of Transport & Planning and advocate for investment in improvements to their strategic cycling corridors, including Boundary Road.

Community conversations – drop in sessions

In addition to the completion of surveys, there were some recurring themes raised by residents at the drop in sessions that warrant further consideration. These included specific references to the proposed Shimmy Route, noting concerns with the speeds of traffic in Sylvan and Irvine Streets, and the rat-running of vehicles through Irvine Street in particular.

Conclusion – preferred route

The findings of the engagement process along with thoughtful submissions received have informed recommendations for several short-term actions to improve bike riding between Glenroy and Coburg. The first recommendation proposes maintaining the existing route as the recommended bike riding route between the Glenroy and Coburg Activity Centres. While there is no additional infrastructure proposed along the route, it is considered comparatively safe and direct when compared to other viable options surveyed. This will provide people riding between Glenroy and Coburg guidance on the most appropriate route to use.

The survey respondents also identified poor east-west connectivity in the region between Glenroy and Coburg. The State Government's Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCC) sought to address this by identifying Boundary Road as an SCC. However, the quality of the bike riding environment is considered to be poor along this route which is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning. It is proposed that advocacy to the state government to improve this corridor is necessary to address safety, comfort and directness of the bike network in this area.

While the Shimmy Route was not supported as the preferred route option, the engagement process revealed issues with rat-running, speeding and safety that can be addressed through traffic calming measures. With a cluster of local destinations in the area between Pascoe Vale Primary School, Pascoe Vale Pool and St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, there is benefit in addressing local rat-running and speeding near Irvine Street and Sylvan Grove to improve safety and comfort for people riding to these destinations.

These short-term actions will make minor, but not significant improvements to the quality and safety of bike riding between Glenroy and Coburg. To meaningfully progress improvements to the bike network in this area, Officers will develop more comprehensive bike network planning and infrastructure improvement proposals while developing the Streets for People Plan in the 2024/25 financial year. This plan will investigate opportunities for streetscape improvements and bike infrastructure proposals throughout the local government area. This will include opportunities that were identified by community members during the engagement process but not considered within the scope of this project.

Considering the survey results, the community group submissions and feedback from the community on issues along the Shimmy Route in particular, the following outcomes are proposed:

1. Continue to refer to the current route (Kent Road and Derby Street) as the Glenroy to Coburg bike route, noting that there are no further supporting infrastructure proposals along Kent Road or Derby Street east of Cumberland Road.
2. Undertake works that will support the current route – resurfacing of Kent Road between Cornwall Street and Cumberland Road, the zebra crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre and lighting through FW Joyce Reserve along the shared path.
3. Undertake works to minimise rat-running in Irvine Street, including 3-4 speed humps, as road safety funding allows over the next two financial years.
4. Review speeds on Sylvan Grove near Olive Grove and if the introduction of the 40 km/h speed limit has not reduced speeds, implement speed limiting infrastructure on the approaches to the Sylvan Grove / Olive Grove intersection using funding for traffic management to support the 40 km/h rollout.
5. Advocate to the Department of Transport and Planning for fresh consideration of the Rhodes Parade / Pascoe Street / Boundary Road Strategic Cycling Corridor with a view to implementing protected bike lanes along this alignment, including extension of the green painted bike lanes north of Kent Road on Derby Street to meet Boundary Road.
6. Future consideration of the best way to provide for bike riding between Glenroy and Coburg will be via the Streets for People Plan that is being prepared in 2024/25 and will be reported back to Council for adoption when complete.

Community impact

Extensive community engagement has been undertaken since the Kent Road trial commenced in June 2021. The recommendation has considered the resolution from the 8 November 2023 Council meeting, along with the Glenroy to Coburg route consultation feedback from residents and community members in March 2024.

The Streets for People plan to be prepared in 2024/25 will outline at high level the role and aspirations for roads throughout the municipality. It is proposed that a safe, direct and comfortable bike network between Glenroy and Coburg will be identified as part of the presentation of this Plan. Community engagement will be part of this process.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Transport accounts for more than one third of an average household's carbon emissions in Merri-bek, and almost one fifth of overall carbon gas emissions in Victoria and Australia. Closing the gap in the Glenroy to Coburg bike route in a manner that will support safe, efficient and accessible alternatives to private vehicle trips; will significantly contribute to reduced emissions and reducing the impact of global warming on future generations.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Key sections in the Charter that are relevant to this report are recognition and equality before the law (section 8), freedom of movement (section 12) and taking part in public life (section 18).

The majority of the actions proposed in this report contribute positively to freedom of movement by making walking and bike riding safer and more accessible options for moving around Merri-bek for more people.

Where treatments to improve the freedom of movement of people using some modes reduce the freedom of movement of other people, these impacts need to be weighed up and mitigated as much as possible. It is considered that the right to freedom of movement has not been unreasonably limited by the recommendations in this report.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Community consultation for the Glenroy to Coburg route occurred 1 March to 1 April 2024. The consultation, survey and drop-in sessions were advertised on the Conversations Merri-bek website, social media, notifications were sent to all those following the Kent Road bike lane trial page and a letter was sent to all owners and occupiers along (and in close proximity) all 6 considered route options in the consultation (2321 owners and occupiers or 11.8 km of bike route). Key community interest group stakeholders including the Merri-bek BUG and Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee (STAC) were also notified.

The page and survey were available to Conversations Merri-bek users in English and Merri-bek's 9 top languages spoken other than English using the new Social Pinpoint tool on the Content Management System.

Community drop-in sessions

The community drop-in sessions occurred on Wednesday 13 March 2024 (6pm - 8pm) and Saturday 16 March 2024 (10am – 1pm) at Sussex Neighbourhood House which is in the Pascoe Vale Community Centre. This location was chosen as it is in the middle of the officer recommended Shimmy Route on Prospect Street. Overall 40 community members attended these sessions (with approximately 20 at each), with the vast majority of these being residents living along the recommended Shimmy Route. A number of Irvine Street residents raised speed of traffic as an issue and many residents were concerned about recent crashes that have occurred at the intersection of Sylvan Grove and Olive Grove. Many Alpine Grove residents attended to confirm that no lane was proposed on Alpine Grove and also to highlight the parking occupancy, particularly alongside Cole Reserve in the evenings.

Feedback survey summary

A total of 78 surveys were completed. The surveys contained questions to help determine preferences for the 6 route alignments considered for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route between Rhodes Parade and O'Hea Street, including perceptions of bike treatments that may be used, as well as understanding respondent connections to the subject area and basic demographic information.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There is \$320,000 nominated in the 2024/25 financial year for new infrastructure and wayfinding to support the outcome of the Kent Road trial to be implemented along with the Kent Road Pedestrian Crossing at Pascoe Vale Health.

There is also budget to support the rollout of the 40 km/h speed limit program which can support management of higher vehicle speeds identified along the Pascoe Vale Shimmy Route, notably Irvine Grove and Sylvan Grove.

Further, road safety and amenity funding within Council's capital program may be able to support Irvine Street speed hump installation, alternatively, the project may be eligible for TAC grant funding.

The Streets for People Plan has been resourced in the 2024/25 draft budget.

7. Implementation

If the decision is made to resurface Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road, install a pedestrian crossing in front of Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre and install lighting through FW Joyce Reserve, these works will occur in the 2024/25 financial year.

If the decision is made to install speed humps in Irvine Street, this will happen as soon as road safety funding is available – either 2024/25 or 2025/26.

If 'after' speed surveys for the rollout of the 40 km/h area speed limits on local streets identifies that speeds in Sylvan and Olive Groves is high, speed reduction measures on the approaches to the intersection between them will be scheduled using funding to support traffic management to reduce traffic speeds.

The Streets for People plan will be developed through 2024/25 and reported back to Council for adoption in the second half of 2025.

Attachment/s

- 1 [!\[\]\(c33cb967c8fc4f5e27188a389b621c8e_img.jpg\)](#) Glenroy to Coburg bike route survey results D24/259078

Glenroy to Coburg Bike Route Options

Summary of Survey Responses, May 2024



This document provides an overview of the 78 responses to a community survey about route options for the Glenroy to Coburg Bike Route, conducted in March 2024.

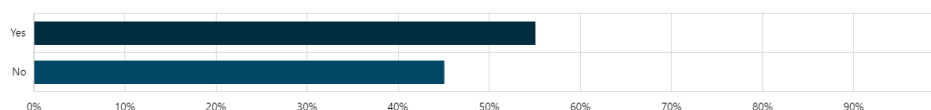
Approach

Community consultation for the Glenroy to Coburg route occurred 1 March to 1 April 2024. The consultation, survey and drop-in sessions were advertised on the Conversations Merri-bek website, social media, notifications were sent to all those following the Kent Road bike lane trial page and a letter was sent to all owners and occupiers along (and in close proximity) all 6 considered route options in the consultation (2321 owners and occupiers or 11.8 km of bike route). Key community interest group stakeholders including the Merri-bek BUG and Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee (STAC) were also notified.

The page and survey were available to Conversations Merri-bek users in English and Merri-bek's 9 top languages spoken other than English using the new Social Pinpoint tool on the Content Management System.

Respondents and their bike riding habits and preferences

Do you live along any of the proposed bike routes?

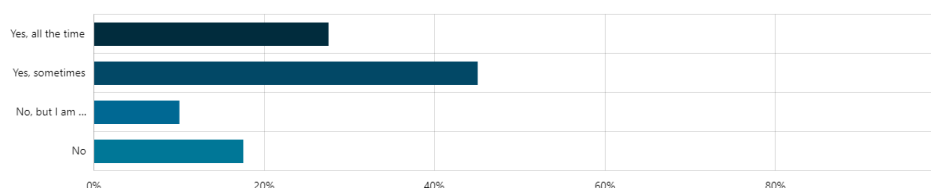


Most respondents (56% or 44 of 78) lived on one of the proposed routes, 17 respondents (22%) told us that they lived on the Shimmy route (letting us know which street they lived on was opt in only).

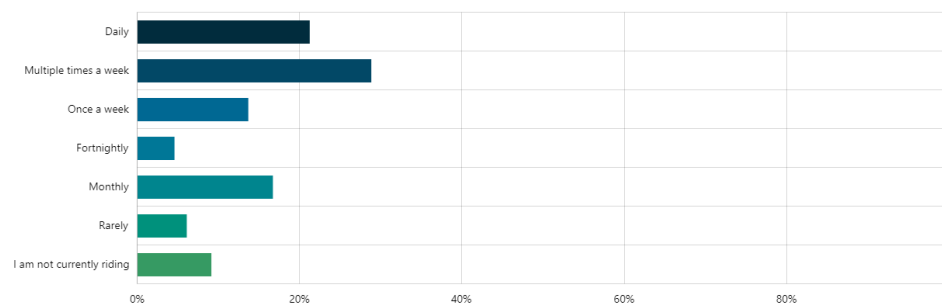
What are your main reasons for travel through the Coburg to Glenroy area?

Top three reasons given for travelling through the subject area were "living in the area" (85%), "shopping or running errands" (60%) and "Recreation or Leisure" (58%).

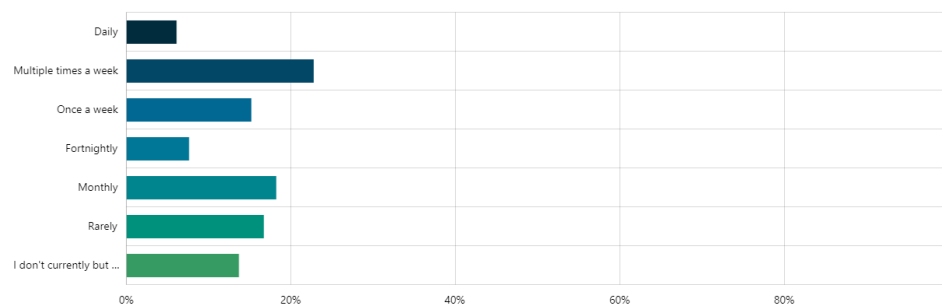
Do you ride a bike?



Most respondents were bike riders (70%), 12 per cent did not ride but were interested in riding, and 18 per cent of respondents had no interest in riding a bike.

For those that ride, how often did they ride a bike?

About 50 per cent of those that ride said they ride a bike ride multiple times a week and about 30 per cent rode less often than fortnightly.

How often did they ride a bike in the Glenroy to Coburg route area?

About 28 per cent of those that ride said they ride a bike in the Glenroy to Coburg area multiple times a week, with most respondents riding in this area less than once a week.

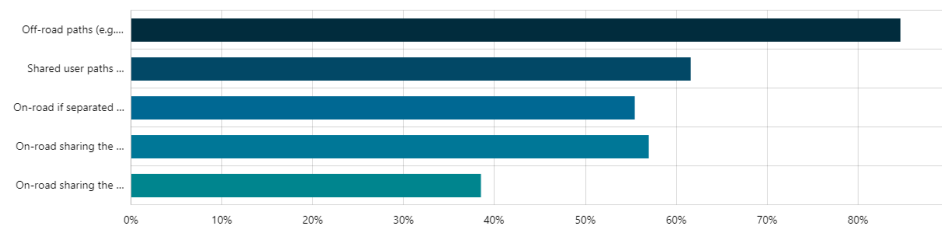
What kinds of paths were they comfortable or interested to ride a bike?

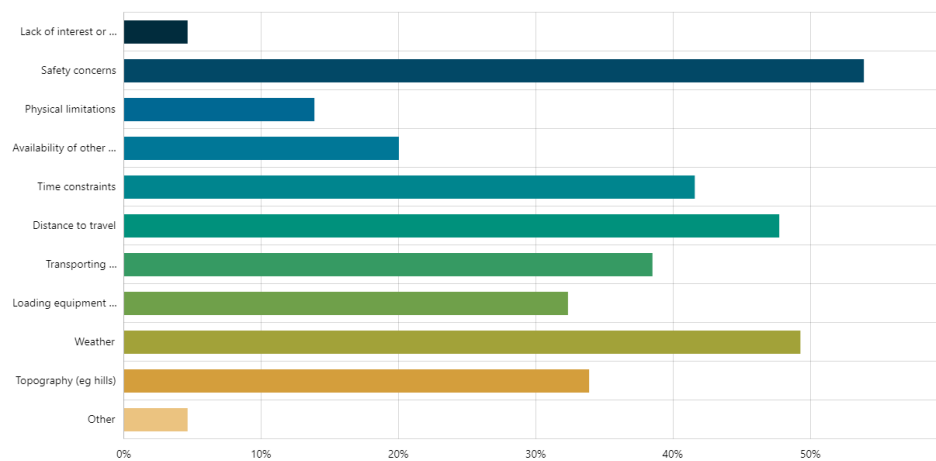
Table – Types of Bike Routes where Respondents were comfortable or interested to ride a bike

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Off-road paths (e.g. KW Joyce Reserve Shared Path or Moonee Ponds Creek Trail)	85%	55
Shared user paths that follow the footpath alignment (e.g. Cardinal Road)	62%	40
On-road if separated from parked cars and traffic by a physical barrier (e.g. Northumberland Road)	55%	36

On-road sharing the traffic lane if it is a quiet local road with slow moving traffic	57%	37
On-road sharing the traffic lane on a medium use road (e.g. Kent Road)	38%	25
Total	100%	65

The top three choices for respondents in order were Off-road paths (85%), Shared paths along the footpath alignment (62%) and shared lanes in quiet local roads (57%).

When respondents decide not to ride a bike to get somewhere, what factors contribute to the decision?



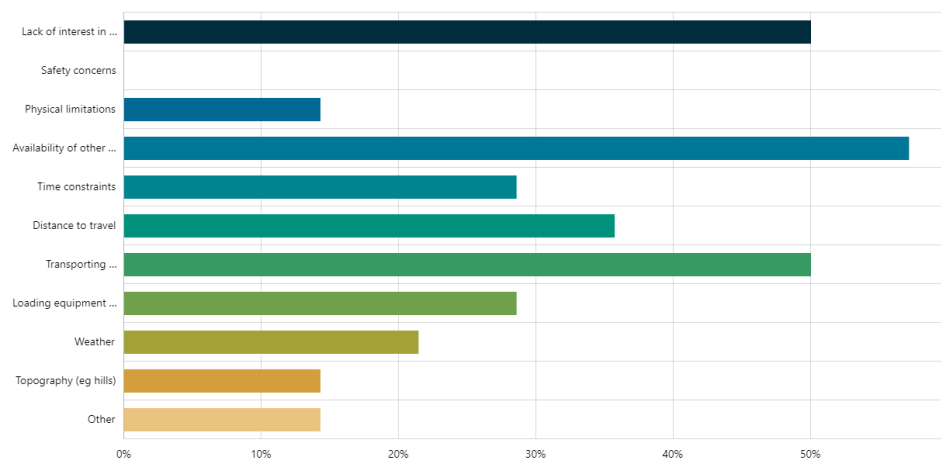
Top three factors (from those that ride or are interested in riding) were Safety (54%), Weather (49%) and Distance (48%).

What specific considerations or improvements could make respondents more inclined to consider cycling in the future?

Free text option. Multiple calls for:

- lower speed limits (some say 30 others welcome 40 but concern over diverting Derby Street traffic),
- separated lanes,
- shared paths along footpath instead of separation,
- more direct routes,
- improved wayfinding and linemarking,
- to leave roads as they are,
- more bike infrastructure in general in the north

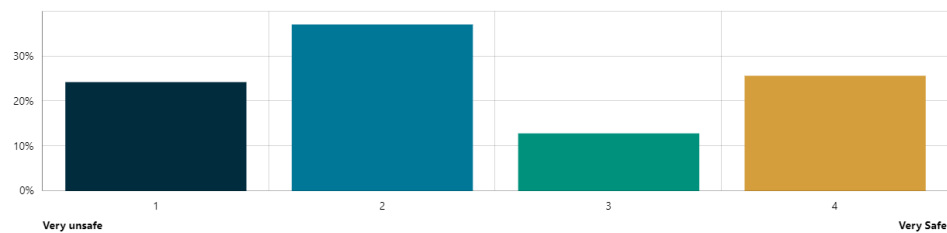
For those that do not ride, what factors contribute to the decision not to ride a bike?



Top three factors for those that do not ride, were Availability of other transport options (57%), Transporting Passengers (50%) and Lack of Interest (50%).

Respondent views on Glenroy to Coburg bike route options

How did respondents rate the safety of the current Glenroy to Coburg bike route?



61 per cent of respondents felt that the current route (via Kent Road and Derby Street) was unsafe with the most common response being 2 (slightly unsafe) at 37 per cent.

For those that responded "unsafe" reason was given as per below:

Table - Reason for rating the Current Route as Unsafe

Reason Considered Unsafe	%	No. of Respondents
No physical separation from traffic on busy roads	63%	27
Road Crossing Points or Road Intersections along the Route	58%	25
Connections through parkland	7%	3
Other	40%	17
Total		43

Main "other" reason given was lack of width to cater for bikes and cars without impacting current use (6 responses, mostly given from driver perspective). Other reasons included not wanting to ride on busy

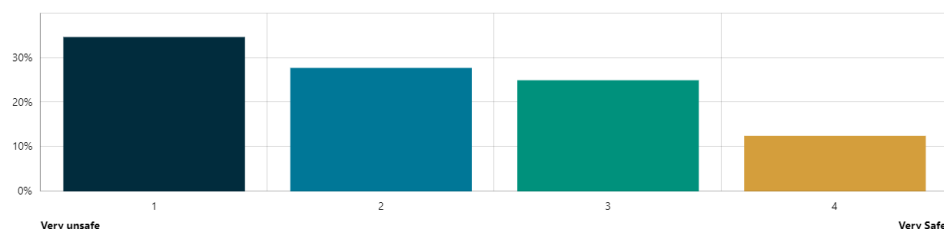
roads or past shops, speed of cars, concerns about impact of separation devices on crossing pedestrians as well as debris in the lanes impacting cyclists, lack of separation from parked car doors and main traffic lane on Derby Street, attitudes towards cyclists in the area following the Kent Road trial and speed limit reduction on Derby Street, concerns about parked vehicles and motorbikes in the Northumberland Road bike lane.

Table – Other reasons given for rating the Current Route as Unsafe

Other reason provided	No. of Respondents
Narrow road width limiting treatment options	6
busy roads	2
no separation from parked car doors	2
debris/pedestrian impacts of separation kerb	3
Speed of vehicles	1

How did respondents rate the safety of the proposed Pascoe Vale Shimmy bike route?

(including the proposed separated lane works in Kent Road, Prospect Street and O'Hea Street, as well as crossing upgrades in Cumberland Road and Gaffney Street)



64 per cent of respondents felt that the proposed Shimmy route was unsafe with the most common response being 1 (very unsafe) at 36 per cent.

For those that responded “unsafe” reason was given as per below.

Table – Reason for rating the Shimmy route as Unsafe

Reason Considered Unsafe	%	No. of Respondents
No physical separation from traffic on busy roads	40%	17
Road Crossing Points or Road Intersections along the Route	37%	16
Connections through parkland	9%	4
Other	70%	30
Total		43

With the high proportion of “other” reasons, the two main reasons given were the indirect alignment of the shimmy route and concerns over use of separated bike lanes (for short segments on Kent Road and Prospect Street, but likely includes perception that these treatments would also be applied to narrow local roads along the route).

Table – Other reasons given for rating the Shimmy route Unsafe

Other Reason Provided	No. of Respondents
Indirect Route	9
Concerns about use of Separated Bike Lanes	10
Unsafe to ride on local roads	6
Total	25

Of the 21 respondents that let us know they live on the proposed Shimmy route, 9 rated it very unsafe (5 of those respondents considered the current route very safe by comparison).

Given the above, the most common response of "Very Unsafe" for the shimmy route is coming from residents along the route concerned about their street being along a bike route, as well as people who currently ride a bike being concerned about the route being indirect. This does not match the key reasons Council Officers believe the route might be considered unsafe.

Ranking of route options in order of preference, to connect the Glenroy to Coburg bike route.

Table – Preferred Route by 1st preference and preferential vote

Preferential Voting	Current route	Shimmy route	Alt. route 1	Alt. route 2	Alt. route 3	Alt. route 4	No. of Respondents
Vote 1	23 37%	11 17%	4 6%	14 22%	4 6%	7 11%	63
Round 2	23	12		18		10	63
Round 3	27	14		22			63
Round 4	34			27			61

Both as a first choice as well as by preferential voting, the preferred route was the current route (via Kent Road and Derby Street), with second preference being Alternative route 2 (via Pascoe Street and Boundary Road to Derby Street) and the Shimmy route in third place.

With most respondents identifying as living in the area and as riding a bike, there is little change to the choice of preferred routes by separating those groups out.

Of the respondents that let us know they live on the proposed Shimmy route, 79 per cent (of 14 that ranked the shimmy route) gave it last or second last preference (out of the 6 options). Of the respondents that specified in comments that they felt the Shimmy route was indirect also gave it last or second last preference 83 per cent (of 6 that ranked the shimmy route).

Overall, as shown in the table below, those that didn't list the shimmy as their preferred route, were likely to put it last or second last.

Table – All route options by preference

Ranking (1 is first preference)	Current route	Shimmy route	Alt. route 1	Alt. route 2	Alt. route 3	Alt. route 4
Most Preferred Total 1	23	11	4	14	4	7
Total 2	9	5	19	9	7	10
Total 3	8	4	13	14	7	10
Total 4	10	8	9	8	9	12
Total 5	4	11	10	5	13	13
Least Preferred Total 6	5	20	1	6	16	6
Average	2.6	4.1	3.1	3.0	4.2	3.6
Total Responses	59	59	56	56	56	58

Route preferences by gender and bike riding habits

Table - Preferred route by Gender

Preferred route	Man	Woman	Prefer not to say	(blank)
Current	11	6	2	4
Shimmy	8	2	1	0
Alt route 1	0	3	1	0
Alt Route 2	8	4	1	1
Alt Route 3	0	4	0	0
Alt Route 4	3	3	0	1
Total	30	22	5	6

Male identifying respondents were most likely to select the current route (37%) then the Shimmy or Alt route 2 (27% each).

Female identifying respondents were most likely to select the current route (27%) and were least likely to select the shimmy route (9%). It is worth noting that with the similar alignment of Alt route 1 and 2, there is an implied preference for the route to continue along Pascoe Street (would sum to 32%)

Table Preferred route by how often riding a bike

Preferred route	Ride Bike all the time	Ride Bike sometimes	Don't Ride but Interested in Riding	Don't Ride	Total
Current	6	13	2	2	23
Shimmy	2	5	4	0	11
Alt route 1	1	2	1	0	4
Alt Route 2	6	4	0	4	14
Alt Route 3	1	1	0	2	4
Alt Route 4	3	3	1	0	7
Total	19	28	8	8	63

Regular riders had a clear preference for the current route (32%) and Alt route 2 (32%) with little interest in the shimmy route..

Those that “ride a bike sometimes”, who represented the largest contingent of respondents, had a clear preference for the current route (46%) then the Shimmy route (18%). Again it is worth noting that with the similar alignment of Alt Route 1 and 2, there is also support for continuing along Pascoe Street (21%).

Those that do not currently ride but are interested in riding had a preference for the shimmy route (50%) and second preference was the current route (25%).

Those that do not ride (and not interested) had a preference for Alt route 2 (50%).

The target user for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route is less confident and new riders. This most directly applies to those interested in riding (who indicated a preference for the Shimmy), but also those who ride sometimes (who had a preference for the current route). Considered in combination, the Current route was the first preference (42%) and the shimmy second (25%).

7.5 VICTORIA STREET - STREETS FOR PEOPLE PROJECT

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Community Engagement Report (Attachment 3) detailing the methodology and findings of community engagement on the Victoria Street – Streets for People project.
2. Endorses Concept 1 (one-way protected bike lanes) as the preferred design option to be progressed for detailed design and construction.
3. Authorises the Director City Infrastructure to make changes to the proposed design through the detailed design process in order to satisfy recommendations of a Road Safety Audit, requirements from the Department of Transport and Planning on bus stop design, and urban design improvements that do not significantly alter the function of the design.
4. Notes that the project is to be delivered in two stages, with the section of the project between Pearson Street and the Upfield Shared User Path to be delivered first.
5. Endorses officers submitting an application to the Department of Transport and Planning for the installation of a 40 km/h speed limit on Victoria Street between Pearson Street and Sydney Road, Brunswick.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Victoria Street Streets for People project arose following strong community support for improved bike riding facilities along this street in Brunswick between Pearson Street and Sydney Road and featured in the Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan adopted by Council in March 2024.

Two concept designs were consulted upon in April and May 2024 – Concept 1 featuring one-way bike lanes and Concept 2 featuring a two-way bike lane. A total of 307 people completed the survey, providing feedback on the two concept designs, and their experience of Victoria Street more generally. Of the two concept designs, Concept 1 received stronger support amongst respondents, with 77 per cent stating that they felt ‘good’ or ‘very good’ about it.

Concept 1 has been identified as the preferred option for Victoria Street. It is considered as the most appropriate option as it is more aligned with best practice design guideline, it is more user-friendly for people on bikes as well as other road-users, it garnered a higher level of community support through consultation, it has a lower impact on public parking, and it is less complex to deliver. Subject to endorsement, Concept 1 will undergo detailed design from July 2024.

The delivery of the project should be considered in two stages, with the section between Pearson Street and the Upfield Shared User Path to be delivered first, and the section east of the railway line delivered in future financial years. This is to avoid delays to the construction of the project overall as more complex design issues are resolved. Additional safety improvements should also be considered, such as a speed limit reduction on Victoria Street between Pearson Street and Sydney Road from 50 km/h to 40 km/h.

The detailed design and delivery of the project is expected to be deliverable with the allocated budget in the draft Council budget. External funding opportunities should also be explored to complement the project delivery.

Previous Council Decisions

Merri-bek City Council 4-year budget 2023-2027 and Council Action Plan 2023-2024 – 20 June 2023

That Council:

1. *Having considered all submissions received and in accordance with Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020, adopts the Annual Budget 2023-2027 (Attachment 1 to this report) subject to the following change:*
...
 - c) *Allocate \$135,000 in the Capital Works Program in 2023/24 or the design and engagement of the Victoria Street Bike Lanes (Sydney Road to Pearson Street, Brunswick).*
 - d) *Offset point c) by reducing the Capital Works Program in 2023/24 for roads resurfacing by \$135,000.*
 - ...
 - h) *Refers \$400,000 to the 2023/24 quarterly review process for the delivery of the Victoria Street Bike Lanes, if surplus funds are available.*
 - ...

Petition requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander, and Wendel Streets, Brunswick – 20 June 2023

That Council:

1. *Receives the petition, requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander and Wendel Streets, Brunswick.*
2. *Refers the petition requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander and Wendel Streets, Brunswick to the Director City Infrastructure and the Director Place and Environment for consideration and response.*

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council plan sets out Council's and community's vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.
 - 2.1. Build safe, accessible, and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand, especially the Coburg to Glenroy bike path.
 - 2.5. Facilitate substantially increased use of active transport in the community through targeted programs which include a focus on children, young people, families and older people.
 - 2.6. Collaborate with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on a case-by-case basis.

Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy and Action Plan (2024)

Moving Around Merri-bek is a long-term strategic document that guides the way Council manages and makes changes to Merri-bek's transport system. The strategy sets out 6 key values that guide transport systems in Merri-bek. They are:

- Safe
- Accessible
- Healthy
- Liveable
- Sustainable
- Inclusive

Moving Around Merri-bek established a new framework for how we make changes to our streets. The framework is called Streets for People, and ensures a holistic approach to understanding the function of our streets and wider transport network, and is used to inform changes to streets to ensure benefits to all road users.

In the Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan 2024/25, Victoria Street, Brunswick is identified as a pilot design project for the Streets for People Framework.

Zero Carbon Merri-bek

Council's Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework outlines the community vision and strategic directions for the transition to zero carbon in Merri-bek by 2040. In 2019/2020, transport was recorded to contribute 17 per cent of all carbon emissions in the Merri-bek local government area and 13 per cent were from private motor vehicles. The 2040 vision for Sustainable Transport includes:

- Most people choose to walk or cycle to get around locally because it's healthy, free, safe and convenient.
- Merri-bek is known for its pedestrian and cycle-friendly streetscapes.

This overarching Framework informed 5-yearly action plans to drive the transition to zero emissions including:

- Investing in infrastructure to support active travel and public transport.
- Reallocate space used for private vehicle travel and parking to support sustainable transport use and other purposes.

In addition, Council resolved in December 2021 to adopt an interim target towards the Zero Carbon by 2040 goal of a reduction of emissions by 75 per cent by 2030.

Community Engagement Policy (2020)

Council has a Community Engagement Policy (2020) that aligns with the *Local Government Act 2020*. It sets directions for how Council will engage with the community on decisions that impact them, including future bicycle and pedestrian projects.

2. Background

Project background and context

Victoria Street between Pearson Street and Sydney Road in Brunswick was first identified for an upgraded bike lane in Council's 10-year capital works program for walking and cycling and was earmarked for design and development between 2028-2030.

Following a strong community advocacy campaign during the 2023/24 Council Budget engagement where Council received over 75 submissions requesting the project be delivered sooner, it was brought forward for design in the 2023/24 Financial Year.

This project for Victoria Street was included in the Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan as the first design project for the Streets for People framework, which was endorsed at the Council meeting on 13 March 2024. Streets for People is our new holistic approach to understanding how our streets function, guiding how we make changes to streets to benefit all users, and ensure we are working towards long-term goals for building a better Merri-bek transport system.

As such, the project focuses on streetscape improvements including bike riding facilities for the subject section of Victoria Street. The project area is shown on the map at Figure 1. The area features diverse land uses throughout, ranging from parks and sporting facilities in the west, through industrial and office uses, to hospitality, retail, and recreation on the eastern end.



Figure 1: Location of Victoria Street – Streets for People Project

Following background analysis and feasibility investigations, officers commissioned the design of two concept plans that would improve the street for all users, incorporating protected bike lanes, safer crossing points, and street greening. Concept 1 was centred around one-way protected bike lanes on both sides of the street, whereas Concept 2 featured a two-way bike lane on the south side of the street.

Existing conditions

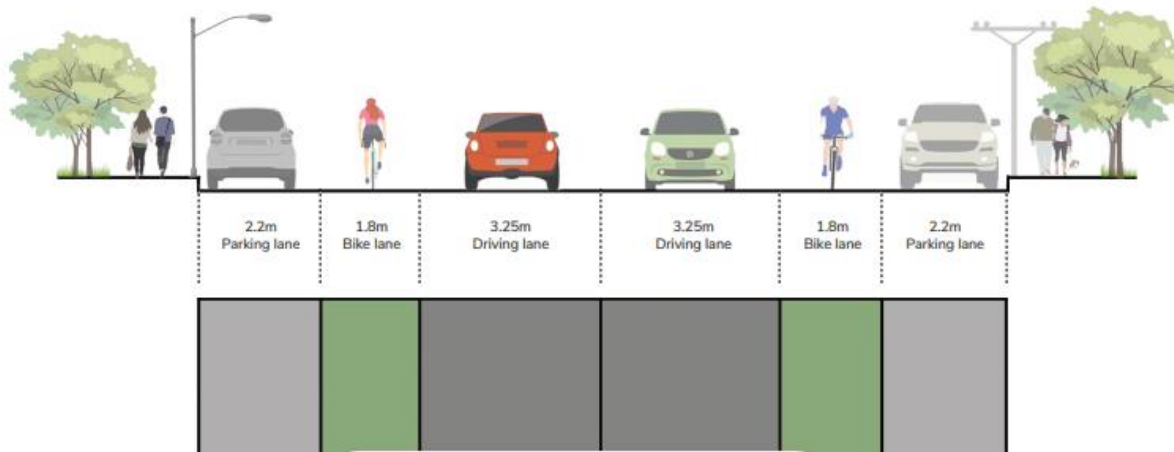


Figure 2: Cross section of existing conditions on typical mid-block section of Victoria Street.

Figure 2 above shows the typical mid-block cross-section of the existing road layout of Victoria Street. There are painted unprotected bike lanes between the kerbside parking lanes and the vehicle lanes. Buses share the vehicle lane, which is on average 3.25m wide. Bus stops are currently kerbside in-between parked cars.

Victoria Street is identified as a Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC) by the Victorian Government, and it is also a local bicycle connection between the Upfield Shared User Path (SUP), the West Brunswick Shimmy, and Sydney Road. However, the current unprotected bike lanes are not aligned with the Moving Around Merri-bek bike infrastructure typologies, or the Victorian Government's guidelines for SCCs. The area also forms part of Merri-bek's Principal Pedestrian Network.

The project area includes all three public transport modes, with the 508 bus route running along its length, the Upfield train line intersecting it, and the Route 19 tram along Sydney Rd on the eastern boundary. The route 509 bus also travels along the eastern section of the corridor. The railway crossing is currently at-grade, but the Victorian Government has earmarked this level crossing for removal. The level crossing removal project (LXRP) was originally anticipated to be completed by 2027. The project has since been delayed and is now expected to be delivered by 2030. Any proposed design for the Victoria Street project needs to consider how the expected disruption of the LXRP will impact it, any co-funding opportunities from the LXRP, and how the proposed bike facilities will be integrated in the Upfield SUP.

Crash history

Over the past 10 years, there have been 25 reported crashes within the project area. Of those, 9 involved a person walking or riding a bike. The highest concentration of crashes has been near the intersection of Victoria Street and Sydney Road. There have been no fatal crashes in the last 10 years.

It is important to note that crashes where police or emergency services did not attend are typically not reported. While these crashes may be less severe, they add to the perceptions of safety or risk in an area, which can be a barrier for people to choose to walk or ride. In order to take into consideration areas of perceived risk for people on bikes, a review of Bike Spot has been undertaken. Bike Spot is an online portal that allows people to report safety concerns that they have on the transport network, particularly for cycling. There are 3 locations in the project area that have been identified as dangerous or uncomfortable for people on bikes. They are the crossing between Clifton Park and Brunswick Park, the Upfield shared user path crossing, and the western approach to the Sydney Road intersection.

Traffic and parking

Traffic counts on Victoria Street were undertaken in February 2024 and March 2022. The counts showed a weekday average of between 9,000 and 11,000 vehicles per day. Of the total volume, approximately 6 per cent are heavy vehicles, including buses. The 85th percentile speed ranged between 44.7 km/h and 52.6 km/h, which is above the posted speed limit of 50 km/h. This volume and speed of traffic, and proportion of heavy vehicles, creates safety risks for other road users, increases noise levels, and adds to the air pollution in the area.

There is a significant amount of parking spaces along the length of Victoria Street and the surrounding side streets within 100 metres. It is estimated that there is approximately 584 parking spaces in the vicinity, both on street and off street, comprising unrestricted parking, 10-minute parking, 2-hour parking, loading zones, 4 car share bays, and 3 'Parklets'. This number has been derived by counting marked parking bays and estimating the number of car spaces in the unmarked sections by measuring the lengths and dividing by 6 metres. 40 of those spaces are on private land associated with Brunswick Bunnings, but these are also publicly accessible at all hours.

Strategic assessment

As part of the Streets for People framework, officers have assessed the corridor using the Healthy Streets framework. Healthy Streets is an approach to planning public realm and transport improvements that incorporates public health, with an aim of creating better places for human activity on streets. Using the Healthy Streets Design Check for Australia, the whole Victoria Street corridor from Pearson Street to Sydney Road has been assessed to better understand what elements of the street currently support basic human needs, and what areas need improvement.

	Existing Layout Score
Healthy Streets Score	20
Everyone feels welcome	21
Easy to cross	14
Shade and shelter	0
Places to stop and rest	39
Not too noisy	13
People choose to walk and cycle	21
People feel safe	22
Things to see and do	33
People feel relaxed	21
Clean air	11

Figure 3: Healthy Streets indicators score for existing conditions on Victoria Street

The project area received an overall Healthy Streets Score of 20 out of 100 (Figure 3 above). There were many areas for improvement, including shade, crossing facilities, walking and riding environment, and noise and air quality.

Concept design development for consultation

Officers commission the development of two concept designs for community feedback that addressed some of the identified issues. The first concept plan includes one-way protected bike lanes on both sides of the street, and the second concept design includes two-way protected bike lanes on the south side of the street.

Concept 1 – one-way protected bike lanes

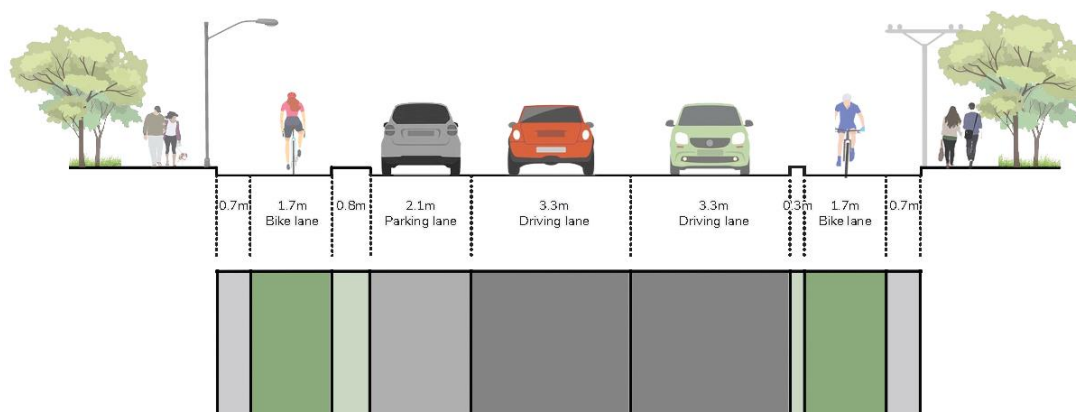


Figure 4: Proposed cross-section for Concept 1

- Protected one-way bike lanes on both sides of Victoria Street running from Pearson Street to Sydney Road
- Increased greening and tree planting
- Bike lane style is both the easiest to ride on for riders, and safer when other road users cross the lane
- Upgrades to existing pedestrian crossings to improve priority and safety for people walking and riding, and an additional zebra crossing
- Wider footpaths near Sydney Road to create more space for on-street dining, tree planting opportunities, and a better walking environment
- Improved safety at the side street intersections, particularly for people walking and riding
- Bus stops upgrades to improve bus reliability and ease of access for people entering and exiting the bus, and to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
- Boosts Healthy Streets score from 20/100 to 44/100
- Parking mostly retained on south side of the street, with a high amount of parking reallocation required on the north side of the street.
- Bike lane may only meet minimum standard width in some sections limiting the ability for faster riders to overtake

Concept 2 - two-way protected bike lanes on south side of the street

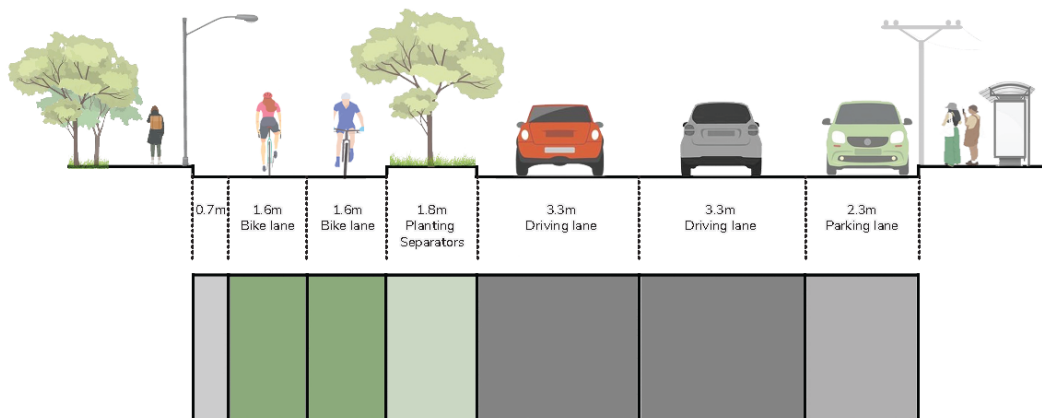


Figure 5: Proposed cross-section for Concept 2

- Protected two-way bike lanes on south side of Victoria Street, between the Upfield Line and Pearson Street
- Protected one-way bike lanes on both sides of Victoria Street between the Upfield Line and Sydney Road
- Upgrades to existing pedestrian crossings to improve priority and safety for people walking and riding, and an additional zebra crossing
- Improved safety at the side street intersections, particularly for people walking and riding
- Bike lane width allows for safe and easy rider passing
- Less user-friendly design for riders and potential for more conflict between bike riders and other road users when crossing the lane compared to one-way bike lane
- Parking mostly retained on north side of the street, with a very high amount of parking reallocation required on the south side of the street
- Some wider footpaths near Sydney Rd for more on-street dining, tree planting opportunities and better walking environment.
- Bus stops upgrades to improve bus reliability and ease of access for people entering and exiting the bus, and to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
- Boosts Healthy Streets score from 20/100 to 46/100
- Significantly increased greening and tree planting opportunities

These two Concept Designs were then exhibited for community feedback through a community engagement process that ran from 5 April 2024 to 12 May 2024. More details on the engagement process and outcomes can be found in Section 4 and in the community engagement report at Attachment 1.

3. Issues

Preferred Concept Design

Officers recommend that Concept 1 with single direction one-way protected bike lanes (Concept plan at Attachment 2) be the preferred design option to proceed with detailed design and delivery. There are several considerations that have led to officers recommending Concept 1 as the preferred design, including best practice design guidelines, community engagement findings, deliverability, and user safety.

Single direction, one-way protected bike lanes adjacent to the kerb are generally considered best practice. This alignment allows for easier access to and from the destinations along the route. Single direction, one-way protected bike lanes adjacent to the kerb are also more common across the broader transport network of Melbourne, and more user-friendly. When compared to two-way bike lanes, there is also a lower risk of conflict between turning vehicles, as people on bikes are always riding in the same direction of the vehicle traffic.

Concept 1 received the highest level of community support during community engagement 77 per cent of respondents stated that they felt “good” or “very good” about Concept 1, whereas 69 per cent felt “good” or “very good” about Concept 2. A significant number of respondents (33%) stated that they had concerns with how two-way bike lanes would function in this location. In particular, safety concerns were raised with two-way bike lanes at the intersections with the side-streets and the locations where people on bikes would be required to cross to the other side of the street. The community engagement findings are discussed in more detail in Section 4 below and Attachment 1.

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) stated a preference for Concept 1, siting concerns with the integration of the two-way bike facility with the bus stops and the Upfield SUP. Similarly, Merri-bek Bicycle User Group’s submission stated a preference for one-way protected bike lanes along the corridor.

Concept 2 is more reliant on the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal project to be feasible. This project has been delayed by the Victorian Government and is now expected to be delivered by 2030, potentially 5 years later than this Streets for People project. This would result in a disjointed connection, potentially creating risks and dangerous rider behaviour to cross the railway line and join the Upfield SUP, or crossing to the northern side of the streets to continue eastbound. Concept 1 will also be impacted by the delay of the LXP, however it is considered a simpler option to cross the railway line at-grade and connect with the Upfield SUP.

While Concept 1 does not provide as many tree planting opportunities as Concept 2, it still allows for a significant increase in tree planting along the corridor compared to existing conditions. Trees within the carriageway that ‘bookend’ designated parallel parking provides a variety of benefits. Primarily, they can provide much needed shade to the west-bound bike lanes and the southern footpath, which are currently very exposed to northern sun, particularly in summer.

Concept 1 allows for more on-street parking to be incorporated into the design when compared to Concept 2, particularly closer to Brunswick Park and Clifton Park.

Healthy Streets

The preferred design, Concept 1, is expected to improve the corridor’s Healthy Streets score from 20/100 to 44/100 (Figures 6 and 7 below). As a result of the proposed design, 9 out of the 10 Healthy Streets indicators are expected to see significant improvements.

	Existing Layout Score	Proposed Layout Score
Healthy Streets Score	20	44
Everyone feels welcome	21	51
Easy to cross	14	52
Shade and shelter	0	33
Places to stop and rest	39	56
Not too noisy	13	33
People choose to walk and cycle	21	51
People feel safe	22	56
Things to see and do	33	33
People feel relaxed	21	51
Clean air	11	22

Figure 6: Expected increase of Healthy Streets indicators for Concept 1

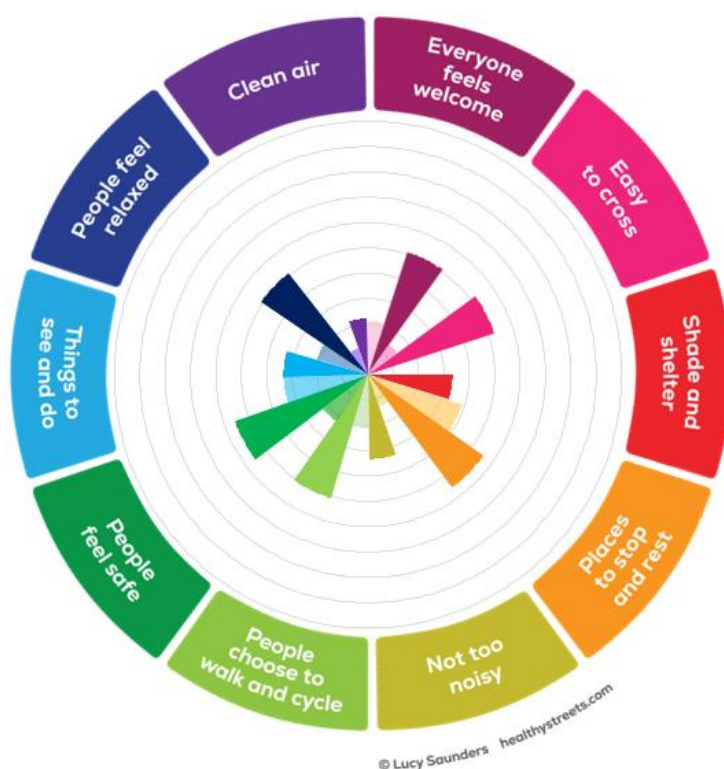


Figure 7: Expected increase of Healthy Streets indicators for Concept 1

Most notably, the introduction of safer and more crossings across Victoria Street and raised threshold treatments at the side streets would allow for more people to easily cross the street. The suite of proposed treatments is also anticipated to give more people the choice to walk or ride along the corridor and be more inviting for people to use.

Changes to concept design following consultation

Some minor updates to the concept plan for Concept 1 (full concept plan at Attachment 2) have been included following consultation. They are:

- Fixing minor mistakes
- Incorporating bicycle turning areas and entry/exit points to the bike lanes at Percy St and Gardiner St
- Incorporating new trees in vacant tree pits on the north side of the street
- Removing proposed trees that would impact bus stops and driver sightlines
- Pursue a speed limit reduction from 50 km/h to 40 km/h to complement the design

It is noted that further changes may be required through the detailed design stage of the project, in response to different engineering constraints and any safety issues that are identified in a road safety audit on the design. Should such changes be required, it is recommended that they are endorsed by the Director City Infrastructure under delegation from Council.

Expected impacts of the design

The proposal, if constructed, would change the way Victoria Street functions for some users. Some of the perceived impacts of the design are discussed in more detail below.

Conflicts between people on bikes and other road users

Moving the bike lanes next to footpath will significantly reduce the exposure and severity of 'dooring' risks for people riding bikes. 'Dooring' risks will still exist for people riding west-bound between the footpath and the parked cars. This risk is managed by a minimum 0.8 m concrete buffer. The risks are also less severe as a person on a bike cannot then swerve into vehicle traffic to avoid 'dooring'. Additionally, vehicles waiting to parallel park will no longer be able to idle in the bike lane.

The new protected bike lanes will be more conspicuous than the current unprotected bike lanes, reducing conflicts between vehicles turning across the bike lanes (at side streets and driveways) and people on bikes. This conflict will be further managed by ensuring adjacent parked cars do not reduce sightlines of the bike lanes, and with the introduction of roll-over lane delineators on the edge of the bike lanes at crossovers. Separator barriers will prevent people driving vehicles from illegally parking in the bike lane.

Parking and Parklets

The preferred design is expected to require approximately 12 per cent of parking spaces in the project area (incorporating 100m buffer of Victoria Street) to be re-allocated for street tree planting and the protected bike lanes. The majority of the parking spaces required to be re-allocated are those on the north side of Victoria Street. It is noted that additional parking spaces may be required to be reallocated through the detailed design process, in response to any safety concerns raised through a Road Safety Audit.

While 12 per cent of survey respondents during community engagement raised concerns with the impact the design will have on parking availability, it is expected that the parking demand in the area will still be able to be catered for with the remaining parking supply of approximately 516 parking spaces. Longer term, the installation of safer and more accessible walking and riding infrastructure will give more people the option to use other modes of transport to visit Victoria Street and surrounding destinations other than driving a private vehicle. This is therefore likely to increase the efficiency and accessibility of the area by providing more options for people to access destinations near Victoria street without requiring on-street parking.

A specific parking issue that was also raised by several respondents through the community engagement was the over-use of on-street parking for the operations of a business opposite Clifton Park. Reports were received of this business regularly parking a large number of vehicles on the street awaiting pick up or servicing, occupying parking bays that would otherwise be available for public use. A petition was received by Council at the 20 June 2023 Council meeting requesting action be taken on this issue. 2P parking restrictions have since been installed for a section of the street. It is recommended that further parking controls be investigated along the sections of unrestricted parking on Victoria Street, and nearby streets, as a separate project to this ahead of the completion of the large development on Albert Street.

The preferred design will require the removal and relocation of two car-share bays. Officers will work with the operators to manage these impacts and find an appropriate new location for the bays.

Similarly, there are currently 3 'Parklets' installed along the corridor. Two of these bays are on the south side of the street between the Upfield SUP and Sydney Road, where the preferred design incorporates footpath widening, which will allow these expanded on-street dining areas to be permanent. The Parklet on the north side of the street in front of 339 Victoria Street will be required to be removed as part of this project. The business does not currently have a permit to have the Parklet.

Bus Stops

The preferred design includes a preference for floating island bus stops. A floating island bus stop is where the protected bike lane passes behind the bus stop next to the footpath. DTP recently published *Road Design Note 06-17 Cycling Infrastructure Adjacent to Bus and Tram Stops*, which provides guidance on their design and is expected to be used by practitioners where appropriate. Some examples of these types of bus stops can be seen in Figure 8 and 9 below.



Figure 8: Island bus stop on Laurent Street, West Melbourne.

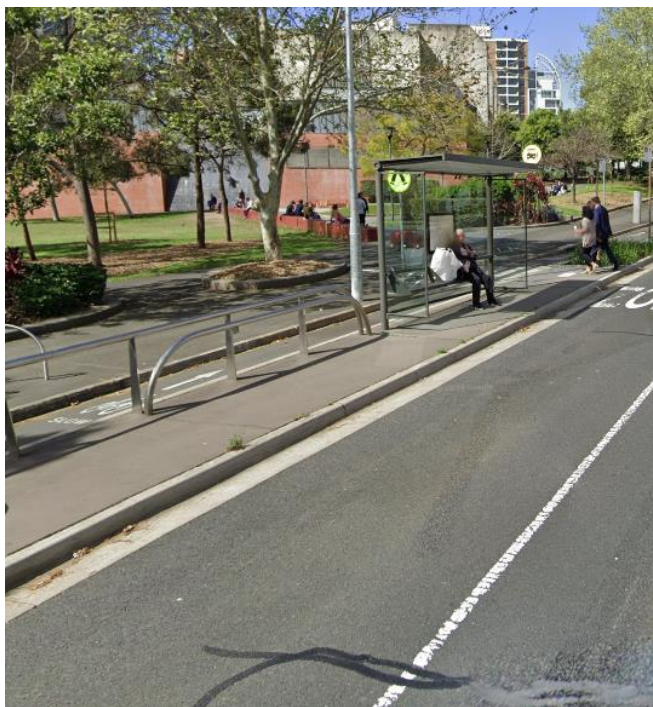


Figure 9: Island bus stop on Hunt Street, Surry Hills (NSW)

These types of bus stops can reduce conflicts between people on bikes, people walking, and people accessing buses. They can also reduce conflicts between buses, parked cars, and other vehicles when pulling in and out of bus stops.

Whilst this type of bus stop has been identified as a preference for this corridor, there are engineering constraints that still need to be worked through with the designers and DTP. As such, it may not be possible for all stops to be upgraded in this way, and alternative options may need to be considered through detailed design.

Traffic flow and traffic volumes

Some survey respondents raised concerns that the project would narrow the driving lanes or have an impact on traffic through movement along Victoria Street. The driving lanes will not be reduced in width, instead they will be slightly widened from 3.25m to 3.3m as part of this project. This lane width has been given in-principle support from DTP's Bus Team.

It is not expected that the proposal will significantly impact traffic flow through the corridor. The introduction of safer pedestrian crossings will slow traffic to an extent, but this will not significantly reduce the level of service for people driving.

As a result of the proposed design, buses picking up and dropping off passengers will stop in the traffic lane, with traffic behind expected to wait. This allows for better bus reliability as buses do not have to pull out of the lane and merge back into traffic, and it also allows more consistent access to both doors of the bus.

Vehicle speeds

A number of people who participated in the community engagement raised concerns with the speed of vehicles along this section of Victoria Street. Recent traffic counts show that the 85th percentile speed is slightly above the posted speed limit of 50 km/h. The proposed separation between the traffic lane and the bike lanes will reduce the risks posed by vehicle speeds to people riding bikes in the area, and the proposed raised crossings will also aid in the reduction of vehicle speeds.

This speed profile may impact the viability of priority crossings across Victoria Street, even with speed management devices on the approaches to the crossings. The specifics of the proposed safer crossings will be developed through detailed design taking into consideration the Austroads best practice guides and a Road Safety Audit. It may also be appropriate for Council to pursue a speed limit reduction from 50 km/h to 40 km/h along Victoria Street from Pearson Street to Sydney Road, to support the other safety improvements of the project.

Project delivery

Officers recommend that the project be delivered in two separate stages. The section between Pearson St and Upfield SUP should be delivered first, to provide a safe connection for people on bikes to the Upfield SUP from Brunswick West and the Brunswick West shimmy. This section is considered less complex to deliver, when compared with the section between Upfield SUP and Sydney Road.

All bus stops between the Upfield SUP and Sydney Road are currently 'hold points' for Route 508 and Route 509, where buses often stop for longer periods if they are running ahead of schedule. This means that these bus stops cannot currently be changed to floating islands, and further consultation with DTP is required to discuss their long-term locations. There is also more urban design work required through detailed design for this section, to ensure an appropriate streetscape upgrade is delivered in the Brunswick Activity Centre, and this may delay the construction of the entire project if both sections of the project were to be delivered together.

However, a temporary or short-term treatment should be investigated through detailed design to separate people on bikes travelling eastbound from other road users on the approach to the Sydney Road intersection. This has been identified as an unsafe and uncomfortable location for people on bikes and should also be addressed in the first stage of project delivery.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Merri-bek City Council is committed to reducing emissions in the community and addressing the climate emergency. Transport is a major source of emissions, so reducing the community's reliance on private vehicle transport, particularly for local trips, is crucial.

Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy aims to reduce transport emissions in a variety of ways, including by providing infrastructure to facilitate the use of zero-emissions transport modes such as walking and riding a bike for as many people as possible.

The Victoria Street Streets for People project will deliver safe and accessible infrastructure that will enable more people to be walk and ride for local trips in Brunswick and Brunswick West. Additionally, the project includes a significant increase in tree planting along the corridor, aiding climate resilience and cooling in the area.

Economic sustainability implications

The transport network in Merri-bek supports local businesses and their customers. The project area includes part of the Brunswick Activity Centre and a light industrial area identified as a core industrial and employment precinct in Merri-bek. This area is currently relatively well serviced by public transport and the local road network but is lacking sufficient infrastructure to support safe walking and riding along the corridor.

The Victoria Street Streets for People project will diversify the transport options for people visiting the area, facilitating greater access to the local businesses for more people. The project will not negatively impact the access to the businesses for customers or commercial vehicles.

Legal and risk considerations

The project has been developed to align with the transport system objectives of the *Transport Integration Act 2010*, as well as the decision-making principles as they apply to the Merri-bek context. Similarly, the project takes into consideration the provisions of the *Road Management Act 2004* and will continue to be guided by the legislation through the detailed design and constructions phases.

Human Rights Consideration

Under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Council is required to consider potential impacts of actions taken on fundamental human rights protected by the Charter and under the Gender Equality Act 2020 Council is required to ensure that policies, programs and services address inequality and meet the needs of people of different genders and intersectionality.

The Victoria Street Streets for People project is not considered to impede on any persons' human rights. The provision of safer active transport infrastructure will aid the right to movement for more people.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Previous consultation

This Victoria Street corridor was identified for improvements through consultation for the 10-year capital works program for walking and cycling. This was a two-stage community engagement across 2021 and 2022. The first stage of consultation primarily centred around the community providing feedback on the transport network for improvements, and the second stage saw a draft 10-year capital works program presented for community feedback. The 10-year capital works program for walking and cycling was then adopted at the 23 June 2022 council meeting, with the Victoria Street project earmarked for design in 2028/29.

Following a strong community campaign through the consultation on the draft Council budget 2023/24, the project was brought forward for design in the 2023/24 Council budget.

Concept Designs

Community feedback was sought on the two Concept Designs and how Victoria Street is currently used and experienced more generally between Friday 5 April and Sunday 12 May 2024. Feedback was primarily received via an online survey hosted on the Conversations Merri-bek webpage.

Letters were sent to all properties and property owners within 400m of the project area, inviting participation in the community engagement. Letters were also hand delivered to businesses on Victoria Street where possible. Advertising signs were put up along the corridor, and social media posts were published on the Merri-bek City Council social media profiles.

Officers also attended an E-bike Expo event hosted by Bicycle Network at the Brunswick Velodrome, in part to promote the projects that were open for community feedback at the time. This included the Victoria Street Streets for People project. Officers were able to answer questions and discuss concerns with the project, whilst also encouraging greater participation in the consultation.

Key external stakeholders were consulted, including DTP, Dyson Bus Group and the Merri-bek Bicycle User Group.

We engaged with our community on this project at the level of 'Involve' on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum, and in line with Council's Future Bike Lane Engagement Process (2022). This meant our engagement was designed to ensure the concerns and aspirations of our community, including local businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders, are directly reflected in the detailed designs that will be developed following this round of engagement. We will provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision so that our community understand our decisions when the detailed designs are completed.

There was a good level of participation in the consultation, with a total of 307 survey responses received, 3 email enquiries, 5 direct submissions, and 2 phone calls.

A detailed Community Engagement report can be seen at Attachment 1. The key findings from this round of community engagement are:

- 77 per cent of people who participated felt 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 1, compared to 10 per cent who felt 'bad' or 'very bad' about it.
- 69 per cent of respondents felt 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 2, compared to 1 per cent who felt 'bad' or 'very bad' about it.
- A large number of respondents (33%) raised concerns with two-way bike lanes proposed in Concept 2. These concerns were about general safety, how the lanes would integrate with the broader cycling network, and potential conflicts between people on bikes and drivers turning across the lanes.
- 12 per cent of respondents raised concerns with the impacts of the project on the availability of on-street parking.
- Majority of respondents were from Brunswick and Brunswick West, where the project is located.
- Majority of people who participated usually walked or rode when using or visiting Victoria Street
- The most popular improvements that respondents wanted to see on Victoria Street were safer bike lanes (79%), more street greening and tree planting (74%) and safer crossing points (55%).

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.

The engagement process was designed to reach all those affected by the proposed project. In particular, nearby residents, businesses, and those who currently use and visit the corridor.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The recommendations in this report are expected to be deliverable with the allocated budget for the project in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years. However, it is noted that a detailed Schedule of Quantities will be developed through the detailed design process, and this will be a more accurate cost estimate for the delivery of the project. The funds required to carry out the necessary detailed design work and road safety audits of the design have been carried forward from the 2023/24 Council budget.

The draft Council budget for 2024/25 includes \$240,000 in the Capital Works budget for the construction of this project. An additional \$600,000 has been identified in the 2025/26 Capital Works budget. This is expected to allow for the delivery of the first stage of the project beginning in the middle of 2025 and continuing into the following financial year, noting that a Schedule of Quantities will more accurately estimate the cost of delivery through detailed design.

Officers also recommend seeking external funding opportunities to complement the delivery of the project.

7. Implementation

Subject to endorsement, officers will commission the detailed design work for the corridor to begin in July 2024. The detailed design process is expected to take up to 4 months and is to include further consultation with DTP and a Road Safety Audit.

Officers intend to tender for construction at the beginning of 2025, with construction to begin by June 2025.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Victoria Street Streets for People project - Community engagement report - May 2024 | D24/243601 |
| 2 | Victoria Street Streets for People - Concept 1 for endorsement | D24/243608 |



Merri-bek
City Council

Victoria Street – Streets for People Community Engagement Report





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Acknowledgement of Country

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



Executive summary

Consultation Process

Merri-bek City Council consulted with the community from 5 April to 12 May 2024, seeking feedback on Victoria Street Brunswick – A Streets for People project.

We asked people to:

1. Share their experience of Victoria Street in general
2. Share their thoughts on two concept design options.

Platforms Used

- Online survey
- Social media
- Direct mailing
- Physical advertising

Overview of Engagement



307
Total surveys
Completed



425
People
downloaded the
Concept Plans



400m
Radius from
project area that
letters were sent



Targeted social
media posts

What you told us



- 307 people provided feedback and participated in the online survey.
- 77% of respondents felt 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 1 and 69% felt 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 2.
- Respondents identified the parklands (44%), the local businesses (25%) and the connectivity to Sydney Road and other areas (23%) as the elements of Victoria Street that they liked.
- Unsafe riding environment (40%), vehicle volumes (15%) and speed (18%), and safety when crossing the street (29%) were identified as challenges the respondents currently experience.
- 33% of respondents raised concerns with 2-way bike lanes in this location (Concept 2).
- 12% of respondents raised concerns with potential impacts on existing supply of on-street parking.



Introduction

We're working to improve Victoria Street in Brunswick, both in its function as a route to travel, and as a destination for businesses, parks, sporting facilities, and more. This is our first project in our new Streets for People program.

Victoria Street in Brunswick is one of Merri-bek's major local roads and is an important route for travel around Merri-bek for virtually all road users. It provides access to employment, parklands, shopping, and other public transport networks.

However, the current design of the street makes it difficult for people to walk or ride bikes.

We're working to improve this important street by designing safer bike lanes, increasing greenery in the area, improving bus stop facilities, and creating a safer on-road environment for all road users.

Why we are doing this

This project was initially identified as an important network improvement in our 10 year capital works program for walking and cycling following 2 rounds of community engagement, completed in 2022.

In 2023, we heard from the community about the difficulties using this street and the need for protected bike lanes as part of the community engagement for the 2023/2024 Council Budget.

Council resolved to bring forward work on the development of these concept designs to the 2023/2024 financial year.

Purpose of this round of engagement

- To understand how Victoria Street is currently used, what people like about the existing conditions, and challenges they experience while using it.
- To understand the level of support for the 2 Concept Designs.

Proposed designs

We developed 2 concepts and asked the community which one they preferred. This included Concept 1 with unidirectional bike lanes (Figure 1) and Concept 2 with bidirectional bike lanes (Figure 2).

Both designs incorporate

- Upgrades to existing pedestrian crossings to improve safety and an additional zebra crossing
- Improved safety at the side street intersections, particularly for people walking and riding
- Wider footpaths near Sydney Road to create more space for on-street dining, tree planting opportunities, and a better walking environment
- Bus stops upgrades to improve bus reliability and ease of access for people entering and exiting the bus, and to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Concept 1

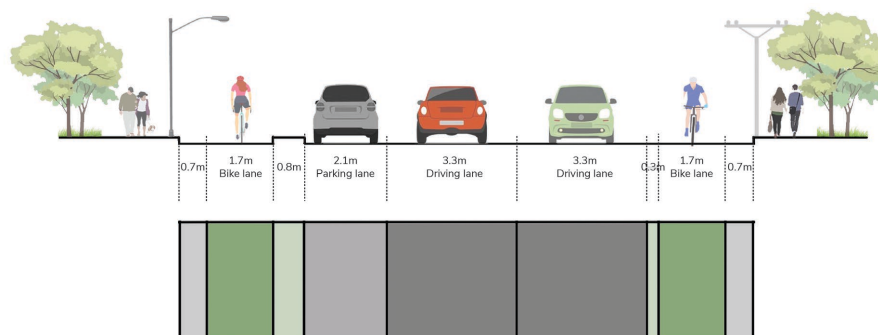


Figure 1: Concept 1 typical cross-section

- Protected one-way bike lanes on both sides of Victoria Street running from Pearson Street to Sydney Road
- Increased greening and tree planting opportunities
- Bike lane style is both the easiest to ride on for riders, and safer when other road users cross the lane
- High impact parking reallocation, but parking mostly retained on south side of the street
- Boosts Healthy Streets score from 20 to 44

Concept 2

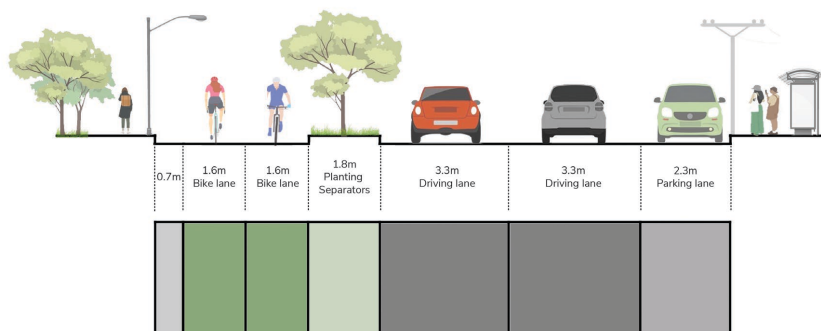


Figure 2: Concept 2 typical cross-section

- Protected two-way bike lanes on south side of Victoria Street, between the Upfield Line and Pearson Street
- Protected one-way bike lanes on both sides of Victoria Street between the Upfield Line and Sydney Road
- Significantly increased greening and tree planting opportunities
- Less user-friendly bike lane design compared to Concept design 1
- Very high impact parking reallocation, but parking mostly retained on north side of the street
- Boosts Healthy Streets score from 20 to 46.



Engagement Activities

Merri-bek City Council used a variety of engagement and communications methods to gather feedback from the community on the Victoria Street – Streets for People project. These methods included:



Online survey

An online survey was made available to the public for four weeks, from 5th April to 12th May 2024. The survey received 307 responses,



Letter to residents

A letter drop with information about the Victoria Street - Streets for People project and a link to the online survey was distributed to residents and letters were personally delivered to businesses along Victoria Street, where possible.



Digital and physical advertising

Targeted advertising campaigns were shared on Merri-bek's social media and posters were displayed along Victoria Street.



Face to face

Staff attended an E-bike Expo Event hosted by Bicycle Network at Brunswick Velodrome to promote the community engagement and answer questions from community.

International Association of Public Participation Spectrum

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

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



Survey Results

A survey was provided to gather feedback on how respondents currently use and experience Victoria Street, and to get their feelings on the two Concept Designs that were presented for discussion. This section will discuss the results of that survey.

This survey was open for community feedback from Friday 5th April to Sunday 12th May.

Respondents were asked about their current experience of Victoria Street, what improvements that would like to see, and their feelings about the two Concept Designs that were presented.

What do you like about this section of Victoria Street?

This question was only asked to respondents who stated that they do visit or use Victoria Street. 257 respondents answered this question using an open comment box, and their responses have been thematically analysed.

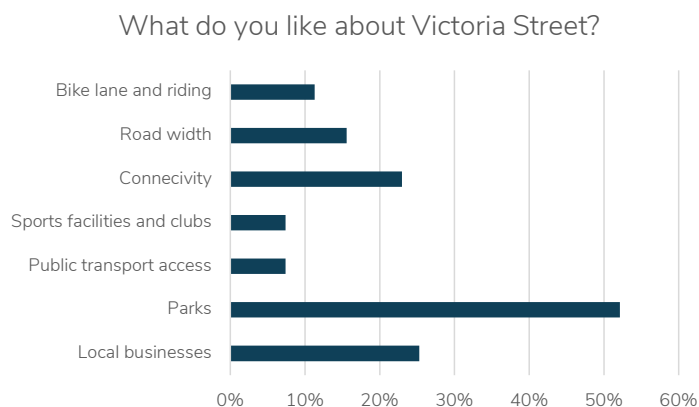


Figure 3: What do you like about Victoria Street graph.

The graph shows the 7 most common themes from the responses. Other positive themes identified were the trees, ease of driving, parking availability, general amenity and the community feel.



What challenges do you experience on this section of Victoria Street?

This question was only asked to respondents who stated that they do visit or use Victoria Street, and was not mandatory. 280 respondents answered this question using an open comment box, and their responses have been thematically analysed.



Figure 4: What challenges do you experience on Victoria Street graph.

The above graph shows the top 6 themes raised by respondents when asked what challenge they experience on Victoria Street. Some other themes that emerged about challenges that were less common were conflicts between turning or parking vehicles and people on bikes, heat and lack of shade, access to parking, space for walking and poor footpath conditions.

What improvements would you most like to see along this section of Victoria Street?

This question was multiple choice, and respondents were able to select up to 4 of the options.

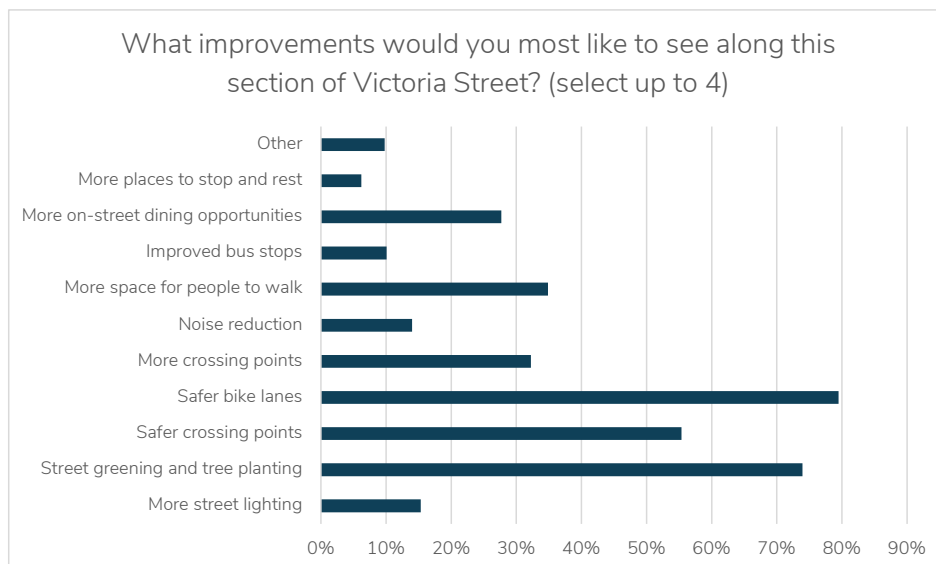


Figure 5: What improvements would you most like to see along this section of Victoria Street graph.

The top 4 improvements that respondents identified were "Safer bike lanes" (79%), "Street greening and tree planting" (74%), "safer crossing points" (55%), and "more space for people to walk" (35%).

Respondents who selected "Other" wanted to see more parking supply, less parking supply, parking restrictions, vehicle turn restrictions, road surface improvements, road widening, more clear delineation between bike lanes and car lanes, amongst other improvements.

Concept 1

Do you think this design would improve the street for people walking or riding bikes?

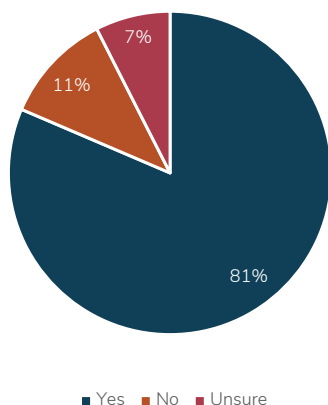


Figure 6: Do you think Concept 1 would improve the street for people walking or riding bikes graph.

81% of respondents stated that they thought that Concept 1 would improve the street for people walking or riding bikes, compared to 11% of thought that it wouldn't.

How do you feel about Concept 1?

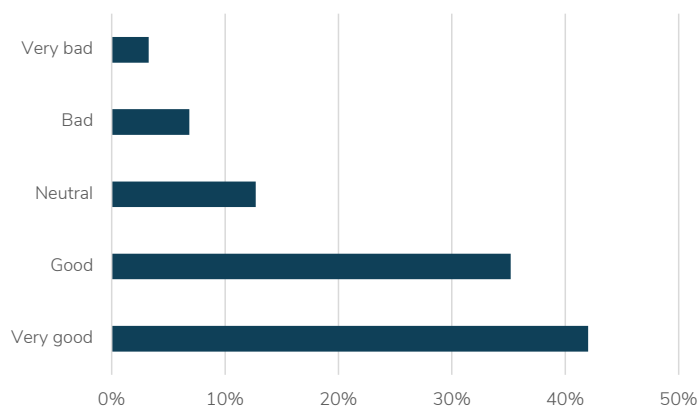


Figure 7: How do you feel about Concept 1 graph.

77% of respondents felt 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 1, 10% felt 'bad' or 'very bad' and 13% were neutral. The most common response was 'very good', with 42% of respondents selecting this option.



208 respondents provided additional feedback about Concept 1 via an open comments box. The most common themes amongst this feedback was general support for the project and separated bike lanes (28%), preference for Concept 1 over Concept 2 (21%), requests for more trees (14%), parking reduction concerns (9%) and safety concerns of separated bike lanes (9%).

Some examples of feedback comments about Concept 1 are shown below:

- *"Due to there being limited public transport options east to west, cars will still need to access this part of the street - especially to drive kids to sporting activities which are peppered through this area. As such, this retains parking but enables a safer pathway for bikes which is really important for encouraging people to use them. We would cycle to events but I am too nervous with my son on the road to do so."*
- *"I prefer one-way protected bike lanes on both sides of a street. However, both options provide safety benefits and I'm happy to support either."*
- *"Removing parking is a disaster, there is already wide walking/riding paths through the park this is sufficient."*
- *"Looks good. My only concern would be that a lot of people (with young children) park their cars and go to the futsal centre (on north side). Perhaps another crossing or island to make it easier for people to do this (particularly if all parking will be on south side)."*

Those who felt positively about Concept 1

- Generally supported protected bike lanes
- Were more likely to consider the changes as a safety improvement
- Highlighted potential updates to the design such as more trees, more crossings, and more separation between the bike lanes and vehicle lanes
- Some requested the project be extended further

Those who felt negatively about Concept 1

- Generally opposed to protected bike lanes and road space reallocation
- Raised concerns with a reduction in parking
- Raised safety concerns to do with separated bike lanes, such as pedestrians stepping into the lanes, people parking in lanes, and people opening doors into the bike lanes.

Those who felt neutral about Concept 1

- Strong preference for more trees
- Identified safety concerns to do with separated bike lanes

Concept 2

Do you think this design would improve the street for people walking or riding bikes?

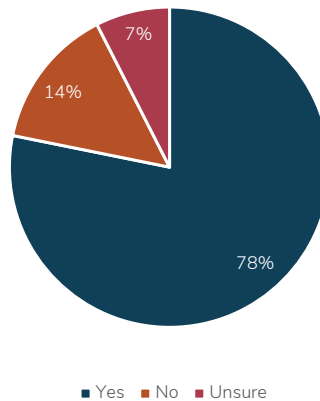


Figure 8: Do you think Concept 2 would improve the street for people walking and riding bikes graph.

78% of participants in the survey stated that they thought that Concept 2 would result in an improved street environment for people walking and or riding bikes. 14% stated that they thought it wouldn't, and 7% said that they weren't sure.

How do you feel about Concept 2?

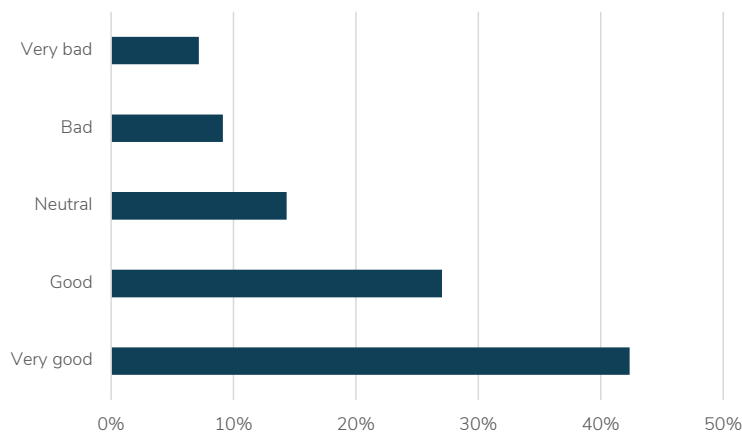


Figure 9: How do you feel about Concept 2.



69% of respondents felt 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 2, compared with 16% who felt 'bad' or 'very bad' and 14% who were 'neutral' about the design. 'Very good' was the most common response, accounting for 42% of responses.

246 respondents chose to provide additional feedback on Concept 2 via the open comments box. The most common themes from this feedback were concerns with 2-way bike lanes and how they integrate with the broader network (41%), a preference for Concept 1 compared to Concept 2 (26%), general support for protected bike lanes (17%) and concerns with parking reductions (8%).

Some examples of feedback received on Concept 2 are shown below:

- "The physical separation between cars and bikes is very good"
- "The option allows for greening which would be a huge benefit in the summer. Bi-directional bike lanes could work well here as there are very few intersections on the south side of Victoria street, but would need to ensure that anyone using the bike lanes would have easy/safe access to shops/facilities on the north side. I'd probably like to see additional crossing points added for both pedestrians and riders."
- "The south side of the street has heavy parking demand. Often full of Australia Post vehicles. Concept 2 significantly reduces available spaces. Having the bike paths on the same side can also be disorienting because people usually drive and ride on the left side of the street in whichever direction they are going. Doesn't seem as safe for pedestrians crossing the street."
- "Additional nature strip looks great and would make me feel more confident cycling with kids"

Those who felt positively about Concept 2

- Liked the significant increase in planting opportunities
- Raised concerns with 2-way bike lanes
- Suggested that the design would be a safety improvement

Those who felt negatively about Concept 2

- Were mostly concerned with how 2-way bike lanes would function and integrated with the broader network in this location
- General safety concerns with the proposed layout
- Raised concerns with the impact the design would have on on-street parking

Those who felt neutral about Concept 2

- Primarily raised concerns with 2-way bike lanes in this location
- Preferred Concept 1 over Concept 2



General feedback

Respondents had the opportunity to provide general feedback on the project overall. 181 people chose to provide additional comments in this section. The most common themes from this feedback are shown on Figure 10 below.

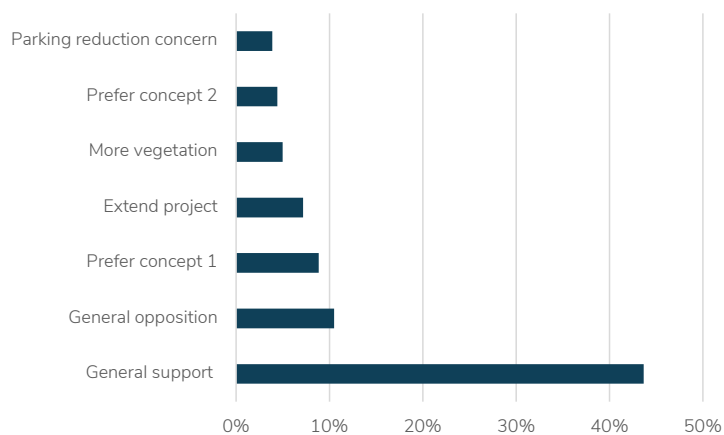


Figure 10: Major themes from general feedback

Demographics

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

Age

There was a multiple choice question to ask the age range of the respondents. Figure 11 shows the responses provided from the online survey.

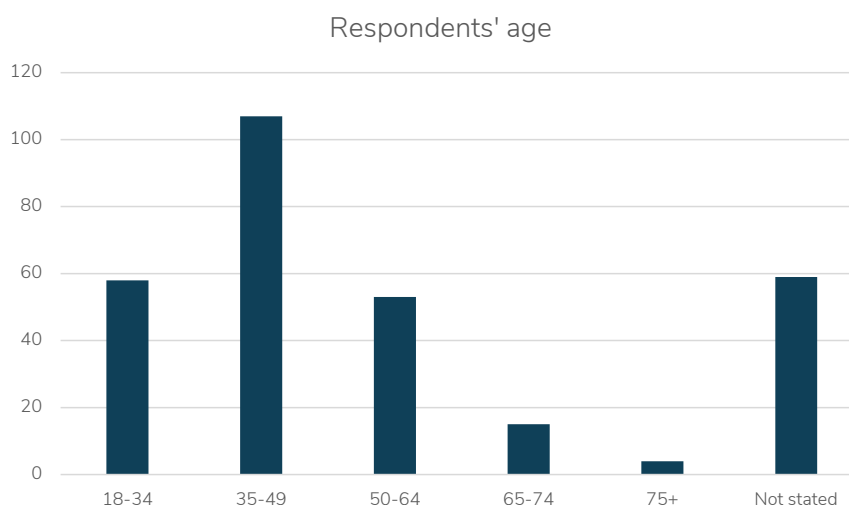


Figure 11: Age groups of respondents

Age 18-34:

- More likely than other respondents to support Concept 1 (83% 'good' or 'very good') and Concept 2 (81% 'good' or 'very good')
- Support for protected bike lanes and wanted to see more trees incorporated

Age 35-49:

- More likely than respondents in older age groups to support Concept 1 (83% 'good' or 'very good') and Concept 2 (71% 'good' or 'very good')

Age 50-64:

- Strong support for both concepts, but less than other age groups (73% supportive of Concept 1 and 60% supportive of Concept 2)
- Concerns with on-street parking reduction

Age 65-74:

- This age group had the equal lowest levels of support for either concept (73% supportive of Concept 1 and 60% supportive of Concept 2). However, this is still significantly positive.

Age 75+:

- Only 4 respondents in this age group
- 75% felt 'good' or 'very good' about both concept designs

Gender

A multiple-choice question was asked to ask what gender respondents identify as. Figure 12 highlights the responses provided from the online survey.

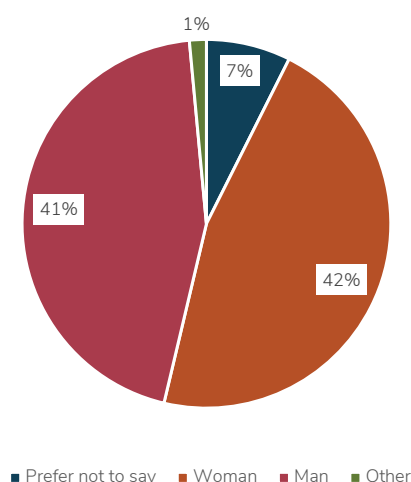


Figure 12: Gender of respondents

The feedback from different genders reflects a diverse set of perspectives. While men, Future engagements should endeavour to reach this community more efficiently.

There was not a statistically significant difference in the level of support for the concept designs across respondents of different genders.

Relationship to the project area

Respondents were asked what their relation to Victoria Street was, with 6 options to choose from: I live close (within 400m) to this section of Victoria Street; I visit venues, shops, parks, sports clubs, or businesses on this section of Victoria Street; I do not often use or visit Victoria St; I travel on this section of Victoria St to get to other places; I work on this section of Victoria Street; or I own a business on this section of Victoria St. How participants responded is shown below on Figure 12.

What best describes you? (Choose all that apply)

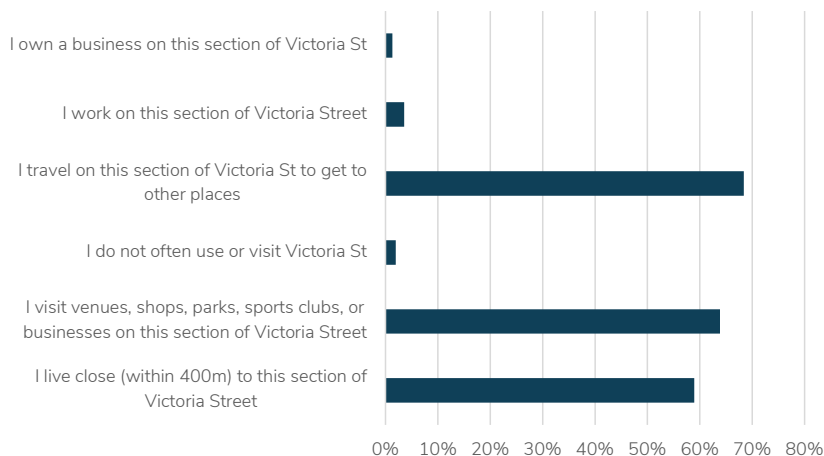


Figure 13: Respondents' relationship to Victoria Street.

Figure 14 below shows how respondents felt about Concept 1 based on the category of relationship to the project area. Those who visit the area or travel on Victoria Street to get to other places were most likely to feel 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 1. Those who worked on Victoria Street or owned a business were more likely than other respondents to feel 'bad' or 'very bad' about Concept 1.

How respondents felt about Concept 1 using relationship to Victoria Street categories

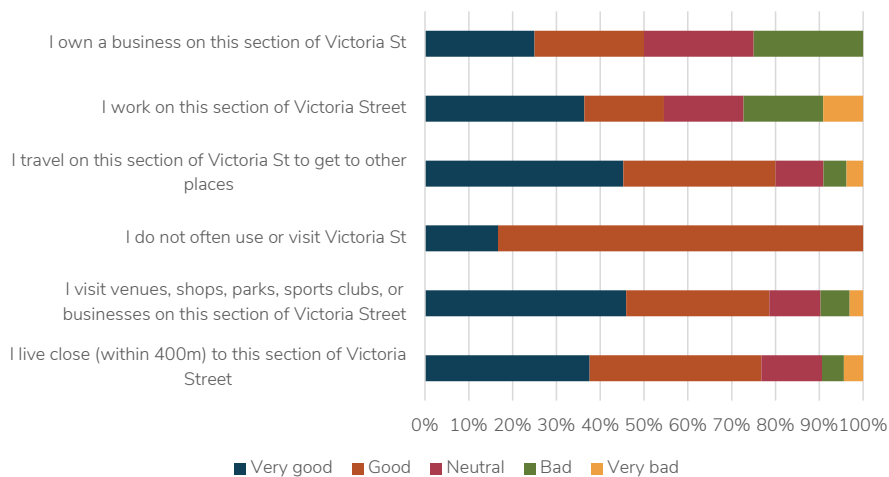


Figure 14: Concept 1 response by relationship to project area category



Figure 15 below shows how respondents felt about Concept 2 based on the category of relationship to the project area. Similar to Concept 1, those who visit the area or travel on Victoria Street to get to other places were most likely to feel 'good' or 'very good' about Concept 2. Those who worked on Victoria Street were more likely than other respondents to feel 'bad' or 'very bad' about Concept 2.

How respondents felt about Concept 2 using relationship
to Victoria Street categories



Figure 15: Concept 2 response by relationship to project area category

Road-user type

Survey participants were also asked how they typically travelled on or to Victoria Street (Figure 16 below). Majority of respondents usually ride (51%) or walk (29%) in the area.

How do you usually use or visit Victoria Street?
(choose one)

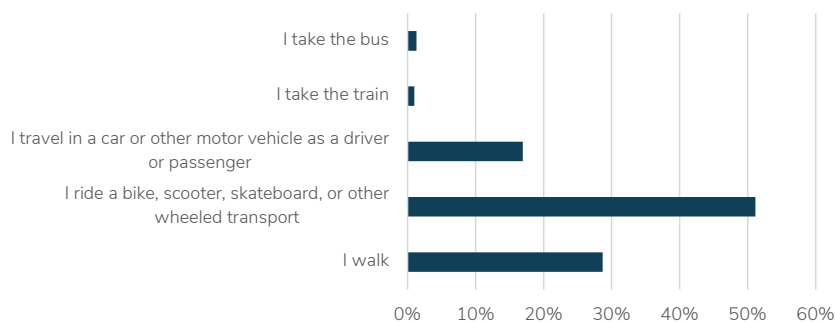


Figure 16: How respondents usually use Victoria Street.



Figure 17 below shows how respondents felt about Concept 1 based on these different road-user groups. While those who travelled in a private vehicle were more likely than those who ride or walk to oppose Concept 1, majority (60%) of this group still supported the concept.

How respondents felt about Concept 1 using road-user type categories

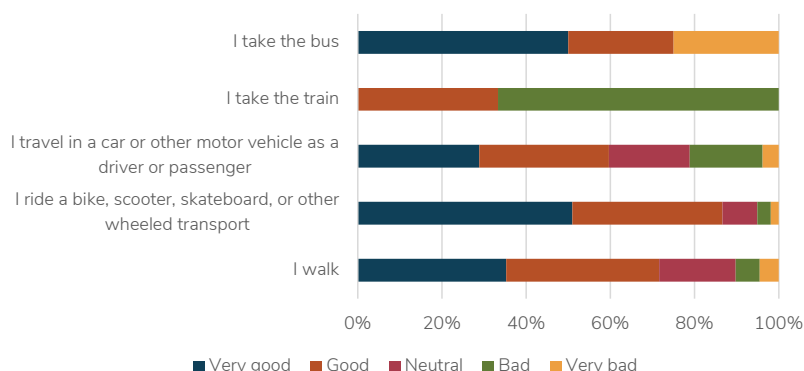


Figure 17: Concept 1 response by road-user categories

Figure 18 below shows how respondents felt about Concept 2 based on these different road-user groups. Amongst the people who ride bikes on Victoria Street, Concept 1 (87%) was more strongly supported than Concept 2 (73%).

How respondents felt about Concept 2 using road-user type categories

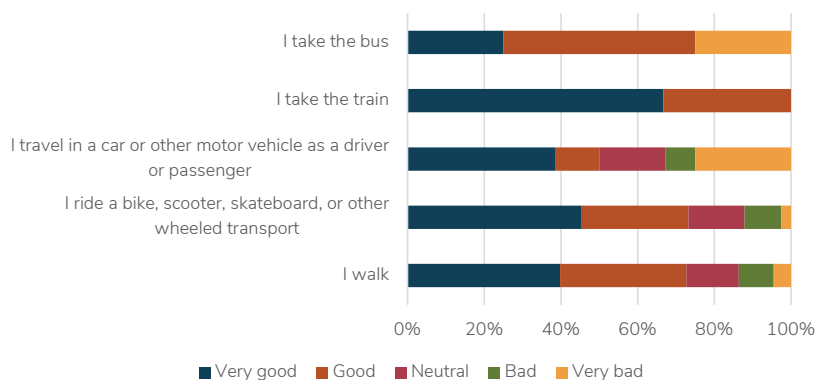


Figure 18: Concept 2 response by road-user categories



Location

We also asked survey respondents for their residential suburb to understand the specific needs and any differences for residents of each suburb. Figure 19 below shows the locations of respondents, with majority from Brunswick (50%) and Brunswick West (16%), where the project is.

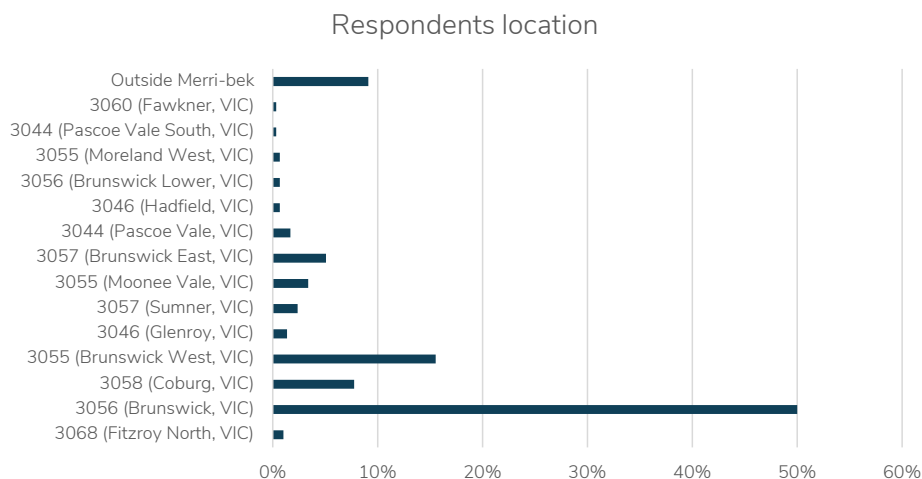


Figure 19: Location of respondents



Stakeholder engagement

In addition to the general community engagement process, formal submissions were received from 5 organisations. These organisations were the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), Dyson Group Buses, the Merri-bek Bicycle User Group (BUG), Walk On Merri-bek, and Go-Get Car Share.

DTP provided in-principle support for the proposed crossings in both concepts. They noted a preference for Concept 1 over Concept 2, especially with regard to the bike lane alignment. The DTP Bus Team have offered to meet to further discuss the bus stop locations and design, and this will be an ongoing consultation through the detailed design process.

Dyson Group were supportive of the proposed upgrades. They noted that floating island stops between Upfield SUP and Sydney Road would not be possible currently as these stops are all 'hold points' for the buses. Changes to these stops would require changes to timetabling and requires DTP support and approval.

The Merri-bek stated a preference for Concept 1 over Concept 2. The BUG also identified some issues to investigate for potential improvements to the designs, including incorporating a crossing in front of the Brunswick Business Incubator that people on bikes could ride across, as the Victorian Road Rules precluded most people on bikes from riding on Zebra crossings.

Walk-on Merri-bek provided broad support for the proposed pedestrian upgrades on both concept plans. They did not identify a preference for one concept over the other. The group sought clarity on some aspects of the designs, and raised particular pedestrian safety concerns at the Sydney Road intersection.

Go-get, who operate 2 of the 4 car-shar bays in the project area indicated general support for the project. They requested that officers work with them to find new locations for any car-share bays that would be impacted by the project.



Discussion

Key themes

There were a number of key themes that emerged from the community engagement. These themes included:

Protected bike lanes

- Support for protected bike lanes
- Concerns with how drivers interact with them, including ensuring people can not drive in and park on the protected bike lanes
- Suggestions for increasing the separators between traffic lanes and bike lanes
- Concerns with how people riding bikes pass each other
- Concerns with how 2-way protected bike lanes would work in this location

Parking

- The impact of that a reduction of car parking spaces on Victoria Street would have
- Specific parking concerns about how one business occupies a large number of unrestricted parking spaces near Clifton Park
- Requests for more parking controls
- Suggestions for alternative parking arrangements

Traffic

- The impact the project would have on traffic flows
- Potential for conflicts between road users when drivers turn across the protected bike lanes

Vegetation

- Requests for additional planting, particularly on the north side of the street
- General support for increased tree planting opportunities

Design suggestions

A number of respondents made suggestions on potential changes to the concept designs. Some of those suggestions include:

- Changing the Zebra crossing in the middle of the project area to a shared priority crossing to allow people on bikes to ride across it
- Pedestrian safety improvements at the Pearson Street intersection
- Installing roundabouts at Gardiner Street and Percy Street intersections
- Grade-separated crossing of Victoria Street for the Upfield SUP
- Increasing accessibility to and from the protected bike lanes with gaps in separation
- Greater consideration for bicycle turning movements at Percy Street, Leslie Street, and Prentice Street
- More crossing locations, such as near Rosser Street and Tripovich Street car park



Appendix

Survey Questions

1: What best describes you? (Choose all that apply)

- I live close (within 400m) to this section of Victoria Street
- I work on this section of Victoria Street
- I own a business on this section of Victoria St
- I visit venues, shops, parks, sports clubs, or businesses on this section of Victoria Street
- I travel on this section of Victoria St to get to other places
- I do not often use or visit Victoria St

2: How do you usually use or visit Victoria Street? (choose one)

- I walk
- I ride a bike, scooter, skateboard, or other wheeled transport
- I travel in a car or other motor vehicle as a driver or passenger
- I take the bus
- I take the train
- I take the tram

3: What do you like about this section of Victoria Street?

Open text box

4: What challenges do you experience on this section of Victoria Street?

Open text box

5: What improvements would you most like to see along this section of Victoria Street?

(select up to 4)

- Safer crossing points
- More crossing points
- Street greening and tree planting
- Safer bike lanes
- Improved bus stops
- More street lighting
- More places to stop and rest
- Noise reduction
- More space for people to walk
- More on-street dining opportunities
- Other

6: Thinking about Concept 1, do you think this design would improve the street for people walking or riding bikes?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



7: How do you feel about Concept 1?

- Very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Bad
- Very bad

8: Do you have any comments about Concept 1?

Open text box

9: Thinking about Concept 2, do you think this design would improve the street for people walking or riding bikes?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

10: How do you feel about Concept 2?

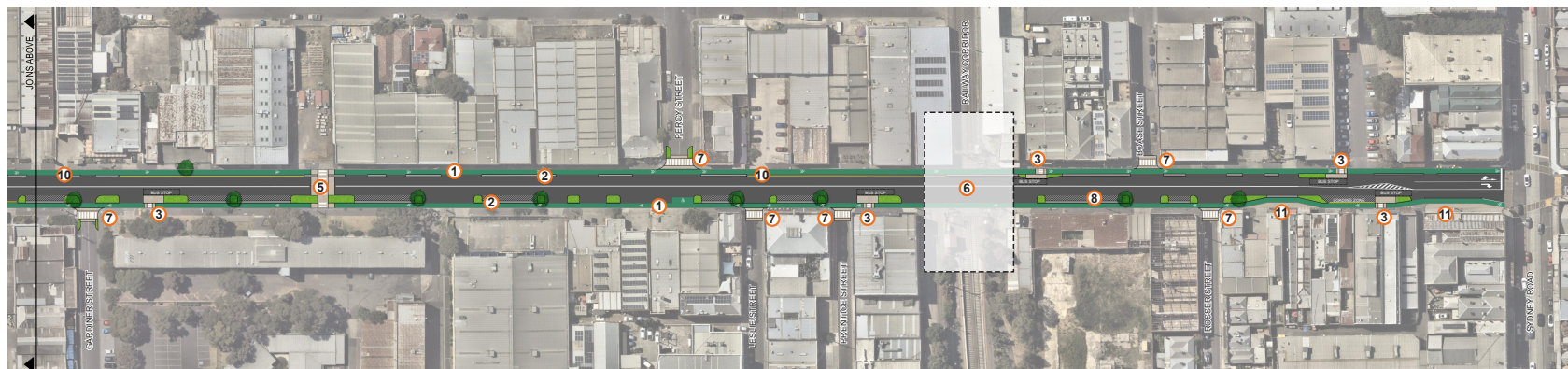
- Very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Bad
- Very bad

11: Do you have any comments about Concept 2?

Open text box



LANDSCAPE PLAN - WEST



LANDSCAPE PLAN - EAST

LEGEND

- ROADWAY AND LINEMARKING
- CONCRETE FOOTPATH
- PROPOSED SPEED HUMPS
- PROPOSED UNI-DIRECTIONAL CYCLEWAY
- PROPOSED PARALLEL PARKING
- CONCRETE KERB SEPARATOR
- LANDSCAPING BUFFER
- PROPOSED TREES

DESIGN NOTES

- 1** Uni-directional separated cycleway located to each side of the road providing a safe cycle route for users.
- 2** Concrete kerb separator between cycleway and road to create a physical buffer. Wider sections allow for understory planting and street trees with clear trunk while ensuring sight lines are still achieved. Tree canopy provides additional shade and comfort to the space.
- 3** Proposed bus stops with dedicated space to board and alight and raised zebra crossings along the cycleway.
- 4** Raised crossing creating a key link between Clifton Park and Brunswick Park to tie into the wider cycle network.
- 5** Raised pedestrian crossing to provide safer access towards the brewery and creating a more permeable pedestrian street.
- 6** Area subject to future works for Brunswick Level Crossing Removal. Council to advocate for signalised crossing as part of LXP project. Council to also advocate for improved bus interchange as part of LXP project.
- 7** Raised pedestrian crossing proposed to side streets to create a continuous pedestrian pathway across the site and slow down traffic movement.
- 8** Proposed designated on street parking areas to the southern side of Victoria Street.
- 9** New pedestrian connections between Clifton Park and Victoria Street.
- 10** Low level mountable separator between road and cycleway.
- 11** Section of footpath extension to provide wider area along pedestrian pathway.



landscape architecture
urban design
environmental management

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SCALE 1:750 @ A1

VICTORIA STREET CONCEPT OPTION 1

MERRI-BEK CITY COUNCIL **VICTORIA STREET - DESIGN OPTIONS**

DATE 27.05.24	JOB NO 300305398	DRAWING NO SK-01	ISSUE 2
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7.6 FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGY 2024-2027

Director Community, Eamonn Fennessy

Community Wellbeing

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Food System Strategy 2024-2027 for public exhibition.
2. Notes the food and material relief organisations and volunteer groups in Merri-bek and thanks them for their significant contribution to life in Merri-bek.
3. Notes the level of support that is offered to emergency food and material aid services and volunteer groups by Merri-bek City Council.
4. Notes how food security and food relief is addressed in the Food System Strategy 2024–2027.
5. Notes that pursuing the acquisition of land for the construction of a purpose-built facility for food relief organisations is not recommended based on significant and unbudgeted costs and the very varied needs of different groups.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Merri-bek Council has been at the forefront of the growing and evolving Food System policy area since the launch of our first Food System Strategy in 2017. Actions under the Food System Strategy 2024-2027 will consolidate the extensive knowledge, relationships and community networks built over the last seven years to embed the food system to build resilience in the face of the climate emergency and growing social and economic inequality.

This will be achieved under 6 strategic focus areas:

Strategic Focus Area	2024-2027 Goals
1. Food equity and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen the Food and Material relief network• Understand the needs of food insecure cohorts• Secure external funding for Food Hub coordinator and Community food hub projects in Glenroy / Fawkner
2. Sustainable local food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to support and promote the benefits of urban agriculture using regenerative, closed loop principles• Review and streamline Council processes for enabling food growing in public spaces
3. Inclusive, connected food cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with CERES to expand / strengthen Olives to Oil Festival• Honour First Nations knowledge and culture in urban agriculture/edible landscapes
4. Education and capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement My Smart Garden program strategic plan• Host local food system network / forums• Upskill community organisations to measure their impact.

Strategic Focus Area	2024-2027 Goals
5. Strong local food economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local community food enterprises to establish and thrive • Help create viable local independent production, processing, logistics / distribution and food retail options which support employment and keep money circulating in the local economy
6. Food system advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to participate in local government network forums and collective advocacy to State and Federal governments • Continue to participate in strategic research projects and partnerships • Advocate for more reliable and ongoing funding streams, support for volunteering and access to infrastructure

The Food System Strategy outlines the holistic long-term approach Council will take to address the complex issues causing food insecurity.

Council's role in food relief is to facilitate and advocate, and to actively support CIS Merri-bek to convene the Food and Material Relief Network.

Previous Council Decisions

Notice of Motion on Support for Emergency Food and Material Relief – 10 April 2024

That Council receives a report in June which outlines:

1. *The emergency food and material aid services and volunteer groups that exist in Merri-bek and where they are located, including any such services or volunteer groups that have closed or reduced their service.*
2. *The level of support that is offered to emergency food and material aid services and volunteer groups by Merri-bek council, compared to other local councils including how the actions in Council's Food Systems Strategy Extension 2020-2024 interacts with assistance for people needing emergency food and material aid.*
3. *Recommendations for a process by which Council can begin the process of acquiring land for the purpose of constructing a purpose-built facility which includes a commercial-standard kitchen for unfunded emergency food and material relief organisations.*
4. *How Council's Food Systems Strategy Extension 2020-2024 can be used to increase support for emergency food and material aid.*

Food System Strategy - 6 December 2023

That Council:

1. *Notes the outcomes of the Food System Strategy 2020-2024 detailed in this report.*
2. *Notes the need for further community engagement to develop the next Food System Strategy and action plan for 2024–2027, in line with the VicHealth Strategy 2023-33.*
3. *Receives a future report on the outcomes and recommendations of the community engagement.*
4. *Refers the cost to fund a further three years of the strategy (\$130,000 per year, total funding \$390,000) to the 2024/2025 budget process for consideration.*

1. Policy Context

- **Council Action Plan 2021-25** includes a commitment to develop a healthy, accessible, affordable local food system that strengthens social cohesion, food security and community resilience to support residents to eat nutritious food.
- **Sustainable** local food production is a priority / focus in Zero Caron Merri-bek 2020-24 and Climate risk strategy and foundation action plan 2023-25 (see 5. *Climate Action*)
- **Food** security is recognised in the Human Rights Policy 2016-2026 as a human rights issue (see 4. *Human rights and Gender Equity*)
- **VicHealth** Strategy 2023-2033 shifts the focus from individual risk factors to a systems-based approach.

2. Background

The Food System Strategy 2017-2020 was developed through the advocacy of a proactive and driven local food community. In 2020 Council resolved to extend the food system strategy for a further four years to 2024. This revised strategy builds on the ambitious goals set out in 2017 and addresses the current context that has been informed by the impact of the pandemic, climate change and economic factors.

More Victorian Councils and State Government agencies like VicHealth are now recognising the importance of a food system approach. Merri-bek Council was an early adopter of addressing food system change through community collaboration to build on existing strengths and community-led initiatives.

Council has funded CIS Merri-bek over 3 years to boost their service capacity and service co-ordination capacity to address food and material relief in Merri-bek.

3. Issues

Food security and food relief

Food security and food relief is a growing concern in Merri-bek. The two Commonwealth funded food and material relief agencies in Merri-bek are CIS Merri – bek and the Salvation Army. In addition to these, there are approximately 20 other community, volunteer and faith-based organisations providing food and material relief (**Attachment 1**).

Council takes a facilitator and advocacy role in food relief and will actively participate in the Food and Material Relief Network convened by CIS – Merri-bek. This network will assist in the co-ordination of services, assessment of need and will provide data for advocacy. Local government take a variety of roles in food relief and **Attachment 2** describes the role some local governments are taking in the space of food system and food relief.

Acquiring land for the purpose of constructing a purpose-built facility including a commercial-standard kitchen for unfunded emergency food and material relief organisations is not recommended. There are varying and different needs for each organisation depending on the type of service they deliver and co-location is not necessarily a desired outcome for these organisations. Initial investigations have revealed land acquisition alone for a suitably sized facility would be in excess of \$3 million plus a \$3 to \$4 million for a suitable building. This facility is unfunded, and officers recommend the needs of individual unfunded food relief organisations could be better met through opportunities to use existing Council venues and informing them of lease opportunities.

Strategic Focus Areas

In response to community and stakeholder feedback and the current context, the direction has been updated for the current strategic focus areas, and a new strategic focus area added: Strong local food economy.

1. Food Equity and security

In concert with support for emergency food relief, Council is taking a long-term holistic approach to food security through the Council's Community Food Hub project. A needs and opportunity analysis has identified the common gaps / barriers across community-led organisations to inform a joint response. Issues being addressed through this project include the lack of a reliable, affordable, quality, nutritious and culturally appropriate food supply, and the lack of food logistics, warehousing and other infrastructure. Solutions are being tested in Glenroy and Fawkner during the second half of 2024.

2. Sustainable Local Food Production

Driven by strong community interest, Council will continue to support urban agriculture and food growing, including raising awareness and understanding of the benefits and collaborating with Climate Risk and Open Space staff to support the community in establishing new and improving existing food growing sites. Council processes for enabling food growing in public spaces including unused and untrafficked laneways will be reviewed and streamlined.

3. Inclusive, connected food cultures

Council will build on the strength of the CERES partnership to expand the Olives to Oil Festival. Council will also work directly with First Nations communities to honour Aboriginal knowledge and cultural belonging and support urban connections to Country through urban agriculture and edible landscapes in Merri-bek.

4. Education and capacity building

To continue building our communities knowledge and capacity over the next 3 years. The 2024-29 My Smart Garden Strategic Plan will strengthen the delivery of the program in the coming years. Continuing to host the Local Food System Network and networking forums is essential for sharing food system best practice and case studies. We will also look at upskilling the community in the implementation of data collection and monitoring and evaluation processes.

5. Strong local food economy - NEW

Council will explore options to help Community Food Enterprises and food groups in Merri-bek with business and marketing skills, financial and volunteer management. Embedding support for local food enterprises in Council's catering / food procurement processes is another key opportunity, as is looking into broadening access to Council's funding and grant programs.

6. Food System Advocacy

Merri-bek will continue to join with other Councils and food system actors to advocate for food system legislative and systemic changes, such as including access to food as a human right in Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. The Food System Officer will advocate internally and externally to secure the funding and resourcing needed to support community led food system initiatives. This includes full coverage for volunteer management, governance, base operations and allowance for data collection and the evaluation of projects and initiatives.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

The activities under Food Systems Strategy address the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency action plan, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by:

- Reducing the carbon footprint and carbon miles of food to have lower or no transport emissions
- Reducing food waste to landfill and associated emissions (captured through Waste services reporting)
- Encouraging plant-based diets

The Food System Strategy supports Goal 4 of the Climate Risk Strategy: Community and Business.

The Food security and equity strategic focus area is about meeting community needs among the most vulnerable or at-risk. The Strategy has a holistic approach to food security through collective models which aim to strengthen the food system so that food access, affordability and supply is more reliable and stable and not as vulnerable to shocks and stresses.

The strategic focus on Strong local food economy will advocate for diverse food supply chains and support local independent production, processing, and retail networks, and less reliance on the large supermarket chains. A more local, diverse and decentralised is less vulnerable to extreme weather events and other disruptions. It also has less greenhouse gas emissions associated with transport and storage.

This initiative directly addresses access to healthy food, a social determinant of health, to reduce overall vulnerability in the community. Food relief support (assessments and referral pathways, coordination of services) addresses the needs of the most at-risk and also supports overall resilience of the community to cope with extreme events and chronic issues.

The full cost of funding the Food System Strategy directly supports climate resilience outcomes for Merri-bek.

Climate resilience has been considered in the monitoring and evaluation plan for the Strategy and will be reported annually as part of the Strategy reporting.

Economic sustainability implications

Under the new strategic focus area: Strong local food economy, the Food System Strategy will support the strengthening of Community Food Enterprise (CFE) models and networks. CFE's are locally owned / controlled food businesses or ventures founded around a desire to create positive outcomes for the communities they serve. They are an essential component of a healthy sustainable, regenerative and just food system. Existing ongoing projects and initiatives such as the Community Food Hub are exploring efficiencies in the scale and operation of CFE's to maximise the impact of investment. This and other future projects will contribute to a strong local food economy by providing training, education, employment pathways and mentoring and support for CFE's.

Legal and risk considerations

Legal and risk considerations will be assessed on a program and project basis during the life of the Strategy

Human Rights Consideration

Merri-bek Human Rights Policy 2016-2026 recognises food security as a significant equity issue that requires Council's support and intervention. Access to healthy, safe, culturally appropriate, affordable food has been an ongoing challenge, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and remains a priority issue in Merri-bek.

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The goals of the Food System Strategy are contributing to addressing the right to an adequate standard of living which is contained in article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)- 'Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living including adequate food, water and housing and to the continuous improvement of living conditions'

A Gender Impact Assessment will be conducted as part of the development of the implementation plan.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Following high level stakeholder interviews between July and November 2023, Phase 2 Food System Strategy engagement was undertaken between mid-February and mid-April 2024 (**Attachment 4**).

The purpose of Phase 2 was to obtain insights to help determine the strategic priorities, programs and initiatives for the Food System Strategy 2024-2027.

Over 275 people were engaged, through the following channels:

- Individuals / households - 125 filled out a survey (on-line, hard copy and in-language formats)
- Community groups and service providers – 29 engaged via a survey, direct contact or interviews
- Community Food Forum, Merri Merri Wayi community day – 43 interactions
- Presentations at reference, advisory, and service provider meetings – 80 participants

Summary of Feedback

Individuals / households

- Merri-bek's diverse range of local food stores and grocers are an important and valued source of food for residents. Many shop for food outside Merri-bek, which is consistent with our highly multicultural population traveling to find affordable outlets specialising in different cultural ingredients.
- Over 30 per cent of the survey respondents (the majority of whom are middle income households) indicated they sometimes experience challenges accessing healthy food that meets their dietary needs and cultural preferences. The high cost of these foods is the main reason given, suggesting current cost-of-living pressures are limiting the food choices and options for more Merri-bek residents.
- There is also a strong interest in participating in a range of local food activities and programs, including cultural food events / festivals, community gardening, fresh food boxes and bulk food cooperatives. Better promotion of services, programs and activities was seen as the most important way to increase participation, as well as diversifying their locations and providing free, low-cost or discounted options.

Community groups, service providers and key stakeholders

- A strong common theme is that community groups and food security / food relief organisations are chronically under resourced, rely heavily on volunteers, including for critical / skilled positions, leading to burn-out and high staff turnover.
- There is a critical need for more reliable, ongoing funding streams which cover base operating costs. Organisations want help to measure their impacts and benefits, to raise the profile of the work and attract more funding / resourcing.

- Many groups recognised and valued the important role Council plays in tracking and sharing food system projects and initiatives, facilitating relationships, partnerships and networks.
- There is a clear need and opportunity for Council to play a stronger role in facilitating collaboration between food relief organisations to better understand service needs and gaps, and to improve the coordination of services.
- Community Food Enterprises (CFE's) want more business skills training, financial and volunteer management support, as well as more flexible options to access Council funding and support. CFE's and community groups also want help to secure affordable long-term leases on buildings and associated infrastructure.

Affected persons rights and interests

This is not applicable.

Communications

A communication plan will be developed during the exhibition period post endorsement of the strategy.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The cost to fund a further three years of the strategy (\$130,000 per year, total funding \$390,000) has been referred to the draft 2024/2025 budget process for consideration.

Additional funding required to start or continue projects under each of these strategic priority areas will be sought through grant funding opportunities or future Council budget considerations. Opportunities to partner across Council programs and services to deliver initiatives with shared or complementary objectives will be pursued to optimise investment and impact for our community.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's consideration of 2024/25 Budget in June 2024 and consideration of any feedback through the Draft Food System Strategy 2024-2027 (**Attachment 3**) public exhibition period as well as final Council consideration of the Final Strategy, implementation will commence in late 2024.

Attachment/s

1 ↓	Food relief, free meals, low cost providers	D24/240031
2 ↓	Local government role in food relief	D24/240042
3 ↓	Draft Merri-bek Food System Strategy 2024-2027	D24/232030
4 ↓	Food System Strategy - Report on outcomes of community engagement May 2024	D24/240200

Food System Strategy Council Report June 2024**Attachment 1**Food relief, free meals and low cost food providers

Commonwealth funded organisations	Community and faith Groups	Neighbourhood Houses
CIS Merri – bek Salvation Army	Uniting Lentara (Broadmeadows) VACCA (Preston) ADRA Community Care (Preston) Uniting Asylum Seekers Welcome Centre St Vincent De Paul Really Really Free Market (Coburg) Nourishing Neighbours (Coburg) Muslim Women Council of Victoria Inc North Point – Newlands (Coburg North) Olive Way (Coburg) Hope Café (Fawkner) Our Daily Bread (Coburg) Albert Street Community Cupboard (Brunswick) Fawkner Community Pantry (Fawkner) Box Forest Wesleyan Church Community Pantry (Hadfield) Our Lady Help Of Christians Catholic Church (East Brunswick)	Reynard Street NH Brunswick Neighbourhood House Glenroy Neighbourhood House NECCHI (Newlands)

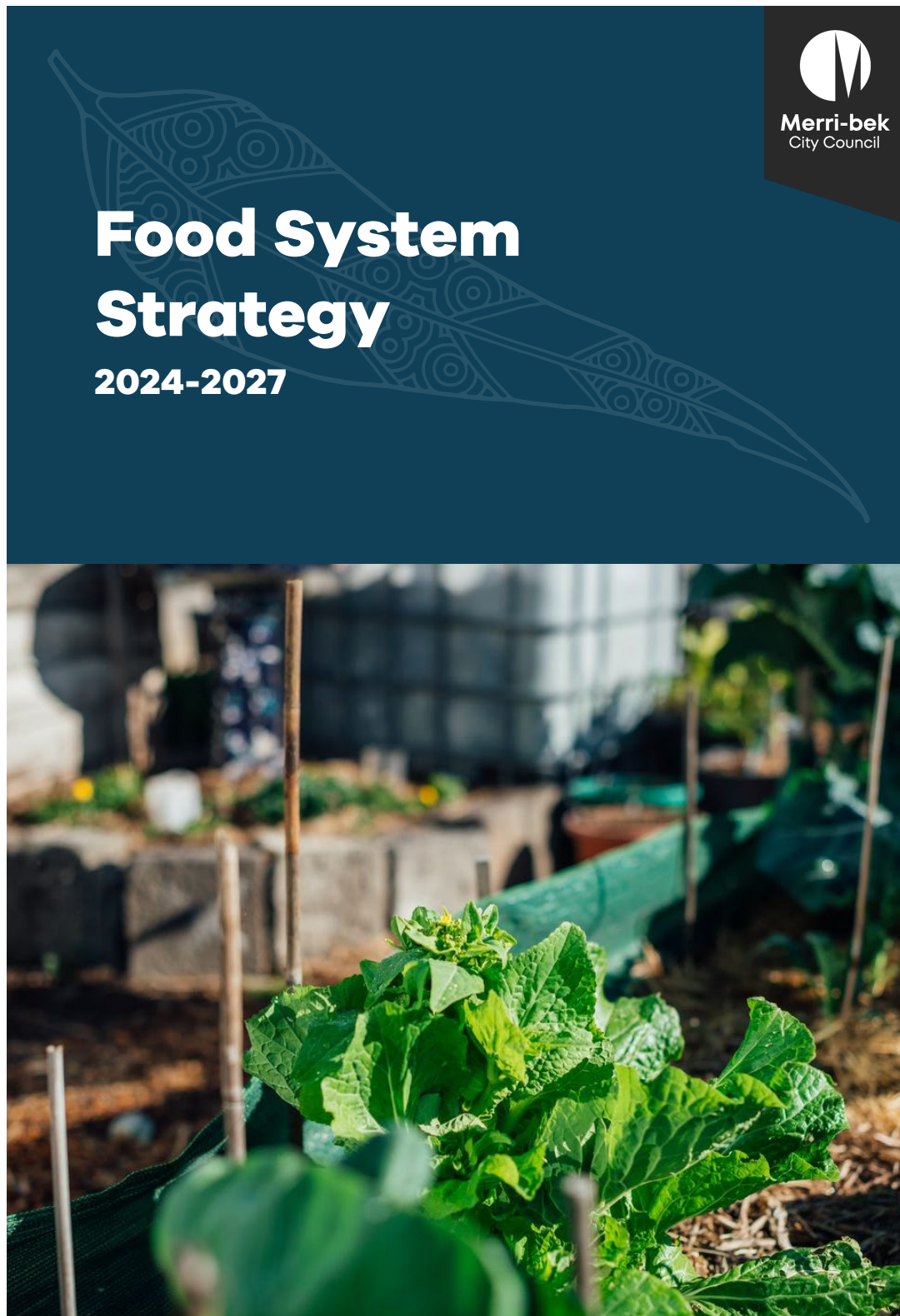
The list of services and operating hours may change, therefore please refer to the Food Relief organisations link on Merri-bek website: [Food Relief Organisations](#)

Food System Strategy Council Report June 2024

Attachment 2

Local governments playing a role in food relief

Council	Does Council provide food relief	Food relief policy	F&M Relief Network
Wyndham	Yes, for young people through Youth Resource Centre (and their families)	No. Alignment to Resilient Wyndham Policy	Yes under review
Greater Dandenong	Part time Community Connector position to work with newly arrived with no income to source food and material relief.	No. Aligned to Anti-poverty strategy	Anti poverty consortium established to address food and material relief concerns for asylum seekers.
Hume	No, community organisations and Neighbourhood Houses are the main providers of food relief.	No Food Relief Policy, but Social Justice Charter. No strategic direction for food relief	No
Yarra			Yes
Nillumbik	Supports groups to do food relief – small grants (not confirmed) – not core funding from Council		Food Network
Melbourne	Focus on partnering with food relief organisations. Investing community food enterprises and advocating to raise income support.	Community Food Relief Plan -strategic priority is to move beyond food relief to increased food security for everyone, especially the most vulnerable.	
Darebin	Supports community organisations and volunteer groups. Main support is provided to the community via the Darebin Information Volunteer and Resource Service.		Yes



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Acknowledgement

Meeri-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.

Message from the Mayor

TBC

Vision

Our vision is a food system that is:

- **Sustainable** – Supports a healthy environment, healthy people and a resilient community
- **Just** – Makes nutritious and culturally appropriate food accessible and affordable for everyone
- **Vibrant** – Protects and nurtures food culture, celebrates diversity and builds a sense of community

Executive Summary

Merri-bek Council has been at the forefront of the growing and evolving Food System policy area since the launch of our first Food System Strategy in 2017. Actions under the Food System Strategy 2024-27 will consolidate the extensive knowledge, relationships and community networks built over the last seven years to embed the food system change needed for food security and community resilience in the face of the climate emergency and growing social and economic inequality. This will be achieved under 6 strategic focus areas:

Strategic Focus Area	2024-27 goals
1. Food equity and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the Food and Material relief network Understand the needs of food insecure cohorts Secure external funding for Food Hub coordinator and Community food hub projects in Glenroy / Fawkner
2. Sustainable local food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support and promote the benefits of urban agriculture using regenerative, closed loop principles Review and streamline Council processes for enabling food growing in public spaces
3. Inclusive, connected food cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CERES to expand / strengthen Olives to Oil Festival Honour First Nations knowledge and culture in urban agriculture/edible landscapes
4. Education and capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement My Smart Garden program strategic plan Host local food system network / forums Upskill community organisations to measure their impact.
5. Strong local food economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local community food enterprises to establish and thrive Help create viable local independent production, processing, logistics / distribution and food retail options which support employment and keep money circulating in the local economy
6. Food system advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to participate in local government network forums and collective advocacy to State and Federal government Continue to participate in strategic research projects and partnerships Advocate for more reliable and ongoing funding streams, support for volunteering and access to infrastructure

Introduction

The Food System Strategy vision and goals have never been more relevant and important. Our food system is under strain from more frequent and severe shocks which are disrupting global supply chains. These include climate change related floods, fires and drought, the pandemic and geopolitical conflict¹.

The importance of healthy, accessible, affordable local food systems for food security and community resilience has been recognised in the Council Action Plan 2021-25. The state government has also recognised that healthier food systems support healthier people and help combat the impacts of climate change. The Victorian State Health plan requires Councils to consider implementing healthy and sustainable food system initiatives to help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, improve access to fresh, healthy and affordable food and improve health outcomes. The VicHealth Strategy 2023-33 have shifted focus from individual risk factors to a systems-based approach. Food systems is one of three key focus areas to better understand and respond to the many complex factors influencing and impacting on health.

More local government areas are seeing the relevance and need for resilient food systems and adopting a food system approach to help combat climate change impacts, the rising cost of living and inequality. Merri-bek Council is a partner in the multi-year University of Melbourne Foodprint research project which aims to strengthen the resilience of Victoria's food system to the impacts of shocks and stresses by providing evidence and guidance about how to undertake food resilience planning.

Principles

The core principles on which the original Food System Strategy were founded continue to apply with additional context informed by community engagement:

1. Address the full breath of a **circular, closed loop food system** (growing, processing, distribution, access, consumption and disposal) to deliver multiple social, environmental and economic benefit
2. Council will **build on existing community strengths and initiatives**, delivering long-term sustained benefit by supporting and resourcing collaboration and partnerships with committed community members and organisations
3. Apply **human rights and equity principles** to all actions and initiatives, recognising that access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food is a fundamental and universal human right
4. Align the food system strategy with other Council policies and actions in an **integrated, whole-of-council approach**
5. Collaborate with research institutions, peak bodies and other levels of government to **advocate for the legislative and systemic changes** needed to achieve our vision
6. Ensure the strategy remains **flexible, responsive and relevant** without compromising the long-term strategic intent and goal

Monitoring and Evaluation

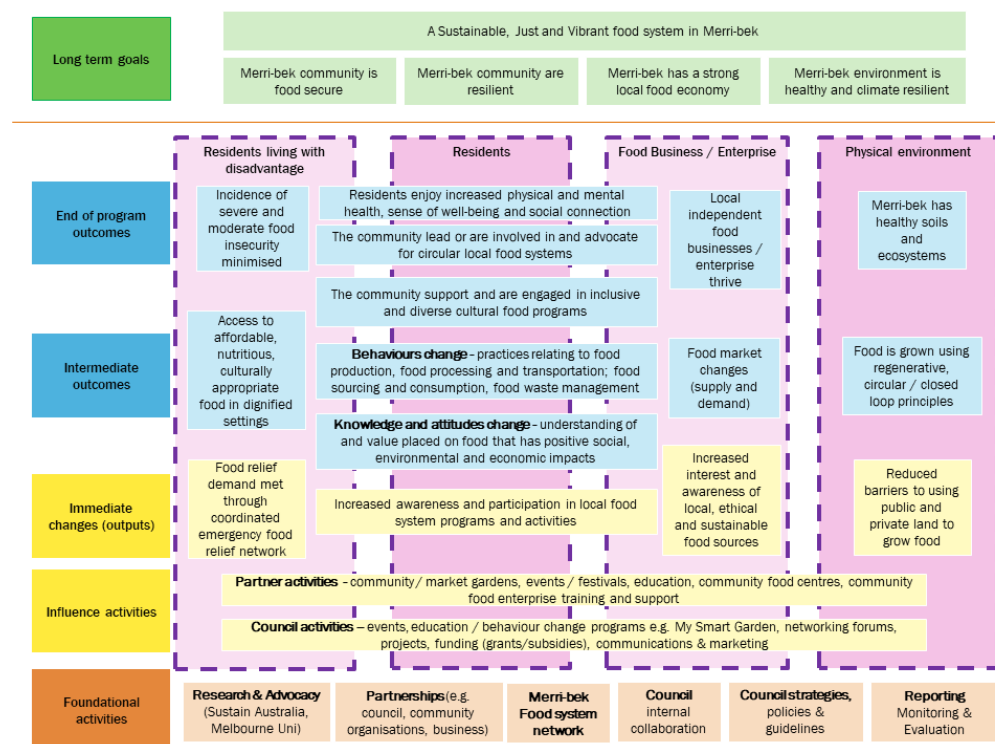
The Food System program includes a range of responses - from the immediate or short-term which are constrained by business-as-usual limitations, to exploring longer term innovative interventions to redesign and ultimately transform the food system.

To achieve our vision, we need the full range of responses working in concert to ensure our activities are grounded in progression towards change at a structural and systemic level.

The Food System Strategy outcome logic model in Figure 1 provides the theory of how system change will occur. It shows the causal links between the Strategy activities and the desired outcomes, leading to the intended changes over time.

Based on what has been learned about the effectiveness and impact of the work in the last 4 years, these links have been updated to more clearly define the proposed pathways to achieving the Strategy vision.

Figure 1: Food System Strategy Outcome Logic



Monitoring and evaluation of the food system strategy has been primarily through tracking the numbers of events / activities and participants, surveying participants of Council-run or partnered events, reporting on project-based outcomes / achievements and developing case studies.

The development of Merri-bek specific food security indicators will be a focus in 2024-27 to better measure the success of the Strategy. Just as the rising demand for emergency food relief services is an indicator of a food system that is failing to deliver social equity, health, and wellbeing for the whole Merri-bek community, improved food security is an indicator of a fairer, more effective and healthier food system.

Council has committed to working with community groups to help improve monitoring and evaluation processes, including support to identify indicators and implement data collection processes (see Strategic Priority 4. Education and Capacity Building).

Food System Strategy goals align closely with the Climate Risk Strategy, Social Cohesion Plan and Zero Carbon Merri-bek Action Plan. We will work with these complementary program areas to identify and implement shared indicators in the monitoring and reporting of the Strategy's progress during 2024-27.

Strategic Priorities

1. Food Equity and Security

Food prices and food insecurity have been rising across Victoria and beyond. In 2022, over 8% of Victorian adults reported experiencing 'severe food insecurity'ⁱⁱ

Monitoring of food insecurity in Victoria is infrequent and narrow in scope. It is focussed on severe food insecurity only, and the response has been limited to the provision of emergency food reliefⁱⁱⁱ.

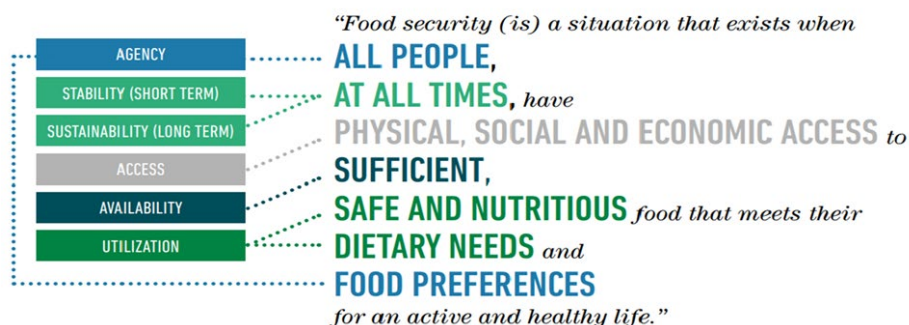
Figure 2. Food insecurity spectrum^{iv}



There is currently a lack of clarity on the responsibilities of state or federal governments for promoting food security and addressing food insecurity^v. The emergency relief sector in Victoria is not well understood in relation to its complexity, scale, nature and the services it delivers. A 2021 report into the sector recommends a long-term investment in solutions to address food insecurity, including a state-wide food relief framework and establishment of a Victorian emergency relief peak body to coordinate action, collect data and information about the sector's operations^{vi}.

The Food System Strategy uses the definition of food security based on six dimensions:

Figure 3: The six dimensions of Food Security^{vii}



All six dimensions of food security need to be addressed to achieve food security. The emergency food relief response focusses primarily on availability, and to a lesser extent access. Food relief and food security organisations in Merri-bek are struggling to meet the demand for food relief and are facing multiple challenges such as lack of coordination with other services (including assessment and referral processes), chronic under resourcing and reliance on volunteers including for skilled / critical roles.

There are over 22 agencies and organisations providing food and material relief and food security services to Merri-bek residents. These encompass a range of approaches by faith-based organisations, charities, neighbourhood houses and community-led organisations. Council proposes taking a stronger leadership and facilitation role to support the Merri-bek food and material relief network and to work through the service sector to better measure and understand the needs of cohorts who rely on food relief and how we can best support them.

Councils Community Food Hub project is taking a long-term holistic approach to food security by identifying the common gaps and needs across community-led organisations and implementing a joint response. The model aims to prevent mild and moderate food insecurity and lessen the incidence of severe food insecurity. The focus is on improving access / affordability and sustainability as well as availability. Issues being addressed through this project include the lack of a reliable, affordable, quality, nutritious and culturally appropriate food supply, and the lack of food logistics, warehousing and other infrastructure. See the Appendix 1 - Culturally relevant food for Fawkner Case Study for how this is being tested on the ground

To be effective Council needs to work across local government areas and with other levels of government to both measure and respond across all six interconnected dimensions.

Food Equity & Security: Current direction	New direction for 2024-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community food hub in the north project and coordinatorFood Leadership Action Group (FLAG)Community Food Hub grants programCollective Impact Measurement framework / tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strengthen the Food and Material relief networkUnderstand the needs of food insecure cohortsSecure external funding for Food Hub coordinator and Community food hub projects in Glenroy / Fawkner

2. Sustainable Local Food Production

There is continued strong interest from the Merri-bek community in urban agriculture and food growing. This includes development and expansion of existing community garden sites as well as Interest in establishing new sites. Merri-bek community and market gardens want to see increased awareness and recognition of the many community benefits, which are supported by research into the broader urban agriculture sector^{viii}. Social and economic benefits include developing farming / food growing skills, increased access to fresh food, building community connections and wellbeing, supporting shared learning and respect for different cultures and cultural identity. The environmental benefits of growing food on underutilised land include regenerating soil and promoting biodiversity, recycling of water and nutrients (through composting), and contributing to urban greening.

Urban agriculture and local food production is recognised in the Merri-bek Climate Risk Strategy as an important action to both mitigate (reduce greenhouse gases causing climate change) and help our community adapt to the impacts of climate change. Access to local food grown in healthy soils which can withstand heatwaves and reduce stormwater run-off becomes more important as rising temperatures and severe weather events disrupt global food supplies. The sense of community and resilience that can be fostered through the collective growing and sharing of food is also a buffer against climate shocks and stresses.

Collaboration across council departments is needed to reduce barriers and increase support for urban agriculture, including through identification of and more secure access to underutilised land, volunteer support, investment in circular economies and access to capital and funding. These issues will be addressed through the review and update of the communal food growing guidelines and toolkit.

Sustainable Local Food Production: Current direction	New direction for 2024-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen urban agriculture operations and governance - Community Garden forums Support to establish new food growing spaces / sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support and promote the benefits of urban agriculture using regenerative, closed loop principles Review and streamline Council processes for enabling food growing in public spaces

3. Inclusive, Connected Food Cultures

Council facilitates inclusive and diverse cultural food programs through partnerships with Merri-bek organisations to deliver food events and festivals which support community connection and inclusion. Council has partnered with CERES to deliver the popular annual community festival Olives to Oil since 2021. In 2023, Council sponsored the Coburg Garden Festival, a collaboration between 8 Coburg based groups in a celebration of community, food and gardening. The outcomes and benefits of these initiatives are described in more detail in Appendix 1 Case Studies

There is a growing interest and recognition from the Merri-bek community, as well as more widely, of the importance of recognising First Nations people and their food culture and knowledge systems in food system policy^{ix}. Council will work directly with First Nations communities to honour Aboriginal knowledge and cultural belonging and support urban connections to Country through urban agriculture and edible landscapes in Merri-bek.

Inclusive, connected food cultures: Current direction	New direction for 2024-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate food and culture through multicultural food events and shared learning Partner with CERES to deliver the annual Olives to Oil festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CERES to expand / strengthen Olives to Oil Festival Honour First Nations knowledge and culture in urban agriculture/edible landscapes

4. Education and Capacity Building

Council is committed to building food skills and knowledge in the community. [My Smart Garden](#) is a free sustainable gardening community education program run collaboratively by partner Councils in metropolitan Naarm/Melbourne. It aims to support residents to grow their own food, protect their home from sun and wind, support biodiversity, use water wisely and reduce waste. Since becoming a member in 2021, Council has held or co-hosted over 30 free workshops and events and over 2000 Merri-bek residents have participated in the program.

78% of surveyed My Smart Garden participants started or improved fruit and vegetable growing and 89% report saving money through the program.

- My Smart Garden Program Evaluation Report Nov 2022

The My Smart Garden program won the 2023 Tidy City & Sustainability Education award and the Community Champion award at the [2023 Premier's Sustainability Awards](#), in the Thriving Environment Category.

In late 2023, an executive board of member Councils was established who employed a Program Coordinator to work with Councils to develop the 2024-29 My Smart Garden Strategic Plan. This will focus the priorities and strengthen the delivery of the program in the coming years.

Merri-bek food groups recognise and value the important role Council plays in facilitating relationships, partnerships and networks. Council will continue to support community groups through the coordination of the Local Food System Network and by hosting networking forums to share best practice food system projects and case studies.

In addition to support for governance processes, community groups and service providers told us they need help to measure their impacts and benefits, to raise the profile of the work and attract more funding and resourcing. Council will explore ways to upskill community in the implementation of data collection and monitoring and evaluation processes.

Education & Capacity Building: Current direction	New direction for 2024-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join the My Smart Garden education program Local Food System network / forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement My Smart Garden program strategic plan Local food system network / forums Upskill community organisations to measure their impact.

5. Strong Local Food Economy

This is a new focus area for 2024-27. Merri-bek has a vibrant, diverse range of local independent market gardens, food processors, grocers, hospitality and retail outlets which contribute to the local food economy. There is a strong food manufacturing sector, providing more than 1000 local jobs. New manufacturing centres are being established, such as in Newlands Road, Coburg, driven by access to skilled labour and good transport connections. Merri-bek residents place a high value and importance on local food stores which, alongside the major supermarket chains, are their main source of food.

Local and regional decentralised and diverse food supply chains can create jobs, improve livelihoods and contribute to the resilience of Melbourne's food supply.* Facilitating collaboration between food businesses, education providers, Community Food Enterprise (CFE) and community food groups can further strengthen the local food economy and livelihoods through training, education and employment opportunities.

CFE's and community food groups in Merri-bek need help with business skills, financial and volunteer management. Council will explore partnering with CERES in Brunswick, who have skills and experience in running small scale food wholesale and retail enterprises, to offer training and support for people who want to set up and run a CFE in Merri-bek. Embedding support for local food enterprises in Council's catering / food procurement processes is another key opportunity, as is looking into broadening access to Council's funding and grant programs. Council will share relevant business support services and opportunities to access infrastructure, for example commercial kitchens.

New Strategic Direction – Strong Local Food Economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local community food enterprises to establish and thrive Help create viable local independent production, processing, logistics / distribution and food retail options which support employment and keep money circulating in the local economy

6. Food System Advocacy

Merri-bek will continue to join with other Councils and food system actors to advocate for the legislative and systemic changes needed to achieve our Food System goals. Merri-bek became a signatory to the Victorian Food System Consensus Statement in 2023. Access to food as a human right is one of the leading advocacy points under the statement. The Merri-bek Human Rights

Policy recognises access to healthy, safe, affordable culturally appropriate food as a significant equity issue requiring Council's support / intervention. The human right to food has not been legislated in Australia, so governments cannot be held accountable for food security. Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities could be extended to include the human right to food as part of the right to an adequate standard of living^{xi}

Council will join with other Councils to advocate for a state policy framework which is supportive of local food systems and urban agriculture, for example through the Public Health and Wellbeing Act, Planning and Environment Act and Climate Change Act and Strategy. This would enable greater policy coherence and impact at the local government level, through the local urban planning scheme and land use policies^{xii}

The food system officer will continue to advocate internally and externally to secure the funding and resourcing needed to support community led food system initiatives. This includes full coverage for volunteer management, governance, base operations and allowance for data collection and the evaluation of projects and initiatives. Support to access premises and other infrastructure will be provided through community infrastructure planning and expression of interest processes.

Food System Advocacy: Current direction	New direction for 2024-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustain Australia local government network forums• Participation in research projects e.g. Melbourne Uni Foodprint• Signatory to the Victorian Food System Consensus Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to participate in local government network forums and collective advocacy to State and Federal government• Continue to participate in strategic research projects and partnerships• Advocate for more reliable and ongoing funding streams, support for volunteering and access to infrastructure

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Case Studies

Case Study: Culturally Relevant Food for Fawkner

[Merri Food Hub](#) (MFH) is a community food initiative based at the Fawkner Senior Citizens Centre. The Hub offers an affordable, safe and consistent supply of culturally relevant fruits and vegetables to Merri-bek residents sourced from local growers and suppliers who prioritise environmentally sustainable practices. [Fawkner Food Bowls](#) (FFB) is a supplier of fresh local produce, as well as an inclusive communal growing space that supports food system education and learning.

Project aims:

Between July to December 2022, MFH received funding through the Community Food Hub project to partner with FFB to:

1. Increase access to culturally relevant foods to the Fawkner population who are among the most diverse and have among the highest reported rates of food insecurity in Merri-bek
2. Build partnerships to establish a viable local supply of fresh food using existing infrastructure

How it worked:

The project paid for an Operations Manager at MFH to coordinate production and distribution with FFB, assess community needs through surveys and on-site conversations with customers, and promote the availability of culturally relevant foods.

An Urban Farm Manager was also employed to support scaling up production at Fawkner Food Bowls and coordinate what crops were grown with the identified needs of MFH's customer base.

MFH and FFB worked together to coordinate the transport and cold storage of produce from FFB and other Merri-bek producers to MFH to be distributed through their weekly market and food boxes.

Outcomes:

24 culturally relevant foods, as identified by MFH customers, were included in subsidised fresh produce box for customers facing food insecurity, which had the same choice, range and quality enjoyed by full paying customers. Average weekly MFH customers increased from 90 to 158 during the project, 38% from multicultural backgrounds.

The two roles worked effectively together to identify availability of relevant produce, what was selling well or in demand, and to plan what would be planted and harvested. This coordination supported both enterprises by providing certainty on both ends of the supply chain. They also enabled good coordination and utilisation of cold storage at FFB and transport of produce from FFB and other growing sites by volunteers to MFH.



Key Learnings:

- Having the paid Operations Manager and Urban Farm Manager role enabled MFH and FFM to scale up their impact based on existing models that are informed by community needs and experience
- Access to physical infrastructure is an ongoing gap and need for Community Food Enterprises like MFH
- Urban farm models like FFB need more development to provide a reliable, affordable and consistent supply of food to organisations like MFH delivering food security services

Case Study: CERES Olives to Oil Festival

Since 2021, Council has teamed up with CERES for the annual Olives to Oil Festival, which brings people from different demographics and backgrounds together to harvest olives and have them pressed communally into delicious, local olive oil.

Not only does the festival make use of a precious urban food resource that often goes to waste, it is also about celebrating the cultural heritage of Melbourne.

300 Merri-bek households have collected a total of 9 tonne of olives since 2021, with 70% of those surveyed saying the festival helped them connect with their community and neighbours - 2023 Olives to Oil Festival Evaluation Report



Olive Collection Day at CERES in Brunswick

Merrin Layden, CERES Community Food Systems Manager in the [Guardian](#):

'In the postwar era, we had big Greek, Italian and other Mediterranean populations migrating to Melbourne who brought olive trees – a lot of them original stock from their places of origin. Making oil from olives is difficult to do for households, as you need access to a processor, a large batch of olives and complicated equipment.

The program was born out of wanting to bring the community together over a shared harvesting tradition. Which goes back to villages in the Greek Islands, where there is a village press, and people will harvest together and press together and celebrate the oil that they get.'

The Olives to Oil festival was awarded **2023 Merri-bek Community Event of the Year**

Case Study: Coburg Garden Festival

In December 2023, Council supported **Newlands Neighbourhood House** and **Reynard Street Neighbourhood House** to host the inaugural Coburg Garden Festival. A celebration of community, food and gardening, the festival brought together eight passionate community partners who hosted 15 events over three days across Coburg.

A central theme of the festival was recognition that all gardening activities in Merri-bek are being done on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country and are therefore occurring within an ancient and ongoing ecology that is integral to the life of the First Nations people of this Country.

Figure 4: Map of event sites, Coburg Garden Festival, 1-3 December 2023



Participants were treated to multicultural food, music, community garden tours and nature walks, and gardening and composting workshops. The community partners involved in this hyper-local festival demonstrated what a circular food system looks like on the ground: growing, preparing, consuming and recycling our food in ways which respect the limits of our natural resources, enhance soil health and biodiversity and honour traditional food cultures.

Appendix 2 – Definitions

Community Food Enterprises (CFEs) are locally owned/controlled food businesses or ventures founded around a desire to create positive outcomes for the communities they serve. This can include improved social or environmental outcomes, increased access to healthy food and support for local regenerative and ethical producers. CFE's can be community cooperatives, not-for-profit or for-profit social enterprises.

Regenerative agriculture uses farming principles and practices that effectively rebuild soil health and landscape diversity and function.

Appendix 3 – Engagement

Engaging extensively with Merri-bek residents and community organisations in early 2024 has confirmed the value of and support for the strategic focus areas and food system programs and initiatives already in progress. It also highlighted that Merri-bek has a diverse range of independent food businesses, a good foundation from which the new strategic direction – strong local food economy – was created. There were some clear common issues and potential solutions which emerged that have been prioritised in the 2024-27 Strategy.

Council also engaged comprehensively with organisations who have clients or members who are disadvantaged and have a lived experience of being food insecure. This has given a good understanding the number and types of services provided and the challenges that need to be addressed to enable these organisations to meet their clients' needs.

Appendix 4 – Victorian Food Systems Consensus Statement

Notice of Motion 13 September 2023:

'The City of Merri-bek endorses the actions and leverage points in this consensus statement because we believe it will lead to a better food system for Merri-bek, other local government areas and for Victoria more broadly. A food system that is healthy, regenerative and equitable for decades to come. One that guarantees a right to food for all and fosters a resilient, thriving community. Amid the sky-rocketing cost of living and speculation on vital agricultural land in Victoria, it is imperative that we commit to strategies that enable access to food for all, protect our food production industries and regenerate the land'.

The Victorian Food Systems Consensus Statement, Towards A Healthy, Regenerative and Equitable Food System in Victoria^{xiii}

Leverage Point 1: Right to Food Law

Create an enabling policy environment to transform Victoria's food system by legislating the right to food in Victoria and embedding it into all relevant State and Local Government policies, budgeting processes and activities.

Leverage Point 2: Food Systems Governance

Strengthen food systems governance capacity by establishing a whole-of-government Food Systems Committee to oversee the participatory development and implementation of a Victorian Food System Strategy and Investment Plan.

Leverage Point 3: Food Systems Monitoring

Advance better food systems strategy and policy design by establishing a comprehensive performance measurement and monitoring framework in Victoria's State of the Environment Report.

Leverage Point 4: Agroecological Food Production

Support the transition to regenerative farming practices to enhance ecological function and build resilience by proactively supporting and resourcing agroecological solutions.

Leverage Point 5: Local Food Infrastructure

Strengthen local and regional food systems by creating a Local Food Investment Fund to grow capacity, improve coordination and drive efficiencies in local food infrastructure.

Leverage Point 6: Public Sector Food Procurement and Retail

Transition all public sector food procurement and retail to preference healthy and sustainably produced food sourced locally or regionally by developing compulsory social and ethical food procurement and retail standards and implementation assistance.

Leverage Point 7: School Food Systems

Transform Victorian school food systems and enhance food systems literacy by working with our educational community and allocating appropriate resourcing and investment.

Leverage Point 8: Community Food Systems Strategies

Require, empower and resource local councils to lead the participatory development of community food system strategies by amending the Public Health and Well-being Act 2008.

Leverage Point 9: Community Food Systems Planning

Prioritise and promote healthy community food systems by reforming Victorian Planning Provisions legislation to explicitly state the promotion of health, alongside economic, environmental and social well-being considerations.

Leverage Point 10: Food Relief Models

Improve dignified access to fresh and healthy food by developing a new, coordinated and collaborative approach with the food relief sector.

Appendix 5 – References

ⁱ Carey, R., Murphy, M. and Behen, T. (2024) **Planning a resilient food system for Victoria**. The University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.46580/124375>

ⁱⁱ **The 2022 Victorian Population Health Survey** indicates that around 8.1% of Victorian adults had experienced 'severe food insecurity' in the past 12 months; that is, they had run out of food and could not afford to buy more, a 40% increase since 2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ Carey, R., Murphy, M. and Behen, T. (2024) **Planning a resilient food system for Victoria**. The University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.46580/124375>

^{iv} adapted from FAO (2024) and Australian Household Food Security Data Coalition. Carey, R., Murphy, M. and Behen, T. (2024) **Planning a resilient food system for Victoria**. The University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.46580/124375>

^v Carey, R., Murphy, M. and Behen, T. (2024) **Planning a resilient food system for Victoria**. The University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.46580/124375>

^{vi} Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic), Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) 2021, **More than a band-aid: Emergency Relief in Victoria, Melbourne**. <https://vcoss.org.au/uncategorized/2021/06/emergency-relief/>

^{vii} Source: HLPE. (2020). **Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030**. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.

^{viii} Donati, K. and Rose, N. (2022). **Growing Edible Cities and Towns: A Survey of the Victorian Urban Agriculture Sector**. Sustain: The Australian Food Network. <https://doi.org/10.57128/MIUD6079>
'Environmental and social values are key drivers in the urban agriculture sector. Creating a healthy food system is a high priority for 98% of respondents. Enhancing mental health/wellbeing, creating more self-sufficient communities and healthier urban environments, responding to climate change, localising the food economy, connecting directly with customers and advocacy for more edible cities were also very/extremely important to over 80% of respondents'.

^{ix} Donati, K. and Rose, N. (2022). **Growing Edible Cities and Towns: A Survey of the Victorian Urban Agriculture Sector**. Sustain: The Australian Food Network. <https://doi.org/10.57128/MIUD6079>

^x <https://science.unimelb.edu.au/foodprint-melbourne/publications/infographic-resilient-food-supply-chain>

^{xi} Carey, R., Murphy, M. and Behen, T. (2024) **Planning a resilient food system for Victoria**. The University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.46580/124375>

^{xii} Donati, K. and Rose, N. (2022). **Growing Edible Cities and Towns: A Survey of the Victorian Urban Agriculture Sector**. Sustain: The Australian Food Network. <https://doi.org/10.57128/MIUD6079>

^{xiii} Victorian Food Security and Food Systems Working Group, 2022. **Towards a Healthy, Regenerative, and Equitable Food System in Victoria: A Consensus Statement**. <https://vicfoodsystem.org.au/>



Moreland
City Council

Food System Strategy

Outcomes of community engagement report

May 2024



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Executive summary

Community Engagement to develop the next Food System Strategy

Following high level stakeholder interviews between July and November 2023, Phase 2 Food System Strategy engagement was undertaken between mid-February and mid-April 2024.

The purpose of Phase 2 was to obtain insights to help determine the strategic priorities, programs and initiatives for the Food System Strategy 2024-27.

More than 275 people were engaged, through the following channels:

1. Individuals / households - 125 filled out a survey (on-line, hard copy and in-language formats)
2. Community groups and service providers – 29 engaged via a survey, direct contact or interviews
3. Community Food Forum, Merri Merri Wayi community day – 43 interactions
4. Presentations at reference, advisory, and service provider meetings – 80 participants

Summary of Feedback

Individuals / households

Merri-beks diverse range of local food stores and grocers are an important and valued source of food for residents. Many shop for food outside Merri-bek, which is consistent with our highly multicultural population traveling to find affordable outlets specialising in different cultural ingredients.

Over 30 per cent of the survey respondents (the majority of whom are middle income households) indicated they sometimes experience challenges accessing healthy food that meets their dietary needs and cultural preferences. The high cost of these foods is the main reason given, suggesting current cost-of-living pressures are limiting the food choices and options for more Merri-bek residents.

There is also a strong interest in participating in a range of local food activities and programs, including cultural food events / festivals, community gardening, fresh food boxes and bulk food cooperatives. Better promotion of services, programs and activities was seen as the most important way to increase participation, as well as diversifying their locations and providing free, low-cost or discounted options.

Community groups, service providers and key stakeholders

A strong common theme is that community groups and food security / food relief organisations are chronically under resourced, rely heavily on volunteers, including for critical / skilled positions, leading to burn-out and high staff turnover.

There is a critical need for more reliable, ongoing funding streams which cover base operating costs. Organisations want help to measure their impacts and benefits, to raise the profile of the work and attract more funding / resourcing.

Many groups recognised and valued the important role Council plays in tracking and sharing food system projects and initiatives, facilitating relationships, partnerships and networks.

There is a clear need and opportunity for Council to play a stronger role in facilitating collaboration between food relief organisations to better understand the service needs and gaps, and to improve the coordination of services.

Council could offer Community Food Enterprises (CFE's) more business skills training, financial and volunteer management support, as well as more flexible options to access Council funding and support. CFE's and community groups also want help to secure affordable long-term leases on buildings and associated infrastructure, such as commercial kitchens.

Introduction

The actions of the Food System Strategy aim to benefit all Merri-bek residents, with a particular focus on those at risk of or experiencing food insecurity. The Food System Strategy 2017-24 was created through the advocacy of a proactive and driven local food community, and we have stakeholders who have been invested in this work for many years. Actions have been primarily community-led rather than Council-led, with Council's role to support, facilitate collaboration and partnerships, and build community knowledge and capacity in Food Systems.

Engagement Objectives

The objective of the engagement was to:

- Identify the most effective food system interventions by Council and the community that have contributed to the objectives of the Strategy over the last three years and;
- Obtain insights to help determine the strategic priorities, programs and initiatives for the Food System Strategy 2024-27

Methodology

Phase 1 (July – November 2023) involved conducting targeted stakeholder interviews to obtain high-level feedback on what has been achieved in the last 3 years, the benefits, Council's role and future needs / priorities.

Phase 2 (February – April 2024) involved collecting ideas and feedback from community groups and residents through on-line surveys, a local food forum for community food groups and residents, Council reference and advisory group meetings, and one-on-one conversations.

Targeted stakeholder input

Stakeholders were interviewed to find out:

- how they are currently involved with the food system in Merri-bek
- the outcomes / benefits of the food system projects and initiatives they were involved in
- what they see as the most important / highest priority food system projects / programs for Merri-bek over the next 3-4 years
- what the barriers are to continuing or starting new local food initiatives / projects

Ten (10) representatives of stakeholders were interviewed during Phase 1, including representatives from:

- CERES environmental education centre
- Growing Farmers
- Community Information Services (CIS) Merri-bek
- Fawknor Food Bowls
- Reynard Street Neighbourhood House
- Newlands and East Coburg Neighbourhood Houses

- Ecological Justice Hub (Jesuit Social Services)
- Merri-bek (formerly Moreland) Community Gardening
- Merri-bek Food Leadership Action Group (FLAG)

Phase 1 stakeholders were contacted again during phase 2 to add to / expand on their previous feedback, and additional stakeholders invited to provide input.

In addition to seeking input on the Strategy from organisations who service the needs of individuals, Council asked for their help to engage directly with clients or members who are disadvantaged and have a lived experience of the impact of food insecurity.

The following additional stakeholders were contacted through a phone, on-line or in person interview or organisations were directed to fill out the on-line survey for community groups and service providers:

- Open Table
- Coburg Farmers Market
- Merri Food Hub
- The Salvation Army, Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service
- Uniting Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre
- Sussex Neighbourhood House
- Fawkner Neighbourhood House
- Glenroy Neighbourhood House
- Brunswick Neighbourhood House
- Merri Health
- Co-Health
- Nourishing Neighbours
- Vincent Care
- Didi Bahini Samaj
- Alevi Community Council of Australia

Conversations Merri-bek Surveys

The Food System Strategy background and objectives were published on Conversations Merri-bek, together with on-line survey options for:

- **Individuals and households**

This survey asked about how and where people sourced their food, challenges they experience accessing the food they need and what food services and programs they would like to see in Merri-bek.

- **Community groups and service providers**

This survey asked about the food services and programs the groups provided or were involved in; which of these had the greatest benefit for their members / clients; the barriers they are experiencing in delivering their services / programs; and what they think we should be focusing on over the next 3-4 years.

Surveys were open from 21 February to the 19 April. The individual and household survey was translated in Merri-bek's top 5 languages and released on 27 March. The surveys were promoted through:

- Council publications and social media
- Local community / service provider networks
- Maternal and child health services
- Posters in English, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Arabic and Urdu, distributed through Merri-bek customer service centres, libraries and neighbourhood houses.

Residents could also access hard copies of the English individual and household survey through the Coburg Civic Centre.

Community based forums / drop-in sessions

The **Merri-bek Local Food Forum** was held at the Reynard Street Neighbourhood House on Thursday 29 February, 2024 from 6 – 8pm.

Two Council officers presented the background and objectives of the Strategy engagement and invited participants to share their views, fill in the survey and distribute posters inviting their members and networks to have their say on the Strategy.

A Council officer also had a stand at the **Merri Merri Wayi Community Day** on April 20, 2024 at CERES where participants could drop-in to talk about the Strategy between 10am and 2pm.

Council reference and advisory group, service provider meetings

Council officers made presentations and invited community members of the following Merri-bek Council reference and advisory Groups and service provider network meetings to submit their ideas and feedback on the Strategy:

- Environmental Reference Group – 14 March
- Glenroy / Fawkner Service Provider network meeting – 26 March
- Childrens Reference Group – 27 March
- Multicultural and Settlement Services network meeting 10 April
- First Nations Advisory Group – 15 April
- Aged friendly reference group – 22 April
- Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Group – 23 April

Participation

Over 275 people in total were engaged to provide input into the Food System Strategy. The following is a breakdown of contributions based on engagement channels and activities:

- Stakeholder organisations individually targeted – 24, with 13 of those interviewed
- Individual and Households surveys – 125
- Community groups and service provider surveys – 5
- Merri-bek Local Food Forum – 25 participants
- Merri Merri Wayi Community Day – 15 –20 enquiries

- Environmental Reference Group – 15 members
- Glenroy / Fawkner Service Provider network meeting – 10 participants
- Childrens Reference Group – 16 members
- Multicultural and Settlement Services network meeting – 10 members
- First Nations Advisory Group – 9 members
- Aged friendly reference group – 10 members
- Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Group – 10 members

Findings

Insights from Individual and Household surveys

Who participated

The top participating households were couples with no children at home (25%) and families with children between 6-17 years (21%). 29% were from Brunswick / Brunswick East / Brunswick West and 25% from Coburg.

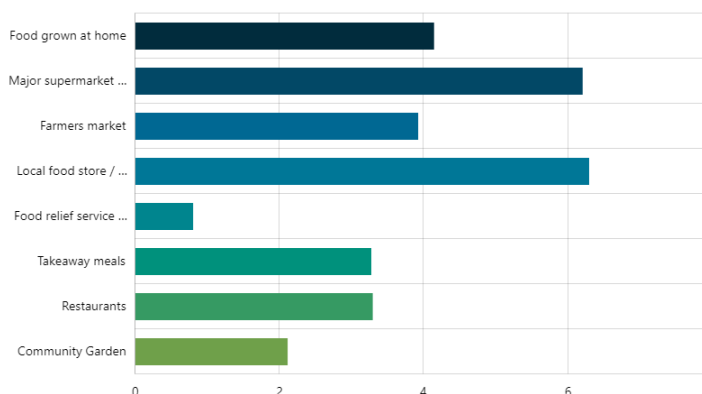
88% were employed either full or part time and 54% earned between \$800 - \$3000 per week, which is in the 2-4 (or middle) income quintiles¹

78% spoke English and 22% spoke over 6 other languages fluently.

How and where residents source their food:

The local food store / grocer was equal to the major supermarkets as the top places where residents source their food. Growing food at home and farmers markets were also closely ranked third and fourth. Food relief was the lowest ranked.

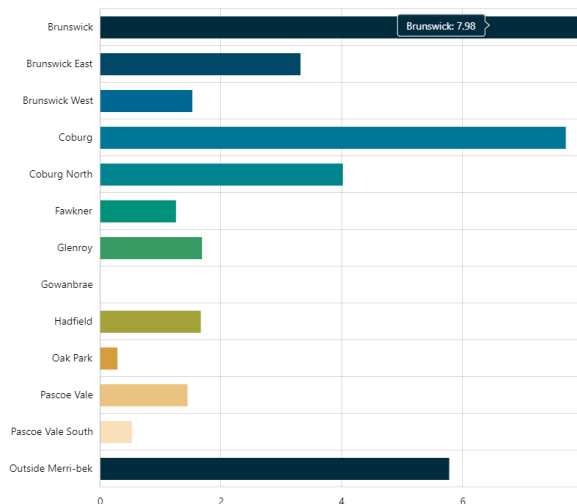
Figure 1: Where do you currently source your food? Rank from most to least



Brunswick and Coburg were the top suburbs where food was sourced / procured followed by outside of Merri-bek

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/national-accounts/australian-national-accounts-distribution-household-income-consumption-and-wealth/latest-release>

Figure 2: Which locations do you source your food from? Rank from the most visited to least visited locations.



Challenges accessing food

While 30% of respondents indicated they never experienced challenges accessing healthy food that meets their dietary needs and cultural preferences, nearly 33% indicated they sometimes did.

The top barrier or challenge to accessing the food they need was that 'nutritious and culturally relevant foods are too expensive' (60%), which was nominated nearly twice as much as the next biggest barriers which were:

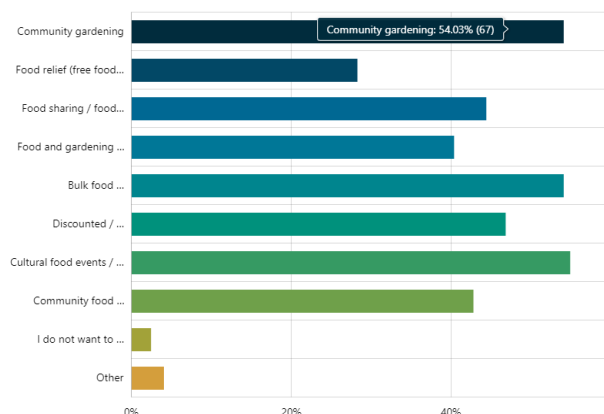
- Lack of food outlets within easy walking distance from home (500m)(35%)
- The food outlets / services I use don't have enough of the foods that meet my needs (33%)
- I don't drive or have a car (33%)

Desired food system activities and programs

The top activities currently participated in are: community food centres like CERES, community gardening, food sharing / food swaps, cultural food events and bulk food cooperatives. However, 34% do not participate in any of the food system activities listed.

There was a strong indication that residents would like to participate in more food system activities, with the most preferred / popular being cultural food events / festivals, community gardening, fresh food boxes and bulk food cooperatives. This was followed by discounted / low-cost food programs, food sharing / swaps and community food centres like CERES.

Figure 3 What food services or activities would you like to participate in if they were offered?



Better promotion of services, programs and activities was seen as the most important way to increase participation (65%), followed by having services or activities located closer to where people live (50%) and providing free, low-cost or discounted services and programs (48%)

Council Reference and Advisory Group input

Presentations were made at Council's reference and advisory groups and members were invited to consider Food System issues and impacts from the perspective of the groups they represent. They were also asked to share the opportunity with their networks to provide feedback. Feedback received during the meetings include:

Childrens Reference Group

A workshop for 12 members of the reference group explored:

- How and where they consume food now
- If they experience challenges accessing food at home or at school and;
- What they think a better food system could and should look like

The children represent diverse cultures and are from schools located in Glenroy, Fawkner, Coburg and Brunswick.

They source food from all over Merri-bek, with particular concentrations in Glenroy and Coburg. Food also came from Broadmeadows and Campbellfield, outside of Merri-bek. The children enjoy foods from their own and other cultures that come from a range of outlets including supermarkets, markets, speciality food stores, home food gardens, school food garden and canteen.

No particular challenges accessing food were raised. The children showed a good understanding of the benefits of linking food system steps together in a local, circular food system. Their ideas for what this looks like fall under these themes:

- Have a variety of food types / cultures available close to home
- Grow more food and compost more at home and school
- Reduce food waste by eating everything you buy
- Return food waste via compost to farmers
- Redistribute food through swaps to increase variety for everyone and avoid waste
- Access food directly from local farms to reduce energy / fuel use and save time / cost driving to get food
- Have enough options and back up for when food supplies are disrupted

Findings from stakeholder interviews and surveys

Common themes

Community grant funding and other project / seed funding was valued and important, as was support for external funding opportunities.

However, access to more reliable and ongoing funding streams was a commonly cited barrier for all stakeholder groups to continuing food system work, as was an overreliance on volunteers, including for critical / skilled positions. Community-based local food groups are chronically under resourced leading to burn-out and high volunteer turnover.

The role Council plays in tracking and sharing food system projects and initiatives with the local food system network is important, as is facilitating relationships and partnerships.

Organisations need / want help to measure their impacts so they can improve and attract more funding.

Feedback based on stakeholder type

1. Food relief / food security groups

Significant rise in people experiencing food insecurity due to cost-of-living pressures (affordability is the biggest issue – aligns with household survey results)

Access to food needs to be viewed as a fundamental human right, alongside other rights recognised in the human rights charter and Councils Human Rights policy.

Additional barriers providing services include:

- Aside from a lack of funding for staff and other operational costs, there's not enough money to procure sufficient food to meet the need
- Lack of a reliable, good quality / fresh, nutritious, culturally appropriate food supply
- Lack of a supply of affordable, sustainably grown produce
- Forced to procure from food recovery organisations that offer limited variety of produce that is free or much cheaper and often not very fresh
- They are not resourced to collaborate / coordinate with other organisations
- Lack of food supply logistics and warehouse infrastructure
- Lack of suitable fit-for-purpose premises and associated infrastructure like cool rooms, storage

Food relief agencies were conscious of and strived to provide a dignified approach and supplying nutritious, culturally appropriate food but were limited by the barriers they faced.

Due to the pressure of meeting the high demand for food relief, agencies tend to operate in isolation. If assessments and referrals were better coordinated between agencies, including non-traditional food relief organisations like Neighbourhood Houses, there would be better matching of clients need to different services. A strong food and material relief network would better enable agencies to find common ground, share the load, and foster a sense of working together.

2. Community and Market Gardens

Communal food growing sites provide multiple social, environmental and economic benefits – These groups highlighted the need for better awareness, recognition and promotion to help expand / amplify the benefits for community.

The benefits include building farming / food growing skills, increasing access to fresh food, building community connections and wellbeing, supporting shared learning and respect for different cultures / cultural identity.

Community gardens are not just a niche activity for the middle class, as some members felt they can be perceived by some people. They can provide a safe and inclusive space for vulnerable community members. These organisations would like to see communal food growing spaces elevated to the same level in terms of priority and support as other uses of Council land (e.g organised sport)

There are opportunities to unlock public and private land for food production which are constrained by regulations such as public health and insurance restrictions. These preventing Growing Farmers selling produce grown on private property.

3. Neighbourhood Houses

Some houses have a range of food programs – Reynard Street Neighbourhood House for example offers food relief, pop up markets, food swaps, community lunches, community composting and community gardens which provides opportunities for community to build food system skills, literacy and self-determination in an inclusive supportive learning environment encompassing various age groups, cultures, language groups, and individuals with disabilities.

Juggling competing community needs and budget commitments is a constraint for Neighbourhood Houses to implement and expand food-based programs.

Neighbourhood Houses recognise the importance and challenge of managing expectations while addressing current community needs, and ensuring a balanced approach that caters to both long-term goals and more immediate, pressing requirements.

Reynard Street Neighbourhood House and Newlands Neighbourhood Houses also nominated the limited representation of First Nations people and their food culture / knowledge as a gap in the Merri-bek food system, which could be addressed through the Strategy.

4. Community food enterprises (CFE)²

Enterprises like Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective which are founded on delivering positive environmental and social outcomes who don't currently qualify for community grants would like more flexible options to access Council funding and support.

A greater range of more affordable / subsidised and secure / long term leases on buildings and associated infrastructure, like commercial kitchens, is a need and gap for CFE's.

CERES have skills and experience in running small scale food wholesale and retail enterprises. There is an opportunity for Council to partner with CERES to offer education and support to people who want to set up and run a CFE in Merri-bek.

² CFE's are locally-owned/-controlled food businesses or ventures / not-for-profits founded around a desire to create positive environmental and/ or social outcomes for the communities they serve. Merri-bek examples are CERES grocery, bakery, nursery and Joes market garden, Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective, Pascoe Vale Wholefoods Collective

Council support

- Reduce regulatory barriers and the governance burden for community-based organisations, including exploring cheaper insurance options
- Reduce complexity of dealing with Council to get support (e.g. grant application processes, access to Council buildings). There is a perceived lack of transparency and equity in how the community access Council's support and communication can be difficult.
- Provide more organisational support for governance, strategic and business planning and volunteer management.

Evaluation and next steps

Engaging extensively with Merri-bek residents and community organisations in early 2024 has confirmed the value of and support for the strategic focus areas and food system programs and initiatives already in progress. It also highlighted that Merri-bek has a diverse range of independent food businesses, a good foundation from which the new strategic direction - strong local food economy – was created. There were some clear common issues and potential solutions which emerged that have been prioritised in the 2024-27 Strategy.

Council also engaged comprehensively with organisations who have clients or members who are disadvantaged and have a lived experience of being food insecure. This has given a good understanding the number and types of services provided and the challenges that need to be addressed to enable these organisations to meet their clients' needs.

The objective to work with these organisations to engage their clients directly on their experience of food insecurity was limited by the time and resource constraints. Further collaboration with food security/food relief organisations will take place through the Community Food Hub project and the Food and Material Relief network to engage these cohorts and guide our response to reduce food insecurity in Merri-bek.

The community will be kept informed via updates to the Conversations Merri-bek pages., including the release of the draft strategy for comment and feedback. Specific updates on relevant strategic direction and priorities will be given to Council reference and advisory groups, service provider networks, as well as at the Merri-bek Local Food Forum due to be held in late 2024.

7.7 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-2023-574 - PANEL FOR PROVISION OF SOLAR PUBLIC LIGHTING FOR DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to Eco Solar Lighting Pty Ltd ACN 730 830 027 and Leadsun Australia Pty Ltd ACN 158 717 750 (**Contractor**) to award to each Contractor panel contract RFT-2023-574 for the Provision of Solar Public Lighting for Design, Supply, Installation and Maintenance (**Contract**):
 - i. For a term of three (3) years with two (2) x one (1) year extension options at the discretion of Council
 - ii. For an amount not exceeding \$1,000,000 incl. GST across all the Contractors over the life of the contract on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. The terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. Other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract.
 - b) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option(s) to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract and subject to satisfactory performance of the contractor.
 - c) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The report seeks Council endorsement to award RFT-2023-574 - Provision of Solar Public Lighting for Design, Supply, Installation and Maintenance. This contract will provide public lighting in streets, car parks, open space areas, etc in accordance with the Public Lighting Policy. In areas such as car parks and open space areas, solar lighting is the typical solution to avoid the need to establish a new point of supply and to improve environmental sustainability.

The contract term is proposed as three (3) years with two (2) x one (1) year extension periods of the contract at the discretion of Council. The total contract term including options is 5 years.

Tenders were called for panel suppliers that can design, supply, install and maintain solar lighting in Merri-bek. Council requires suppliers (or their sub-contractors) to have the capacity to provide all these services in order to provide an end-to-end solution for Council and ensure good value for money across the lifecycle of the lighting asset.

The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil.

1. Policy Context

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. It also addresses the requirement under Section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires Council to conduct a public tender for goods, services and works where once-off or ongoing cumulative spend over the life of the contract is expected to exceed \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

2. Background

Council is seeking to appoint of panel of suppliers that can design, supply, install and maintain solar lighting in Merri-bek. Council requires suppliers (or their sub-contractors) to have the capacity to provide all these services in order to provide an end-to-end solution for Council and ensure good value for money across the lifecycle of the lighting asset. The Purpose of the report is to award a panel of contractors for a 3-year initial term with two x 1-year extension options.

The procurement method was a Request for Tender (RFT).

A public tender was released on 23 March 2024 with three (3) respondents submitting a tender response.

Tender evaluation was undertaken by Tender Evaluation Team and has been identified as the preferred service providers based on a set of predefined evaluation criteria, which considered a balance of cost, capacity, capability, and risk.

The companies that tendered were:

- Commlec Services Pty Ltd
- Eco Solar Lighting Pty Ltd
- Leadsun Australia Pty Ltd

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows.

Title and/or company	Role on panel	Full Voting / Advisory Member
Lighting and Permits Officer	Generalist (Chair)	Full
Unit Manager Open Space Design & Development	Generalist	Full
Acting Unit Manager Transport	Generalist	Full
Procurement Partner	Procurement	Advisory

Detailed evaluation criteria and weighting are provided in the following table.

Criteria	Weighting
Price	40%
Capability of the tenderer to provide the goods, services and works	20%
Capacity of the tenderer to provide the goods, services and works	5%
Methodology and task appreciation	15%

Criteria	Weighting
Tender Program/ Works Program	5%
Social Sustainability	5%
Economic Sustainability	5%
Environmental Sustainability	5%

In assessing the tenders, consideration was given to the predefined evaluation criteria included in the Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan. Further details of tender evaluation are shown in the attachment Tender Recommendation Report (**Confidential Attachment 1**).

3. Issues

The pricing comparisons were substantially different with all tenders. In order to evaluate more thoroughly, a project scenario was provided to the three tenderers with a request for design, price and anticipated project delivery schedule.

Collaboration

Note that section 109(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement must include information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

Under this contract, there are no opportunities to collaborate with other Councils because there way have existing contracts that do not align with our contract current requirements.

Social/ Environmental/ Local Implications

The preferred contractors have internal policies supporting social sustainability, environmental management, and they have indicated they will use local sub-contractors.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Consultation / Recommendation from Management

The pricing comparisons were substantially different with all tenders. In order to evaluate more thoroughly, a project scenario was provided to the three tenderers with a request for design, price and anticipated project delivery schedule.

Collaboration

Note that section 109(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement must include information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

Under this contract, there are no opportunities to collaborate with other Councils because there way have existing contracts that do not align with our contract current requirements.

Social/ Environmental/ Local Implications

The preferred contractors have internal policies supporting social sustainability, environmental management, and they have indicated they will use local sub-contractors. Residents and affected communities will be informed prior to the works commencing.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council Officers, external consultants and all other parties involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Panel contractor(s) will be engaged based on agreed rates in accordance with a specific scope of work. It is envisaged that a single project engagement or task instance will not exceed \$300,000 (Excluding GST). For individual project or task costing more than \$300,000 (Excluding GST), the Council will arrange for Public Tender. Staged project shall be treated as one project.

It worth noting, for panel arrangements Council does not guarantee either a minimum quantity of work in relation to any of the Contract components or any particular mix of work within the Contract components.

Transport branch has a maintenance budget of approximately \$37,000 per annum for public lighting, as well as a capital allocation of approximately \$90,000 from within the Road Safety and Amenity recurring capital budget. This is not all for solar lighting, it would be expected that the call on the panel contract from this budget would be less than \$40,000 per annum in total.

In addition, where solar lighting is procured as part of another project, such as a park upgrade or a shared path upgrade project, the panel may also be used and this could vary significantly year on year. In recent years, the spend has been in the order of \$166,000 per annum for lighting. It is considered that provision of up to \$200,000 per annum is advisable. Note that a separate purchase order will be raised for each project.

Over the maximum possible five-year term of the contract, the maximum spend is expected to be \$1,000,000 (ex GST).

7. Implementation and Timeline

It is proposed that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the contract/s and any other required documentation.

The contracts will commence as soon as possible following Council endorsement.

The contract term is proposed as three (3) years with two (2) x one (1) year extension periods of the contract at the discretion of Council. The total contract term including options is 5 years.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|---|--|------------|
| 1 | CONFIDENTIAL_RFT-2023-574 - Tender Recommendation Report | D24/239457 |
|---|--|------------|

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

7.8 CONTRACT RFT-2024-2 WHEATSHEAF ROAD STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT

Acting Director Place and Environment, Victoria Hart

Property, Place and Design

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to **Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd, ACN:128 554 307 (Contractor)** to award **Contract RFT-2024-2** for the **Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement (Contract)** on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - i. For the lump sum of \$2,616,165 (excluding GST)
 - ii. Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for Contract RFT-2024-2 Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement; and
 - b) Refers the budget shortfall of \$775,000 to the 2024/25 budgeting process as part of the reallocation and planned reprioritisation of the activity centre capital budgets over forward years with no net dollar impact on the 2024/25 Capital Works Program.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report seeks the appointment of the preferred contractor, Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd, to deliver the construction works for Wheatsheaf Road Improvement, located along Wheatsheaf Road between Glenroy Road and Blucher St, Glenroy.

A total budget of \$2,402,818 has been allocated to the Wheatsheaf Road Improvement program over the financial years 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2025/26.

An advertisement was placed in *The Age* newspaper on 16 March 2024 inviting tenders via the e-tender portal from suitably qualified contractors to undertake the Wheatsheaf Road Improvement works. Tenders closed on 12 April 2024 and three tenders were received. Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd received the highest score through the evaluation process.

The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Previous Council Decisions

Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvements - 20 June 2023

That Council:

1. *Endorses the Final Concept Design for the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvements.*
2. *Endorses, in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004, the removal of eight car parking spaces from Wheatsheaf Road (three on the north side, five on the south side), and two car parking spaces from Argyle Street near the intersection with Wheatsheaf Road, as part of the design.*
3. *Notes that, in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004, Council will assume the role of the Responsible Road Authority upon the completion of the project for the footpath and landscaping and drainage infrastructure from the back of kerb, as well as the indented parking and street trees within the road reserve.*

1. Policy Context

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. It also addresses the requirement under Section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires Council to conduct a public tender for goods, services and works where once-off or ongoing cumulative spend over the life of the contract is expected to exceed \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

2. Background

The project aligns with Theme 4 of the Council Plan: Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek, as Major Initiatives and Priorities to Implement major activity centre capital works improvements in Coburg, Brunswick and Glenroy.

Wheatsheaf Road Improvement is identified as a key project in the Glenroy Streetscape Masterplan and responds to the vision and objectives of the Glenroy Structure Plan: to create a visually appealing centre that gives a sense of place and promotes civic pride.

Wheatsheaf Road is an important link connecting Glenroy Station and Glenroy Community Hub. The streetscape upgrade aims to improve the presentation and sustainability of Wheatsheaf Road and make it easier and safer to visit and move around the centre of Glenroy.

The design for the streetscape was finalised through several rounds of community and stakeholder engagement. The final concept plan and the carparking changes were adopted at the June 2023 Council meeting.

Final Concept Plan

The final concept plan will make Wheatsheaf Road safer and more pedestrian friendly and accessible, with a new pedestrian operated signal and raised threshold crossings and kerb outstands. The project will also include implementation of slower speed limit of 40km/h advocated to the Department of Transport.

New street trees will be positioned in the road reserve between parking bays, supported by permeable asphalt, passive stormwater irrigation and structural soil.

The project includes significant underground services, including drainage works to mitigate flooding impact and the realignment of a water main. An electric vehicle charger will be installed as part of the streetscape upgrade.

The final concept design is included in **Attachment 1**.

Wheatsheaf Road is an arterial road, managed and controlled by the State Government. Changes to road design, speed limit, and traffic management require approval by the Department of Transport.

Tender Process

The tender was released on 16 March 2024. An advertisement was placed in The Age newspaper inviting tenders from contractors to undertake the works. The tenders closed on 12 April 2024, and three tenders were received from the following contractors:

- CDN Constructors Pty Ltd and ABN 62 884 294 341
- Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd and ABN 67 667 088 791
- Blue Peak Constructions Pty Ltd and ABN 88 660 064 079

All the tenders were conforming and were assessed by the evaluation panel.

Tender Evaluation

Tenders were evaluated in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and in accordance with the approved Procurement and Probity Plan for this project.

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows:

Title	Project Mgr/ Generalist or Nominated Speciality	Full Voting / Advisory Member
Principal Urban Designer	Project Manager (Chair)	Full
Senior Transport Engineer	Transport	Full
Senior Projects Engineer Drainage	Engineering	Full
Unit Manager Urban Design	Generalist	Advisory
Procurement Business Partner	Procurement	Advisory

In assessing the tenders, consideration was given to the following predefined evaluation criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Price	40%
OHS requirements	10%
Traffic Management and Works Program	10%
Capability, Experience & Past Performance and local	20%
Quality Management System	5%
Customer Service	5%
Social Sustainability	3%
Economic Sustainability	3%
Environmental Sustainability Construction Options	5%
Total score	100%

The evaluation process identified Evergreen Civil as the preferred tenderer based on the results of the evaluation matrix, included in the Tender Recommendation Report as Confidential **Attachment 2**.

3. Issues

Collaboration

Section 109(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement must include information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

Under this contract there are no opportunities to collaborate with other Councils or public bodies because it is a local, stand-alone civil project for which there is a healthy local market of contractors.

Social Implications

Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd has a Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility Policy in place. The policy aims to provide a safe and accessible workplace for all members of the workforce. Evergreen have supported a number of apprentices and aim to retain their employees for long terms by maintaining a safe and happy work environment.

Economic Implications

Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd contractors will use a number of contractors and suppliers for this project that are based in Merri-bek and surrounding municipalities.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Local implications

The contractor is situated in Thomastown. Many of their employees reside in the Northern Council Alliance. Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd is committed to engaging subcontractors and sourcing materials that are sourced within the Northern Metropolitan Region.

4. Consultation

Round 1 of community, trader and stakeholder consultation on the streetscape improvement project was conducted from 2 November to 29 November 2020. Letters were sent to local addresses, and an online survey was open for 4 weeks. A total of 115 responses were received.

Round 2 consultation was undertaken for the draft concept design which was developed based on feedback from round 1 consultation. It was presented for feedback from 14 June – 19 July 2021. 15 responses were received. Feedback was broadly supportive of the proposed improvements.

A project update was provided in October 2022 to let the community, traders and stakeholders know the project was progressing and to communicate the impacts and benefits associated with the car parking loss and tree removal.

The Final Concept Design for the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvements and the removal of eight car parking spaces from Wheatsheaf Road was adopted in the Council Meeting on 20 June 2023.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council Officers, external consultants and all other parties involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The table below shows the overall budget allocation and anticipated expenditure for the completion of the project.

Item	Amount (ex GST)
Project Budget	
Approved Budget 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2025/26	\$2,402,818
Costs to date (planning, engagement, and design)	\$200,774
Budget remaining	\$2,202,044
Remaining Project Delivery Costs	
Tendered lump sum amount (to be awarded through this report)	\$2,616,165
Other project costs (approvals and utility works outside of tender scope)	\$360,879
Project Delivery Costs Total	\$2,977,044
Budget Shortfall	\$775,000

The budget shortfall can be accommodated within the overall Activity Centres program by adjusting the scope and timing of projects in the program. The budget shortfall of \$775,000 will be considered in the 2024/25 budgeting process as part of the reallocation and planned reprioritisation of the activity centre capital budgets over forward years with no net dollar impact on the 2024/25 Capital Works Program.

7. Implementation and Timeline

This report is seeking a Council resolution that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the contract and any other required documentation, including authorising any cost overruns within the project budget, provided that the overall budget within the Capital Works Program is not exceeded.

Works are planned to commence in August 2024 and to be completed by August 2025.

Attachment/s

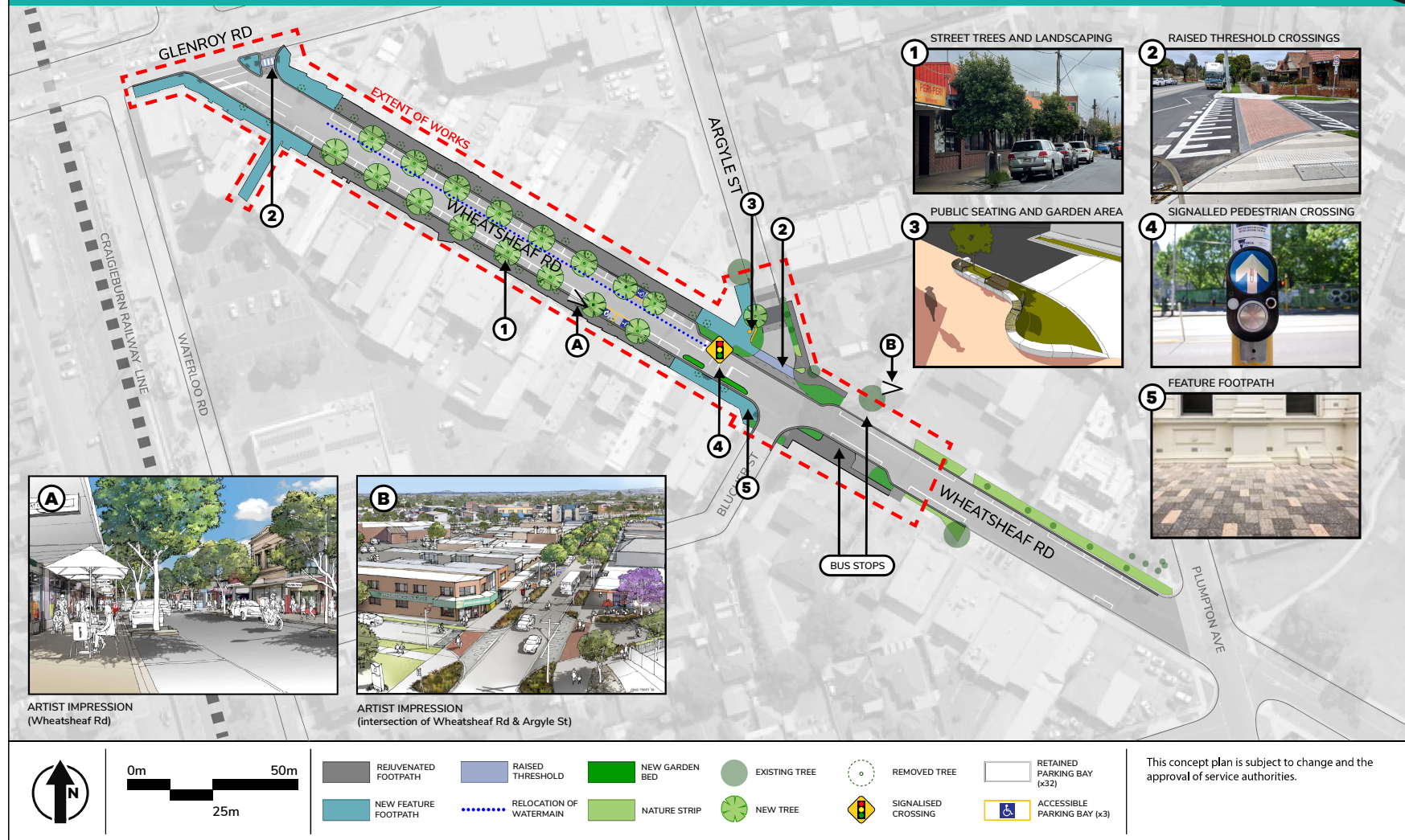
- | | | |
|---|--|------------|
| 1 | Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement Final Concept Plan | D23/618211 |
| 2 | Tender Recommendation Report | D24/240428 |

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

WHEATSHEAF ROAD STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT

FINAL CONCEPT DESIGN

www.conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/wheatsheaf-road
May 2023



7.9 CONTRACT VARIATION: RFT-2021-230 - 14 FRITH STREET, BRUNSWICK PARK CLOSE TO HOME

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Capital Works Planning and Delivery

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves an increase of the total contract spend under Contract RFT-2021-230 – 14 Frith Street Park Close to Home by \$534,044.53 (GST exclusive), taking the total to \$7,620,926.53 (GST exclusive), noting that this brings the total contingency to 59.7 per cent over the original contract sum of \$4,772,212.00 (GST exclusive).
2. Approves the additional budget (shortfall) of \$650,135.53 being drawn from the Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve, taking the Reserve balance to \$25,758,714.00.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to approve contract variations, extension and related documentation as identified in point 1.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In February 2022, Council awarded the Contract RFT-2021-230 – 14 Frith Street, Brunswick – Park Close to Home to Building Engineering to construct the park. The original contract sum was \$4,772,212.00 (GST exclusive). The total approved contract expenditure was \$5,249,433.00 (GST exclusive) including 10 per cent contingency.

In May 2023, Council approved an increase in the total contract sum under Contract RFT-2021-230 to \$5,965,265.00 (GST exclusive), which represented a 25 per cent increase above the original contract sum.

In August 2023, Council approved a further increase in the total contract sum under Contract RFT-2021-230 to \$7,086,882.00 (GST exclusive), which represented a 48.5 per cent increase above the original contract sum.

Now, with the project nearing completion, Council approval is sought for a third increase in the total contract sum under Contract RFT-2021-230 to \$7,620,926.53 (GST exclusive), which represents a 59.7 per cent increase above the original contract sum.

The value of the increase in this instance is \$534,044.53 (GST exclusive). The previously approved contingency has been effectively exhausted. The circumstances that have contributed to this increase are due to unknown site conditions and are:

- three steel columns leaning outwards, consultants redesign of steel structure and installation of three new steel columns (east end of building Lobb Street)
- demolition works including traffic control, footpath reinstatement (Frith and Lobb Streets)
- further soil contamination under the existing concrete slab and wall foundry
- contractor delay costs.

Council approval is required of the release of funds from the Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve to cover remaining shortfall to the project.

With this increase in contract cost and a small increase in non-contract costs of \$37,474, the total project budget will become \$8,281,829.53, up from \$7,710,311.00.

Previous Council Decisions

Contract RFT-2021-230 14 Frith Street, Brunswick – Park Close to Home – 9 August 2023

That Council:

1. *Notes that in February 2022, it approved the award of Contract RFT-2021-230 – 14 Frith Street, Brunswick – Park Close to Home for a contract sum of \$4,772,212 (GST exclusive), and authorised the Chief Executive Officer to exercise a contingency of \$477,221 (GST exclusive and 10 per cent of the contract sum)*
2. *Notes that in May 2023, Council approved a total additional contract spend to a total of \$5,965,265.00 (GST exclusive) for Contract RFT 2021 230, noting that this represents a total contingency of 25 per cent on the original contract sum of \$4,722,212.00 (GST exclusive).*
3. *Notes that the project has further encountered latent conditions including structurally unstable heritage brick walls (Lobb and Frith Street sides) imposing public safety risk and further soil contamination under the wall and foundry, contractor delay costs, and that the previously approved contingency has been effectively exhausted.*
4. *Approves an increase of the total authorised contract spend under Contract RFT 2021 230 by a further \$1,121,617.00 (GST exclusive) to a total of \$7,086,882.00 (GST exclusive), noting that this brings the total contingency to 48.5 per cent over the original contract sum of \$4,722,212.00 (GST exclusive).*
5. *Approves the budget short fall from savings in Fleming Park Project (\$900,000.00) and Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve (\$221,617.00), on the basis that the current approved budget of \$6,588,694.00 is not sufficient to cover full project costs including the requested contract variation in this report and non-contract costs.*
6. *Notes that, related to the cost increases, the project has also suffered delays in delivery schedule and is now scheduled for practical completion by mid-October 2023 and open to the public in late 2023 once grass and planting has had suitable time to establish.*
7. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to approve contract variations, extension and related documentation as identified in points 4 and 6.*

Contract RFT-2021-230 14 Frith Street, Brunswick – Park Close to Home – 10 May 2023

That Council:

1. *Notes that in February 2022, it approved the award of Contract RFT-2021-230 – 14 Frith Street, Brunswick – Park Close to Home for a contract sum of \$4,772,212.00 (GST exclusive), and authorised the Chief Executive Officer to exercise a contingency of \$477,221.00 (GST exclusive and 10 per cent of the contract sum)*
2. *Notes that due to encountering of contamination beyond the extent identified during scoping and other latent conditions, the contingency has now been exhausted in the delivery of this project and a small additional expenditure beyond the contingency has been committed to allow the project team to immediately deal with the contamination and protect public health.*
3. *Approves an increase of the total authorised contract spend under Contract RFT 2021 230 by \$715,831.80 (GST exclusive) to a total of \$5,965,265.00 (GST exclusive), noting that this represents a total contingency of 25 per cent on the original contract sum of \$4,722,212.00 (GST exclusive).*
4. *Notes that, related to the cost increases the project has also suffered delays in delivery schedule, now scheduled for practical completion by early August 2023, although park opening is unlikely before September 2023 to allow the grass to establish.*
5. *Notes that, at this stage the current approved budget of \$6,588,694.00 is sufficient to cover requested contract variation in this report.*

6. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to approve contract variations and related documentation as identified at paragraph 3.*

Contract RFT-2021-230 14 Frith Street, Brunswick – Park Close to Home – 9 February 2023

That Council:

...

8. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:*
- a) *Make a formal offer to Building Engineering ABN 41 103 839 514 (Contractor) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2021-230 for the Park Close to Home – 14 Frith Street Project (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 8(b) of this Resolution:*
 - i. *For a fixed lump sum of \$4,772,212.00 (GST exclusive) for Design and Construct Contract RFT-2021-230.*
 - ii *Allocate a 10 per cent contingency of \$477,221.00 (GST exclusive) for Contract RFT-2021-230 for unforeseeable variations that may arise during construction and bring the total expenditure approval for Contract RFT2021-230 to \$5,249,433.00 (GST exclusive).*
 - b) *Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:*
 - i. *The terms specified in paragraph 8(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and*
 - ii. *Other than terms referred to in paragraph 8(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer*
9. *Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:*
- a) *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and*
 - b) *Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.*

1. Policy Context

Financial Management

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. Under Council's procurement policy, financial delegations and prior resolutions, a Council decision is required to approve the increase in the Contract Sum for Contract RFT-2021-230.

In addition, the additional budget required for the Frith Street Park Close to Home project is \$650,135, and this budget variation requires a Council decision, as does the approval to draw from the Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve to meet this cost pressure.

Council Plan 2021-2025

Strategic Objective 1 – An environmentally proactive Merri-bek

To strive for maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and regeneration of our natural environment.

Strategies

1.4. Strategically increase accessible and inclusive open spaces based on local needs and other priorities for parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sporting facilities, community gardens, eating, toilets, etc.

Strategic Objective 4 – Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek

To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities

Strategies

4.3. Design Merri-bek's neighbourhoods to be safe, pleasant, inviting places for all to visit and live

4.5. Promote the amenity and liveability of the public realm with services, facilities, community participation, strong local laws and compliance activities

A Park Close to Home Framework

The framework adopted by Council on 6 December 2017, is a strategy to fill gaps in the open space network in Merri-bek. The strategy is intended to create and improve access to open space in the areas that need it most, by identifying gap areas in the community where residents are not within walking distance to their closest park. The development of land for a park at 14 Frith Street, Brunswick will help to address one of the high priority gaps outlined in the framework.

Open Space Strategy

While the Park Close to Home Program began as a result of Council's previous Open Space Strategy, it remains consistent with the new Open Space Strategy adopted by Council in April 2024.

The Open Space Strategy has five directions, and the first of these is "Providing parks close to home and enhancing existing open space."

2. Background

In February 2022, Council awarded the Contract RFT-2021-230 – 14 Frith Street, Brunswick – Park Close to Home to Building Engineering ABN 41 103 839 514.

Works on the project commenced in June 2022 and the project construction continues. Latent conditions encountered throughout construction of this project have resulted in two previous Contract variations and now requires a further Contract variation and additional budget to facilitate the continued construction and completion of the new park.

3. Issues

Since start this project has encountered substantial contaminations and latent conditions. These conditions were not detected or known at the tender award stage and were not included in the original contract award. The amount of contamination incurred with this project is also considered beyond what could have reasonably been expected.

Further to contamination related additional costs, other latent conditions encountered have required structural propping of walls and additional capping of legal points of discharge required by Yarra Valley Water. As well as the time to address these issues, delays have been experienced while ensuring that planning clearance was appropriate and to address other community and stakeholder concerns. Contractor delay costs due to prolongation of contract and costs relating to the escalation in the market since the time of contract award have also contributed to overall pressure on the contingency originally provided for in the Contract. These costs are documented as follows:

- The cumulative life to date cost for the removal of the contamination, addressing latent conditions, delay costs etc. have been approximately \$1,082,539.00 (GST exclusive). These costs have been claimed by the contractor.
- Works on the project recommenced in January 2024 after planning heritage requirements were approved in December 2023. Delays to the project were encountered from August 2023 through to January 2024.
- In April 2024 the project has encountered further latent conditions with contaminated soil, additional removal of concrete footings under existing concrete slab floors in the foundry.
- The existing layout of the masonry wall that the three steel columns at the east end of the building are leaning heavily towards Lobb Street, the masonry wall will be reinstated to the current Building code. Resulting in replacing the existing columns with three new steel columns further delays to the project.
- These delays to the project are due to latent conditions on site, the planning permit delay in August – December 2023 no works on site. The latest practical completion date is due to the loss of time due to further removal of contamination soil, steel column design and replacement in Lobb Street and the reinstatement of the heritage brick walls in Lobb and Frith Street.
- The practical completion date is now the 22 July 2024 notwithstanding any further latent conditions on site and inclement weather delays.
- The additional \$534,044.53 identified as further potential anticipated variations is an allowance for other unknown unknowns to bring the project to completion. However, officers recommend for expediency that this be approved for inclusion in the revised contract sum to avoid delays should further items within this cost envelope arise before project completion.

Council's approval to increase the contingency to a total of 59.7 per cent is being sought given the uncertain conditions still facing the delivery of this complex site redevelopment project.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. There were no Human rights impacts identified.

4. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Contract costs

Addressing the latent conditions uncovered to date with allowance for further emerging latent conditions as recommended by officers takes the total authorised value of the Contract to \$7,620,926.53 (GST exclusive).

A summary of the original (February 2022), current (May 2023) and proposed (August 2023) and (June 2024) contract costs are as follows:

Items	Value (GST exclusive)
ORIGINAL CONTRACT PROVISION FEBRUARY 2022	
Building works contract sum	\$4,772,212.00
Construction contingency (10%)	\$477,221.20
Contract cost RFT-2021-230 February 2022	\$5,249,433.20
CONTRACT VARIATION APPROVED MAY 2023	
Building works contract sum – ORIGINAL	\$4,772,212.00
Construction contingency (25%) – made up of	\$1,193,053.00
<i>Contingency committed – variations accepted to date (11.8% over contract sum)</i>	\$563,057.22
<i>Known additional variations not yet lodged (further 5.3% over contract sum)</i>	\$253,000.00
<i>Additional allowance for further variations (further 7.9% over contract sum)</i>	\$376,995.78
Contract cost RFT-2021-230 May 2023	\$5,965,265.00
CONTRACT VARIATION AUGUST 2023	
Building works contract sum – ORIGINAL	\$ 4,772,212.00
Construction contingency (48.5%) – made up of (*)	\$ 2,314,670.00
<i>Construction contingency (25% over contract sum) as approved at May 2023 Council meeting (see above)</i>	\$ 1,193,053.00
<i>Lobb St Brick Wall Rebuild - Known additional variations not yet lodged (further 7.8% over contract sum)</i>	\$ 371,617.00
<i>Frith St Brick Wall Rebuild - Known additional variations not yet lodged (further 5.2% over contract sum)</i>	\$ 250,000.00
<i>Soil Contamination - Unknown additional variations not yet lodged (further 3.1% over contract sum)</i>	\$ 150,000.00
<i>Additional allowance for further variations (further 7.3% over contract sum)</i>	\$ 350,000.00
Contract cost RFT-2021-230 August 2023	\$ 7,086,882.00
PROPOSED CONTRACT VARIATION June 2024	
Building works contract sum – ORIGINAL	\$ 4,772,212.00
Construction contingency (59.7%) – made up of (*)	\$ 2,848,714.53
<i>Construction contingency (25% over contract sum) as approved at May 2023 Council meeting (see above)</i>	\$ 1,193,053.00
<i>Construction contingency (further 23.5% over contract sum) as approved at August 2023 Council meeting (see above)</i>	\$ 1,121,617.00
<i>Three steel columns leaning outwards, consultants redesign of steel structure (east end of building Lobb Street), Demolition works including traffic control, footpath reinstatement (Frith and Lobb Streets) Further removal works soil contamination under the existing concrete slab and wall foundry, (further 11.19% over contract sum)</i>	\$534,044.00
Contract cost RFT-2021-230 June 2024	\$ 7,620,926.53

Project Budget

The table below summarises the key budget data.

Items	Value (GST exclusive)
Project budget as at May 2024 (A)	\$7,631,694.07
Contract costs to be provided for as at June 2024 (B)	\$7,620,926.53
Non-contract costs as at June 2024 ©	\$660,903.00
Shortfall in project budget (A – B – C)	(\$650,135.53)
Additional project costs to be provided from Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve (PRRLF)	\$650,135.53
Proposed updated project budget	\$8,281,829.53

The total budget for the project is currently \$7,631,694.07 (GST exclusive). With the additional costs outlined above, total forecast expenditure on this project is \$8,281,829.53 (GST exclusive).

There are no material savings in other projects that could be used to offset these costs and therefore, an additional release of \$650,135.53 from the Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve is proposed for Council approval.

Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve

The current Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve balance is \$26,408,849. The additional budget (shortfall) of \$650,135 will take the current Reserve balance to \$25,758,714.

Below is the table for the PRRLR from the Proposed Budget 2024-2028:

	Forecast Actual 2023/24 \$'000	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	2025/26 \$'000	Projections 2026/27 \$'000	2027/28 \$'000
Public Resort & Recreation Land Reserve					
<u>Purpose:</u> The funds are to be utilised for the development of new open space and recreation assets, as well as upgrade or expansion of existing assets.					
Opening balance	19,595	21,542	26,356	33,629	42,334
Transfer to reserves	10,000	9,600	9,792	9,988	9,989
Transfer from reserves	(8,053)	(4,786)	(2,519)	(1,283)	(1,585)
Closing balance	21,542	26,356	33,629	42,334	50,738

If an additional \$650,135 is funded from the PPRLR, the impact would be as below:

	Forecast Actual 2023/24 \$'000	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	2025/26 \$'000	Projections 2026/27 \$'000	2027/28 \$'000
Public Resort & Recreation Land Reserve					
<u>Purpose:</u> The funds are to be utilised for the development of new open space and recreation assets, as well as upgrade or expansion of existing assets.					
Opening balance	19,595	21,542	25,706	32,979	41,684
Transfer to reserves	10,000	9,600	9,792	9,988	9,989
Transfer from reserves	(8,053)	(4,786)	(2,519)	(1,283)	(1,585)
Proposed transfer for Frith St	0	(650)	0	0	0
Closing balance	21,542	25,706	32,979	41,684	50,088

This additional funding has been identified to be allocated to the 14 Frith Street Park Close to Home project to enable the project to be completed.

7. Implementation

Upon Council's approval of the contract variation, it will be executed by the Chief Executive Officer and works on the project will continue towards the updated practical completion date.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.10 CONTRACT VARIATION: RFT-2022-287 - PROVISION OF AN INTEGRATED PARKING SOLUTION - INCORPORATION OF OPTIONAL ITEMS INTO CONTRACT

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Amenity and Compliance

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Vary Council's formal Contract RFT-2022-287 Provision of an Integrated Parking Solution awarded to **Orikan Group Pty Ltd and ACN 620 056 715 (Contractor)** and effective as of 1 January 2023 to take up options for licence plate recognition technology and Infringement Management as a Service on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - i. For the same maximum term as Contract RFT-2022-287, with the initial term expiring on 31 December 2027 and then five 2-year extension options.
 - ii. For licence plate recognition, at the rates outlined in Confidential Attachment 1.
 - iii. For Infringement Management as a Service, at the up front costs and rates per infringement and per year not higher than those outlined in Confidential Attachment 2.
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Change Order for Contract RFT-2022-287 between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. The terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. Other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Change Order to the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract;
 - b) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the first two options to extend the contract in accordance with the provisions within the Contract.
3. Authorises an increase in the total spend on Contract RFT-2022-287, after incorporation of these optional items to the end of the initial Contract Term (to 31 December 2027) and exercising of the first two 2-year extensions to the contract, to a total of 9 years from \$4,493,750 (excluding GST) to \$14,348,796 (excluding GST).
4. Notes that the additional costs relating to the proposed Change Order will be primarily funded by savings in the costs of collecting infringement revenue including a reduction in expenses relating to referrals to Fines Victoria, a reduction in lookup fees from the Vehicle Registration Enquiry (VRE) database, a reduction of bad debts and no net change in budget is required.

Executive Summary

When Contract RFT-2022-287 was awarded by Council in September 2022, Council was advised that it was “feasible that officers may seek Council approval of optional components in the tender such as the licence plate recognition units or the fully hosted end-to-end infringement management system in the future.”

Officers have now undertaken detailed analysis of these two optional items and have concluded that it is appropriate to now exercise those options.

Licence plate recognition allows more effective deployment of parking and road safety officers, instead of chalking vehicles it allows ‘electronic chalking’ and so when the officer and vehicle return it more quickly identifies vehicles that have overstayed. It is particularly suited to the enforcement of timed parking, and costs will be offset through a small amount of additional infringement revenue.

Infringement Management as a Service (IMaaS) is a cloud-based service that provides a better customer experience, with the ability for the customer to apply for an extension of time, make an application for a payment plan, lodge an application for internal review or view the status of their infringement and reduced number of infringements ageing to the extent that statutory fees are added to the infringement cost. IMaaS also provides a much more streamlined back-of-house operation, allowing staff to focus on consideration of appeals and assisting customers with payment difficulties.

Even with conservative estimates, the IMaaS option will more than pay for itself in reduced costs relating to infringement management.

In addition to the above benefits, IMaaS will also help to improve the management of infringements relating to Construction Management, Working Within Road Reserves and Temporary Road Occupations, which have been identified for attention in an internal audit and would otherwise require additional resourcing.

Further, IMaaS will enable more straightforward and reliable reporting on Council’s performance as a regulator to external bodies such as Fines Victoria, Local Government Victoria, the Department of Transport and Planning, the Attorney-General, the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office and Animal Welfare Victoria.

Council’s approval is sought to enter into a Change Order to be signed by the Chief Executive Officer for the take up of these options included in the original tender for RFT-2022-287.

Council’s approval is also sought to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to enter into extensions that are part of the contract beyond the initial 5-year term. While there are five 2-year additional terms available in the contract, approval is sought to delegate the first two of these to the Chief Executive Officer.

Including the options now activated and adopting the state government CPI forecasts for the next 4 years would produce maximum spend of \$14,348,796 (excluding GST), indicatively made up of GST-exclusive sums of:

- \$4,493,750 (current authorised total spend to 31 December 2027),
- \$4,042,400 (extension for 4 years of current contract elements),
- \$2,375,233 (new contract options to 31 December 2027) and
- \$3,437,413 (extension for 4 years of new contract options).

All costs associated with the new contract options will be offset by reduced costs of administering infringements and a reduction in bad debts. Costs associated with the current contract elements are covered by base budgets.

Previous Council Decisions

RFT-2022-287 - Provision of an Integrated Parking Management Solution - 14 September 2022

That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:

- 1. Make a formal offer to DCA Cities Holdings Pty Ltd trading as DCA Cities ABN 77 620 056 715 to award Contract RFT-2022-287 for the Provision of an Integrated Parking Management Solution at a cost of \$3,821,828 (excluding GST) over a five-year term.*
- 2. Allocate contract expenses of up to \$50,000 each year for annual operating costs (not indexed) and include an annual CPI uplift allowance to the base contract of 5 per cent, bringing the total expenditure approval for Contract RFT-2022-287 to \$4,493,750 (excluding GST).*
- 3. Negotiate and finalise the terms of the contract between Council and the contractor.*
- 4. Do all things necessary to execute any required documentation for the contract.*
- 5. Advise all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the contract.*

1. Policy Context

Procurement Policy

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. It also addresses the requirement under Section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires Council to conduct a public tender for goods, services and works where once-off or ongoing cumulative spend over the life of the contract is expected to exceed \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

Statutory Requirements

There are obligations under the Infringements Act, the Fines Reform Act and within individual Acts and Regulations governing the issue of particular infringement types that Council must meet.

In particular Council has a statutory obligation to complete internal reviews in 90 days for all infringement types.

Council needs to provide regular reports to various state overseeing bodies on our performance with infringement issue and management, including Fines Victoria, Local Government Victoria, the Department of Transport and Planning, the Attorney-General, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office and Animal Welfare Victoria.

2. Background

The purpose of the report is to obtain Council approval for the Chief Executive Officer to sign a Change Order under Contract RFT-2022-287 which takes up two options that were part of the original tender and authorises the Chief Executive Officer to also exercise the first two of the five 2-year extension options that are part of the Contract.

The contract was signed on 14 July 2023, with a Commencement Date of 1 January 2023. There were some staffing shortages and legal complexities that required several months of negotiation within the bounds of Council's resolution on 14 September 2022, however as the previous incumbent was the same company as the new contractor, services were not discontinued during the intervening period.

Council originally endorsed the award of Contract RFT-2022-287 to **DCA Cities Holdings Pty Ltd trading as DCA Cities ABN 77 620 056 715**, which was subsequently purchased by **Orikan Group Pty Ltd and ACN 620 056 715**, to whom the Contract has been novated.

3. Issues

Consideration of the IMaaS system

Infringement management, from the issue of an infringement to its payment or other resolution, is a significant administrative task. While there are some key points after the issue of an infringement that require a person to review information and make judgements, many of the steps are statutory in nature and can largely be automated providing for a better customer experience and delivering significant operational efficiencies.

IMaaS is a modular offering, tailored to Council's requirements. The proposed Merri-bek solution is Software as a Service where:

- Council staff administer infringements directly;
- customers make use of a Self-Service portal allowing them to manage their infringement;
- a Payment Plan Module supports customers to pay off their infringements as they are able; and
- a Nominations Module supports those with parking infringements to apply to council to nominate another person as the driver of the vehicle and responsible for the infringement.

These modules allow for a more positive customer experience, as vehicle owners and infringement recipients are able to easily manage their infringement.

The IMaaS system provides financial benefits to Council through cost savings and reduction in debt burden. It provides significant benefits to staff across several teams through faster and better decision making and reduced administrative effort. This will improve the quality of their work, increase morale and reduce stress associated with high volume work bound by statutory timeframes (e.g. processing of appeals within 90 days) and allow staff to spend more time on quality decision making and supporting customers to understand and access options available to them (e.g. processing of payment plan applications).

Infringement Management as a Service will reduce the amount of time taken to administer infringements and the cost of doing so. It will deliver:

- Reduced cases where a vehicle registration enquiry is made of the DTP database
- Reduced referrals for infringement collection to Fines Victoria, because more infringements will be paid before this occurs
- Reduced need to budget for bad debts
- Reduced administration requirements surrounding management of reminder notices, internal reviews (appeals), payment plans and requests for extension of time
- More consolidated storage of all information pertaining to an infringement, reducing effort in preparing matters for court
- Much greater capacity to report on infringement status and track outcomes, feeding into training needs and improved quality of infringement issue.

There are also a number of benefits to people who receive infringements such as greater fairness in terms of shorter appeal turn-around times, enhanced customer experience via a secure online self-service portal which provides infringement details, current status of the infringement, ease of access for lodgement of internal review, payment plans, extension of time requests and nomination applications, and quicker responses to these. The system also automates the issuing of reminder notices, alerting customers early that they have an unpaid infringement and avoiding additional costs such as Fines Victoria lodgement fees being added. Customers are able to track the progress of applications/status of their infringement at their convenience, no longer needing to contact Council to request an update.

One of the greater benefits will be through a reduction in the times for appeals to be considered. At present, and regularly, appeal periods exceed 80 days (with the statutory limit of 90 days) and so it is often necessary for additional resources to be applied to appeal consideration. Other Councils introducing IMaaS have found that their appeal periods reduce from similar lengths to periods more like 15 days.

The benefits to customers using the digital platform are significant, making interacting with council on infringement related matters much quicker and easier. Customers choosing to deal with council over the phone or at one of our Customer Service centres will also experience an improved service as telephone wait times should reduce as a result of customers using the self-service portal. All functions performed via the self-service portal such as payment, lodgement of appeals, applications for extensions of time and payment plans will continue to be available in person at our Customer Service centres and staff will continue to offer assistance at council offices. Correspondence will continue to be issued in hard copy unless an email is specifically requested by the customer.

In addition to the above, IMaaS will also provide easier extraction of data about infringement management for external reporting (as outlined under Statutory Requirements) and when audits and quality assurance activities relating to our processes such as internal review are undertaken.

Consideration of licence plate recognition

Although licence plate recognition is a lower cost option than IMaaS, it also presents benefits that will offset the costs of the investment. Council has trialled the technology offline without issuing actual infringements and tested the robustness of the solution. Cameras in the enforcement vehicle are linked to the PinForce infringement issuing system, and they apply an 'electronic' chalking as the vehicle passes a parked vehicle. When the parking officer returns after the designated maximum parking duration, any vehicles that have overstayed are identified and the officer parks their vehicle and walks to affix parking infringements on the windscreen of offending vehicles, checking whether any eligible permit overrides the overstay detected.

The system applies blurring technology to faces of all people in shot. Council is currently testing the full life cycle of capture, storage and disposal of images and will not undertake deployment of this technology until the Privacy Officer has confirmed that it meets Council's Information Privacy and Health Records Policy.

The introduction of licence plate recognition technology will allow a small number (one to three) vehicles to be used in this mode, improving compliance, and therefore fairness, in the use of time restricted parking spaces. While the objective of adopting licence plate recognition is greater compliance with parking restrictions, a side-effect will be a small increase in the number of infringements issued. This is anticipated to offset the cost of this feature.

Procurement options

In going out to market with RFT-2022-287 – Provision of an integrated parking management solution, Orikan was the only tender respondent that offered an end-to-end infringement management system and licence plate recognition as part of their bid.

Returning to market for a stand-alone Infringement Management System is not feasible as this is a specialist system and Council is not aware of any other providers that offer an end-to-end system infringement management system. IMaaS integrates with all other parking management software and hardware e.g. parking sensors, ticket machines, PayStay ePermits and PinForce infringement issuing system, delivering significant operational efficiencies which provide benefits to staff and customers. It was because of the high level of integration needed between various elements of an integrated parking solution that a price was sought for infringement management at the time of tendering RFT-2022-287.

Licence plate recognition technology could be procured from elsewhere but this would not integrate with PinForce for infringement issue and would therefore not deliver any benefit.

Broader integration with Council's systems

IMaaS is a cloud-based specialist infringement management system and to officer's knowledge, no off-the-shelf core system currently utilised by other councils has an equivalent inbuilt specialist system. Council's current core customer management and enforcement management systems do not integrate with the parking solution.

As Council considers a future transformation in its core systems, it is an option to specify an infringement management system in the scope. However, this particular service would add considerable complexity to such a transformation. In the intervening years, the anticipated benefits attributed to IMaaS will not be achieved – administrative burden will not ease, additional resourcing will need to be considered to deal with increased workload (based on current trends and advice from Fines Victoria) and customer experience benefits will not be realised.

Council's information and security and privacy policies were considered as part of the original award of Contract RFT-2022-287. The IMaaS and licence plate recognition solutions will be further reviewed and checked against security and privacy policies prior to go-live of each service.

Collaboration

IMaaS is used by a number of inner and northern metro councils including Stonnington, Port Phillip and Whittlesea. Officers from the Finance and Amenity and Compliance teams have met with representatives of these councils to interrogate the implementation of IMaaS into their respective councils and to understand the benefits in terms of operations and customer experience. Each council has reported significant savings in the administration of infringements being realised through the tool in addition to customer experience uplift and greater assurance that their approach achieves statutory compliance. They advised that the implementation of IMaaS was straight forward and the improvements to both customers and staff were realised relatively quickly.

While collective procurement of a solution like this is not practical, the certainty relating to benefits realisation has been a significant benefit of collaboration with other Councils.

Social / Environmental / Local Implications

As detailed in the Issues section of this report, the IMaaS solution provides significant benefits to people who receive infringements through greater fairness and enhanced customer experience making interacting with council on infringement related matters much quicker and easier. The system supports infringement recipients to manage their infringements through the self-service portal at their convenience, however all infringement management functions will continue to be available in person or over the phone, and staff will continue to offer assistance at council offices.

The licence plate recognition system improves compliance with timed parking restrictions, supporting local businesses and residents impacted by high parking demand.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

One of the purposes of Charter is “ensuring that all statutory provisions, whenever enacted, are interpreted so far as is possible in a way that is compatible with human rights”. Council applies considerable effort to consideration of human rights in the exercise of our statutory obligations to achieve this compatibility, and the introduction of IMaaS and licence plate recognition provide additional capacity for staff to spend time on faster consideration of circumstances relating to appeals where discretion is required on the basis of human rights.

4. Consultation / Recommendation from Management

Stakeholders across Council have developed this proposal, namely:

- Amenity and Compliance
- Customer Service
- Transport
- Transformation Program
- City Development
- Procurement
- Finance
- Social Policy and Community Development
- Information Technology

The Digital Steering Committee, which includes an independent expert, has specifically reviewed the business case for IMaaS over two meetings and is satisfied with the business case for proceeding, subject to final checks around information security and privacy.

Officers recommend the take up of both Infringement Management as a Service and licence plate recognition options within the Contract RFT-2022-287 held by Orikan Group Pty Ltd.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council Officers, external consultants and all other parties involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The financial implications to the contract of the proposed introduction of LPR and IMaaS, and the addition of two, 2-year extension options in the total approved spend is shown in the table below. These estimates assume CPI as per DTF forecasts as at May 2024 for 4 years, followed by CPI estimated at 5 per cent per annum.

	Initial Contract Period to 31 December 2027	Extensions: 4 years (2x2-year extensions), 1 January 2028 to 31 December 2031	Total to 31 December 2031
Current contract scope	\$4,493,750 ¹	\$4,042,400	\$8,460,304
Addition of IMaaS and licence plate recognition ²	\$2,375,233	\$3,437,413	\$5,812,646
New maximum spend	\$ 6,868,983	\$7,479,758	\$ 14,348,796

Note 1: The previously approved maximum total spend for Contract RFT-2022-287.

Note 2: It is estimated that LPR and IMaaS will go-live within 2024/25

The additional costs relating to IMaaS will be fully offset by savings in the costs of collecting infringement revenue, mostly transaction costs and bad debt reduction.

The additional costs relating to licence plate recognition will be fully offset by a small increase in the number of infringements issued.

Although cost-neutral, the spend on Contract RFT-2022-287 is in a different part of operating budgets to the costs of infringement management. Adjustments (estimated each year at approximately \$670,000) will be made to the relevant budgets including the parking sensor contract, parking – bad & doubtful debts, operational costs, Fines Victoria lodgement costs, vehicle registration enquiry lookup costs and postage (mailing service).

7. Implementation and Timeline

It is proposed that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the Change Order and any other required documentation.

A project manager will be appointed to oversee the change which will include the necessary communication, training, configuration and testing of the services within the Council environment, including full review against Council's security and privacy policies.

Implementation of IMaaS will commence as soon as possible from the execution of the Change Order, and it is anticipated that the system will be live within 3 months.

Implementation of the licence plate recognition system will begin within 2 months from the execution of the Change Order.

Attachment/s

- 1 Costings for Licence Plate Recognition D24/242386

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

- 2 Costings for Infringement Management as a Service D24/242387

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

7.11 CONTRACT RFT-2023-504 - PROVISION OF CATERING SERVICES

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to the following contractors (**Panel Contractor**) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2023-504 for the provision of catering services (**Contract**) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution to:

Category A - Refreshments, snacks and light lunches

 - i) Elizabeth Andrews Catering (354 691 603)
 - ii) Green Refectory Pty Ltd (168 257 565)
 - iii) Jarrah Integrated Services Pty Ltd (622 902 167)
 - iv) Mela Patisserie Pty Ltd (640 377 215)
 - v) Roti-Shot by Pooja (80 841 626 343)
 - vi) Treat Enterprises (165 399 413)
 - vii) Youth Projects - The Little Social Catering Co (149 618 486)

Category B – Hot meals and events

 - i) Elizabeth Andrews Catering (354 691 603)2) Green Refectory Pty Ltd (168 257 565)
 - ii) Jarrah Integrated Services Pty Ltd (622 902 167)
 - iii) J & CO Melbourne Pty Ltd (Catering Project Melbourne) (658 451 211)
 - b) For a term of three (3) years with two (2) x one (1) year extension options at the discretion of Council.
 - c) For an amount not exceeding \$1,333,541 including GST across all contractors over the life of the contract on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this resolution.
 - d) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i) The terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council.
 - ii) Other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer.
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor(s) in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract.

- b) Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to accept new panel contractor(s) during the contract term subject to the same tender/evaluation process as adopted for the original panel contractors, to ensure we can maintain a range of suitable suppliers to meet Council's needs, providing the total contract amount to remain as paragraph 1 (a).
- c) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option(s) to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract subject to satisfactory performance of the contractor.
- d) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to recommend the award of a contract for the provision of corporate catering services to Council.

Tenders were invited and assessed for services including the preparation, delivery and serving of meals and where required, upon completion of the meal, the cleaning of tables, relevant equipment, crockery and cutlery.

The aim of the tender process is to engage a panel of registered food businesses, including local businesses and social enterprises.

Successful contractors will be required to provide and deliver meals ranging from fruit, snacks and sandwiches to formal main course type meals to Council Civic Centres and other locations throughout the municipality on an as needs basis. The functions at which catering will be required will vary from Council meetings, committee meetings, internal meetings, civic events including citizenship ceremonies and dinners for evening meetings or events.

Successful contractors will be required to provide a diverse range of foods, adapting for religious beliefs, special dietary requirements, healthy food choices and catering should reflect Merri-bek's culturally diverse community.

The tender process was designed to facilitate all businesses, small to large, local and outside of the municipality, to have the same opportunity to tender for the contract whilst applying a strong emphasis on environmental, economic and social sustainability. The process also sought to seek suppliers who source ethically and sustainably produced, seasonal and local food/ingredients, to meet high standards of animal welfare and minimise the water and energy used to produce and transport the food.

The potential term for the successful tenderers is five years, consisting of the initial contract term of 3 years with two 1-year extension options.

The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Previous Council Decisions

Contract 792T - Provision of Corporate Catering Services – August 2019

That Council:

1. *Awards Contract 792T - Provision of Corporate Catering Services for the initial 3 years with 2x1-year options to be exercised at Council's discretion, to:*
 - Contract A – Refreshments, snacks and light lunches:*
 - a) *Green Refectory Pty Ltd, Brunswick*
 - b) *George & Jody Panagiotou Trust & Mankar Family Trust trading as The Deli Coburg Pty Ltd*
 - c) *Cultural Catering Pty Ltd*

- d) *Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc trading as ASRC Catering Contract B – Hot meals and events;*
 - e) *Barth St Pty Ltd trading as Your Private Chef catering and events;*
 - f) *Cafés International Pty Ltd trading as Hudson’s Famous.*
2. *Authorises the Director Business Transformation to do all things necessary to execute contracts for Contract 792T - Provision of Corporate Catering Services, and any other required documentation.*
 3. *Advises all tenderers for Contract 792T - Provision of Corporate Catering Services advised of Council’s decision in this matter.*
 4. *Notes that Council declared a climate emergency in September last year, that emissions come from a variety of sectors within Council’s control and that a climate emergency declaration means taking action subsequent to making the declaration. The latest update of Australia’s National Greenhouse Gas Inventory shows agricultural emissions account for 12.9% of Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions. That indirect and direct emissions from livestock account for large amounts of these emissions and that there are known benefits to an individual’s health and well-being from eating a vegetarian diet and diets with less meat and more vegetables. As a result Council commits to only receiving meat-free catered meals on Mondays at all Council functions and events including Councillor briefings.*

1. Policy Context

This report is in keeping with Council’s commitment to accountability and sound financial management. It also addresses the requirement under Section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires Council to conduct a public tender for goods, services and works where once-off or ongoing cumulative spend over the life of the contract is expected to exceed \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

2. Background

Council is seeking to appoint a panel of suppliers for services including the preparation, delivery and serving of meals and where required, upon completion of the meal, the cleaning of tables, relevant equipment, crockery and cutlery. The purpose of the report is to award a panel of contractors for a 3-year initial term with two x 1-year extension options.

Tenders were invited and assessed for a panel of registered food businesses to deliver a range of catering services to Council. Due to the complexity of the range of services required and a desire to support social, local and economic sustainability, there are 2 categories to be awarded under the contract, suppliers had the opportunity to submit for 1 or both categories:

- Category A – Refreshments, snacks and light lunches.
- Category B – Hot meals and events.

The Economic Development Branch provided a key level of support, collaborating to promote the tender for this contract prior to release across local businesses.

The tender process included the below, with twelve (12) respondents submitting a tender response.

- A public tender that opened on 9 December 2023 and closed 29 January 2024.
- Advertising in *The Age* newspaper on 9 December 2023.

Tender evaluation was undertaken by the Tender Evaluation Team and the below has been identified as the preferred suppliers based on the evaluation criteria.

Twelve companies submitted for the tender, the eight companies that are being awarded to the panel are listed below:

- J & CO Melbourne Pty Ltd (Catering Project Melbourne)
- Elizabeth Andrews Catering
- Green Refectory Pty Ltd
- Jarrah Integrated Services
- Mela Patisserie Pty Ltd
- Roti-Shot by Pooja
- Treat Enterprises
- Youth Projects - The Little Social Catering Co.

The remaining four suppliers were deemed non-compliant due to not submitting the required documentation.

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows:

Title and/or company	Role on panel	Full Voting / Advisory Member
Coordinator Facilities	Generalist (Chair)	Full
Events and Facilities Team Leader	Generalist	Full
Unit Manager Governance	Generalist	Full
Organisational Performance Support Officer	Project support	Advisory
Industry Facilitation Officer	Technical advisor	Advisory
Senior Procurement Business Partner	Procurement	Advisory

Detailed evaluation criteria and weighting are provided in the following table.

Criteria	Weighting
Price	40%
Capacity to provide the service	15%
Service delivery methodology	5%
Social Sustainability	5%
Economic Sustainability	15%
Environmental Sustainability	20%

In assessing the tenders, consideration was given to the predefined evaluation criteria included in the Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan. Further details of tender evaluation are shown in the attachment Tender Recommendation Report (**Confidential Attachment 1**).

3. Issues

Some of the suppliers who responded to the tender are not recommended for contract award as they were not able to provide the required documentation as part of the tender process; therefore it was not possible to assess their capacity and capability and score them (refer to confidential Attachment 1). The Officer Recommendation is to allow the CEO to approve new suppliers, as required, to ensure we maintain a number of suppliers over the life of the contract to meet councils needs and address circumstances which may arise, such as contractors that cease their operations during the term of the contract. This would be subject to the same tender/evaluation process as adopted by the original evaluation panel, to ensure we maintain a suitable range of suppliers to meet Council's needs.

The ability to bring on new suppliers also enables Council to potentially increase the number of contractors who align with our Procurement Policy environmental, social and economic objectives e.g. provide opportunities to business such as refugee businesses, social benefit suppliers etc. Any additional suppliers added to the panel would not change the overall contract amount of \$1,333,541 including GST.

To help support small local businesses on Merri-bek's tendering processes, the Procurement Unit is collaborating with Northern Council's Alliance (NCA) to hold a joint education session for small business in NCA on Wednesday 7th August 2024.

Collaboration

Note that section 109(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement must include information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

Under this contract, there are no opportunities to collaborate with other Councils because other local government agencies have existing contracts that do not align with Council's current contract requirements including contract dates and the preferred method of supporting local Merri-bek suppliers as stated in the evaluation criteria and weightings.

Environmental Implications

The tender process sought to seek suppliers who source ethically and sustainably produced, seasonal and local food/ingredients, to meet high standards of animal welfare and minimise the water and energy used to produce and transport the food. Caterers were also required to minimise waste, energy and water use in-house.

Council's commitment to reducing and seeking to eliminate all unnecessary use of single-use plastic within Merri-bek was affirmed through this tender.

To support Council's position to protect the environment and make decisions based on ecological sustainability; this contract required that food must be presented/delivered in containers or packaging which minimise environmental impact. The following priority order has been applied appropriate to the type of food:

- Re-usable trays/platters (including lids)
- Recyclable trays and platters (including lids)
- Contains recycled material
- Can be composted.

Any single use packaging is required to be minimised as much as possible, however if required should be recyclable or compostable. The use of cling wrap should be avoided in favour of aluminium foil, which can be recycled in general co-mingled recycling bins.

Local and Social Implications

The Economic Development Team was consulted and provided support to promote the tender to local businesses prior to release. Below are some examples of local and social implications and benefits in relation to the recommended contractors:

- Supporting a 100% owned first nations business.
- One of the recommended tenderers is a social enterprise located in Merri-bek working to support young people and people experiencing homelessness within the municipality, and if successful, will allow them to expand their operations.
- Five of the recommended tenderers are located within Merri-bek.
- Majority of the recommended tenderers either employ local Merri-bek residents or support local businesses.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Consultation and Engagement

The Economic Development Team was consulted and provided support to promote the tender to local businesses prior to release.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council Officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The contractor/s will be engaged based on agreed menu rates.

The catering contract covers a variety of events such as Council meetings, committee meetings, grand opening events as well as civic events, including citizenship ceremonies and formal dinners.

The budget over the next 5-years is \$1.2 million (excluding GST).

The engagement of local businesses offers a reduction in additional delivery costs, in addition to supporting our economic and social sustainability objectives.

It worth noting, for panel arrangements Council does not guarantee either a minimum quantity of work in relation to any of the Contract components or any particular mix of work within the Contract components.

Over the maximum possible five-year term of the contract, the maximum spend is expected to be \$1,333,541 including GST.

7. Implementation and Timeline

It is proposed that the CEO be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the contract/s and any other required documentation.

The contracts will commence as soon as possible following Council endorsement.

The contract term is proposed as three (3) years with two (2) x one (1) year extension periods of the contract at the discretion of Council. The total contract term including options is 5-years.

Attachment/s

- 1 Confidential attachment - RFT-2023-504 - Tender Recommendation Report D24/262582

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii))(I), and of the Local Government Act 2020, this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage, and information that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the Local Government Act 1989.

7.12 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 APRIL 2024 (INCLUDING SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY RESERVE GUIDELINES)

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Finance and Procurement

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 30 April 2024, at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Endorses the Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve Guidelines at Attachment 2 to this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report presents the Financial Management Report for the financial year to date period ending 30 April 2024.

A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation at the end of February 2024. The results of this review are included in this report as the Full Year Revised Forecast.

The April 2024 Income Statement shows the Council surplus is \$4.1 million higher than the year-to-date revised forecast as a result of higher overall revenue and lower overall expenditure. These differences are considered largely timing in nature. As set out in the Issues section of this report, operating surplus funds do not convert to immediately available cash to Council; they are used to fund important community infrastructure projects like the Fawcner Leisure Centre redevelopment or the Cultural and Community Hub at 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick.

Council has spent \$55.4 million on capital expenditure, which is tracking below the year-to-date (YTD) forecast of \$70.6 million, with \$53.6 million budget remaining.

This report also outlines an administrative update of the guidelines for operation of the Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve to align with the parent policy, the Financial Reserves and Capital Management Policy. The updated guidelines replace the Moreland Housing Reserve - Guidelines for Allocation of Funds which were endorsed by Council on 8 June 2016 (**Attachment 3**).

Previous Council Decisions

2023/24 Third Quarter Financial Report – 10 April 2024

That Council:

1. *Notes the 2023/24 Third Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 29 February 2024, including operating performance and capital performance.*
2. *Notes the status of the capital works program for 2023/24.*
3. *Note the decrease to the full-year forecast for operating income of \$0.01 million and the decrease to operating expenditure of \$2.2 million arising from the 2023/24 Third Quarter Financial Review.*

4. *Notes a forecast underspend of \$0.8 million against the adopted budget in the waste charge and \$1.3 million of unbudgeted grant funding (factored into the 2023/24 waste charge) to be transferred to the Waste Charge Reserve (\$1.1 million identified in the Third Quarter Financial Review).*
5. *Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of \$109.0 million, arising from the 2023/24 Mid-Year Financial Review.*
6. *Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2024/25 Capital Works Program:*
 - *Derby St Kindergarten Children's Centre - \$1,000,000*
 - *Oak Park Kindergarten - \$1,000,000*
 - *Hosken Reserve Stage 4 Open Space & Civil Work - \$1,000,000*
 - *Clifton Park – Synthetic Soccer - \$740,001*
 - *Sportsfield Lighting – JP Fawcner Park - \$641,744*
 - *Mitchell Pde Retaining Wall - \$632,421*
 - *Greenbank Crescent Retaining Walls - \$525,000*
 - *Shared Zones – Victoria Street and Albert Street, Brunswick East - \$460,000*
 - *Sportsfield Lighting – Allard Park - \$378,785*
 - *Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex Redevelopment - \$300,000*
 - *Dawson Street bike lane – make permanent - \$220,000*
 - *Merri Creek Trail Access and Safety Upgrades – Various - \$191,900*
 - *Accommodation Changes to Meet Service Demand - \$184,766*
 - *Merri Trail – Sumner Park to Capital City Trail Flood Mitigation – Bridge across Merri Creek into Darebin, Brunswick East - \$170,000*
 - *Furniture & Fittings Replacement Program - \$169,745*
 - *De Carle Street Protected Bike Lanes – The Avenue to Moreland Rd, Coburg - \$165,679*
 - *Gym Equipment Replacement Program – Various Locations - \$164,000*
 - *HW Foletta, Brunswick - \$130,000*
 - *Summer Bank/Dowding Reserve - \$130,000*
 - *Coburg Olympic Pool – Pool Plant and Building Works - \$120,000*
 - *Fisher Reserve, Brunswick East (Design Only) - \$120,000*
 - *Parks and Reserve flooding rectification - \$100,000*
 - *McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Social Room Amenities & Kitchen - \$100,000*
 - *Blackspot Project – De Carle St & Albion St - \$98,000*
 - *Kendall/Harding Footbridge – Footbridge over Merri Creek - \$76,424*
 - *MITS – Road closures - \$73,000*
 - *Shore Reserve – Public Toilets - \$35,457*
 - *Brunswick Velodrome – Community Pump Track - \$30,000*
 - *Glenroy Activity Centre Upgrade Works – Wheatsheaf Rd North - \$21,862.*

7. Approves the following additional capital project funding to be funded from the Public Resort and Recreation Land Reserve:
- Coburg Lake – Exersite - \$12,560
 - ATC Cook Reserve – Exersite - \$6,746
 - ATC Cook Reserve – Picnic Shelter - \$5,329
 - Charles Mutton Reserve – Tennis Court Resurface & Lighting - \$3,982.

Moreland Housing Reserve Guidelines and Establishment of Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd – 8 June 2016

That Council:

1. Adopts the Moreland Housing Reserve Guidelines.

...

The Status of Housing Strategy Reserve – 10 December 2014

That Council:

1. Notes the current balance and expenditure details of the Housing Strategy Reserve.
2. Commits to allocating \$50,000 annually towards the Housing Strategy Reserve each year beginning with the 2015-2016 Financial Year.

1. Policy Context

This report supports Merri-bek City Council's continuing commitment to open and accountable management of its financial resources on behalf of its ratepayers.

The administrative update of the guidelines for operation of the Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve is an activity related to action 2.5, *strategically use the Merri-bek Housing Strategy Reserve*, of the Affordable Housing Action Plan (AHAP) 2022-2026. The AHAP broadly links to Council Plan 2021-2025 in the following themes and strategies:

Theme 3: Healthy and Caring Moreland

Theme 4: Vibrant spaces and places in Moreland.

2. Background

The Financial Management Report at Attachment 1 provides Council's financial statements for the year to date (YTD) period ending 30 April 2024. The actual results are compared to the revised forecast which includes changes made in the Third Quarter Financial Review.

The Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve was established in 1997 to foster affordable housing. In total, more than \$2.1 million has been disbursed. The current balance is \$481,300.

A guideline document was adopted by Council in June 2016 (Attachment 3). Since then, just under \$1m has been transferred from the Reserve, focussed on supporting the establishment phase of Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd (MAH). This support from Council to MAH for its first four years was predicated on the new company getting on a sustainable footing without ongoing Council financial support. This is confirmed under a new Memorandum of Understanding signed in December 2023 with Council not specifically committing any future funds from the Reserve to MAH.

Regular transfers into the reserve commenced after a resolution of Council in December 2014 to make an annual \$50,000 allocation through the Council budget. Further regular transfers into the Reserve came because of a decision in 2018 to allocate 50 per cent of annual revenue from the sale of abandoned vehicles.

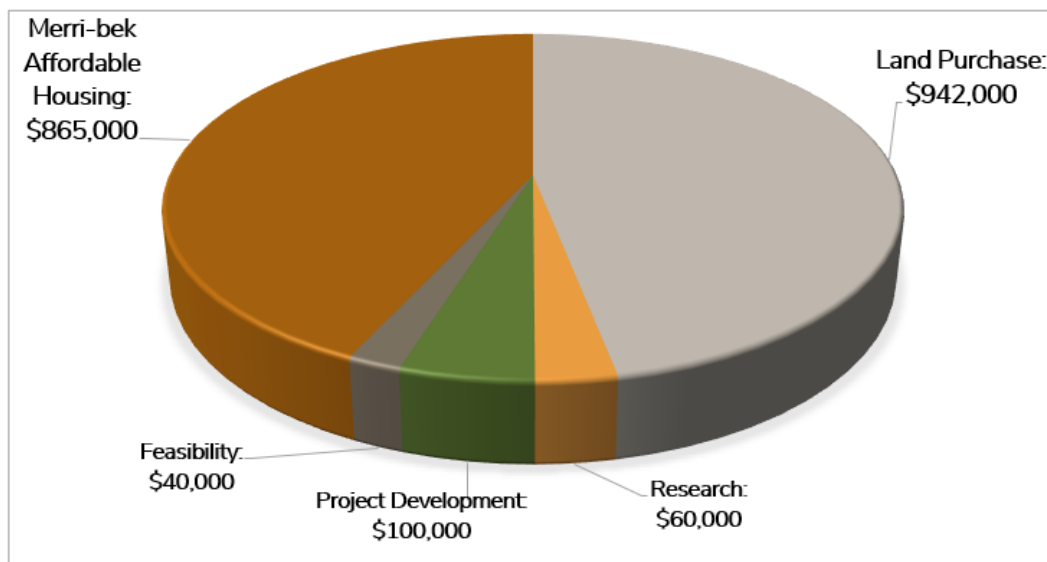


Figure 1 Allocation of Reserve funds since 1997

The Reserve has supported:

- successful delivery of four social housing projects on leased Council land, two in Fawkner, and one each in Merlynston and Coburg East
- establishment of Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd, which will shortly develop 40 units of social and affordable housing in a \$26m project on former Council land in Brunswick, and
- delivery of research and technical studies to meet policy and advocacy goals.

The total spend in terms of social and affordable housing outcomes represents an investment of \$33,870 per dwelling or approximately \$20,000 per bedroom.

3. Issues

Council ended April 2024 with a surplus operating result of \$64.6 million which is \$4.1 million (7%) more than the year to date (YTD) revised forecast of \$60.5 million. These differences are considered largely timing in nature.

It is important to note that the \$64.6 million operating surplus does not convert to immediately available cash to Council. Surplus funds are used to fund important community infrastructure projects like the Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment or the Cultural and Community Hub at 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick.

As described above, significant amounts of surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

Significant variance explanations are provided below to clarify where the current YTD variances are expected to be a timing or permanent difference by 30 June 2024. A timing variance is a current difference between actual result and budget which is expected to be resolved before the end of the financial year. A permanent variance is a current difference between actual result and budget which will continue to the end of the financial year.

The main items contributing to the overall variance are:

Revenue

- **Grants – Capital** ended \$1.2 million (81%) favourable primarily due to the earlier than anticipated receipt of the receipt of Oak Park Kindergarten Building Blocks funding of \$0.8 million (timing).

Expenditure

- **Net loss on Disposal of Assets** ended \$0.4 million (22%) favourable due to the transfer of expenditure from capital to operating where expenditure cannot be capitalised (permanent).

Key Definitions

Surplus – is reported based on the Australian Accounting Standards and includes all operating income and expenditure recognised in the financial period, including gifted subdivisional assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the surplus is not a cash surplus. It does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

Adjusted underlying surplus – is the surplus for the year adjusted for non-recurrent capital grants and contributions. It is an accepted measure of financial sustainability as it is not impacted by non-recurring or once-off items of revenue and expenses that can often mask the operating results.

Unrestricted result – this is the net funding result after considering the funding requirements to meet loan principal repayments and transfers to and from reserves.

Capital Projects – Capital Expenditure

The Capital Expenditure program year to date has an actual spend of \$55.4 million which is tracking below the YTD forecast of \$70.6 million (22%), with \$53.6 million (49%) revised budget remaining.

Cash

At the end of April, Council had cash and short-term investments of \$115.5 million. This is \$1.8 million lower than the cash position at the beginning of the financial year. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors including the timing of payments and receipts.

Solvency Assessment

Council's liquidity ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities) is 4.3 as at 30 April 2024. The Victorian Auditor-General's Office recommends that this ratio be 1.5 or higher.

Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve Guidelines update

On 12 April 2023 Council endorsed a revision of its Financial Reserves and Capital Management Policy to respond to changes in Australian Accounting Standards as well as to bring the policy up to best practice standard.

The revised policy expressly outlines the purpose of financial reserves as well as the process of transferring funds to and from reserves. It changed the name of the Moreland Housing Strategy Reserve to the Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve.

The proposed administrative updates to the Reserve Guidelines (Attachment 2) are minor in nature and include:

- officers responsible for the management of the Reserve
- financial reporting requirements
- authorisation of transfers from the Reserve either through the annual budget allocation or a resolution of Council, and
- simplification of expressed principles for the allocation of funds.

Community Impact

There are no community impacts identified in this report.

Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications identified in this report.

Economic Sustainability Implications

There are no economic sustainability implications identified in this report.

Legal and Risk Considerations

There are no legal and risk considerations identified in this report.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

This report has been prepared based on information provided by managers and reviewed by directors. The *Community Engagement Policy 2023* notes that where policies are prepared that apply to Council's internal operations, and/or that have no impact, or a negligible impact on the community; Council will not carry out any community engagement.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The overall corporate objective is to deliver the 2023/24 budget with the best possible outcome for Council and the community and in line with the adopted budget targets. Adopting the Social and Affordable Strategy Reserve Guidelines will have nil financial impact.

7. Implementation

The financial position of Council will continue to be monitored and managed. Subject to Council endorsement, budget adjustments will support the continuation of the projects outlined in this report and the revised Social and Affordable Strategy Reserve Guidelines will be uploaded to the internet as a public policy and communicated to relevant Council officers.

Attachment/s

1	Council Financial Management Report - April 2024	D24/239673
2	Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve – Guidelines -Draft for endorsement May 2024	D24/233228
3	Moreland Housing Reserve - Guidelines for Allocation of Funds- Endorsed by Council 8 June 2016	D16/129800



Merri-bek
City Council

Council Financial Management Report

10 Months Ended April 2024

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Executive Summary

Operating Performance

For the ten months ended 30 April 2024, Council had an operating surplus of \$64.6 million which is \$4.1 million (7%) more than the year to date (YTD) revised forecast of \$60.5 million. This comprises total revenue of \$241.7 million which is \$1.2 million (1%) more than the YTD revised forecast of \$240.5 million and total expenditure of \$177.0 million which is \$2.9 million (2%) favourable compared to the YTD revised forecast of \$180.0 million.

Income Statement	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Total Revenue	241,680	240,470 ▲	1,210	1%	257,760	262,650 ▲	4,890
Total Expenses	177,045	179,970 ▲	2,925	2%	213,532	219,572 ▼	(6,041)
Surplus/(Deficit)	64,636	60,500 ▲	4,135	7%	44,230	43,079 ▼	(1,151)

YTD favourable variance in revenue is largely driven by the earlier than budgeted receipt of Oak Park Kindergarten capital funding (\$0.8 million). YTD favourable variance in expenses is primarily due to Materials & Services which ended \$2.9 million favourable due to the timing of expenditure.

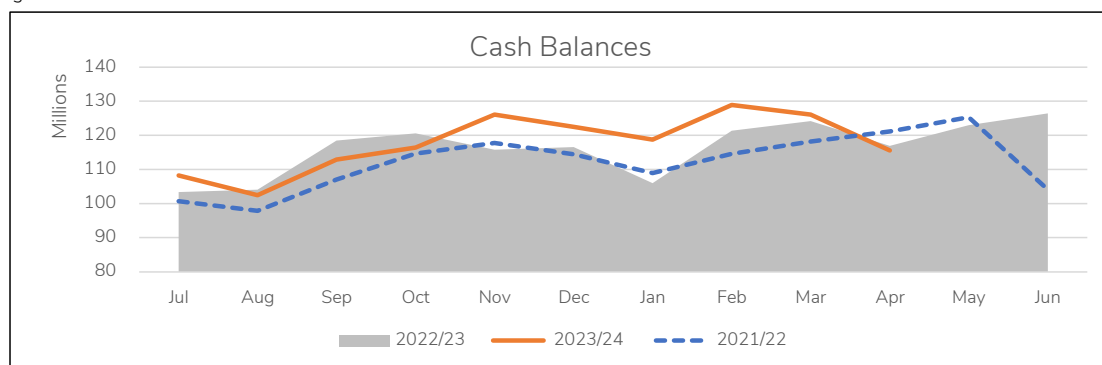
Capital Works Program

Council has spent \$55.4 million on capital expenditure to 30 April 2024 which is \$15.2 million (22%) lower than the YTD revised forecast, with \$53.6 million (49%) of the full year revised budget remaining. The capital revised forecast reflects the adopted 2023-24 budget, \$28.7 million of carry forwards from 2022-23 and changes from the Q1, Q2 and Q3 forecast.

Financial Results Summary	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
New asset expenditure	7,217	11,916	4,698	39%	29,923	20,861	9,062
Asset renewal expenditure	30,961	39,119	8,157	21%	62,775	58,637	4,138
Asset upgrade expenditure	17,220	19,541	2,321	12%	30,490	29,479	1,011
Total capital works expenditure	55,399	70,576	15,177	22%	123,188	108,977	14,211

Cash & Investments

Cash assets are \$115.5 million at 30 April 2024. This is a decrease of \$1.8 million on 30 June 2023 cash levels. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors including the timing of payments and receipts. Of the \$115.5 million cash assets, \$67.4 million is convertible to cash in less than 60 days and \$77.0 million (81.9%) is held in green investments. The portfolio is in compliance with Council policy which requires at least \$20.0 million to be convertible to cash and green investments to make up greater than 70% of all investments.



Operating Performance

Income Statement

YTD Variance (\$)		YTD Variance (%)	
▲	> \$100k	▲	> 10%
■	< \$100k & > (\$100k)	■	< 10% & > (10%)
▼	< (\$100k)	▼	< (10%)

Income Statement	Notes	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Revenue								
Rates and charges		185,112	185,069	▲	0%	184,495	185,275	781
Statutory fees and fines		13,618	14,031	▼	(3%)	17,462	17,100	(362)
User Fees		6,892	6,717	▲	3%	7,006	7,951	944
Contributions - Monetary		7,682	7,988	▼	(3%)	10,455	9,648	(807)
Contributions - Non-monetary		1,849	1,777	■	4%	-	1,777	1,777
Grants - Operating		15,211	14,909	▲	2%	19,827	22,267	2,440
Grants - Capital	1	2,757	1,523	▲	81%	10,994	8,706	(2,288)
Other Revenue		8,435	8,451	■	(0%)	7,434	9,922	2,488
Asset Sales		123	5	▲	2361%	87	5	(82)
Total Revenue		241,680	240,470	▲	1%	257,760	262,650	4,890
Expenses								
Employee Benefits		86,190	85,947	▼	(0%)	108,807	108,032	776
Contracts, Materials & Services		53,649	56,104	▲	4%	68,416	69,741	(1,324)
Depreciation		32,234	32,397	▲	1%	33,104	38,939	(5,835)
Amortisation		197	197	■	0%	236	236	0
Bad and doubtful debts		2,228	2,338	▲	5%	2,960	2,891	69
Net loss on disposal of assets	2	1,447	1,847	▲	22%	(1,655)	(1,765)	110
Finance Costs		592	625	■	5%	917	778	139
Other Expenses		508	514	■	1%	745	719	26
Total Expenses		177,045	179,970	▲	2%	213,532	219,572	(6,041)
Net Result		64,636	60,500	▲	7%	44,230	43,078	(1,151)

Notes

Revenue

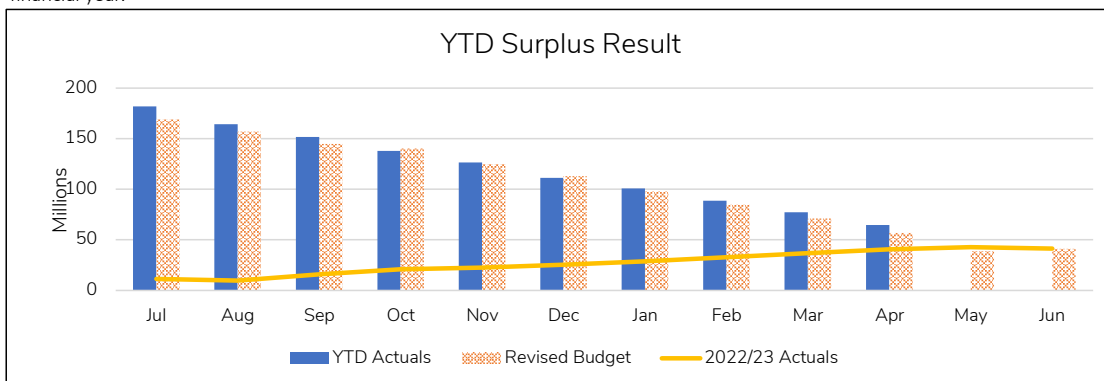
1. **Grants Capital** ended \$1.2 million (81%) favourable primarily due to earlier than anticipated receipt of Oak Park Kindergarten capital funding (\$0.8 million).

Expenses

2. **Net Loss on Disposal of Assets** ended \$0.4 million (22%) favourable primarily due to the timing of the disposal of assets. Disposal of assets occur when capital works are completed to replace old infrastructure.

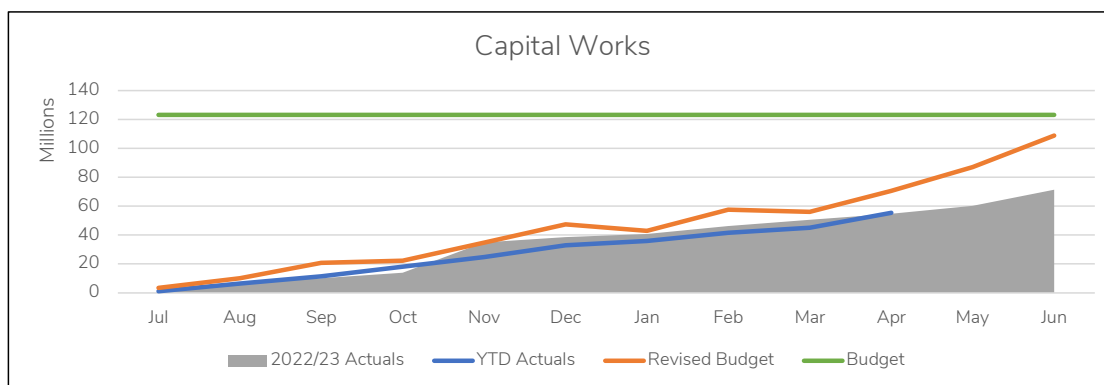
YTD Operating Result

YTD surplus result is impacted by total rates being recognised in July and the surplus will reduce progressively over the course of the financial year.

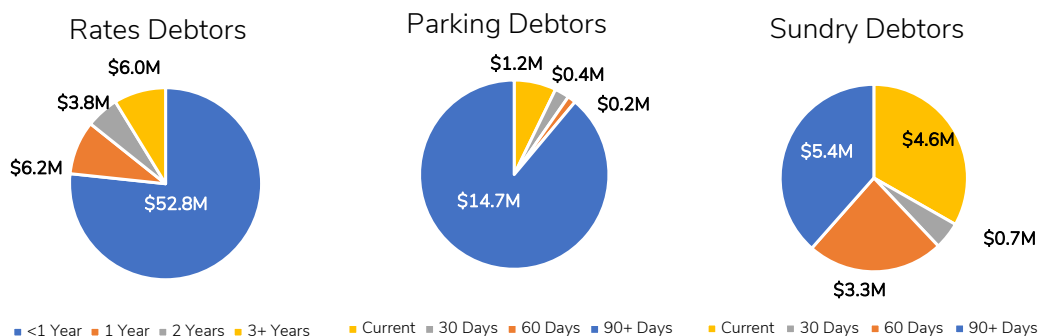


Capital Works

Council has spent \$55.4 million on capital expenditure to 30 April 2024 which is \$15.2 million (22%) lower than the YTD revised forecast, with \$53.6 million (49%) of the full year revised budget remaining. The capital revised forecast reflects the adopted 2023-24 budget, \$28.7 million of carry forwards from 2022-23 and changes from the Q1, Q2 and Q3 forecast.

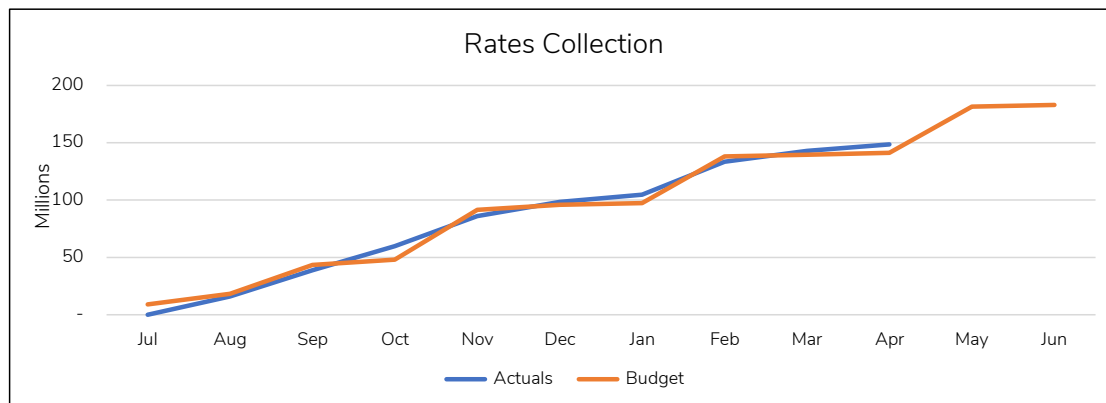


Debtors



Rates Collection

Rates cash collections are on budget and will be monitored over the upcoming months for impact on the forecast cash balances.



Investments

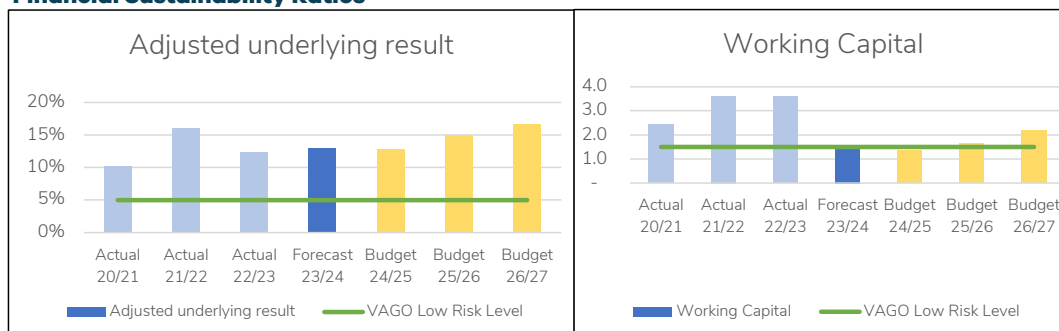
Of the \$115.5 million cash assets, \$67.4 million is convertible to cash in less than 60 days and \$77.0 million (81.9%) is held in green investments. The portfolio is in compliance with Council policy which requires at least \$20.0 million to be convertible to cash and green investments to make up greater than 70% of all investments.

Bank	Maturity Date	Green %	Interest Rate %	S & P short term rating	Amount \$'000	Ratio %
Minor Cash*	N/A		N/A	N/A	75	
Westpac	N/A		4.70%	A-1+	11,135	
Westpac	N/A		4.80%	A-1+	10,318	
CBA - 3	5/06/2024		4.74%	A-1+	6,000	10.6%
CBA - 3	21/05/2024		4.79%	A-1+	4,000	
Bendigo Bank - 3	20/05/2024	100%	4.69%	A-2	4,000	17.0%
Bendigo Bank - 4	8/07/2024	100%	4.79%	A-2	12,000	
IMB - 3	3/07/2024	100%	4.85%	A-2	5,000	
IMB - 4	4/06/2024	100%	4.80%	A-2	5,000	21.3%
IMB - 3	10/06/2024	100%	4.80%	A-2	10,000	
ME Bank - 4	3/05/2024	100%	5.05%	A-2	10,000	10.6%
NAB - 3	16/05/2024		5.05%	A-1+	7,000	7.4%
Suncorp - 4	1/08/2024	100%	4.95%	A-1	11,000	22.3%
Suncorp - 4	1/08/2024	100%	4.95%	A-1	10,000	
Westpac - 6	6/08/2024	100%	4.95%	A-1+	6,000	10.6%
Westpac - 6	11/10/2024	100%	5.04%	A-1+	4,000	
Total		81.9%			115,528	100.0%
Green					77,000	81.9%

* Minor cash includes NAB holding account and Petty Cash

Financial Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Ratios

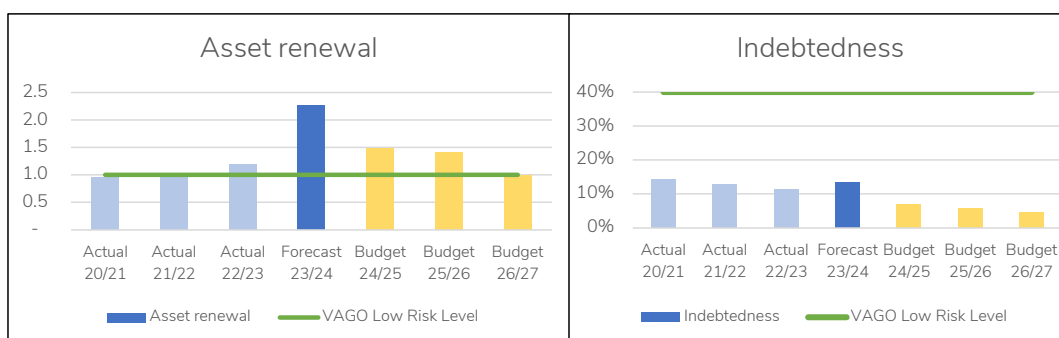


Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / adjusted underlying revenue

This ratio measures an entity's ability to generate its own cash. A positive result indicates a surplus, and the larger the percentage, the stronger the result. The result highlights Councils challenges in generating enough cash to fund future capital works without borrowing.

Current assets / current liabilities

Compares current assets to current liabilities, which provides a measure of the ability to pay existing liabilities in the next 12 months. This year's result expected to be in the low-risk range.



Renewal & upgrade spend/ depreciation

Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate that spending on existing assets is faster than the depreciation rate. This year's result is expected to stay in the low-risk range.

Non-current liabilities / own-source revenue

Measures Council's ability to pay the principal and interest on its borrowings as due from the funds it generates. This year's result is expected to stay in the low-risk range.

Treasury Corporation of Victoria (TCV)

TCV loan requirements		Target	Forecast
Interest Cover	EBITDA/Interest Expense	> 2	100
Interest Bearing Loans	Interest Bearing Liabilities/Own Source Revenue	< 60%	13%

TCV financing is conditional upon the Council maintaining a sustainable financial position when measured by the interest cover and interest bearing loans ratios. Forecast results indicate that the Council is meeting the minimum requirements. TCV loan requirements are well within target given limited borrowing compared to own source revenue and liability obligations.

Standard Statements

Comprehensive Income Statement

Comprehensive Income Statement	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Revenue						
Rates and charges	185,112	185,069	43	184,495	185,275	781
Statutory fees and fines	13,618	14,031	(413)	17,462	17,100	(362)
User Fees	6,892	6,717	175	7,006	7,951	944
Contributions - Monetary	7,682	7,988	(306)	10,455	9,648	(807)
Contributions - Non-monetary	1,849	1,777	72	-	1,777	1,777
Grants - Operating	15,211	14,909	303	19,827	22,267	2,440
Grants - Capital	2,757	1,523	1,234	10,994	8,706	(2,288)
Other Revenue	8,435	8,451	(16)	7,434	9,922	2,488
Asset Sales	123	5	118	87	5	(82)
Total Revenue	241,680	240,470	1,210	257,760	262,650	4,890
Expenses						
Employee Benefits	86,190	85,947	(243)	108,807	108,032	776
Contracts, Materials & Services	53,649	56,104	2,456	68,416	69,741	(1,324)
Depreciation	32,234	32,397	163	33,104	38,939	(5,835)
Amortisation	197	197	-	236	236	0
Bad and doubtful debts	2,228	2,338	111	2,960	2,891	69
Net loss on disposal of assets	1,447	1,847	399	(1,655)	(1,765)	110
Finance Costs	592	625	34	917	778	139
Other Expenses	508	514	6	745	719	26
Total Expenses	177,045	179,970	2,925	213,532	219,572	(6,041)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	64,636	60,500	4,135	44,230	43,079	(1,151)

Underlying Result	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Surplus for the Year	64,636	60,500	4,135	44,230	43,079	(1,151)
Non Operating Income and Expenditure						
Net loss on disposal of assets	1,324	1,842	(517)	(1,742)	(1,770)	(27)
Contributions Capital (cash & non-monetary)	(575)	(317)	(259)	(55)	(2,115)	(2,060)
Grants - Capital	(2,757)	(1,523)	(1,234)	(10,994)	(8,706)	2,289
PRRLF Reserve	(6,814)	(7,384)	570	(10,000)	(9,000)	1,000
DCP Reserve	(293)	(287)	(6)	(400)	(309)	91
Total Capital Income	(9,114)	(7,669)	(1,445)	(23,191)	(21,900)	1,292
Underlying Result	55,521	52,831	2,690	21,039	21,179	141
Less						
Loan Principal Repayments	1,113	1,113	-	2,036	2,036	0
Additional Rates Funded CAPEX	(9,408)	(9,408)	-	7,533	(11,290)	18,823
Transfers to Reserves - Operating	7,106	7,649	543	15,761	20,827	(5,066)
Transfers from Reserves - Operating	-	-	-	(4,291)	(5,069)	778
Carry Forwards processed into FY25	14,249	14,249	-	-	14,249	(14,249)
Total Transfers & Other	13,060	13,603	543	21,039	20,752	287
Unrestricted Surplus/(Deficit)	42,460	39,227	3,233	0	427	427

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position	YTD Actuals \$'000	30/06/23 Actuals \$'000	Movement Inc/(Dec) \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	62,527	24,282	38,245	14,419	46,683	32,264
Trade and other receivables	83,945	38,638	45,307	39,038	45,414	6,376
Other financial assets	53,000	93,000	(40,000)	60,900	75,900	15,000
Inventories	268	248	19	298	298	-
Prepayments	943	2,263	(1,321)	-	-	-
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	2,625	2,625	-	-	-	-
Other assets	1,853	783	1,070	2,343	2,343	-
Total current assets	205,160	161,839	43,320	116,998	170,638	53,640
Non-current assets						
Unlisted Shares	2	2	-	2	2	-
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	2,797,316	2,803,638	(6,322)	2,878,732	3,052,320	173,588
Right-of-use assets	854	947	-	473	711	238
Investments	36,024	28,690	7,334	29,159	28,977	(182)
Total non-current assets	2,834,196	2,833,277	1,012	2,908,366	3,082,010	173,644
Total assets	3,039,356	2,995,116	44,332	3,025,364	3,252,647	227,283
Current liabilities						
Payables						
Payables	19,820	14,828	4,992	43,378	12,419	(30,959)
Revenue Received in Advance	6,421	1,823	4,597	3,321	3,321	-
Provisions	18,986	21,146	(2,160)	27,743	27,675	(68)
Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings	1,338	1,338	-	2,070	2,070	-
Trust Funds & Deposits	911	6,057	(5,146)	1,727	1,727	-
Lease liabilities	16	111	(94)	-	-	-
Total current liabilities	47,493	45,303	2,190	78,239	47,212	(31,027)
Non-current liabilities						
Provisions	2,262	2,262	-	2,301	2,301	-
Interest-bearing liabilities	20,704	21,135	(431)	27,051	27,051	-
Lease liabilities	131	128	2	-	-	-
Trust Funds & Deposits	683	683	-	-	-	-
Total non-current liabilities	23,779	24,208	(429)	29,352	29,352	-
Total liabilities	71,273	69,511	1,761	107,591	76,564	(31,027)
Net assets	2,968,083	2,925,605	42,478	2,917,773	3,176,084	258,311
Equity						
Asset revaluation reserves	2,059,261	2,089,066	(29,805)	2,035,955	2,266,108	230,153
Other reserves	91,570	86,487	5,083	56,074	60,906	4,832
Accumulated surplus	817,253	750,052	67,201	825,744	849,069	23,325
Total equity	2,968,083	2,925,605	42,478	2,917,773	3,176,084	258,311

Statement of Cashflows

Statement of Cash Flows	YTD Actuals \$'000 Inflows (Outflows)	Annual Budget \$'000 Inflows (Outflows)	Annual Forecast \$'000 Inflows (Outflows)	Annual Variance \$'000 Inflows (Outflows)
Cash flows from operating activities				
Rates and charges	141,999	183,055	183,796	741
Statutory fees and fines	8,978	16,177	15,822	(355)
User fees	3,483	8,509	9,453	944
Grants - operating	15,161	19,136	21,577	2,441
Grants - capital	7,835	8,232	5,943	(2,289)
Contributions - monetary	7,673	10,455	9,648	(807)
Interest received	5,146	-	5,334	5,334
Trust funds and deposits taken/(repaid)	20,880	15,225	17,034	1,809
Other receipts	5,625	12,936	5,401	(7,535)
Net GST refund/(payment)	780	-	1,593	1,593
Payments to Employees	(91,070)	(102,313)	(101,538)	775
Payments to Suppliers	(53,575)	(58,909)	(60,365)	(1,456)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(16,731)	(15,225)	(17,063)	(1,838)
Other payments	(533)	(3,705)	(1,842)	
Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities	55,652	93,573	94,792	(644)
Cash flows from investing activities				
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(55,830)	(123,188)	(107,556)	15,632
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(776)	3,861	3,779	(82)
Payments/(Proceeds) for investments	1,000	9,100	26,200	17,100
Net cash used in investing activities	(55,607)	(110,227)	(77,577)	32,650
Cash flows from financing activities				
Finance costs	(592)	(917)	(778)	139
Proceeds from Borrowings	-	8,000	8,000	-
Repayment of borrowings	(1,114)	(2,036)	(2,036)	0
Interest paid - lease liability	(2)	-	-	-
Repayment of lease liabilities	(92)	-	-	-
Net cash used in financing activities	(1,800)	5,047	5,186	139
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	(1,755)	(11,607)	22,401	34,008
Cash at beginning of period	24,282	26,027	24,282	(1,745)
Cash at end of period	22,527	14,419	46,683	32,263
Cash Position				
Non-restricted Cash at 1 July 2023	24,282	26,027	24,282	(1,745)
Other Financial Assets at 1 July 2023	93,000	70,000	93,000	23,000
Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	117,282	96,027	117,282	21,255
Non-restricted Cash at end of financial period	62,527	14,419	46,683	32,264
Other Financial Assets at end of financial period	53,000	60,900	75,900	15,000
Cash & cash equivalents at end of financial period	115,527	75,319	122,583	47,264

Statement of Capital Works

Statement of Capital Works	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Property						
Buildings	27,378	32,770	5,393	56,111	52,820	3,291
Building Improvements	4,362	5,228	866	8,009	8,122	(113)
Total property	31,740	37,998	6,259	64,120	60,942	3,178
Plant and equipment						
Heritage plant and equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,058	1,198	140	4,299	2,988	1,311
Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture	75	119	44	347	177	170
Computers and telecommunications	568	620	51	701	701	-
Artworks	16	34	19	42	42	-
Library books	855	897	42	1,061	1,061	-
Total plant and equipment	2,572	2,869	296	6,450	4,969	1,481
Infrastructure						
Roads	8,281	11,247	2,966	17,320	14,806	2,514
Bridges	178	287	110	421	414	6
Footpaths and cycleways	2,963	3,285	322	5,880	4,568	1,312
Drainage	1,322	1,754	432	2,363	2,942	(579)
Waste management	153	152	(1)	1,199	495	705
Parks, open space and streetscapes	7,897	12,383	4,486	24,147	18,879	5,267
Other infrastructure	294	600	306	1,288	961	326
Total infrastructure	21,087	29,709	8,622	52,618	43,066	9,552
Total capital works expenditure	55,399	70,576	15,177	123,188	108,977	14,211
Represented by:						
New asset expenditure	7,217	11,916	4,698	29,923	20,861	9,062
Asset renewal expenditure	30,961	39,119	8,157	62,775	58,637	4,138
Asset expansion expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asset upgrade expenditure	17,220	19,541	2,321	30,490	29,479	1,011
Total capital works expenditure	55,399	70,576	15,177	123,188	108,977	14,211

Procurement Delegations Report
Contracts Executed in April 2024

Contract Description	Contract Number	Start date	Delegation Exercised	Total Contract Value (Excl GST)
Wombat Crossings - Albion Street, Brunswick West	RFT-2024-3	29/04/2024	Director City Infrastructure	\$266,348.00



Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve Guidelines

Date Authorised by Council:	< pending >
Commencement Date:	1 July 2024
Review Date (5 years from authorised date):	1 July 2029
Responsible Department:	Place and Environment
Responsible Officer:	Principal Advisor, Social and Affordable Housing

1. Introduction

This document provides guidance to Council on the operation of the Social and Affordable Housing Reserve (the Reserve).

It replaces the *Moreland Housing Reserve - Guidelines for Allocation of Funds* which was endorsed by Council on 8 June 2016.

The Reserve is an Internally Restricted Reserve as identified in the *Capital Reserves and Management Policy (2023)*. The policy states that the following criteria applies to internally restricted reserves:

- The reserve is not subject to legal requirements governing the use of the funds; and/or
- The reserve has been established for a specific purpose, however, if that purpose does not eventuate or Council changes its priorities, the funding can be diverted to other purposes.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Reserve is to assist with the funding of housing initiatives.

Use of the Reserve is guided by the *Affordable Housing Action Plan 2022-26*, its successor(s), and relevant future Council policy decisions that support the provision of affordable housing.

Transfer of Reserve funds can be direct (funding of Council-led action) or indirect (funding of an entity or organisation to take actions aligned with the Purpose).

3. Guiding Principles

Funds can be transferred from the Reserve for land purchase; commissioning technical and expert reports; housing research; legal advice; housing project development and community engagement.

While having careful regard for the sustainability of the Reserve, allocations may be used to provide equity in a housing project.

With due regard to the *Strategic Property Framework (2023)* and other relevant policies and guidelines, Council may allocate to the Reserve of some or all proceeds from the sale of Council-owned land (including from air rights subdivision) and other methods of value capture or returns/income from housing projects.

4. Authorisation

4.1. Transfer of funds into the reserve

As per the *Capital Reserves and Management Policy(2023)*, transfer of funds are restricted by the internal purpose of the reserve. All transfers to and from the reserve account must be authorised by Council in the following manner:

- Identified in the budgeting or forecasting process as funds committed to be transferred to the reserve account; or

- By Council resolution after the end of financial year results are completed and surplus funds are identified.

All transfers to reserves are assessed annually during the preparation of the 4-year budget.

4.2 Transfer of funds out of the reserve

As per the Capital Reserves and Management Policy(2023), transfer of funds out of the reserve must be for the purpose of the reserve.

- Transfers are approved in the Annual Budget
Works identified in service area work plans are required to detail project funding including planned usage of the Reserve. The funding proposal is then approved by Council as part of the Annual 4-year Budget process.
- Transfers exceeding approved Annual Budget
In cases where a transfer of funds from a reserve was approved in the budget but subsequently a higher level of funding is required from the Reserve, approval must be sought by Council resolution prior to transfers being made.
- Transfers not approved in Annual Budget
Where transfer of funds from the Reserve for purposes are not foreseen when the annual budget was developed, or transfer amounts approved in the annual budget may then be found to require more than a 10% variance, any such transfer must be approved by Council through resolution.

5. Reporting

Reporting on the Reserve occurs as part of Quarterly Financial Management Reports which are endorsed by Council, including:

- Transfers into the Reserve, as stipulated in Section 4.4 of the Capital Reserves and Management Policy
- Transfers from the Reserve as stipulated in Section 4.5 of the Capital Reserves and Management Policy.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Adherence to these guidelines is the responsibility of the Director Place and Environment and compliance is evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis.

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document.

Where an update does not materially alter the effect or purpose of this Policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change name of a Council department or job role, or a minor update to a policy or process which does not have a material impact.

Moreland Housing Reserve- Guidelines for Allocation of Funds

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of the Reserve is to support actions under the Moreland Affordable Housing Strategy 2014-18 (MAHS), its successor(s) and relevant future Council policy decisions that support the provision of affordable housing.

1.2. Provision can be both direct (funding of Council -led action) and indirect (funding of an entity or organisation to take actions aligned with 2.1).

2. Guiding Principles for allocation of funds

2.1. Allocations can be used for (but not limited to) commissioning technical and expert reports; housing research; legal advice; housing project development and community engagement.

2.2. The Reserve will not fund purposes normally and more appropriately resourced through Base, OPEX or CAPEX budget allocations.

2.3. The funds must be allocated prudently and the balance must not fall below \$100,000 within the period of the current MAHS.

2.4. While having careful regard for the sustainability of the Reserve, allocations may be used to provide equity in a housing project.

2.5. Council may support the provision of affordable housing through the allocation to the Reserve from some or all proceeds from the sale of Council-owned land (including from air rights subdivision), other methods of value capture or returns/income from affordable housing projects.

3. Authorisation

3.1. The operation of fund allocations will be through the Council budget based on Base and OPEX allocations to relevant units.

4. Accountability

4.1. An evaluation of the operation of the Reserve, including adherence to, and effectiveness of, these guidelines, will be conducted with the review of the Affordable Housing Strategy or its successor documents.

7.13 OPEN COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS REPORT

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Open Council Resolutions Report provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Open Council Resolutions Report provided as **Attachment 1**, has been prepared to inform Councillors and the community, of the actions taken to date to implement the Council resolutions that are currently still open and not yet finalised.

There are currently 46 Open Resolutions, with 1 of these relating to a petition, 30 relating to Council officer reports, 2 relating to responses to Notices of Motion and 13 relating to Notices of Motion.

The Open Council Resolutions Report is presented to Council on an ongoing basis, promoting transparency of how Council resolutions are being implemented.

Previous Council Decisions

Open Council Resolutions Report – 14 February 2024

That Council receives and notes the Open Council Resolutions Report provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

1. Policy Context

Section 46(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states:

- (a) That Chief Executive Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the decisions of the Council are implemented without undue delay.
- (e) When requested by the Mayor, reporting to the Council in respect of the implementation of a Council decision.

This report also supports Council's continuing commitment to transparent management of resources on behalf of ratepayers, key stakeholders and the broader community.

2. Background

The purpose of the Open Council Resolutions Report provided as **Attachment 1**, is to inform Councillors and the community of the actions taken to date, to implement the Council resolutions that are currently still open.

3. Issues

The Open Council Resolutions Report (shown at **Attachment 1**) outlines the open resolutions and indicates that there is a total of 46 Open Resolutions, with 1 of these relating to a petition, 30 relating to Council officer reports, 2 relating to responses to Notices of Motion and 13 relating to Notices of Motion. Each open resolution in **Attachment 1**, also includes a target date for full completion.

The table below provides a breakdown of the open resolutions that have been allocated to each directorate for action:

Directorate	Petitions	Council Reports	Response to Notices of Motion	Notices of Motion
Office of the Chief Executive	-	1	-	-
Business Transformation	-	3	-	-
City Infrastructure	1	5	-	4
Community	-	5	2	5
Place and Environment	-	16	-	4

Attachment 1 excludes resolutions relating to Confidential items and items relating to Planning and Related Matters.

An Open Council Resolutions report is presented to Council on an ongoing basis, to promote the transparency of how Council resolutions are implemented.

Community impact

Community impact is addressed through the Council Plan 2021-2025 under strategic objective 5: To build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

There are no climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications associated with the preparation of this report.

Economic sustainability implications

There are no economic sustainability implications associated with the preparation of this report.

Legal and risk considerations

There are no legal and risk implications associated with the preparation of this report.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Community consultation and engagement is not required for this report as it reflects the current status of the implementation of Council Decisions that have been previously made.

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views. There are no individual rights or interests affected.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Any financial implications associated with the preparation of this report have been met within existing resource and budget allocations.

7. Implementation

The reporting of the Open Council Resolutions will continue on an ongoing basis, with the next report to be reported to Council in September 2024.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Open Council Resolutions - June 2024 D24/256952

Open Resolutions Report

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PETITIONS

Director City Infrastructure	Council 10/04/2024	Target date for full completion: 24/06/2024
PETITION	PARKING PARK STREET, BRUNSWICK	
That Council:		
<div><div>1.</div><div>Receives the petition requesting Council take appropriate action to rectify and standardise parking arrangements in Park Street, Brunswick, between McVean Street and the Upfield Railway Line.</div></div> <div><div>2.</div><div>Refers the petition requesting Council to take appropriate action to rectify and standardise parking arrangements in Park Street, Brunswick, between McVean Street and the Upfield Railway Line to the Director City Infrastructure.</div></div>		
Progress Comment		
Council officers have reviewed the request and are in the process of drafting a response.		

OFFICER REPORTS

Director Place and Environment	Council 11/10/2017	Target date for full completion: 13/12/2024
DCS59/17	PROPOSED LAND SWAP WITH DARUL ULUM COLLEGE OF VICTORIA - EVANS RESERVE, FAWKNER	
That Council, having given public notice and having considered the submission received, in accordance with sections 189 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989:		
<div><div>1.</div><div>Determines to exchange part of its land at 20 Victory Street, Fawkner, with land currently owned by Darul Ulum College of Victoria at 21 and 23 Marjory and 16 and 18 Victory Streets, Fawkner, as shown in the negotiated plan at Attachment 1 to this report.</div></div> <div><div>2.</div><div>Authorises the Director Corporate Services to do all things necessary to affect the exchange of land of part of its land at 20 Victory Street, Fawkner as shown in with land owned by the Darul Ulum College of Victoria at 21 and 23 Marjory and 16 and 18 Victory Streets, Fawkner, as shown in Attachment 1 to this report, including the execution of all relevant documentation.</div></div> <div><div>3.</div><div>Authorises the Director Corporate Services to commence the subdivision of approximately 2,393 square metres from the Evans Reserve, shown as the red hatched area on Attachment 1 to this report, and remove its drainage, sewerage and recreation reserve status pursuant to section 24(A) of the Subdivisions Act 1988.</div></div> <div><div>4.</div><div>Requests authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare a planning scheme amendment in accordance with section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to rezone 21 and 23 Marjory and 16 and 18 Victory Streets, Fawkner, to Public Park and Recreation Zone and rezone the land to be sold at 20 Victory Street, Fawkner, shown as the blue hatched area on attachment 1 to this report, to General Residential 1 (GRZ1).</div></div> <div><div>5.</div><div>Notifies the person who made a submission in writing of its decision and the reasons for that decision</div></div> <div><div>6.</div><div>Explores options with Darul Ulum to preserve 7 mature native trees that exist on the site in keeping with the aims of the newly adopted Urban Forest Strategy.</div></div>		
Progress Comment		
Council is currently working though legal matters.		

Director City Infrastructure Caden McCarthy	Council 12/05/2021	Target date for full completion: 12/06/2024
7.7	ELECTRIC SCOOTER TRIAL IN MORELAND	
That Council:		
<div>1. Notes its former resolution (NOM66/19) to request the State Government facilitate the safe and legal use of electric scooters on roads and bike lanes, and to receive a report on the merits of a Council-led trial of e-scooters in Moreland following the conclusion of a trial that was to occur in the City of Port Phillip.</div> <div>2. Notes that no trial of e-scooters has occurred in the City of Port Phillip to date, and that the State Government has invited Council to submit an expression of interest to participate in a trial of e-scooters to occur in two metropolitan and one regional local government areas.</div> <div>3. Approves an expression of interest to be made for Council seeking to participate in the State Government trial of e-scooters.</div> <div>4. Subject to Moreland being selected as trial area by the State Government, receives a further report prior to commencing a trial and partnering with an e-scooter provider, including the considerations for a further report as detailed in NOM66/19.</div> <div>5. Notes that if Council is not successful in being selected for the trial, that the report required in NOM66/19 will be expanded to include the results for this broader trial (when available) noting the trail is anticipated to be in place for 12 months commencing in the Spring of 2021.</div>		
Progress Comment		
A report to Council in June 2024 will see this set of resolutions complete or superseded by Council's resolutions arising from the report. This item is to be closed following that report.		

Director Community	Council 14/07/2021	Target date for full completion: 10/07/2024
7.12 GYM AND AQUATIC MEMBERSHIP FOR MORELAND SENIORS		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resolves to proceed with option 1 outlined below as a trial for six months commencing August 2021.2. Receives a further report at the end of the trial period outlining the results achieved and any future options.		
Progress Comment		
A report on the evaluation of the trial and options for future will be presented to the July 2024 Council meeting.		

Director Business Transformation	Council 14/07/2021	Target date for full completion: 10/07/2024
7.19 SISTER AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES REVIEW		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Formally write to current (inactive) Sister and Friendship Cities seeking to determine if the objectives of the relationships are being met and continue to be of benefit, as follows:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Sister City – Xianyang, Chinab) Friendship Cities (including special relationship Cities)<ol style="list-style-type: none">i) Corum Municipality, Turkeyii) Spartiaton Municipality, Greeceiii) City of Canterbury-Bankstown, Australiaiv) Mansfield, Australiav) Solarino, Sicily, Italy		

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vi) Messina, Sicily, Italy.

2. Receive a further report on the outcomes of discussions with those Sister and Friendship Cities identified in this report and present recommendations for the purpose of:
 - a) continuing relationships, including recommendations for timelines for review of relationships; or
 - b) ceasing existing relationships

Progress Comment

Council officers are currently in communication with existing Sister and Friendship Cities to ascertain if it is appropriate to maintain existing relationships. A report is expected to be presented to Council in July 2024.

Director Place and Environment	Council 9/02/2022	Target date for full completion: 31/03/2025
7.1 DESIGN EXCELLENCE SCORECARD - TRIAL OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopts the Design Excellence Scorecard for High Density Developments, at Attachment 1 to this report, and the Design Excellence Scorecard for Medium Density Developments, at Attachment 2 to this report, on a permanent basis, subject to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the further enhancements to the Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) criteria outlined at Attachment 3 to this report. b) consequential changes to Council's website and other customer facing material including attachments 1 and 2 to remove references to a delegated decision-making process. 2. Amends the 'Guidelines for the Exercise of Delegation for Planning Applications, 2019' to remove wording that exempts the Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard compliant applications from being reported to the Planning and Related Matters (PARM) meeting or a Council meeting. 3. Notes that the changes in resolution (2) remove the specific changes to officer delegation guidelines that allowed the design excellence scorecard applications to be decided by Council officers. Applications that meet the Design Excellence Scorecard will now be treated the same as all other applications including being reported to a Planning and Related Matters Council meeting when the number of objections or building heights require that a decision be made by the Council, rather than by Council officers. 		

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4. Notes that a list of approved Scorecard developments will be published on Council's website and regularly updated.
5. Notes that the Design Excellence Scorecard will be reviewed over time to ensure its currency, with an annual briefing of Councillors on the projects that have achieved Scorecard compliance and of any further enhancements made to the Scorecard requirements.
6. Notes and acknowledges the concern about the Design Excellence Scorecard expressed by community members during the trial period, particularly in regard to robust democratic oversight of the planning process by the community and Councillors.
7. Acknowledge the results of the Design Excellence Scorecard Trial and thank officers and the community for their effort and input.
8. Receive a report in the second half of 2022 outlining further ways in which better quality developments can be encouraged and bad quality developments can be discouraged in Moreland, including information on what initiatives other Councils have undertaken to improve the quality of development.
9. Actively monitor all mixed use or residential developments valued over \$7 million in Moreland until the end of 2024.
10. Receive a report in early 2025 based upon the active monitoring of the following considerations. This report will include the number and percentage of mixed use or residential developments valued over \$7 million that:
 - Provided affordable housing (noting the current Scheme requirement is zero);
 - Provided accessible housing above the Moreland Planning Scheme's minimum requirement;
 - Provided gas free builds (noting the current Scheme requirement is zero);
 - Exceeded the acceptable BESS (or other equivalent ESD tool) requirements of the Moreland Planning Scheme;
 - Exceeded discretionary height limits by more than three levels;
 - Proceeded to a Planning and Related Matters Meeting;
 - Proceeded to VCAT (challenged by objector or applicant to be noted);
 - Were called in by the Planning Minister;
 - Were called in by Councillors; and
 - Received over 50 objections.
11. Include in the aforementioned report how the above 8(a)-(e) compared with the results achieved in applications that were deemed Scorecard compliant during its trial from 2019-2021.

Progress Comment 1. Completed, all Design Excellence Scorecard documents have been updated to include the further enhancements to the ESD criteria outlines. All documents have now been uploaded into the Council website. 2. Completed, by removing Design Excellence Scorecard exemption the from Guidelines for the Exercise of Delegation for Planning Applications. 3. Noted, no action required. 4. Completed, Council's website has been updated to include a list of approved Scorecard developments. 5. Noted, no new scorecard applications in 2022, the Council report to 8 February 2023 meeting included an update on scorecard applications, and Councillors are advised of any new scorecard applications as a standing agenda item in the monthly Planning Briefing. 6. Noted, no action required. 7. Noted, no action required. 8. Completed, report considered at the February 2023 Council meeting. 9. Monitoring is underway. 10. Report due early 2025. 11. Monitoring, target date for full completion, March 2025.		
Director Community	Council 14/09/2022	Target date for full completion: 30/04/2025
7.9	HOCKEY FEASIBILITY STUDY	
That Council: 1. Notes the Brunswick Hockey Club Second Hockey Field Feasibility Study, at Attachment 1, and supports in-principle the provision of a second field for the Brunswick Hockey Club. 2. Notes that Hockey is a growing sport particularly amongst gender and culturally diverse communities, in particular South Asian communities and international students, which form a large component of our growing community.		

3.	Notes that Parker Reserve North Coburg and McDonald Reserve Coburg are recommended by the feasibility study as possible sites for a second hockey field, and supports in principle McDonald Reserve Coburg as the preferred site subject to further detailed site investigation, including old industrial land through the current open space review, community engagement with other clubs using the reserve, Coburg High School, nearby residents and people who use the reserve for dog walking and passive recreation and funding availability.
4.	Notes the Hockey Feasibility Study's estimated capital costs and that more detailed cost planning will be required based on site conditions, potential staging of works and further efficiencies in delivery in consultation with users of the reserve.
5.	Notes that Hockey is played on synthetic grass fields with recyclable options and that Moreland council is in the process of reviewing the environmental sustainability of different sports playing surfaces.
6.	Council resolves to receive a future report on the consultation and benefits or otherwise of a phased approach that could allow the construction of the hockey field and the installation of temporary facilities in the first phase, followed by a permanent pavilion in subsequent phases.
7.	Notes that the North Coburg Rebels Baseball Club has year-round allocation at Parker Reserve.
Progress Comment	
Wider community consultation will occur later in 2024 with a report to Council being tabled for early 2025.	

Director Place and Environment	Council 7/12/2022	Target date for full completion: 11/12/2024
7.17	PROPOSED SALE OF LAND FROM A PREVIOUSLY DISCONTINUED ROAD- REAR 1-15 MARKS STREET, 2-16 WHITE STREET AND 21 AUDLEY STREET COBURG.	
That Council:		
1.	Commences the procedures to sell the land from the previously discontinued road at the rear of 1 to 15 Marks Street, 2 to 16 White Street and adjoining 21 Audley Street, Coburg, to the owners of 21 Audley Street, 5 Marks Street and 15 Marks Street, Coburg, in accordance with section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020.	

2. Gives notice of its intention to sell the land on Council's website (conversations Merri-bek) and such notice state that Council proposes to sell the land from the previously discontinued road to the owners of 21 Audley Street, 5 Marks Street and 15 Marks Street, Coburg, by private treaty in accordance with the State Governments "Local Government Best Practice Guidelines for the Sale, Exchange and Transfer of Land".
3. As part of its community engagement process invites both written and verbal submissions on the proposed sale and deal with any submissions received in line with the principles set out in section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989.
4. Appoints Councillor Pavlidis as Chair, and Councillors Pulford, Carli Hannan and Bolton to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the proposed sale of the previously discontinued road to the owners of 21 Audley Street, 5 Marks Street and 15 Marks Street, Coburg.
5. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date, and place of the meeting of the committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to sell the previously discontinued road to the owners of 21 Audley Street, 5 Marks Street and 15 Marks Street, Coburg.
6. Receives a further report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee, and presenting a recommendation regarding whether to proceed with the proposed sale of the site.

Progress Comment

A Hearing of Submissions Committee Meeting was held on 2 May 2024.

A future report will be presented to Council at a date to be determined.

Director Place and Environment	Council 8/02/2023	Target date for full completion: 31/12/2024
7.2 OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE BETTER QUALITY DEVELOPMENTS IN MERRI-BEK CITY COUNCIL		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note it has continually sought to influence better quality developments in Merri-bek City Council over many decades through improvements to the Planning Scheme and/or planning process including adoption of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Moreland Apartment Design Code; b) Good Design Advice Sheets; 		

- c) Planning Scheme Amendment to the Moreland Planning Scheme to increase tree canopy and landscaping outcomes;
 - d) Continued advocacy and leadership for Environmentally Sustainable Design, such as Towards Zero Carbon in Planning;
 - e) Design Excellence Scorecards; and
 - f) Various amendments to the Moreland Planning Scheme by introducing Design and Development Overlays that provides specific built form and design guidelines.
2. Undertake further work on how to influence better quality developments in Merri-bek City Council by:
- i. Investigating, developing and trialling a process model that encourages better quality, planning scheme compliant two dwelling development, while maintaining public notice and rights of review to VCAT;
 - ii. Proceed with a 12-month trial period of the new process model as described in resolution 2i.
 - iii. Engages with community and residents groups, including a round table consultation with residents groups, as part of the investigation and development of the above process model.
 - iv. Update Council's current Good Design Advice sheets; and
 - v. Commission the preparation of examples of better-quality medium density developments.
3. Note the proposal to refer the making of the current temporary fixed-term Urban Design Officer position permanent for consideration as part its 2023/2024 budget process, in order to maintain the resourcing capacity for expert urban design advice on medium density development applications.

Progress Comment

- 1. Noted, no action required.
- 2. Further work has commenced on how to influence better quality development, with a trial to be completed by end of 2024.
 - (i) A model has been developed and currently being tested with a regular applicant.
 - (ii) The model is being refined to respond to public engagement feedback and testing with a regular applicant. Intending to launch in first quarter of 2024.
 - (iii) Engagement has concluded with community and resident groups.
 - (iv) Work in progress on updating Good Design Advice sheets.
 - (v) Architectural exemplar plans of better-quality medium density development are being finalised.
- 3. Noted, no action required.

Director Place and Environment	Council 20/06/2023	Target date for full completion: 12/06/2024
7.2 WHEATSHEAF ROAD STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorses the Final Concept Design for the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvements. 2. Endorses, in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004, the removal of eight car parking spaces from Wheatsheaf Road (three on the north side, five on the south side), and two car parking spaces from Argyle Street near the intersection with Wheatsheaf Road, as part of the design. 3. Notes that, in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004, Council will assume the role of the Responsible Road Authority upon the completion of the project for the footpath and landscaping and drainage infrastructure from the back of kerb, as well as the indented parking and street trees within the road reserve. 		
Progress Comment		
The project has been tendered and a recommendation to award a contract for construction will be presented to the June Council Meeting.		

Director Place and Environment	Council 20/06/2023	Target date for full completion: 9/06/2027
7.8 ENDORSEMENT OF APPROACH FOR PUBLIC ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduces a price on electricity provided at fast/direct current (DC) public electric vehicle (EV) chargers of 25 c/kWh during financial year 2023/24 as per the Rates and Charges included in the draft Merri-bek Council Budget 2023-2027. Revenue will be re-invested in maintenance of existing chargers, replacement of chargers where necessary, and installation of new chargers. 		

2. Explores opportunities in financial year 2023/24 to lease public parking bays to charging operators, willing to install, operate and maintain EV chargers.
3. Continues to encourage Council's electricity distributors (Jemena and Citipower) to trial pole-mounted chargers in the municipality to give options for those without off-street parking.
4. In financial year 2023/24 explore the requirements of a permit scheme for on-street charging of EVs. This would aim to identify what would be required (e.g., switchboard upgrade, civil works, rectification deposit, risk and officer time) for Council teams and Council's insurer to approve a resident charging their EV on the road reserve using electricity from their home. Officers will provide an update at a Councillor Briefing in November 2023 with potential to refer to the budget process for 2024/25.
5. Installs an EV charger dedicated to a car-share bay by financial year 2024/25.
6. Conduct a review in June 2027 to determine if the market has changed following Council's decision to charge for electric vehicle chargers.
7. Seek input on siting of EV charging stations and positioning of charging equipment at EV charging stations from one or more organisations such as the Disabled Motorists Association which can advise on accessibility for drivers with mobility issues.

Progress Comment

1. Complete. A price on electricity provided at fast/direct current (DC) public electric vehicle (EV) chargers of 25 c/kWh was introduced in July 2024. Revenue is re-invested in maintenance of existing chargers, replacement of chargers where necessary, and installation of new chargers, such as at Russell St carpark. The Proposed 2024-28 Budget includes an increase to the price on electricity to 20 c/kWh at slow chargers and 40 c/kWh at fast chargers. These prices are commensurate with current market rates.
2. No further update.
3. The trial of pole-mounted chargers has been delayed due to ongoing negotiations on commercial terms between the company which owns the power poles and the company which won the State Grant Funding to install the chargers. While discussions are on-going, Merri-bek remains one of three Metro Melbourne councils committed to participating in the trial. Once the trial proceeds, a first step will be community engagement with Merri-bek residents to identify preferred locations.
4. Council has held discussions on the topic of EVs with multiple car-share companies. The achievement of this is largely dependent on the appetite of the Car-Share company and discussions will continue with those firms interested in exploring this model. It should be noted that two car-share EVs have been installed at Nightingale Village in November 2023.
5. Council will install an accessible DC charging hub at Russell St carpark, Coburg, 2024. Input on the designs has been sought from Council's Disability Reference Group and Disabled Motorists Australia, and the works should be implemented by July 2024. Council is also planning a study on how accessibility could be improved at our existing EV chargers, to be completed by mid-December 2024.

Director Place and Environment	Council 9/08/2023	Target date for full completion: 14/02/2024
7.6	1-9 BREESE STREET, BRUNSWICK - DEVELOPER LED PROPOSAL	
That Council:		
<div>1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Heads of Agreement between Council and 20-22 Hope Street Pty Ltd ('the Proponent'), attached to this report as Confidential Attachment 2, to enable the exploration of a proposal to develop 1-9 Breese Street, Brunswick as an underground car park and basic park.</div> <div>2. Invites feedback from the community on this proposal in September 2023, in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy, noting that this process will be separate and additional to a mandatory public notice process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 once the development proposal is lodged for planning.</div> <div>3. Receives a report in early 2024, following community engagement and further explorations into the feasibility of this project, with a recommendation on whether to proceed to the next stage of considering the proposal.</div>		
Progress Comment		
<div>1. The CEO executed the Heads of Agreement between Council and 20-22 Hope Street Pty Ltd.</div> <div>2. Feedback was invited from the community on the proposal in September 2023.</div> <div>3. Further advice from the developers is awaited on the feasibility of the project. This will inform a future report to Council.</div>		

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/09/2023	Target date for full completion: 01/08/2024
7.8 PARKLET PROGRAM REVIEW		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorses the proposed revisions to the Parklet Program set out in this report, namely discontinuing the short term parklets, and continuing the long term parklets whilst there is ongoing demand. 2. Endorses the extension of the Council-owned outdoor dining temporary structures in Lygon Street and waives parklet permit fees for the relevant businesses using this structure, to 30 June 2024. 3. Following this extension, endorses the removal of the Council-owned outdoor dining temporary structures in Lygon Street, and provides support to individual businesses who wish to transfer to the long term parklet program in this part of Lygon Street, to do so. 		
Progress Comment		
After June 2024, the temporary structures will be removed and officers will engage with interested businesses to transition to long term parklets.		

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/09/2023	Target date for full completion: 27/12/2024
7.9 NAMING OF LANEWAYS		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the potential risks and resource challenges associated with a universal approach to naming laneways, and that individual requests for naming laneways can be accommodated within the existing Naming Merri-bek Places Policy (2013), in cases where there is a clear reason to consider them as exceptions to standard practice. 2. Continues discussions with Geographic Names Victoria to assess the name 'Kastoria Lane' against Geographic Naming Victoria's naming rules for places in Victoria - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022. 		

3. Writes to the submitter of the request to name a walkway on Sydney Road 'Pagonis Place' requesting supporting evidence in relation to the naming rules, specifically Principle C – linking the name to the place and Principle I – using commemorative names.
4. Commence a formal process to name the laneway between Trafford Street and Ann Street, Brunswick.
5. Continues to assess individual naming requests as the naming authority, noting that the Registrar of Geographic Names holds the power to either approve or reject any proposal for naming.
6. Refers to the 2024/25 budget process consideration of allocating funds for the installation of informative text beneath new road names and interpretive signage at newly named parks to offer insights into the history and significance of place names and enhances understanding and appreciation of the locale's heritage and cultural importance.
7. If budget savings are declared in the 2023/24 budget, that consideration be given to allocating savings identified to ensure that projects nominated in this recommendation are delivered with interpretive signage elements.

Progress Comment

1. Noted.
2. Has been completed.
3. Has been completed.
4. An initial assessment and documents to be prepared for public notification in July. External engagement will follow in August through Conversations Merri-bek, letters to adjoining owner/occupiers and key consultation groups.

Director Place and Environment

Council 13/09/2023

Target date for full completion:

11/09/2024

7.12 PROPOSED ROW DISCONTINUANCE AND SALE ADJOINING 47 & 45 CLARENCE STREET BRUNSWICK EAST

That Council:

1. Commences the statutory procedures to discontinue and sell the resultant land adjoining 47 Clarence Street, Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street, Brunswick East, in accordance with Section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1989 and Section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020.

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2. Gives public notice of the proposed discontinuance in accordance with section 223 and 207A of the Local Government Act 1989 and Section 114, clause 2 of the Local Government Act 2020 in The Age newspaper and on Council's website and invite written submissions from Monday 25 September 2023 until Wednesday 25 October 2023. The notice will state that Council proposes to sell the land to the adjoining owners of 47 Clarence Street, Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street, Brunswick East in accordance with Council's Rights of Way Associated Policies 2011 and the Rights of Way Strategy 2011.
3. Appoints Cr Riley as Chair, and South Ward Councillors to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission.
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to discontinue and sell the resultant land adjoining 47 Clarence Street Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street Brunswick East.
5. Receives a further report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee and presenting a recommendation regarding whether to proceed with the proposal to discontinue the road, or part of the road adjoining 47 Clarence Street Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street Brunswick East.

Progress Comment

The statutory process has commenced, with submissions closing on 4 June 2024.

Director Place and Environment

Council 18/10/2023

Target date for full completion:

1/09/2024

7.9 PROPOSED SALE OF THE FORMER GLENROY LIBRARY AT 737 PASCOE VALE ROAD GLENROY**That Council:**

1. Notes that all of the Council functions of the building at 737 Pascoe Vale Road Glenroy have been moved into the new purpose-built Glenroy Hub as planned.
2. Notes the 29 submissions received in relation to the proposed sale of the former Glenroy Library at 737 Pascoe Vale Road, Glenroy.
3. Having fulfilled its obligations under Sections 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and Council's Community Engagement Policy supports the proposal to sell the site at 737 Pascoe Vale Road, Glenroy by a public process.

<p>4. Write to all submitters advising them of the Council's decision.</p> <p>5. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to do all things necessary to effect the sale of the former Glenroy Library by public auction.</p> <p>Progress Comment Building works are to be completed and once complete, the property will be put on the market for sale.</p>

Director Place and Environment	Council 18/10/2023	Target date for full completion: 30/06/2024
7.11	PROPOSED EOI FOR A CAFE AT 14 FRITH STREET BRUNSWICK	
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Endorses a public Expression of Interest process to procure an operator to manage and operate a café (approx. 353m²) at the Council owned property at 14 Frith Street, Brunswick.2. Includes criteria in the Expression of Interest process to test respondents' capacity to operate a viable business, their capacity to deliver additional social benefits, and their capacity to provide activation benefits in line with the vision for the new park.3. Receives a further report on the outcome of the Expression of Interest process with recommendations as to the next steps.		
Progress Comment		
An Expression of Interest has been prepared which includes the criteria set out in the resolution and an agent has been appointed to undertake the EOI process.		

Director City Infrastructure	Council 8/11/2023	Target date for full completion: 30/06/2024
7.7	TOWARDS A PLACE-BASED, COMMUNITY CO-MANAGEMENT OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES - PROJECT REPORT	
That Council:		
<div><div>1.</div><div>Notes the successful outcomes achieved in partnership with the community and the findings of the report.</div></div> <div><div>2.</div><div>Updates all park pages under the 'Find a Park' section of Council's website with current photos, park features and for those with a sportsground, links to sporting club pages with training and game time information.</div></div>		
Progress Comment		
Work has commenced on updating the Find a Park pages on Council's website. This work is planned for completion by 30 June 2024.		

Director City Infrastructure	Council 8/11/2023	Target date for full completion: 31/08/2024
7.10	PUBLIC LITTER BINS - CHANGE OVER UPDATE	
That Council:		
<div><div>1.</div><div>Updates Technical Notes Part B – B140 Bins as part of Merri-bek Technical Notes Review to include signage for each stream that encourages correct public bin usage and colour coding in line with the Australian Standard.</div></div> <div><div>2.</div><div>Continues to provide public litter bins for general rubbish and mixed recyclables (in some locations) and introduces standardised signage on public bins across the municipality and limits the supply of 4 bins to residents and businesses.</div></div> <div><div>3.</div><div>Refers the following to the 2024/25 budget process:<div><div>•</div><div>Any additional resources required to create a standard look and feel to the public litter bins.</div></div></div></div>		

Progress Comment

Work has commenced on updating the technical notes and reviewing public bin signage.

Director Community**Council 8/11/2023****Target date for full completion:**

30/06/2024

7.14 ABORIGINAL PLACE NAMES ON POSTAL CHANNELS**That Council:**

1. Adopts the immediate implementation of traditional Aboriginal place name Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country as part of the Merri-bek City Council address;
2. Adopts a progressive implementation approach for the use of traditional Aboriginal place names in postal addresses for mail outgoing from Council, as becomes possible following staff training and systems upgrades.

Progress Comment

This is still in progress. Due for completion by 30 June 2024.

Director Place and Environment**Council 8/11/2023****Target date for full completion:**

18/6/2024

7.15 PROPOSED SALE - 2 SPRY STREET, COBURG NORTH**That Council:**

1. Notes that the portion of land that Council acquired at Spry Street to create an open space buffer and path along the Merri Creek has now been subdivided and will remain in Council ownership

2. Notes the one submission received in relation to the proposed sale of the remainder of the land at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North.
3. Having fulfilled its obligations under Section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Community Engagement Policy, supports the proposal to sell the site at 2 Spry St, Coburg North by a public process.
4. Writes to the submitter advising them of the Council's decision.
5. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to do all things necessary to effect the sale of 2 Spry Street, Coburg North by a public process.
6. Returns the net proceeds of this sale to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund in accordance with the resolution of Council at its 6 August 2018 meeting.

Progress Comment

The property was sold on 29 May 2024 and once settlement is finalised the net proceeds of this sale will be returned to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund.

Director Place and Environment

Council 6/12/2023

Target date for full completion:

10/07/2024

7.12 GLENROY COMMUNITY HUB CAFE - UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS**That Council:**

1. Notes that the Expression of Interest (EOI) process conducted in October / November 2022 to secure a social enterprise to manage and operate the café outlet at the Glenroy Community Hub was not successful.
2. Endorses an EOI process, open to all potential operators including for-profit commercial businesses, social enterprises and not-for-profits to secure an operator to manage the Glenroy Community Hub café outlet.
3. Endorses higher weighted selection criteria apply to EOI applicants that meet the social enterprise and/or not-for-profit eligibility.
4. Endorses a peppercorn lease if the successful proponent meets the social enterprise and/or not-for-profit eligibility.
5. Receives a further report on the outcome of the EOI process with recommendations for next steps to appoint a suitable operator.

Progress Comment

Report is being prepared for the July 2024 Council meeting.

Chief Executive Officer

Council 14/02/2024

Target date for full completion:

28/02/2024

7.5

FEDERAL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

That Council adopts the following Federal Advocacy Priority infrastructure projects:

- Upfield Rail Corridor upgrade and duplication and extension and electrification to Wallan
- Coburg Library redevelopment
- Central Coburg Social and Affordable Housing
- All Abilities Playground
- Ballerdt Mooroop
- More Trees in Merri-bek
- Coburg Aquatic Centre redevelopment
- Gillon Oval Grandstand refurbishment
- Neighbourhood Playground Upgrades (multiple sites)
- Sports Field Lighting Upgrades (multiple sites)

Progress Comment

Advocacy on the adopted priority infrastructure projects is currently in progress and ongoing.

Director Community	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 10/07/2024
7.5 LAND ADJACENT TO BRUNSWICK BATHS - OPTIONS FOR FUTURE USE		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notes that the endorsed concept plan for the 33 Saxon Street hub identified the footprint of the North-West building (fronting onto Phoenix Street) as being for potential use for future expansion of Brunswick Baths.2. Acknowledges that if the North-West building is not retained for future aquatics and leisure purposes, the likely best use of the site would be an arts related usage which preferably also increases activation of the site.3. Commissions cost estimates for repurposing the building for arts use, and for Brunswick Baths Health Club (gym) use.4. Undertakes a targeted market sounding during April 2024 to investigate if there are destination arts tenancies who can provide capital investment to repurpose and activate the building.5. Receives a report in June 2024 that outlines the comparative benefits, risks, costs and community impact of Aquatics and Leisure or arts and culture usage including the options of:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Expansion of Brunswick Baths Health Club extensionb) Destination arts venuec) Making space (affordable arts).		
Progress Comment		
A report will be presented to the July 2024 Council meeting in response to this resolution.		

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 30/06/2024
7.8 UNIT 1, 6 SUTHERLAND STREET, COBURG - UPDATE ON PROPOSED SALE		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to do all things necessary to effect the sale of Unit 1, 6 Sutherland Street, Coburg. 2. Allocates the proceeds of the sale to the Social and Affordable Housing Strategy Reserve to support social and affordable housing projects. 		
Progress Comment		
An agent has been appointed to manage the sale of the property, and a property valuation is being obtained to inform the sale.		

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 14/08/2024
7.10 FUTURE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS PROGRAM		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes that the Christmas Decoration Program for 2024 will be delivered under the current contract and that the current Program contract will expire on 30 June 2025 with no further extensions allowable. 2. Commences the procurement process via public tender to engage a vendor(s) for a new contract that will come into effect from 1 July 2025. 3. Resolves that the new Christmas Decorations 2025 contract will amongst other things: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Apply for a 2-year period, with further extension options of 2 x 2 years at Council's absolute discretion. b) Continue to operate in line with annual budget allocations. c) Consider the insights obtained from the recent consultation with Merri-bek's business community. d) Continue to focus the Christmas Decorations Program on the three major Activity Centres in Brunswick, Coburg and Glenroy. 		

- e) Seek to enhance the visual presentation of the new Christmas Decorations Program, aiming for more impactful displays that continue to offer the greatest possible value for money.
- f) Continue to include illuminated displays at Brunswick and Coburg Town Halls.
- g) Include an illuminated display in a new and prominent location within the Glenroy Activity Centre.
- h) Explore options to concentrate decorations in a more focused and visually impactful manner at key sites such as gateways and public gathering spaces within the three Activity Centres.
- i) Include a requirement for the successful vendor to develop an annual Project Implementation Plans in consultation with the Economic Development Unit by 31 May each year. This plan must include an annual audit of the condition of existing decorations, which reviews surplus decorations be identified for sale, donation, recycling, or repurposing for alternative decorative uses to ensure that sustainability considerations are taken into account.
- j) Continue to engage an external vendor(s) to manage the annual Project Implementation Plan, to align with indexed annual budget allocations.
- k) Explore rental options for new decorations to optimise return on investment and value for money, reduce storage costs, and maximise both environmental sustainability considerations and visual impact.

Progress Comment

Report proposed for the August 2024 Council meeting recommending successful tenderer.

Director Business Transformation

Council 13/03/2024

Target date for full completion:

10/07/2024

7.13 GOVERNANCE REPORT - MARCH 2024 - CYCLICAL REPORT

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report:
 - Merri-bek First Nations Advisory Committee Advisory Committee held 19 February 2024.

2. Notes the Merri-bek First Nations Advisory Committee's recommendations:
 - a) That Council commits to initial contribution of 10 per cent of the estimated value of the Ballerrt Mooroop project to leverage further external funding, upon land title handover or long-term lease agreement, as part of local Treaty discussions.
 - b) That Council writes to the co-Chairs of the First People's Assembly seeking their support for the Ballerrt Mooroop project.
3. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
4. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at 14 February 2024 Council meeting, at Attachment 3 to this report.
5. Appoints the following community members to the First Nations Advisory Committee to fill 3 extraordinary vacancies:
 - a) Trevor Barker
 - b) Seth Nolan
 - c) Rob Patton
6. In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020:
 - a) Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 of this report, as set out in the instrument.
 - b) Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instruments and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.
 - c) Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.
7. Endorses the motion about Accessible Public Transport in Attachment 6 for submission to the 2024 National General Assembly of Local Government.
8. Approves the enrolment of Cr Riley in the Australian Institute of Company Directors – Company Directors Course at the cost of \$11,900 (excluding GST), noting that:
 - the cost of \$11,900 for a non-member of the AICD is applicable; and
 - subject to an application for AICD membership (at a cost of \$880) the cost of the course may be reduced, resulting in a total cost of \$9,680 (excluding GST).
9. Resolves to receive a report by July 2024 which:
 - a) includes consideration of an exclusion to the Councillor Support Expenses and Resources Policy to access the AICD Company Directors Course during the final year of the Council term; and
 - b) provides an overview of the key benefits and learning of the AICD Company Directors Course and its relevance to Council duties; and

<p>c) outlines Councillor expenditure incurred, attendance and completion dates, and accreditations awarded of the AICD Company Directors Course during the current Council term.</p> <p>10. Endorses the following motion for submission to the 2024 National General Assembly for Local Government: 'This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to introduce anti-vilification laws to protect the community from hate and ensure that every individual in Australia feels safe and protected under law irrespective of their age, disability, gender identity, intersex status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation'.</p> <p>Progress Comment</p> <p>1-8 & 10 of the resolution have been completed.</p> <p>9 is scheduled to be reported to the July Council meeting.</p>
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Director Business Transformation	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 27/03/2024
7.15	PROCUREMENT POLICY, COMMUNITY FLAG SCHEDULE AND NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MATTERS	
That Council:		
<div>1. Amends the Procurement Policy in relation to future contracts and purchases by adopting Option A: "Council is committed to ensuring Council purchases goods and services from suppliers not engaged in manufacturing, supplying, distribution, benefitting and/or associated with nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, biological weapons, landmines, cluster munitions and other weapons used in war and to harm civilians."</div> <div>2. Adopts Option B for the Community Flag Schedule after May 2024 to continue the current flag arrangements for flying the Palestinian flag at Coburg Civic Centre until a permanent ceasefire is declared, at which point revert to usual Community Flag Schedule and fly the Palestinian flag on key dates including 15 November (Independence Day) and 29 November (International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People). In addition, fly the Pride flag from a temporary flagpole in the foyer of the Coburg Civic Centre on key dates including 31 March (Transgender Day of Visibility) and 17 May (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersex discrimination and Transphobia)".</div>		

3. Requests the Australian Local Government Association invite a speaker from either Australian Palestine Advocacy Network or the Palestinian Delegation to Australia and New Zealand to address the 2024 National General Assembly of Local Governments.
4. Endorses a proposed motion for submission to the National General Assembly of Local Governments, as proposed by a Councillor. The motion to read:

ALGA Mourns the tragic and horrific loss of civilian lives in the conflict in Gaza and condemns all attacks that target civilians. This pain resonates deeply worldwide and within our communities across Australia.

ALGA calls on the Australian government to help stop the starvation of people in Gaza by immediately restoring funding to UNRWA and doubling the funding

ALGA also calls on the Australian government to advance the cause of peace by calling for:

 - an immediate and permanent ceasefire
 - the immediate lifting of the siege to allow an unlimited supply of all of the essentials of life to be delivered to people in Gaza
 - ending any weapons sales to Israel and ending any deals with weapons companies that supply weapons to the Israeli military.
 - Urge all parties to uphold international law, including decisions of the International Court of Justice.
5. Provide immediate support of up to \$10,000 to faith, cultural and asylum seeker organisations to assist in their support of recently arrived families from Palestine in Merri-bek.
6. Continues to investigate existing contracts that may be linked to the war in Gaza and provide a further briefing to Councillors regarding options and recommended next steps.
7. Liaise and further consult with the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network on matters related to the war in Gaza.

Progress Comment

Point 1 – Completed, the amended Procurement policy has been updated on the website.

Point 2 – Completed.

Point 3 – Completed.

Point 4 – Completed.

Point 5 – Completed.

Point 6 – In progress.

Point 7 – A meeting with APAN has been requested.

Director City Infrastructure	Council 10/04/2024	Target date for full completion: 14/08/2024
7.7	TRIAL ROAD CLOSURE - BARROW STREET, COBURG	
That Council:		
<div>1. Approves the commencement of the process under Section 207, Schedule 11, Clause 10(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 1989 to erect temporary barriers at Barrow Street, Coburg, at the intersection with Harding Street, from Harding Street to a point up to 8 metres further south to block the passage of vehicles other than bicycles, for the purpose of a genuine traffic diversion experiment.</div> <div>2. Gives public notice of the traffic diversion experiment proposals and calls for submissions under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 as required by Section 207A of the Act, in The Age, on Council's website and to owners and occupiers of all properties in the area as shown in Attachment 1.</div> <div>3. Appoints the Mayor as Chair, and Councillors Conlan, Bolton and Pavlidis to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission.</div> <div>4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the date and time and location for the Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting following consultation with the appointed Councillors and submitters requesting to be heard.</div> <div>5. Following the consultation process, receives a report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of any Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting held, in relation to the proposed traffic diversion experiment and the report from the Department of Transport and Planning on the proposal, with a recommendation on whether to proceed to the trial.</div>		
Progress Comment		
Consultation commenced on 3 May, for a period of 28 days and the hearing of submissions has been scheduled for 6 June 2024.		

Director City Infrastructure	Council 10/04/2024	Target date for full completion: 30/06/2024
7.10 MERRI CREEK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - FUNDING AND SERVICE AGREEMENT 2024-2027		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves a new 3-year Funding and Service Agreement with Merri Creek Management Committee, commencing from 1 July 2024 until 30 June 2027. 2. Delegates responsibility for executing the Funding and Service Agreement to the Chief Executive Officer. 		
Progress Comment		
Process under way to develop the new contract. Expect to be completed and executed by mid-June 2024.		

Director Community	Council 10/04/2024	Target date for full completion: 14/08/2024
7.13 BRUNSWICK MECHANICS INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT MODEL		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorses a new approach to the operation of the Brunswick Mechanics Institute from 1 July 2025 that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Aligns with the 2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy b) Designates the space for creative development, small, low-tech and/or informal public events and activations, artist networking and engagement c) Includes the following terms and key performance indicators: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ability for Council to program the space for a set number of weeks per year ii. That local artists and communities are prioritised through a pre-approved hire decision making model iii. Artists to receive in-kind or reduced rates for venue hire 		

- iv. Prioritisation of Merri-bek based artists and creatives
 - v. Prioritisation of artists from Merri-bek Human Rights priority groups
 - vi. Inclusion of artist networking events and outdoor activation in the activity requirements
 - vii. A clear communication and reporting strategy for sharing information about the activities happening at BMI with the public and Council.
2. Proceeds to tender for the management of Brunswick Mechanics Institute for a term of three years, plus two further three year options.
3. Notes that the funds required (\$80,000 per annum) to action this resolution are budgeted for within the current year Council budget.

Progress comment

Tender for the management of Brunswick Mechanics Institute is occurring. A report recommending the preferred tenderer will be presented to the August 2024 Council Meeting.

Responses to Notices of Motion

Director Community	Council 8/07/2020	Target date for full completion: 10/07/2024
DCD13/20	GROWING FOOD IN SOME LANEWAYS - RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION NOM24/20	
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Endorses a laneway garden pilot to be conducted in early 2021 which tests the conditions and parameters of a potential future laneway garden program.2. Receives a report by September 2021 on the laneway garden pilot outcomes and recommendations to inform a Council policy on laneway gardens.		
Progress Comment		
Whilst a laneway pilot was initially scoped, a review of the 'Right of Way' strategy and documents revealed that laneway gardens are difficult to introduce. Officers are currently reviewing the Community Garden guidelines and will include avenues for residents to consider gardens in alternate public spaces such as disused laneways.		

Director Community	Council 14/07/2021	Target date for full completion: 10/07/2024
7.12	GYM AND AQUATIC MEMBERSHIP FOR MORELAND SENIORS	
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resolves to proceed with option 1 outlined below as a trial for six months commencing August 2021.2. Receives a further report at the end of the trial period outlining the results achieved and any future options.		

Progress Comment

A report on the evaluation of the trial and options for future will be presented to the July 2024 Council meeting.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Director Place and Environment	Council 12/08/2020	Target date for full completion: 26/08/2020
NOM39/20	COBURG SQUARE	
<p>That Council receives a report on the potential to include some facilities for homeless people in the Coburg Square. Such facilities could be the provision of showers and lockers.</p>		
<p>Progress Comment The Coburg Square site is being considered as part of the current Central Coburg Revitalisation plan. The consideration of facilities for homeless people will be included as part of the future precinct masterplan.</p>		

Director Place and Environment	Council 10/08/2022	Target date for full completion: 28/03/2025
8.3	NAMING LANEWAYS	
<p>That Council requests a report listing policy changes required to allow laneways and walkways to be named in accordance with the Geographic Place Names guidelines and a process be setup for community members to nominate laneways and provide suggested names and relevant information about the history of the laneway and suggested name.</p>		
<p>Progress Comment Liaison with Geographic Names Victoria is ongoing to inform a future report on naming laneways and walkways in 2025.</p>		

Director Community	Council 12/10/2022	Target date for full completion: 10/07/2024
8.1 WHAT'S IN A NAME? MORELAND TO MERRI-BEK		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writes to the Wurundjeri Council and the Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne thanking them for their contribution to the historic name change of the city. 2. Prepares a report documenting the name change process and preserving information, minutes, documents, objects, photos and recordings of the process for historical prosperity. 3. In July 2023 and July 2024 present a report to council detailing the implementation actions of the name change and associated costs in the previous financial years. 4. Acknowledges that council has no intention of changing the name of Moreland Road or other non-Council controlled spaces and places called Moreland within the City of Merri-bek and council acknowledges that many community organisations and businesses use the name Moreland and council will not be advocating a change of name for these organisations and business, although some of them may choose to change the name to align with the municipal name. 5. Prepares a report to be presented to council about how council can assist rebranding of community organisations and businesses, if they choose to change their name with special support grants and other measures. 		
Progress Comment		
Documentation of the name change process and preservation of information is underway and will be completed in line with the completion of renaming implementation at the end of June 2024. A final report on renaming implementation will be provided in July 2024. All other aspects of the resolution have been completed.		

Director Place and Environment	Council 12/04/2023	Target date for full completion: 26/04/2025
<p>8.5 MAJOR ROAD FAWKNER SHOPPING STRIP</p> <p>That Council considers Major Road Shopping Centre Fawkner in its Shopping Strip Renewal Program and that as part of this program examines proposals to reconfigure parking to minimise traffic accidents and make the area safer for pedestrians; and installs additional pram and trolley ramps.</p> <p>Progress Comment Major Road Fawkner will be considered as part of any review of the Shopping Strip Renewal Program.</p>		

Director Community	Council 9/08/2023	Target date for full completion: 30/06/2025
<p>8.2 FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE</p> <p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Undertakes a review of existing processes associated with Council decision-making (including the formation of Officer recommendations and Notices of Motion) that have an impact on the First Nations community and explore ways to effectively consider and/or refer such matters to the First Nations Advisory Committee and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation for their advice and feedback, prior to presenting to Council for consideration. In addition, the review would seek input from the First Nations Advisory Committee and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation at the beginning of the process and on the outcomes of the review prior to presentation to Council. Receives a further report identifying recommendations that can fulfill the objectives mentioned in point 1) above. 		

<p>Progress Comment</p> <p>Officers are reviewing existing Merri-bek Council processes alongside an appraisal of similar processes across other local governments. A review of existing Advisory and Reference Committee processes will commence over the coming months. This will include strengthening measures to ensure referral of decisions that impact First Nations community to the First Nations Advisory Committee.</p>		
Director City Infrastructure	Council 8/11/2023	Target date for full completion: 11/12/2024
<p>8.1 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AROUND BONWICK STREET, FAWKNER</p> <p>That Council receives a report on improving pedestrian safety around the Bonwick Street shopping centre in Fawkner as part of a report back on the proposed projects prioritised through the Fawkner Transport Study by the end of 2024. Some safety aspects to be considered include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Putting pedestrian-operated traffic lights on the pedestrian crossing on Jukes Road. 2. Erecting a pedestrian sign of the walking legs at the pedestrian crossing in the carpark on the eastern side of the shops. 3. Examine ways of improving the traffic flow to ensure that eastbound traffic turning right into Bonwick Street from Jukes Road doesn't bank up across the pedestrian crossing. <p>Progress Comment</p> <p>Consideration of pedestrian safety improvements in Fawkner is underway with consultation from late May.</p>		

Director City Infrastructure	Council 14/02/2024	Target date for full completion: 31/08/2024
8.1	DON'T REMOVE THE SCHOOL CROSSING AT BRUNSWICK SECONDARY COLLEGE	
That Council:		
<div>1. Notes the letter sent to all Councillors from the School Principal in consultation with the School Council, on 4 February 2024, which explicitly requests that council retain the crossing as is.</div> <div>2. Notes that the existing school crossing infrastructure has been in place for at least 15 years, with the School Principal noting that it provides a visual cue to motorists to slow down on approach.</div> <div>3. Notes that the school provides for a teacher to supervise the crossing before and after school each school day. While this teacher is not the same as the crossing supervisors provided by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), the teachers perform a supervisory role in helping kids to cross the road and asking motorists to slow down.</div> <div>4. Given that removal of the existing crossing is not supported by the resident who raised this with council, nor by the School Council or School Principal, that council resolves to retain the crossing as is.</div> <div>5. As requested by the principal of Brunswick Secondary College, requests officers to undertake a fresh audit of traffic volumes and pedestrian numbers at the Fallon Street school crossing and apply for DTP funding for a paid supervisor if the counts meet the DTP's thresholds.</div> <div>6. Requests officers to undertake speed surveys and observe driver behaviour at the site over the same period.</div>		
Progress Comment		
Traffic volume and speed survey have been scheduled. Officers will analyse the results of the survey and discuss by August 2024.		

Director Community	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 12/06/2024
8.3 FUNDING THE ARTS IN MERRI-BEK		
That Council requests a report by June 2024 on innovative ways Council could increase funding for the arts in Merri-bek, including public art, arts infrastructure, grants and other opportunities for artists and arts organisations. Options the report may examine could include:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with charitable trusts and/or other organisations. • A percent cost contribution for public art from major Council capital projects, as per the 2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy. • An Arts levy on developments. 		
Progress Comment		
A report will be presented to the June 2024 Council meeting on innovative ways Council could increase funding for the arts in Merri-bek.		

Director Community	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 11/12/2024
8.4 LIBRARIES WITHOUT BOOKS		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the important role the libraries play in local communities. 2. Notes with concern the international trend towards bookless and unstaffed libraries. 3. Receives a report on the current management of book collections and any policy or practice regarding book reductions that are occurring in Merri-bek libraries. 		
Progress Comment		
A report on this matter is currently being prepared for a future Council meeting.		

Director City Infrastructure	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 27/05/2025
8.6 DANGERS FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS AT HUDSON STREET AND VICTORIA STREET, COBURG INTERSECTION		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receives a report on safety hazards and potential solutions for cyclists and pedestrians at the Hudson Street and Victoria Street, Coburg intersection. 2. Requests officers to take account of potential flow-on effects of additional traffic to Hudson Street and consider the need for potential safety improvements to Hudson Street as part of the Harding/Munro Streets for People project. 		
Progress Comment		
Background analysis for the Harding and Munro Streets for People project will commence in August 2024 and a review of the safety data for the Hudson Street and Victoria Street intersection will be undertaken through this process. A report on the findings with solutions for the safety of the intersection will be included in the Harding/Munro Streets for People project report in early 2025.		

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/03/2024	Target date for full completion: 14/08/2024
8.7 ENGAGING WITH SMALL BUSINESSES IN NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRES		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receives a report outlining current business development support practices in neighbourhood activity centres situated in the North-West Ward including the consideration of providing further resources and assistance to facilitate the establishment and functioning of trader associations, including guidance on organisational structure, networking opportunities, and access to relevant information and support services. 		

2. Notes that the formation of trader associations will facilitate direct communication channels between small businesses and Council, enabling the exchange of ideas, feedback, and support mechanisms.
3. Continues to collaborate with formal and informal trader associations to identify and address common challenges faced by small businesses in neighbourhood activity centres, such as marketing, promotion, parking, and infrastructure improvements. This includes regular meetings and forums to facilitate ongoing dialogue between small businesses, trader associations, and relevant stakeholders, providing a platform for sharing best practices, discussing issues of concern, and exploring collaborative solutions.

Progress Comment

Report being prepared for the August 2024 Council meeting.

Director Community

Council 10/04/2024

Target date for full completion:

12/06/2024

8.2 SUPPORT FOR EMERGENCY FOOD AND MATERIAL AID RELIEF

That Council receives a report in June which outlines:

1. The emergency food and material aid services and volunteer groups that exist in Merri-bek and where they are located, including any such services or volunteer groups that have closed or reduced their service.
2. The level of support that is offered to emergency food and material aid services and volunteer groups by Merri-bek council, compared to other local councils including how the actions in Council's Food Systems Strategy Extension 2020-2024 interacts with assistance for people needing emergency food and material aid.
3. Recommendations for a process by which Council can begin the process of acquiring land for the purpose of constructing a purpose-built facility which includes a commercial-standard kitchen for unfunded emergency food and material relief organisations.
4. How Council's Food Systems Strategy Extension 2020-2024 can be used to increase support for emergency food and material aid.

Progress Comment

A report is being prepared for June 2024 Council meeting which will respond to the information and recommendations requested in this resolution.

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Director City Infrastructure	Council 10/04/2024	Target date for full completion: 30/06/2024
8.3 SUPPORT FOR SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION AND SCHOOL ZONES		
That Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Requests Officers to submit an application to the Department of Transport and Planning for the installation of a 40 km/h school zone speed limit at the following locations:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Coonans Road between the intersections of Reynard Street and Brentwood Avenue.b) Pentridge Boulevard between the intersections of Sydney Road and Bell Street.c) Bell Street between the intersection of Elizabeth Street and the existing 40 km/h strip shopping centre zone near Rodda Street.2. Requests Officers to submit an application to the Department of Transport and Planning for the installation of a 40 km/h speed limit on Stockade Avenue, Coburg.3. Writes to the Department of Transport and Planning, requesting information on the efficacy of existing traffic calming measures (i.e. dragons' teeth and speeding warning signs) on Sydney Road, near Mercy College, and advocating for the installation of a signalised pedestrian crossing.		
Progress Comment		
Officers have met with DTP to discuss the proposed speed limit reductions and will be submitting applications by the end of May 2024.		

7.14 GOVERNANCE REPORT - JUNE 2024 - CYCLICAL REPORT

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report:
 - a) First Nations Advisory Committee held 15 April 2024.
 - b) Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee held 23 April 2024.
 - c) Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee held 16 May 2024.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 10 April 2024 and 8 May 2024 Council meetings, at Attachment 3 to this report.
4. Endorses Mr Nicholas Tsiaras as the preferred candidate for appointment as a community appointed member on the Inner North Community Foundation Board (as put forward by the foundation).
5. Requests that the Chief Executive Officer write to the Inner North Community Foundation of Council's endorsement of Mr Nicholas Tsiaras as its community appointed member on the Inner North Community Foundation Board, effectively withdrawing the current nomination of the Director Community for Merri-bek.
6. Reschedules the Planning and Related Matters meeting originally set for Monday 23 September 2024 to Wednesday 25 September 2024 in order to align with the usual meeting cycle, given the changes proposed on the election timeline that is currently in a Bill before Parliament.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Governance report is prepared as a monthly standing report to Council which provides a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

This Governance report includes:

- A summary of the minutes of Advisory Committees and Groups.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Responses to Public Question Time items taken on notice at 10 April 2024 and 8 May 2024 Council meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.
- An overview of the recruitment process undertaken, and the recommended preferred candidate for appointment as a community appointed member on the Inner North Community Foundation Board.
- A recommendation to reschedule the Planning and Related Matters meeting originally set for Monday 23 September 2024 to Wednesday 25 September 2024 in order to align with the usual meeting cycle, given the changes proposed on the election timeline that is currently in a Bill before Parliament.

Previous Council Decisions

Governance Report - December 2023 - Cyclical Report – 6 December 2023

That Council:

...

4. *Endorses the procedure for filling one position among Council-nominated members on the Inner North Community Foundation (INCF), including that the Inner North Community Foundation commence a public recruitment process for a Council-nominated member (noting that advertising will commence in March 2024, with the aim of securing a preferred applicant by the end of March or April 2024), and:*
 - a) *Seek that the Chief Executive Officer make necessary arrangements with Inner North Community Foundation, for the preferred candidate to meet with the CEO, Mayor, and Deputy Mayor as a final step; and*
 - b) *Prepare a report for the May 2024 Council meeting, to make a recommendation for Council's endorsement of the preferred candidate for appointment as a Council-nominated member on the Inner North Community Foundation board (to replace the current temporary arrangement).*

...

Governance Report - November 2023 - Cyclical Report – 8 November 2023

That Council:

...

7. *Sets the dates and times for Council meetings in 2024 as provided in Attachment 5 to this report, and designates those meetings indicated for consideration of Planning and Related Matters in accordance with the Governance Rules.*

Governance Report - May 2022 - Cyclical Report – 11 May 2022

That Council:

...

4. *Notes that its decision made under Confidential item 11.1 IntoWork Governance Review and Proposal for Change on 10 March 2021 to relinquish Member Council interest in IntoWork in exchange for a 30-year funding commitment to the Inner North Community Foundation has now been implemented through a Signed Relationship Deed executed on the 7 December 2021; and therefore the decision of Council will now be made public (the executed Relationship Deed is between Moreland City Council, City of Yarra, Darebin City Council, Inner Northern Group Training Limited and Inner North Community Foundation Ltd).*
5. *Notes that the Council resolution made under Confidential item 11.1 IntoWork Governance Review and Proposal for Change on 10 March 2021 is provided publicly in this report under the Previous Council Decisions section of this report.*
6. *Notes that for the purpose of public transparency, this report provides an overview of the information related to Council's decision on 10 March 2021 regarding 'IntoWork Governance Review and Proposal for Change' and action taken execute the agreement in.*

1. Policy Context

Reports from Advisory Committees to Council are provided in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and the Governance Rules set out the requirements for keeping and reporting records of meetings held under the auspices of Council.

Council's Governance Rules contains provisions which enable the Chairperson to take a question On Notice, with a considered written response being provided to the questioner, in circumstances including where the question requires information that is either not available or accessible at the time of that meeting, or where the time allowed for Public Question Time has elapsed.

Council's Governance Rules contain provisions which require Council to fix the date, time and place of all Council meetings for the following calendar year, including meetings designated for Planning and Related Matters.

Council's Governance Rules also contain an Election Period Policy which outlines the requirements and limitations for the making of Council decisions in the 32 days prior to a Council election.

2. Background

The Governance Report is prepared as a monthly report to Council to provide a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

In accordance with best practice principles and good governance practice, and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act, this report incorporates matters including reporting of Advisory Committees, records of meetings held under the auspice of Council, items relating to the delegation of Council powers and duties, and policy and strategy reporting.

The Inner North Community Foundation (INCF) is a strong and trusted foundation committed to the people, places and opportunities of Melbourne's inner north. It covers the municipalities of Merri-bek, Yarra and Darebin. Since being established in 2007, the foundation has overseen the distribution of more than \$5.9M in grants to local organisations for hundreds of community building projects. The currently manage more than \$11 million from over 740 generous locals.

The foundation held the 2024 MyFund Showcase at Schoolhouse Studios in Coburg on 23 May. Some of the highlights from the showcase included:

- Schoolhouse Studios gave an overview of their rock'n'roll Coles that supports 60 artists in studios in a converted supermarket.
- Open Table reside at Schoolhouse Studios, and have turned the supermarket deli into a food rescue headquarters.
- Norm Anderson Young Peoples Fund: Foundation Director Philippa Day facilitated a panel deep dive on the Norm Anderson Fund. Thanks to Marley and Henry, Merri-bek Youth Ambassadors, who reflected on how they had input into where grants were given last year.

Council will continue to partner closely with the foundation and look at further opportunities to strengthen engagement, including annually with Councillors.

An upcoming opportunity will be the foundations 2024 Pathways to Employment Fund grants announcements expected in September. The Pathways to Employment Fund is a proud partnership between the cities of Merri-bek, Yarra, Darebin, and the INCF and IntoWork Australia to address disadvantage through employment opportunities in the inner north of Melbourne. This is an example of the value of the partnership between the Councils, INCF and IntoWork, that creates opportunities for employment and support helping people to find work in the inner north. In recent years, the foundation grants around 10 successful and eligible organisations up to \$20,000 per organisation to support vulnerable group in the inner north community, including Merri-bek.

3. Issues

Advisory Committee minutes

A summary of the minutes of the advisory committees and groups are provided at **Attachment 1** for Council's information as follows:

- a) First Nations Advisory Committee held 15 April 2024.
- b) Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee held 23 April 2024.
- c) Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee held 16 May 2024

The summaries of the minutes do not contain any recommendations from the committees to Council.

Records of Meetings held under the auspice of Council

Records of matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Merri-bek that involve Councillors and Council officers are kept in accordance with the Governance Rules.

Meeting Records must include meeting attendees, including organisations represented by external presenters; the title of matters discussed; and any conflicts of interests disclosed and whether the declarant of a conflict of interests recused themselves from the meeting.

Some examples include Councillor Briefings, meetings with residents/developers/clients/organisations/Government departments/statutory authorities and consultations.

Records of Meetings received since the November Council Meeting are presented at **Attachment 2** as follows:

- Harvest Square Site Tour (8 Kitchener Street, Brunswick West) – 12 April 2024
- Councillor Briefing – 1 May 2024
- Councillor Briefing – 6 May 2024
- Councillor Briefing – 15 May 2024
- Planning Briefing – 20 May 2024.

Responses to Questions taken On Notice – 10 April 2024 and 8 May 2024 Council meetings

At Council Meetings, questions and/or statements are taken On Notice during Public Question Time, where persons submitting questions are not in attendance or where the maximum allowable time for public questions has elapsed.

Questions taken On Notice are provided with a written response following the meeting for which they are submitted and reported to Council at the next practicable meeting. The questions are recorded in the meeting minutes.

The responses to questions taken On Notice at **Attachment 3** to this report relate to questions from 10 April 2024 and 8 May 2024 Council meetings regarding:

- Palestine
- Pet Registration
- Hosken Reserve Masterplan Implementation Update
- Landslide at Greenbank Crescent, Pascoe Vale South
- Councillor Expenses Policy – attendance approval and cost allocation cap.

Inner North Community Foundation

At its meeting on 6 December 2023, Council endorsed the procedure for filling a community-nominated position on the Inner North Community Foundation (INCF) that included: initiating a public recruitment process to secure a candidate by the end of March or April 2024; facilitating the preferred candidate to meet with the CEO, Mayor, and Deputy Mayor as a final step; and to receive a report recommending the preferred candidate for Council's endorsement, replacing the current temporary arrangement.

Following Council's endorsement, as set out above, a recruitment process commenced, with the role being promoted through social media channels, resulting in 3,985 impressions on LinkedIn, and the Foundation's email distribution list, with 1,700 opens and 400 click-throughs on information regarding the role. Merri-bek Council also shared the opportunity through its relevant social media channels. The desired skill sets sought included:

- Experience in financial management and fund investments, including assessing cash flow forecasts and analysing balance sheets for strategic benefits.
- Proven ability to leverage networks to advance an organisation's cause.
- Experience in marketing and communications to increase engagement with an organisation or cause.

Applications closed in early May 2024, with 14 individuals applying for two vacancies. Among the 14 applicants, 7 had connections to Merri-bek. The Foundation board interviewed two shortlisted candidates during the week commencing 13 May 2024. The interview panel consisted of Carolyn Phiddian (Foundation Chair), Michael Howard (Nominations and Employment Committee Chair), and Maria Cardamone (HR specialist and Nominations and Employment Committee member). The Foundation's Nominations and Employment Committee recommended that the Board propose Mr Nicholas Tsiaras to Merri-bek Council as their preferred applicant for membership of the Foundation, given his alignment with the Board's desired skill set and profile. Mr Nicholas Tsiaras is a long standing business operator in Merri-bek, a specialist accountant and business advisor.

On 23 May 2024 the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer met with Mr Tsiaras (along with Ben Rogers, Executive Officer INCF and Philippa Day, Director INCF) as part of the Council endorsed process.

It is recommended that Council endorse Mr Nicholas Tsiaras as the nominee for the INCF position. Upon endorsement, Council officers will inform the Foundation of this decision, effectively withdrawing the current nomination of the Director of Community for Merri-bek membership and nominating Mr Tsiaras.

At its meeting held on 8 November 2023, Council adopted the 2024 Council Meeting Schedule. In doing so, the Council took into account the general Council elections scheduled for 26 October 2024, and the requirements outlined in the Election Period Policy. As a result, Council initially decided to hold the September 2040 Planning and Related Matters meeting on Monday, 23 September 2024, which fell outside the initial dates of the known Election Period and the regular Planning and Related Council meeting cycle. However, given the changes proposed on the election timeline that is currently in a Bill before Parliament, effectively bringing forward the Election period a week earlier, it is now recommended to reschedule the 23 September 2024 Planning and Related Matters meeting to align with its usual meeting cycle to Wednesday, 25 September 2024.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Advisory committees provide a valuable communication and consultation link between the organisation, Councillors, Council and the community.

Public Question Time provides an opportunity for the community to engage with and direct their questions and statements directly to the Council.

5. Officer Declaration for a Conflict of Interests

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflicts of interest in the matters contained therewith.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There are no financial and/or resource implications as a result of this report.

7. Implementation

Governance activity, including reports of Committees to Council, Records of Meetings and Community Question Time items will continue to be reported to Council monthly.

Subject to Council's decision the next steps include:

- Council writing to the Inner North Community Foundation of Council's endorsement of Mr Nicholas Tsiaras as its community appointed member on the Inner North Community Foundation Board and the withdrawing of the current Merri-bek Director Community representative.
- Upon Council's endorsement, Mr Tsiaras will then apply for membership with the Foundation. If his membership application is approved, he will be eligible for election as a Director. This is expected to occur before the next INCF Annual General Meeting, likely at the next board meeting. The upcoming meetings are scheduled for June, August, and October.
- The schedule of Planning and Related Matters meeting dates being updated on Council's website and being made available at Council's Customer Service Centres.

Attachment/s

1 <u>↓</u>	Reports from Advisory Committees to Council - June 2024	D24/254987
2 <u>↓</u>	Records of Meetings - June 2024	D24/242855
3 <u>↓</u>	Responses to questions taken 'On Notice' - June 2024	D24/246833

FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 15 APRIL 2024

A report of the First Nations Advisory Committee meeting held on 15 April 2024 are provided for Council's information.

Councillors appointed to the First Nations Advisory Committee: Cr Adam Pulford; Cr James Conlan; Cr Sue Bolton.

Key Items Discussed

- **Council decision-making and Aboriginal self-determination**

The committee discussed that Notices of Motion (NOMs) related to First Nations affairs should be referred to the Committee for consideration before being presented to the Council. They agreed that more engagement with departments is necessary to ensure proper consideration of self-determination principles. To improve the integration of First Nations perspectives in Council decisions, the committee suggested requiring that NOMs related to First Nations affairs be referred to the First Nations Committee before Council consideration, incorporating the principle of self-determination into governance policies, and improving interdepartmental engagement and communication on these issues.

- **Ballerrt Mooroop Project Update**

The Ballerrt Mooroop First Peoples Coordinator presented on the history and future initiatives supporting the Ballerrt Mooroop project. Lease negotiations and Wurundjeri engagement are underway. The committee suggested further officers to follow up with the Minister regarding the site transfer request sent in January; support the establishment and operation of the Ballerrt Mooroop governance group involving Wurundjeri, local people, and Council; Review and consider the recommendations from the original feasibility study as advised by the First Nations advisory committee and investigate potential asbestos issues at the site as part of site safety management.

- **First People's Employment Strategy**

The First Peoples' Employment Officer presented update on progress on the First People's Strategy implementation to date. Members highlighted the importance of setting employment targets as a measure of the Council's commitment. The committee discussed that no specific employment targets are set in the current plan, with the intention to establish these in collaboration with the committee for future planning.

- **Food System Strategy engagement**

Officers presented an update on the Food Systems Strategy, questioning how to enhance connections to Country and facilitate First Peoples' involvement in edible landscapes, as well as understanding food security issues from a First Peoples perspective. Discussion acknowledged the end of the current engagement phase, with the food hub project ongoing. Members brought up the absence of a specific strategy for engaging First Peoples. Member suggested linking climate change work, proposed the Ballerrt Mooroop site as a collaboration opportunity, mentioning the involvement of 25 representatives from a broad range of families in similar study done by Darebin Council. Members noted there are approximately 20 gardens plus other sites, including school gardens and bush tucker sites, and highlighted the recognition of Merri Murnong, alongside West Brunswick sites.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was disclosed at the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

Nil

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 23 APRIL 2024

A report of the Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held on 23 April 2024 is provided for Council's information.

Councillors appointed to the Committee: Councillor Mark Riley.

Key Items Discussed

- Welcome and induction of new members to the Committee
- Human Rights priorities for 2024 discussion included:
- Snapshot of key achievements so far and key actions for 2024-2026 (presentation was provided)
- Theory of Change – What are the outcomes the Human Rights Policy is seeking to achieve?
- Implementation plan – key actions – are there any areas you'd like to have an input into? How can we report progress to you?
- Reporting from reference groups - highlights and any recommendations – reports were tabled.
- Food Systems Strategy – the committee had input into the draft strategy.
- Other business

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was disclosed at the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

There were no recommendations from the committee to Council.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 16 MAY 2024

A report of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting held on 16 May 2024 are provided for Council's information.

Councillors appointed to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee: Cr Riley.

Key Items Discussed

- An overview of the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Framework 2040 and 2020-2025 Action Plan, current activities and how we are tracking.
- Discussed how to show progress, collect and convey relevant data.
- Discussed plans for review and development of the 2025-2030 Climate Emergency Action Plan. How to include ecological crisis and integration with other Council strategies and action plans such as Nature Action Plan and Open Space Strategy.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was disclosed at the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

There were no recommendations from the committee to Council.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.



Record of Meeting

Meeting: Harvest Square Site Tour 8 Kitchener St (8 Kitchener St, Brunswick V

Date: 12 April 2024

Meeting time: 10.00am – 12noon

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees			
		Cr Lambros Tapinos, Deputy Mayor Cr Helen Pavlidis	
Apologies		Cr Angelica Panopoulos	
Council Staff (name and position)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Narelle Jennings, Manager City Strategy and Economy • Mark Hughes, Unit Manager Urban Planning • Phillip Priest, Group Manager City Development • Mike Collins, Principal Advisor Social and Affordable Housing 	
External participants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AV Jennings, representatives • Homes Victoria, representatives • Women's Housing Ltd representative 	
Items discussed (list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Tour of partially completed development	Nil	-
2	Close	Nil	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Phillip Priest, Group Manager City Development

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).



Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 1 May 2024

Meeting time: 6.00 pm

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	<div>Cr Adam Pulford, Mayor</div> <div>Cr Mark Riley</div> <div>Cr Angelica Panopoulos</div> <div>Cr James Conlan</div> <div>Cr Monica Harte</div> <div>Cr Lambros Tapinos, Deputy Mayor</div> <div>Cr Helen Pavlidis</div>
Apologies	<div>Cr Helen Davidson</div> <div>Cr Oscar Yildiz</div> <div>Cr Sue Bolton</div> <div>Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan</div>
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Joseph Tabacco, Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation • Lisa Dempster, Manager Cultural Development • Caden McCarthy, Manager Transport • Sunil Pamu, Senior Project Manager • Kamal Singh, Head of Building Projects • Indivar Dhakal, Manager Capital Works Planning and Delivery • Raquel Birch, Ballerit Mooroop First Peoples Projects Coordinator • Bernadette Hetherington, Manager Community Wellbeing • Bernie McMullen, Program Director Transformation • Robert Raiskums, Manager Information Technology • Jessamy Nicholas, Manager Community Engagement • Jemma Wightman, Chief Financial Officer • Mike Collins, Principal Advisor Social and Affordable Housing • Narelle Jennings, Manager City Strategy and Design
External participants	Nil

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Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Support for Street Parties and Road Closures	-	-
2	Hosken Reserve Masterplan Implementation Update	-	-
3	Ballert Mooroop Project update	-	-
4	Digital and Customer Transformation Project Update	-	-
5	Snap Send Solve Update	-	-
6	Federal inquiry into local government sustainability	-	-
7	Housing Strategy Reserve Guidelines	-	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation

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Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 6 May 2024

Meeting time: 6.00pm

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson Cr Mark Riley Cr Angelica Panopoulos Cr Monica Harte Cr Lambros Tapinos, Deputy Mayor Cr Helen Pavlidis
Apologies	Cr James Conlan Cr Sue Bolton Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan Cr Oscar Yildiz
	Cr Adam Pulford, Mayor
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Phil Priest, Acting Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation
External participants	Nil

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Council meeting agenda	CEO, regarding report 12.1 Chief Executive Officer Employment Matters	6.45 pm

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation

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Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 15 May 2024

Meeting time: 6.00 pm

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed, and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Adam Pulford, Mayor Cr Mark Riley Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan Cr Oscar Yildiz Cr Helen Pavlidis
Apologies	Cr James Conlan Cr Sue Bolton Cr Helen Davidson Cr Lambros Tapinos, Deputy Mayor Cr Angelica Panopoulos Cr Monica Harte
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Phil Priest, Acting Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation • Bernadette Hetherington, Manager Community Wellbeing • Vaughn Allan, Strategic Transport Lead • Caden McCarthy, Manager Transport • Indivar Dhakal, Manager Capital Works Planning and Delivery • Amber Stuart, Unit Manager Arts and Culture • Nalika Peiris, Unit Manager Community Development and Social Policy • Lee Tozzi, Food Systems Officer
External participants	•Bachar Houli, Ali Fahour, & Dom Cato from Bachar Houli Foundation and Susan Carland from Islamic College of Sport

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Proposal for Islamic College of Sport Centre of Excellence - presentation from Bachar Houli Foundation	-	-
2	Engagement outcomes for bike projects: Victoria Street; O'Hea Street; and Glenroy to Coburg	-	-

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Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
3	Electric Scooter Trial in Merri-bek	-	-
4	Roads explainer: reconstruction, resurfacing & routine maintenance	-	-
5	Saxon Street Project - North West Building recommendations on uses	-	-
6	Options to increase arts funding in Merri-bek	-	-
7	Food Systems Strategy	-	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's [website](#).

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Planning Briefing

Date: 20/05/2024

Meeting time: 6:00pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff will be kept. The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees			
Councillors		Cr Adam Pulford, Mayor	
		Cr Lambros Tapinos, Deputy Mayor	
		Cr Angelica Panopoulos	
		Cr James Conlan	
		Cr Helen Pavlidis	
		Cr Mark Riley	
		Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	
		Cr Helen Davidson	
Apologies		Cr Oscar Yildiz	
		Cr Sue Bolton	
Council Staff (name and position)		Phil Priest – Acting Director Place and Environment	
		Mark Hughes – Acting Group Manager City Development	
		Vita Galante – Acting Unit Manager Urban Planning	
		Jack Poulson – Acting Planning Coordinator	
		Esha Rahman – Acting Planning Enforcement Coordinator	
		Mike Collins - Principal Advisor Social and Affordable Housing	
External participants		N/A	
Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Ministerial Intervention – 31 and 22-38 The Avenue, Coburg – PPA/2022/71	Nil	-
2	Ministerial Intervention – 511-517 and 519-537 Sydney Road, Coburg – PPE/2024/116	Nil	-
3	Better Quality Two Dwelling (BQ2D)	Nil	-

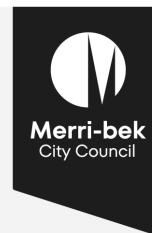
Name and title of Council officer completing record: Mark Hughes – Acting Group Manager City Development

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Merri-bek Civic Centre
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Coburg Victoria 3058
T: (03) 9240 1111

Postal Address
Locked Bag 10
Brunswick Victoria 3056

merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Doc. No. D24/200464
Enq: D24/121535
Tel: [REDACTED]

Ms Lorelle Putland
[REDACTED]

Dear Lorelle,

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM 10 APRIL 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your question submitted to the 10 April 2024 Council meeting, as follows:

I am writing to express my deep concern over the council's recent actions in promoting a pro-Palestinian agenda and displaying the Palestinian flag. As a local government body, the council's primary responsibility is to serve the local community. However, by engaging in global politics, aggressively changing procurement policies and taking sides in international conflicts, the council is overstepping its mandate and disregarding the principles of federalism and Australia's global strategy.

The council's actions not only undermine the efforts of our federal government in maintaining diplomatic relations with other nations but also create unnecessary divisions within our local community. It is crucial that we promote inclusivity and unity within our diverse community and avoid alienating any group based on their ethnicity, religion, or political beliefs.

Furthermore, by focusing on global politics, the council is diverting valuable resources and attention away from pressing local issues that require immediate attention, such as infrastructure, public safety, and community development. The council's primary responsibility is to address these local concerns and provide tangible solutions to improve the quality of life for its residents. In light of these concerns, I urge the council to reconsider its approach and refocus its efforts on addressing local issues within the scope of its mandate. By doing so, the council can rebuild trust with the community, and ensure that it serves the best interests of all residents.

- **How is the "local council" going to address these concerns?**

Many Merri-bek residents have family or friends directly affected by the humanitarian disaster in Gaza. Council values and respects the human rights of every member of our community.

Merri-bek is one of several metropolitan councils that have taken a position in relation to the war in Gaza.

Council provides more than 150 services to the community - from maintaining roads, collecting waste, maternal health services, sporting facilities to support for businesses to grow and flourish. In serving our community, Council has a responsibility to deliver a wide range of valued core services as well as advocating for social justice issues.

I trust this answers your question, however if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact Jessamy Nicholas on 03 9240 [REDACTED] or jnicholas@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely



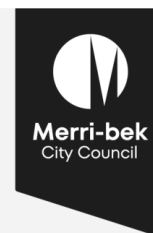
Eamonn Fennessy
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

02 / 05 / 2024

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XRef: D24/189047
Doc. No. D24/219841
Enq: Sandra Troise
Tel: 9240 1111

Mr Luke Marinelli

Dear Luke

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM MAY 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

Thank you for your question and suggestion submitted to the 8 May Council meeting regarding registration discounts being credited for pet registration at any time pets are desexed.

Question

Pet registration costs should be made pro-rata with desexing discounts. The point of a discounted desexing cost for registration is to reduce the risks of feral animals and aggression. The current policy means that animals may remain desexed for the entirety of the registration period given there is no incentive to desex them in that time.

Would the Council agree that this defies the point of the discount, and consider amending this policy to account for a prorata desexing discount?

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation. The answer to your question is set out below.

Response

Council is aware of the many benefits of desexing and we are committed to educating the community about responsible pet ownership, including the benefits of desexing, registration and microchipping. We support our community to desex cats through our free and subsidised cat desexing program which includes desexing, vaccination, microchipping and first year free registration. We also provide free microchipping of dogs at some Council events and upon request by vulnerable community members.

We currently offer a partial refund for pets that are desexed in the first two months of the animal registration year i.e. from 10 April to 10 June. We appreciate your suggestion and can see how this would encourage more residents to desex their pets. We commit to taking your suggestion on board and will consider amending our current position on pro-rata desexing discounts.

I trust this answers your question, however, if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me or Sandra Troise, Manager Amenity and Compliance on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely

Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE
27 / 05 / 2024

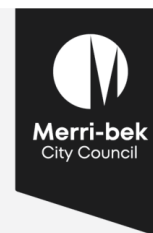
Merri-bek Language Link

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Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	National Relay Service: 13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au		
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XRef: D24/212563
Doc. No. D24/220789
Enq: Indivar Dhakal
Tel: 9240 1111

Ms Rachel Matton

Dear Ms Matton

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM 8 MAY 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

Thank you for your questions submitted to the 8 May Council meeting, documented below.

Question 1

On May 6th, after waiting 28 days for a response from council, I received the following reply to a question centred around asbestos management at Hosken Reserve: "Council and its contractors take our obligations with respect to the safety of workers and the community very seriously. We have no appetite for ignoring potential safety risks, this applies to workers in close proximity to any discovery of asbestos as much as it does to the community near the precinct. Council developed an Asbestos Management Plan for the whole site and the main contractor, Joslyn Group, also prepared an Asbestos Management Plan for its work site. This includes a requirement to have a qualified hygienist on site every time excavation was undertaken and air monitoring in place". In the AGS Environmental Services asbestos management plan prepared for Joslyn Group, in section 6.3 - Workers Not Involved with ACM Removal Works, it states "as a minimum, all personnel on-site not involved in the ACM removal shall... (point 3) keep doors to offices, lunch room and the first aid rooms closed at all times to minimise the potential influx of potential asbestos fibres to these areas". Why wasn't this same precautionary advice provided by council to all residents whose properties back onto Hosken Reserve (ie Shorts Rd) or whose properties faced Hosken Reserve (ie Pallet St), to ensure they could comply with safety advice, ie close all doors and windows to minimise influx of potential asbestos fibres into their homes?

Question 2

Council documents show no asbestos testing occurred on Hosken Reserve, pre-excavation commencement. Asbestos was first found in November 2023, when works were well underway. Dust and debris events repeatedly affected adjacent and nearby residents from 2023, into early 2024. Will council create an official register where residents who believe they may have been exposed to asbestos through inadequate practices (including lack of dust suppression) from redevelopment activity, can log their names and details for future reference?

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Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation.

Response to Question 1

I apologise that my response to your previous question on notice did not reach you on the day it was finalised – this was due to an administrative error on our part, meaning the letter was released with the Council agenda before you received it. Thank you for bringing to our attention that you had not received a response so that we could rectify this.

You asked a question relating to section 6.4 of the Joslyn Group Asbestos Management Plan. AGS Environmental Services, the consultants who prepared the Asbestos Management Plan, has confirmed that section 6.3 is to be read in conjunction with section 6.4.

Section 6.4 states: "The LAR (Licensed Asbestos Removalist) will demarcate the work area by erecting appropriate barriers and signage, where practicable at least 10 metres from the location of removal activities."

This demarcation applies for the work area for which section 6.3 and 6.4 apply. The requirements do not apply to the offices or lunchrooms or first aid rooms which are outside the work area demarcated by LAR or Hygienist. Similarly, they do not need to apply to other buildings that may be occupied.

The houses are 50 m away on Pallett St side and more than 100 m on the north side of the reserve. As such, the requirements to close the doors and windows do not apply.

Response to Question 2

Whilst it is not necessary to create a specific register, any questions, concerns, or complaints received by Council are promptly and appropriately documented in our record management system.

I trust this answers your questions, however, if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me or Indivar Dhakal, Manager Capital Works Planning & Delivery on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely



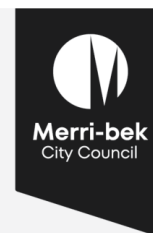
Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

27 / 05 / 2024

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Doc. No. D24/219748
Enq: Indivar Dhakal
Tel: 9240 1111

Ms Kiarne Treacy

Dear Kiarne

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM 8 MAY 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your questions submitted to the 8 May Council meeting, as follows:

Greenbank Crescent, Pascoe Vale South

- Question 1**

Has the Mayor and/or the CEO of Merri-Bek City Council physically attended the landslide site at Greenbank Cres in the past 4 months?

- Question 2**

Can you please provide clarity on why the Merri-Bek City Council has refused to conduct any sort of maintenance on the affected landslide area in the 12 months following the incident on April 15th 2023.

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation. The answers to your questions are set out below.

Response to Question 1

In response to your first question, I can advise that under Council's Governance Rules questions directed at an individual Councillor or member of Council staff cannot be accepted. However, I do wish to advise that Council officers, who have various roles and responsibilities, frequently visit the area where the embankment has collapsed. Additionally, I have been informed that Council's Manager of Capital Works Planning and Delivery, Unit Manager of Engineering Services, and Construction Engineer met with you on-site to provide an update on progress and tentative timelines moving forward.

Merri-bek Language Link

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Response to Question 2

Council has regularly monitored the site to make sure that there is no further erosion of the embankment. After the embankment collapsed, Council undertook minor works to reduce the steepness of the slope, so that no further erosion occurs.

Council has undertaken ongoing structural monitoring and inspections to assess the safety of the retaining wall and guard against further collapse. Council has also cleaned up rubbish caught up within the temporary fencing and retaining wall.

In addition, Officers are looking at alternate temporary fencing that would ease traffic and reduce impact on the amenity of the street until rehabilitation works are undertaken.

I trust this answers your questions, however, if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact myself or Indivar Dhakal, Manager Capital Works Planning and Delivery on 9240 1111.

Yours sincerely



Anita Curnow
DIRECTOR CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

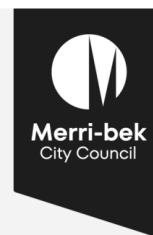
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Doc. No D24/260264
Enq: Troy Delia
Tel: [REDACTED]



Dino Albano
[REDACTED]

Dear Dino

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM MAY 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your questions submitted to the May Council meeting, as follows:

Question 1

The agenda contains a request for approval for a Councillor to attend a conference that costs \$144. The Councillor Expenses Policy says that approval by resolution of council is only required for conferences that cost \$1,500 or more. Why is this \$144 conference cost in the Governance Report if it doesn't need to be?

Answer question 1

The request to approve Cr Riley's attendance at the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances conference was included in the Governance Report as a result of human error, when the request was inadvertently treated as a ticketed community event.

Question 2

When Councillors attend an interstate conference, such as the ALGA National General Assembly, is the total cost of the conference including registration/hotel accommodation/travel/food, counted towards the \$10,000 allocation per Councillor for professional development, training and conferences? How many Councillors have exceeded the \$10,000 allocation during this term of the Council?

Answer question 2

When Councillors attend interstate conferences like the ALGA National General Assembly, the total cost of the conference package is counted towards the \$10,000 allocation per Councillor. At the current time, no Councillor has exceeded the \$10,000 allocation during this term of the Council.

I trust this answers your questions, however if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact myself or Troy Delia, Unit Manager Governance on [REDACTED] or by email at: tdelia@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Sue Vujcevic

DIRECTOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

4 June 2024

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 STANDARDS FOR ENCLOSED DOG PARKS

Cr Sue Bolton

Motion

That Council:

1. Conducts a review of the standards for enclosed off-lead dog parks with consideration given to:
 - eliminating gaps in fences, underneath fences and underneath gates that allow tiny dogs to escape
 - provision of water in both the large dog and small dog sections of the dog park
 - provision of shade in dog parks, especially in the area where people gather to watch their dogs
 - latches on gates to be accessible on both sides of the gate for people in wheelchairs
2. Receives a report on the outcome of the review.

1. Background

Cr Bolton's background:

Enclosed dog parks are very popular and well used by the community. Merri-bek's two new enclosed off-lead dog parks - Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve Dog Park in Glenroy and Moomba Park Dog Park in Fawkner - are already well-used. However, there are some improvements that could be made for the design of future dog parks and remedy issues with existing dog parks.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

Council recently opened two new enclosed dog parks at Moomba Park (Fawkner) and Kingsford Smith-Ulm Reserve (Glenroy). These are in addition to existing enclosed dog parks in Gilpin Park (Brunswick), Richards Reserve (Coburg North) and under the Upfield train line between Coburg and Moreland railway stations.

Council Officers have received feedback from the community regarding the existing and new facilities, including suggestions for minor changes at our existing dog parks (such as locks and latches on gates, the need for shade, water facilities and safety concerns), which are in the process of being addressed by Council staff. There are no universal standards for the design and development of enclosed dog parks, however Council Officers continue to refine preferred elements with each new enclosed dog park built.

Any minor design changes required to existing dog parks to address issues will be completed as part of Council's business as usual to managing open space infrastructure.

At the 10 April 2024 Council meeting, Councillors unanimously adopted the new Merri-bek Open Space Strategy and accompanying Action Plan. The new Strategy and Action Plan continue Council's efforts to provide engaging, fun and safe facilities for dogs in open space, including enclosed dog parks.

The Open Space Strategy Action Plan includes the following specific actions which align with the intent of this Notice of Motion:

- *Action 1.3, an ongoing action which ensures Council will continue to invest in, upgrade and enhance existing open spaces across Merri-bek, including dog parks.*
- *Action 4.14, to commence in the coming FY 24/25, which will commence a municipal-wide review of on and off-leash dog areas, including seeking community consultation about the need for changes. Any changes proposed to existing conditions will be presented to Councillors for feedback.*
- *Action 4.15, to commence in FY 25/26, which will investigate the need and opportunity for open space infrastructure for dogs, including dog parks, agility equipment and dog beaches and consider as part of future Capital Works budget decision making process.*

Council Officers will continue to respond to feedback from our community about improvements to our existing dog parks, including at our recently constructed dog parks at Moomba Park and Kingsford Smith-Ulm Reserve. This feedback and learnings for Council Officers will be considered as part of the design of future dog related infrastructure including the new enclosed dog park at Elms Court, Gowanbrae, which is currently being designed by Officers. Community consultation on this design is expected to occur in mid to late 2024.

As part of the development of the new enclosed dog park, officers will review key design elements related to fencing, provision of water, provision of shade and accessibility, and this will be included in a report to Council provided as part of addressing Open Space Strategy Actions 4.14 or 4.15. A standard set of Technical Notes will be created for gates and fences for dog parks as a result of this work.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

There are no additional financial implications arising from this Notice of Motion.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

Funds for constructing new enclosed dog parks will be subject to normal future budget processes and Officer time required to complete the Open Space Strategy Action items. Funds and Officer time needed to address the contents of this Notice of Motion, can be accommodated within the existing resourcing of the Open Space Design and Development Unit.

8.2 IMPROVING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR OLDER, NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING RESIDENTS

Cr Helen Pavlidis

Motion

That Council:

1. Commences a review of its Community Engagement Policy (2023) with a focus on improving engagement for older, non-English speaking residents to maximise opportunities for them to have their say on decisions that affect their lives.
2. Receives a Council report at the 10 July Council meeting on the outcomes of the review of its Community Engagement Policy.

1. Background

Cr Pavlidis' background:

Merri-bek City Council's Community Engagement Policy was adopted in 2020 and revised in 2023. It supports Council's integrated planning and reporting framework required under the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and meets Council's legislative requirements for community engagement which is a key focus for local government.

Despite significant improvements in the quality of engagement and the range of community members who are reached, there continue to be opportunities for Council to do better when engaging older, non-English speaking residents in key decisions that impact their lives. There is a need to better communicate the opportunities for engagement to older, non-English speaking people and to also provide aged and culturally specific opportunities for them to have their say in ways that are inclusive and maximise their voice and input.

The motion calls for Council to commence a review of the current Community Engagement Policy to see how Council could improve its communication and community engagement with older, non-English speaking residents from diverse backgrounds in the many community engagements that it undertakes.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

Council's Community Engagement Policy was revised in 2023.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

Preparation of a report can be achieved within existing budgets.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

In discussion with Councillor Pavlidis it is understood this motion seeks to strengthen specific aspects of the policy. This can be undertaken within existing resources and is achievable by July.

8.3 CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORTING

Cr Helen Pavlidis

Motion

That Council receives a quarterly report on key customer service measures (including but not limited to CRS's) to commence from 1 July 2024. For the purpose of context, Customer Requests (CRS's) will include:

- Category/type
- Date received
- Date completed (inside/outside SLA)
- In progress (overdue/not overdue)

1. Background

Cr Pavlidis' background:

Merri-bek City Council delivers a broad range of important services. While performance and also community sentiment are reported through the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework annually, and through the Annual Report, Council does not report specifically on its customer service commitment of key performance areas for customer experience. This motion calls for a quarterly report on Council's customer service.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

Council's Customer Service Commitment, Promise and Contact timeframes can be found on the Merri-bek City Council website. These outline and guide Council's approach and commitment to customer service.

It should be noted that reports can be generated in a thematic way however reports on individual customer service requests cannot be reported on due to the large volume of customer service requests Council receives each quarter.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

Preparation of a report can be achieved within existing budgets.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

Preparation of a report can be undertaken within existing resources.

8.4 SPEED SURVEYS AND ACCESSIBLE TRAM STOPS FOR NICHOLSON STREET, COBURG

Cr James Conlan

Motion

That Council:

1. Conducts a speed survey along Nicholson Street between Moreland Road and Bell Street, at the same location as the 2022 speed surveys, both before and after the implementation of the new infrastructure, to measure the effectiveness of the infrastructure on motorist compliance.
2. Writes to the Minister for Public and Active Transport, Gabrielle Williams and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Melissa Horne, seeking an update on when accessible tram stops will be delivered for Nicholson Street, Coburg.

1. Background

Cr Conlan's background:

As part of the 2024/25 state budget, the Victorian State Government announced that it would spend \$1.27 million on a range of measures to reduce road danger between Bell Street, Coburg and Albion Street, Brunswick on Nicholson and Holmes Streets. The measures include electronic variable speed limit signage, electronic travel speed warning signs, dragon teeth road markings and yellow surface treatment to highlight pedestrian crossings.

This funding announcement is the product of over eight years of sustained community campaigning by locals who regularly witness crashes on this dangerous stretch of road. While the announcement is welcome, more needs to be done to ensure motorist compliance with speed limits.

Two years ago when the speed limit on Nicholson Street was reduced from 60km/h to 50km/h, Council conducted 2 speed surveys to measure motorist compliance with the new speed limit. The speed surveys found that between March and October 2022, the 85th percentile speed dropped only 1.5km/h to 58km/h despite the speed limit dropping from 60km/h to 50km/h at that location.

To measure the effectiveness of the new road safety infrastructure, Council will need to conduct speed surveys before and after its implementation. Based on the previous speed survey data gathered by Council, the new measures are unlikely to meaningfully reduce motorists driving in excess of the signed speed limits unless the speed limits are enforced through heavy policing or road safety cameras.

To remove the need for a policing response, the State Government should introduce physical changes to the street to encourage motorists to slow down, including accessible tram stops.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments

At the Council meeting on 8 May 2024, a question was asked with respect to Road Safety on Nicholson Street, Coburg, as follows:

"Following the State Government's announcement of \$1.27 million for road safety infrastructure along Nicholson and Holmes Streets between Bell and Albion Street, will Council conduct a speed survey along Nicholson Street after the infrastructure is delivered to measure the impact of the changes?"

The Director City Infrastructure responded that Council would organise speed surveys after infrastructure installation, noting that it takes time for traffic patterns to settle after changes are introduced.

As such, Cr Conlan's item 1 has essentially been committed to already. The need for any further 'before' surveys will be considered – data has previously been collected at this location and additional surveys may not be justified.

Cr Conlan's item 2 around state government advocacy on accessible tram stops on Nicholson Street is addressed as part of the Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan for 2024/25, which includes the following action:

By June 2025, we will have worked with our community and disability advocates to campaign for accessible tram stops and low floor trams on all tram routes within Merri-bek.

Extracts from the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy and Action Plan are provided below, relating to Cr Conlan's motions and highlighting their consistency with Council's adopted strategy.

Moving Around Merri-bek Transport Strategy and Action Plan (2024)

Moving Around Merri-bek is a long-term strategic document that guides the way Council manages and makes changes to Merri-bek's transport system. The strategy sets out 6 key values that guide transport systems in Merri-bek. They are:

- Safe
- Accessible
- Healthy
- Liveable
- Sustainable
- Inclusive

Relevant to Cr Conlan's motion are the following extracts from the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy and Action Plan:

Safe

Key objective 2:

Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roads.

Accessible

Key objective 3:

Advocate to the State Government to create a fully accessible public transport system, including accessible tram stops and tram vehicles.

Pedestrian Network: Safe and convenient crossings

A lack of safe and convenient crossings decreases safety on our streets. It also reduces peoples' ability to undertake transport trips using the pedestrian network, particularly for children, the elderly, and people with disability.

We will look to decrease the wait time for pedestrians at signalised crossings, increase the green time for pedestrians, provide new crossings where needed, and advocate for missing crossing legs to be installed across arterial roads. Increasing the number of safe crossing points, and improving existing crossings (including at roundabouts), will improve safety and our communities' ability to move around Merri-bek.

Cycling Network: Safer intersections and crossing points

We will seek outcomes for improving cycling safety at intersections requires approval from the State Government, particularly where the cycle network intersects with the arterial road network. Items that improve cycling safety include increased protection, advance green bike lanterns, install new crossing points across arterial roads, and installing missing crossing legs to increase cycling access.

Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan 2024/25

By June 2025, we will have begun researching speed-related crashes, speed zoning inconsistencies and speed behaviour on arterial and subarterial roads in Merri-bek and identified priority roads for advocacy for further appropriate speed limit reductions and other safety improvements.

By June 2025, we will have reported to Council the first annual road safety report (for the 2023 calendar year) identifying trends in crash numbers and types and priority sites for future treatments.

By June 2025, we will have worked with our community and disability advocates to campaign for accessible tram stops and low floor trams on all tram routes within Merri-bek.

Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan 2025 to 2029

For consideration in 2025 to 2029 Action Plan:

Create an updated Public Transport Advocacy document that includes Council advocacy priorities for completion during the 2025-2029 timeframe. This will include accessible tram stops and low-floor trams on all tram routes within Merri-bek and across Metro Melbourne.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

Council's operating budget makes provision for a level of speed surveys and the committed surveys on Nicholson Street will be undertaken at the appropriate time using this funding. Depending on the timing of the works, it is probable that the collection of 'after' speed data will be timed for 2025/26.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

Officers will undertake this work from existing staffing resources, noting that these staff are also responding to large numbers of customer requests.

8.5 INVESTIGATE REDUCING COUNCIL RATES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES BY CHARGING HIGHER RATES FOR INVESTMENTS

Cr James Conlan

Motion

That Council:

1. Investigates if a differential rate for property investors who have more than one residential property in Merri-bek is possible and could see a reduction in the rates paid by residential homeowner occupiers and local businesses, and provides a report back to Council by August/September 2024.

1. Background

Cr Conlan's background:

Cost-of-living crisis

We are in a housing and cost of living crisis. Interest rates, groceries, energy bills and rents are all rising at record levels. Skyrocketing interest rates are putting home owners and families under severe financial pressure, with mortgage defaults on the rise.

Anglicare Australia's recent Rental Affordability Snapshot recorded the lowest ever availability of affordable rentals across the country, with average rents rising by over \$200 since the pandemic.

A recent business survey found that small and medium-sized local businesses were also struggling, as customers reduced spending due to cost-of-living pressures.

The severity of the cost-of-living crisis means that an injury, unexpected bill, or even a council rates notice can be the last straw for a struggling renter or family that tips them over the edge into financial stress or even homelessness. Small and medium-sized businesses are also closing up shop as they struggle to keep up with rising costs.

The average rates cost for a typical home in Merri-bek is \$1,800 per year, and around \$2,700 for non-residential properties like shops, warehouses and industrial sites.

Yet, property investors continue to outbid first home buyers thanks to federal tax incentives like negative gearing and capital gains discounts can make property investment a lucrative wealth creation scheme – all at the expense of renters and first home buyers.

Local residents and small businesses in Merri-bek desperately need some financial help.

What Merri-bek Council could investigate

Merri-bek's revenue and rating plan, adopted 24 June 2021 establishes the revenue raising framework within which Council works.

Right now, there's an opportunity for Merri-bek Council to show leadership by investigating if cost-of-living relief to local residents and businesses is possible through a new, differential rate.

This NOM seeks that Council investigate if it is possible to apply a differential rate for residential property investors who have more than one property in Merri-bek.

A land tax change introduced by the Victorian State Government in 2023, known as the COVID Debt Levy has increased land tax charges to property investors on each investment property that is not their principal place of residence. The average land tax for a residential property valued at \$1 million is around \$1,600 under this new tax.

Anecdotally, many investors are selling up in response to the government's COVID Debt Levy because the cost of the tax has reduced the attractiveness of owning investment properties. These properties sold by investors are increasingly available to first home buyers. An investigation if a differential rate is possible to apply to residential property investors, to charge a higher rate is sought to see if it is possible to make more homes available to first home buyers.

Importantly, there have been no substantiated reports by housing advocates that the COVID Debt Levy has contributed to increased rents.

This is because investors charge the maximum rent that the market will allow. Investors and their agents overwhelmingly set rent for their properties by looking at how much similar properties are successfully being rented for – not by tallying up their expenses and trying to pass them on to renters. As noted by Treasurer Tim Pallas with respect to the COVID Debt Levy, 'The COVID Debt Levy is targeted at those with the greatest ability to pay following the pandemic... We think that it's fair that Victorians with multiple properties make a modest contribution.'

The legal and regulatory context

The legislative framework set out in the *Local Government Act 1989* determines councils' ability to develop a rating system.

The Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating (2013) provide guidance for councils on setting differential rates which states that residential, commercial, and industrial land are considered to be 'appropriate' land categories for differential rates.

The Local government better practice guide: revenue and rating strategy (2014) must also be considered by councils when setting differential rates. It says that councils must consider a range of 'good practice taxation' principles, including horizontal and vertical equity, economic and administrative efficiency, benefit, capacity to pay and simplicity.

In addition to the above, councils are restricted from increasing rates above a certain percentage each year, known as 'rate capping'.

This NOM seeks that Council investigate if a differential rating is possible based on:

- A differential rate of 4 times the lowest rate for non-primary place of residence (residential investment properties); and
- The lowest differential rate to be applied to all other rate types (primary place of residence/owner-occupied, vacant land, commercial and industrial).

Rationale

Anyone owning two or more properties may in the vast majority of cases have a greater capacity to pay. Unlike owner-occupiers and renters, investors can sell at least one residential property without making themselves homeless. Ratepayers unable to keep up with expenses associated with maintaining an investment property may sell their investment properties. Selling provides them with the funds they need to meet their obligations or to pay off their mortgage, with profit often left over.

Higher fixed expenses for property investors, like increased rates, tend to place downward pressure on house prices, as shown by the ACT's land tax reform which increased land taxes on investors.

This is because attaching a higher ongoing liability to an investment property means that it is less attractive as an asset to another investor, who in turn will be willing to pay less for it. Conversely, the lower ongoing liability faced by a prospective buyer who will be an owner-occupier (who would likely face lower rates) means that properties being sold are more likely to go to owner-occupiers.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

It is very unlikely that it is feasible to apply a differential rate for property investors who have more than one residential property in Merri-bek, given the legislative framework and guidelines that apply to local government, as detailed below.

The State Government implemented a temporary land tax surcharge from the 2024 land tax year, until 30 June 2033 as a part of the COVID debt repayment plan. These temporary changes changed the tax thresholds for land tax, reducing the tax-free threshold from \$300,000 to \$50,000. Local governments are required to operate within the constraints of the *Local Government Act 1989 and 2020*. Whilst the state government were able to make this change, raising differential rates on investment properties may not be allowed under legislation.

The *Local Government Act 1989* allows Council to declare general rates in respect to all rateable land. Council may declare general rates by the application of a uniform rate or differential rates.

Council currently levies rates on all rateable land through the declaration and application of a uniform rate. This means that if a property is worth \$500,000, they would be charged the same rates, regardless of whether it is commercial, industrial or residential.

A Council may raise general rates by the application of a differential rate, if it uses the capital improved value to assess and levy rates and if it considers that the differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions. Whilst the introduction of a differential rate is within Council's powers under the *Local Government Act 1989*, the difficulties lie in the definition of the rate and the identification of the land to be included in the relevant category. If a differential rate were to be introduced, it would need to be in accordance with the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating (2013) and Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*:

161 Differential rates

- (1) A Council may raise any general rates by the application of a differential rate if it uses the capital improved value system of valuing land.
- (2) If a Council declares a differential rate for any land, the Council must—
 - (a) specify the objectives of the differential rate which must include the following—
 - (i) a definition of the types or classes of land which are subject to the rate and a statement of the reasons for the use and level of that rate in relation to those types or classes of land;
 - (ii) an identification of the types or classes of land which are subject to the rate in respect of the uses, geographic location (other than location on the basis of whether or not the land is within a specific ward in the Council's municipal district) and planning scheme zoning of the land and the types of buildings situated on it and any other criteria relevant to the rate;
 - (iii) if there has been a change in the valuation system, any provision for relief from a rate for certain land to ease the transition for that land; and

- (b) specify the characteristics of the land which are the criteria for declaring the differential rate.
- (2A) A Council must have regard to any Ministerial guidelines made under subsection (2B) before declaring a differential rate for any land.
- (2B) The Minister may, by notice published in the Government Gazette, make guidelines for or with respect to—
 - (a) the objectives of differential rating;
 - (b) suitable uses of differential rating powers;
 - (c) the types or classes of land that are appropriate for differential rating.
- (3) A Council which declares a differential rate must ensure that copies of the following information are available on its Internet website and for public inspection at the Council office—
- (4) On the recommendation of the Minister, the Governor in Council may by Order in Council prohibit any Council from making a declaration of a differential rate in respect of a type or class of land, if the Minister considers that the declaration would be inconsistent with any guidelines made under subsection (2B).
- (5) The highest differential rate in a municipal district must be no more than 4 times the lowest differential rate in the municipal district.

Merri-bek's revenue and rating plan, adopted 24 June 2021 establishes the revenue raising framework within which Council proposed to work. The plan sets out decisions that Council has made in relation to rating options available to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates amongst Council's ratepayers. The adopted plan states that Merri-bek City Council applies uniform rating (a uniform rate in the dollar) across all rateable properties. Uniform rating ensures all ratepayer groups are treated equally, as differential rating may be seen as unfair and excessive towards certain ratepayer groups.

In accordance with section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989* Council must formally declare the rates levies and annual service charges by 30 June for the following financial year. This forms part of the budget process under section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020* the total amount that Council intends to be raised by rates and charges must be contained within the budget.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

The cost of preparing initial advice investigating if differential rates on residential investment properties is possible, is estimated to cost less than \$5,000.

If the initial advice comes back that differential rating on residential investment properties can be done under legislation, the report will outline any potential risks and unintended consequences of using residential investment properties as a differential rate type. For example, an unintended consequence would be that an elderly resident owns a house in Merri-bek and rents this property out (non-primary place of residence) and resides with either another family member or in a retirement village. In this situation, the differential rate of 4 times would be applied to the resident's property.

As described in the Policy Context, officers consider it very unlikely that it is feasible to apply a differential rate for property investors who have more than one residential property in Merri-bek, given the legislative framework and guidelines that apply to local government.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

Preparing a report on whether a differential rate for residential property investors is possible under legislation and guidelines can be done within existing resources.

An investigation or first step is required, which may or may not generate further work being required, which would be addressed in the August/September report to Council.

8.6 UNION SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE/GRANTHAM STREET

Cr Lambros Tapinos

Motion

That Council:

1. Calls for a report outlining the options, cost and timing of a community engagement program that develops a community vision for the Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Centre in Brunswick West. The report should consider how the following elements could be included in the community engagement:
 - a) Economic output, job creation, offering of shops and other services in the neighbourhood centre.
 - b) Streetscape renewal, beautification, including public seats, streetlights, greening, and public realm works.
 - c) New public space as identified in the Open Space Strategy and the Merri-bek Planning Scheme at the Union Square Shopping Centre
 - d) Advocacy related to traffic, trams, cycling and pedestrian movements, including lower speed limits, accessible tram stops, and possible relocated traffic lights to the intersection of Grantham and Union Street.
 - e) The report should also provide advice on the timing and implications of the review of the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy, Design and Development Overlay, as well as consider development of a Place Framework for the Neighbourhood Centre and advice on how a community vision could inform these strategies.
2. Writes to the landowners of the Union Square Shopping Centre about the cleanliness and amenity at the shopping centre, offering to assist them with developing a plan to make the centre more safe and visually appealing, and alerting them to the future report about the community engagement program.

1. Background

Cr Tapinos' background:

Union Square and Grantham Street comprise an important neighbourhood activity centre easily accessible by tram and nearby bus networks. The neighbourhood centre is currently not living up to its full potential and the expectations of the local community. Council has an opportunity to lead a community discussion and vision about the potential of the centre considering current and future shopping needs, public realm improvements, open space, and transport advocacy.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

The Grantham/Union Street Neighbourhood Activity Centre is one of 12 Neighbourhood Activity Centres identified in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme. The planning scheme aspires for these Neighbourhood Centres to:

Accommodate an increase in density and scale of built form appropriate to their role in the Activity Centre Hierarchy but at a lesser intensity and scale to the larger centres of Coburg, Brunswick and Glenroy.

Provide a mix of uses to serve the daily and weekly shopping and service needs of the local community.

Each Neighbourhood Activity Centre has a Design and Development Overlay which guides built form outcomes. The focus area for change for the Grantham/Union Street Neighbourhood Activity Centre is the Commercial, Mixed Use and Residential Growth Zone land, where buildings up to 4 storeys are envisaged. A new public space is identified as part of any redevelopment of the Union Square Shopping Centre.

The 2022 Planning Scheme Review was endorsed by Council in October 2022 and identified the following pieces of strategic work relevant to the Neighbourhood Activity Centres:

No.	Recommendation	Timeframe
6B	Review DDO24 to understand how it is operating and whether additional policy is needed to manage townhouse type development occurring in our Neighbourhood Centres.	2023-2025
1CR	Explore how to support key worker housing and local job growth within a 20 minute neighbourhood concept. Identify gaps in service infrastructure – parks, transport, community infrastructure to inform future community infrastructure provision and advocacy efforts.	2023-2026

Council's current Shopping Strip Renewal Policy outlines how Council will deliver local economic development and urban design improvements for the renewal of neighbourhood shopping strips across the City.

The policy is intended to guide Council's efforts to bring about physical enhancements and improved business performance and to activate the public spaces within its nominated neighbourhood shopping strips in a manner which is equitable and sustainable over the long term. This policy is due for review in 2025.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

The cost associated with preparing a report and writing to landowners can be met within the Place and Environment Directorate budget.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

The resources required to prepare a report and write to landowners can be met within the Place and Environment Directorate budget.

8.7 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN THE BRUNSWICK SOUTHWEST

Cr Lambros Tapinos

Motion

That Council calls for a report into traffic management and possible interventions that improve the transport network in the southwest of Brunswick including consideration of the following:

1. The need to improve safety, visibility and pedestrian access at the Pearson Street / Dawson Street intersection and the Dawson Street / South Daly Street intersection.
2. Rat-running in the morning, using Moule Street, Union Street U-turn to Fleming, and the afternoon variation using Fleming, Teague, Ferriman Streets.
3. Investigate speed humps, wombat crossings, and traffic calming measures in the area.

1. Background

Cr Tapinos' background:

The local community is noticing an increase in traffic and rat running through the municipality but particularly in the southwest of Brunswick that has lots of through traffic at peak times. Residents have raised a number of traffic related matters that warrant further investigation as part of the Streets for People approach of Merri-bek City Council.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

Moving Around Merri-bek is a strategic document that guides the way Council manages and makes changes to Merri-bek's transport system. The strategy sets out 6 key values that guide transport systems in Merri-bek:

- Safe
- Accessible
- Healthy
- Liveable
- Sustainable
- Inclusive

To meet the strategic objectives of the strategy and apply these values to the Transport System, Council seeks to ensure that local streets are being managed effectively and protect local amenity by seeking to reduce the amount of non-local traffic on local streets where it is impacting local amenity or the safety of people walking or riding a bike.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

As part of the information gathering process to prepare the report requested in the recommendation, Council officers will conduct traffic counts and speed study information on a series of streets in the southwest Brunswick precinct. This may cost up to \$3,000 if rigorous information gathering is required. Other investigations to inform the report can be undertaken with Council resources to help prepare the proposed report without further investment.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

The recommendation can be delivered within existing council resources and programs.

8.8 MORE BIKE PARKING NEAR LOUISA STREET CARPARK COBURG

Cr James Conlan

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes the inclusion of the much needed, 14 new bike parking spaces, as part of Council's current Louisa Street Car Park Upgrade works, that will support more people travelling to central Coburg by bike.
2. Investigates further opportunities to increase bicycle parking in central Coburg, especially close to the existing supermarkets.
3. Writes to the management of the Louisa Street, Coburg, Woolworths supermarket and Dan Murphy's liquor store, to request the installation of bicycle hoops to service the growing needs of active transport in the area and informs the Mayor and Councillors of the responses received (or any lack of response), by August 2024.

1. Background

Cr Conlan's background:

Central Coburg is a vital activity centre where Council is trying to encourage more active and public transport trips to and from the shops. While the area is reasonably well-serviced by public transport (although frequencies are inadequate), there is a chronic lack of bike parking in and around central Coburg, particularly outside the major supermarkets. Local transport and resident groups have reported having bikes and mobility devices stolen, and difficulties in parking cargo bikes and e-scooters.

While there is some limited bike parking in on the northern entrance to Woolworths, there is a particular lack of bike parking in front of the southern end of Woolworths and in front of Dan Murphy's.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

Moving Around Merri-bek is a long-term strategic document that guides the way Council manages and makes changes to Merri-bek's transport system. The strategy sets out 6 key values that guide transport systems in Merri-bek:

- Safe
- Accessible
- Healthy
- Liveable
- Sustainable
- Inclusive

Moving Around Merri-bek established a new framework for how we make changes to our streets. The framework is called Streets for People and ensures a holistic approach to understanding the function of our streets and wider transport network to ensure benefits to all road users.

The Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan 2024-25 contains the action to:

- *Identify areas of high demand for additional bike parking in partnership with our community and implement facilities.*

Actions for consideration in the next Action Plan for 2025-29 include:

- *Provide bike parking at key public locations catering for all bike shapes and sizes (including family bikes, e-bikes, cargo bikes and bikes with trailers).*

Once the 2024-25 Action Plan is complete, rollout of bike hoops and other bike parking facilities will align with the high demand areas identified.

Zero Carbon Merri-bek

Council's Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework outlines the community vision and strategic directions for the transition to zero carbon in Merri-bek by 2040. In 2019/2020, transport was recorded to contribute 17 per cent of all carbon emissions in the Merri-bek local government area and 13 per cent were from private motor vehicles. The 2040 vision for Sustainable Transport includes:

- *Most people choose to walk or cycle to get around locally because its healthy, free, safe and convenient.*
- *Merri-bek is known for its pedestrian and cycle-friendly streetscapes.*

This overarching Framework informed 5-yearly action plans to drive the transition to zero emissions including:

- Investing in infrastructure to support active travel and public transport.
- Reallocate space used for private vehicle travel and parking to support sustainable transport use and other purposes.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

The recommendation can be implemented with existing base and program budgets.

The 2024/25 Draft Budget includes \$57,000 for the installation of bike facilities across Merri-bek.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

The recommendation can be implemented within existing resources and programs.