

New Otter Street Park

Consultation Analysis and
outcomes



Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

Introduction

Stage 3 Consultation

Following the announcement to develop two new pocket parks in Collingwood through the Victorian Government Local Parks Program, concept plans for both parks were developed based on community feedback and presented to the broader community for review. An overview of the consultation results and how they have informed the final design for the new Otter Street park is detailed below.

Community engagement overview

- In August 2020, we invited the community to share their ideas and shape the development of a proposed new park at Otter Street, Collingwood.
- A Draft Concept Plan was developed based on feedback provided and presented to the community for comment on 21 July 2021.
- Community engagement concluded on 25 August 2021 through Your Say Yarra. An onsite meeting was cancelled due to lockdown restrictions, but the consultation period was extended for a week and the community were invited to contact the project manager directly to share their feedback.

The objectives for consulting on the Draft Concept Plan were as follows:

- To understand the level of community support for the new park, including a full road closure adjacent to the intersection of Smith Street, and associated parking loss.
- Identify any issues/concerns in the design proposal that needed to be addressed.
- Test if we captured the community feedback appropriately and that the design reflected the community's values and priorities.

Approximately 2,000 residents and stakeholders were informed about the online consultation by way of a flyer which outlined ways to obtain more information and provide feedback. Signs were placed on-site informing park users and passers-by about the project and how to get involved. Key stakeholders who opted to keep up to date about the project were contacted directly and made aware of the community engagement activities.

The online survey asked participants to respond to four main questions about the Concept Plan for Otter St Reserve as follows:

Q1. What they thought about the following parts of the concept plan:

- **Grassy lawns;** for relaxing and meeting people
- **Trees;** a mix of Indigenous and exotic deciduous trees to provide a balance of shade and light
- **Landscaped terraces**
- **Bespoke lounge seating;** for sitting, eating lunch, reading a book
- **Timber decking**
- **Bike parking**

Participants were invited to select from the following responses:

Really don't like Don't like Not sure/neutral Like Really like

Q2. Was there anything missing from the design, or something we hadn't considered?

Q3. Did they have any concerns about the proposed changes?

Q4. Did they have any other comments or feedback about the design?

Council received **91** individual responses to the survey, with respondents choosing to answer some questions and leaving others blank.

Engagement findings

Overall feedback

The feedback received was overwhelmingly supportive of the design proposal and many respondents welcomed the change from roadway to parkland. The feedback indicated an understanding of the broader benefits in expanding the park, such as environmental improvements and social connection. A lot of respondents were also able to see past immediate inconveniences caused by the road closure, in favour of the long term benefits the new park would create for the local neighbourhood.

Responses to Q1 What do you think of the draft design?

The following graphs depict the responses to parts of the design participants were asked to respond to.

Figure 1 Grassy lawns

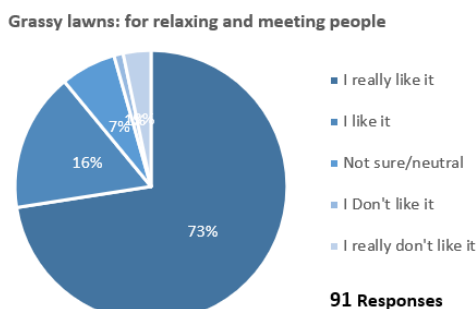


Figure 2 Trees

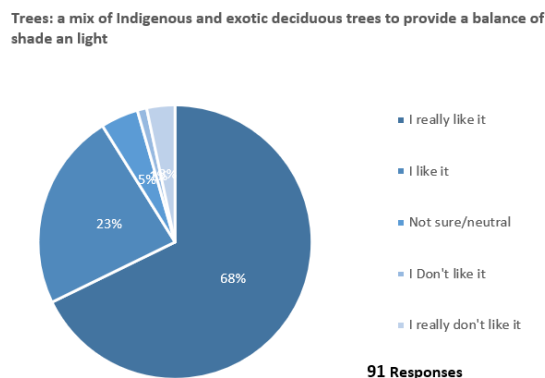


Figure 3 Landscape Terraces

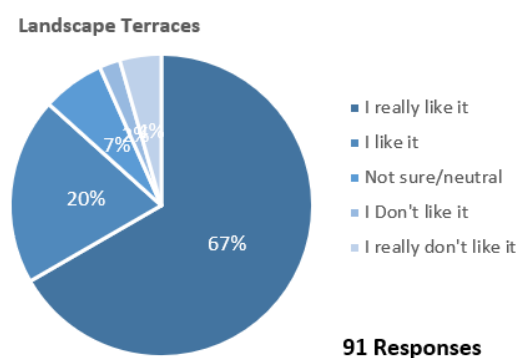


Figure 4 Bespoke lounge seating

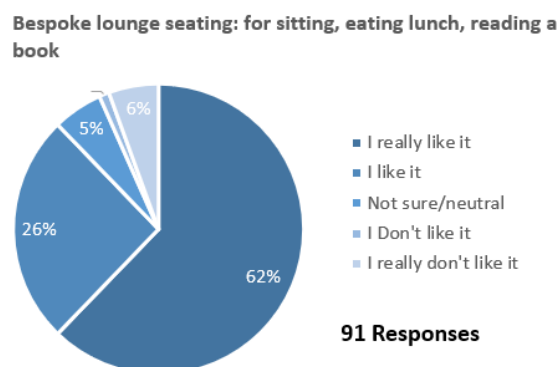
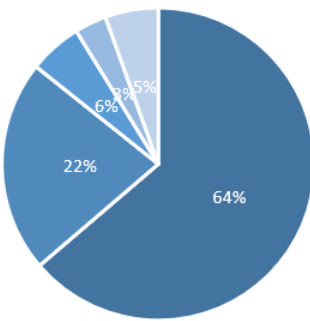


Figure 5 Timber decking

Figure 6 Bike Parking

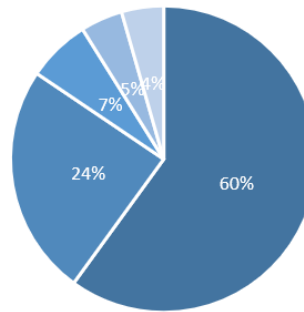
Timber decking



- I really like it
- I like it
- Not sure/neutral
- I Don't like it
- I really don't like it

91 Responses

Bike parking



- I really like it
- I like it
- Not sure/neutral
- I Don't like it
- I really don't like it

91 Respondents

Responses to Q2 – Was there anything missing from the design, or something we hadn't considered?

There were **39 responses** to this question, with some providing multiple comments or requests within the available text field.

The most common themes to emerge were as follows:

What we heard	Our response
Theme 1 Amenity concerns around rubbish/litter, skateboards, graffiti, dog bags, drinking fountains (25 comments)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Provide more bins' was heard numerous times • 'Some concern about the risks of graffiti' • A dispenser that has plastic bags so people can pick their dog's poop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate number and type of bins will be provided and serviced regularly • Drinking fountain to be provided towards Smith Street end of park • All park furniture and materials to be durable and easy to maintain, stainless steel skate deterrents to be provided • Dog bags generally not provided in on-leash parks
Theme 2 Additional planting, greenery (21 comments)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Increase planting into Otter Street' • Plant native trees • Plant indigenous trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional tree planting to be provided, however balanced against need for solar access • Native trees will be incorporated into final design
Theme 3 Safety issues such as lighting, visibility, anti-social behaviour (10 comments)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I hope there is lighting at night, so the park is safe and well lit'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park has been designed in line with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting to be provided
Theme 4 General positive comment (9 comments)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Overall very happy with these plans’ • ‘Looks fantastic!’ • ‘Love it’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted
Theme 5 More grass, less concrete (6 comments)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘More grass would be better’ • ‘More lawn - less paved areas’ • ‘Extend the park/ planting further down Otter St.’ • ‘Still a lot of paved space, is there a way to increase the share of green space?’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have expanded the lawn terraces further east to increase lawn and reduce paving. • Have reduced the number of terraces from four to three to provide larger, more useable lawn areas and eliminate one of the north/south paths, further reducing the amount of paving.

Responses to Q3 – Do you have any concerns about the changes to the space?

There were **35** responses to this question.

What we heard	Our response
Theme 1 No concerns (16)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘No concerns. The park is beautiful’ • ‘No, do it soon!’ • ‘No. This is fantastic and a much-needed addition along the Smith St commercial spine’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted
Theme 2 Concerns about traffic (6)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘I think more consideration needs to be given to implementing measures to slow, restrict and redirect the traffic which will inevitably end up cutting through Bedford Street.’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General support for the project outweighs the negative sentiment around impacts to traffic. • Work is being undertaken with Council’s Traffic Engineering Unit to address identified traffic impacts including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘No traffic diversion info in these plans? What happens to the increase in cars now cutting through narrow Bedford St to Johnston?’ • ‘As a resident in Bedford Street I am really concerned about the impact of traffic on nearby streets if you close off Otter Street’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the intersection of Wellington St and Otter Street will be modified to allow for school buses to enter and exit without damaging the kerb and island. - The outer corner of Napoleon Street is to be re-designed to prevent vehicles from parking. - Create a more pedestrian friendly crossing on the north side of Otter Street at Bedford Street. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Bedford and Perry Streets traffic volume are under the acceptable level of traffic in local street, particularly one so close to a shopping strip. • Perry Street daily traffic volume is expected to increase approximately 500 vehicles per day (vpd) to 700vpd. Over a course of a day that is 1 vehicles every 3 minutes. It is not expected to be noticeable. • For Bedford Street we expect a moderate increase of vehicles during peak hour, noting the current traffic volume is around 360 vehicles per day, the addition is well under the expected traffic capacity of local streets (3,000vpd) • Discussions to be undertaken with Strategic Transport and Parking Services to determine an alternative location for the affected car shared location. • The pathways through the park will be for pedestrians only. If cyclists want to use this street to access Smith Street, then they will have to dismount at the park.
--	---

Theme 3
More grass and greenery (3)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘More native and less introduced species would be preferable’ • ‘More grass area’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have expanded the lawn terraces further east to increase lawn and reduce paving. • Will be including native trees in the final design.
--	---

Responses to Q4 – Do you have any other comments or feedback about the design?

There were **25** responses to this question.

What we heard	Our response
Theme 1 General positive comment (8 comments)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘So good for the local community!’ • ‘Love how it will create a reprieve on busy Smith Street :)’ • ‘OMG this is amazing! We need more and thank you!’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted
Theme 2 Concerns about traffic (2)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What mitigations are going to be put in place to restrict traffic flow and to make that cross overs pedestrian friendly in Otter Street’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer traffic response above for Question 3 • Create a more pedestrian friendly crossing on the north side of Otter Street at Bedford Street.

Q5. What is your connection to the area?

Most survey participants lived in Collingwood (69.2%), followed closely by those that lived in Fitzroy (13%).

Q6. Which of these best describe your connection to Yarra?

Most survey participants lived in Yarra (90%) and 48% owned a property in Yarra. 40% of respondents worked in Yarra, 14% visited Yarra and 14% owned a business in Yarra.

Next steps

What are we doing with your ideas?

Participants were thanked for taking the time to share their ideas and feedback on the draft concept plan and given an undertaking that their responses would be considered and the design adjusted where appropriate. The final concept plan would then be presented back on Your Say Yarra.

The main changes from the draft concept plan to the final concept plan are:

- Expansion of the park across the Right of Way on the northern side of Otter Street to create more lawn and reduce the amount of paving.
- A reduction of the number of terraces from four to three to provide larger, more useable lawn areas and eliminate one of the north/south paths, further reducing the amount of paving.
- Inclusion of more tree planting and review of the species selection.

- Traffic improvement works at the intersection Otter and Bedford Streets to create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Adjustments to the intersection of Otter and Wellington Streets to improve access into and out of Otter Street for buses.

What are the next steps?

Participants were advised:

1. A road discontinuance process would commence where public notice would be given, inviting submissions in respect to the proposal. Council will hear all submissions and decide whether to endorse the discontinuance.
2. If the road discontinuance is approved, construction on the new park can begin.
3. It is anticipated construction will take around 4-6 months depending on variables on site.