



Global Research
Turning **Information** Into **Insight**

Southbank Promenade Upgrade

ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

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Prepared by Global Research Ltd

For



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Executive summary

About the engagement

The City of Melbourne has plans to revitalise a 300 metre section of Southbank Promenade between Princes Bridge and Evan Walker Bridge, to provide greater safety and improved amenity for all users. The proposal seeks to enhance views and create an increased sense of connection between the river and upper promenade, both of which are outcomes and qualities outlined in the City of Melbourne's Yarra River-Birrarung Strategy.

City of Melbourne have released a proposed design for the works on Southbank Promenade, which have been made available to the public. In July-August 2020, a public consultation was launched on Participate Melbourne to elicit feedback from the public about the design.

Overall, throughout the engagement period, the website had **1,288** visitors and was viewed a total of **2,596** times. The total number of completed surveys returned by the end of the engagement period was **171**.

Written comments received from the survey were generally either supportive (41%), or offered critiques or suggestions (57%). Two percent of comments were considered neutral or 'other'. Note that these percentages are only indicative of overall sentiment, due to the nature of the engagement questioning approach and because many respondents made a combination of both supportive and critical comments on different topics.

The aims of this consultation were to:

- > Offer the public an opportunity to review the proposal and provide feedback
- > Determine whether the current proposal is meeting the public's expectations for how Southbank Promenade will look and function in the future
- > Understand concerns the community may have about the proposed works, and receive suggestions for what could be done to address these concerns.

Key findings

There was general consensus that...

- > Having trees in the area was desired by respondents. However, there was disagreement among respondents about whether these trees should be natives or exotic species, and whether they should be deciduous or evergreen.
- > The current conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians need to be appropriately addressed.

The feel and atmosphere of the Promenade is important to people...

- > Respondents felt that the current lighting and balustrades should be preserved as they give the area character, which they felt the proposed modern lights will not.
- > Trees should be reflective of the character of the Promenade and the city of Melbourne. The European style deciduous trees were seen to be more in keeping with the Victorian style than native trees, though adding more trees was generally supported.

People anticipate...

- > That although the proposed design would improve safety to some degree, conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians will not be adequately resolved.

Some conflicting uses and outcomes for the area were identified...

- > A considerable number of respondents felt that Southbank Promenade should prioritise pedestrians. Some felt that bicycles should be prohibited altogether and diverted to another route.
- > Cyclists felt that their needs had not been properly considered in the proposed design.
- > Both cyclists and pedestrians supported increased separation between foot and cycle traffic beyond what is currently proposed.

Respondents' connection and use of the area...

- > Half of respondents were visitors to Southbank Promenade.
- > Over half of respondents live or work in the area.
- > Over a third of respondents cycle through the area.

Respondent characteristics

- > Of those who do not live in the area, over a quarter visit Southbank Promenade daily.
- > Walking was the most common mode of transport used by respondents on or around Southbank Promenade.
- > Half the number of respondents cycle in the area, compared to pedestrians.

SOUTHBANK PROMENADE

ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

In August 2020, CoM asked for your feedback about the proposed designs for Southbank Promenade. This is what you told us:

ENGAGEMENT REACH

171
TOTAL
RESPONSES



171 ONLINE
SURVEYS



6 STAKEHOLDER
SESSIONS



1,288 WEBSITE
VISITS

23%

of respondents
think the works
will make them
want to spend
more time on
Southbank
Promenade.

WHO RESPONDENTS WERE

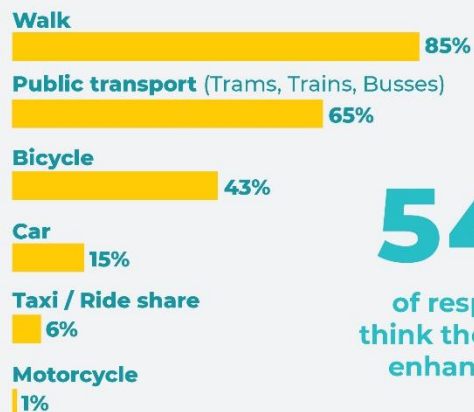
CONNECTIONS



FREQUENCY OF USE



MODE OF TRANSPORT



54%

of respondents
think the works will
enhance safety.

WHAT RESPONDENTS LIKED



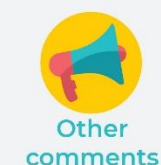
"I think that the focus on trees is important."



"I like the pathway improvements as that will make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians."



"I like the replacement of uneven paving so that safety for pedestrians is improved."



Other ideas put forward that people liked:

- General rejuvenation/beautification
- Extending the main promenade
- Opening up the lower promenade

CRITICISMS OR SUGGESTIONS



"There still doesn't seem to be any designated cycleway. Until there's a designated cycleway, the promenade will remain a source of frustration for both pedestrians and cyclists as they're in constant conflict."



"I love the current trees and believe they are one of the promenades best features. Great for shade in summer and maximum sunlight in winter. They look magnificent year round. Understand if they need to be replaced but I would really like to see the species retained and replaced."



"Why is this being proposed? Pre-covid, Southbank remains one of the most popular places in the city, and these designs remove all unique elements that make it an interesting place."

STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS

In addition to the Participate Melbourne online survey, City of Melbourne engaged with **16** external stakeholders during the consultation period.

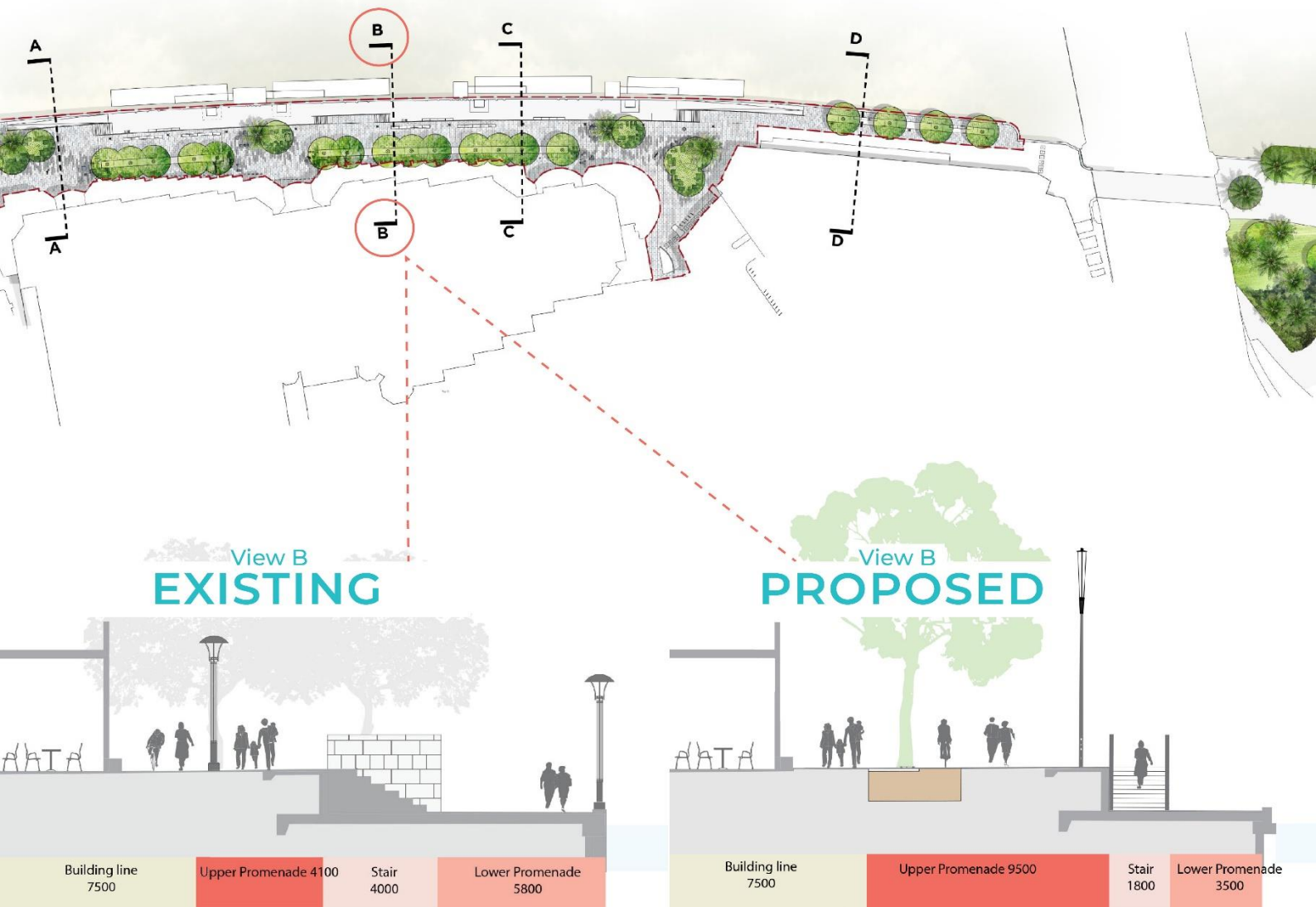
- ➔ Between the beginning of July and end of August 2020, **6** dedicated stakeholder sessions were held (either by phone or zoom)
- ➔ Emails were sent to **16** key stakeholders informing them of the community engagement process and offering further information and meetings.

Council's Southbank Promenade upgrade proposal will improve access and visibility to the lower promenade and river-based activities which is great, so long as there's support during construction for river-based operators who utilise the lower promenade.

The redevelopment of Southbank Promenade is a most welcome project to help rejuvenate the maturing tourist node of Southbank...an opportunity to now redevelop the promenade to reflect its integral role in the tourism and recreational life of Melbourne City, as well as to better facilitate on-water activity.

Council should explore how visual interpretation can be introduced to communicate the land's cultural heritage.

Bicycle Network have been closely consulted on the Southbank Promenade proposal. Issues around cycle/pedestrian conflicts and safety have been fully considered and together with Bicycle Network, Council have arrived at satisfactory solutions that enable cyclists and pedestrians to co-exist.



Project overview

Introduction

The City of Melbourne has plans to revitalise a 300 metre section of Southbank Promenade between Princes Bridge and Evan Walker Bridge, to provide greater safety and improved amenity for all users. This is intended as a first stage that will eventually be followed by revitalisation of the promenade between Evan Walker Bridge and Queens Bridge.

The proposal seeks to enhance views and create an increased sense of connection between the river and upper promenade, both of which are outcomes and qualities outlined in the City of Melbourne's Yarra River-Birrarung Strategy.

With more than 40,000 people using the promenade each day, City of Melbourne appreciates the role that Southbank Promenade plays in many people's lives, and during July and August 2020, a community consultation process was undertaken to gain the public's feedback on the proposal design.

The material presented to the community through the City of Melbourne's community engagement website, Participate Melbourne, presented a number of long-standing amenity and safety issues, and outlined how these issues would be addressed and redesigned to create a vibrant and attractive new public space along the river, for example:

- > Replacement of damaged pavements
- > Improved tree growing conditions
- > Introduction of new trees
- > Minimised pedestrian and cyclist conflict
- > Integration of key artworks
- > Improvements to amenity and illumination.

Background

Built in 1990, Southbank Promenade was a part of a broader program of public works including the creation of Southbank Boulevard, which aimed to encourage redevelopment of former industrial and warehouse areas in Southbank, Melbourne. Today, it is the front door to one of Australia's most densely developed neighbourhoods and provides precious sunny open space in an area dominated by high-rise buildings.

Southbank Promenade is now 30 years old and the concrete paving and lights are approaching the end of their service life. Many of the trees are stressed and in poor condition due to soil conditions which are particularly poor in this section of the promenade.

In addition to asset replacement, Southbank Promenade has a long history of cyclist and pedestrian conflicts due to the high numbers of people using the promenade every day, and because the Capital City Trail network feeds into the promenade. The proposed design seeks to improve amenity for all with additional space created to ease congestion and

ensure improved accessibility for both pedestrians and cyclists, and a design that expresses the character of the space as a pedestrian-priority zone to encourage respectful behaviour by cyclists.

Objectives

The aims of this consultation were to:

- > Offer the public an opportunity to review the proposal and provide feedback.
- > Determine whether the current proposal is meeting the public's expectation for how Southbank Promenade will look and function in the future.
- > Understand concerns the community may have about the proposed works and receive suggestions for what could be done to address these concerns.

Method

In March 2020, the City of Melbourne's Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) approved a planning application for the current design proposal to upgrade Southbank Promenade. Shortly after, Council placed the project on hold until 2021 in order to minimise disruption on the surrounding Southbank precinct and allow better coordination with nearby projects.

In June 2020, FMC decided to make use of the project's 'pause' and take the proposal out to the community to get their feedback. The following process was undertaken:

- > Participate Melbourne website was set up with proposed design, background material and extensive list of Frequently Asked Questions.
- > Feedback survey (via Participate Melbourne webpage) was open for six weeks between July and August.
- > Postcards delivered to over 900 residential and business letterboxes in surrounding streets.
- > Site signage installed along the promenade (prior to Stage 4 lockdown).
- > Emails were sent to 16 key stakeholders with a link to the Participate Melbourne survey and a request to circulate with their networks.
- > Six individual stakeholder sessions were held (in addition to 17 stakeholder sessions that took place during the design phase in 2019).

Engagement: full results

Quantitative analysis overview

Frequency analysis was completed on respondents' connections to the Southbank Promenade; the frequency of visits (of those who do not live in the area); the transport modes typically used when visiting Southbank Promenade; the extent to which respondents felt that the proposed design enhances the safety of Southbank Promenade; and whether respondents felt they were more likely to visit after the works have been completed.

The results are presented below as charts, along with key findings. The quantitative questions analysed below are:

1. What is your connection to Southbank Promenade? (select all that apply)
 - I live in the area/ I work in the area/ I visit the area/ I ride through the area/ I am just interested/Other (please specify)
2. If you don't live or work in the area, how regularly do you visit Southbank Promenade?
 - Daily/A few times a week/Weekly/Every couple of weeks/Monthly/A few times a year/Yearly/I never visit
3. Which transport modes do you typically use when in or around Southbank Promenade? (select all that apply)
 - Walk, Bicycle, Motorcycle, Train, Tram, Bus, Car, Taxi/ride share, Other (please specify)
4. To what extent do you think the proposed design enhances the safety of Southbank Promenade? Rate your answer with one star being the lowest and five stars being the highest.
 - It greatly enhances safety, It somewhat enhances safety, Neutral, It doesn't enhance safety, It makes it feel less safe
5. Do you think the works will make you want to spend more time on Southbank Promenade?
 - I would spend more time, I would spend less time, I would spend the same amount of time, Not sure

To give a clear and consistent indication of the number of comments received on each topic, the following key was used to describe the relative number of comments on each topic:

Key for comment numbers	
3 comments	A few
4–7 comments	A small number
8–14 comments	Several
15–24 comments	A moderate number
25–49 comments	A considerable number
50–74 comments	A substantial number

Comments from respondents have been included in this report verbatim. However, where obvious spelling or grammatical errors are found, these have been corrected.

COMPARING THE RESPONSES OF RESPONDENT GROUPS

Charts were created to present the weight of opinions on the most highly commented on issues: cyclist/pedestrian conflict and trees, based on respondents' *connection* to Southbank Promenade.

In order to make relative comparisons between groups, responses from particular connection groups were weighted. This was completed because there were different numbers of people in each group. Weighting the responses of the groups made it possible to directly compare the amount of interest and the sentiment of the comments on particular topics. For example, there were 60 people who lived in the area and 86 who visited the area. To be able to make a direct comparison between the two, the comments made by those who live in the area were weighted by 65%, and the comments made by those who visit the area were weighted by 50%. This ensured that the resulting figures reflect the amount of interest and sentiment of comments based on if there were the same number of participants in each connection group.

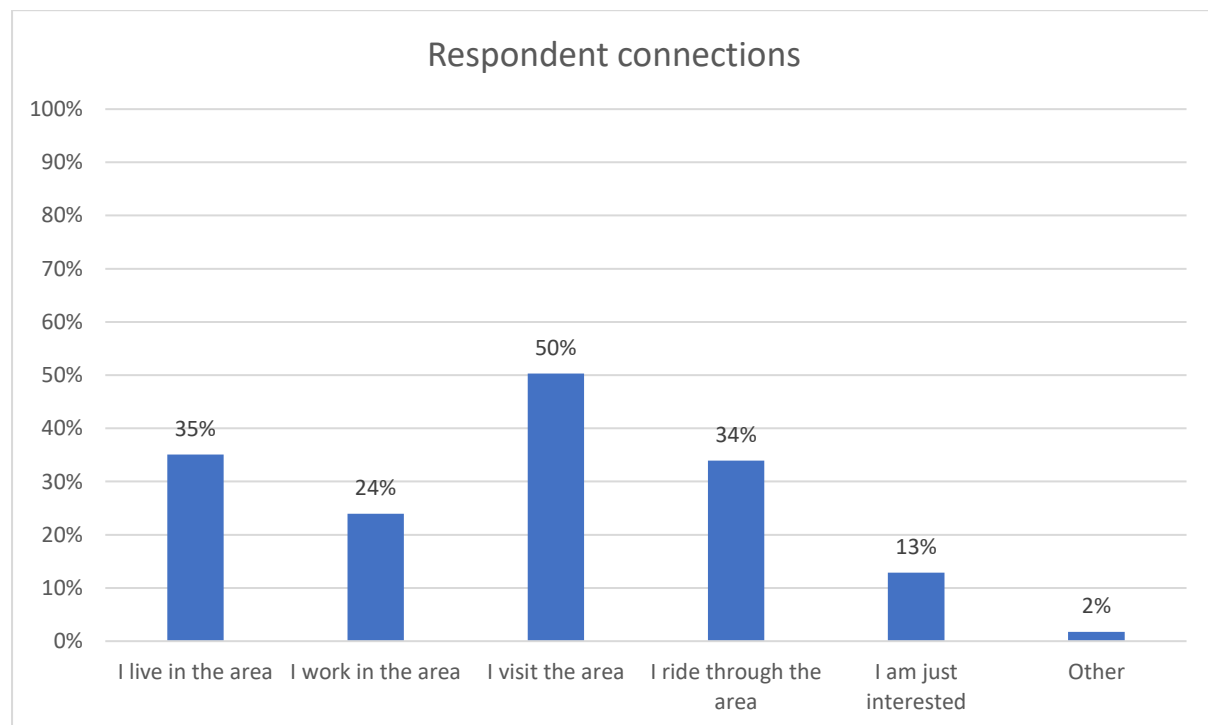
Summary of quantitative data

OVERALL

- > Half of respondents were visitors to the area (50%).
- > Those who lived in the area (35%) or rode through the area (34%) were the next largest 'connection' groups.
- > 92% of respondents visit at least once a month.
- > Over half of respondents (54%) felt that the proposed design would increase the safety of Southbank Promenade at least somewhat.
- > Almost one quarter of respondents (23%) thought they would spend more time on Southbank Promenade if the proposed works were carried out.

Respondent connections

Responses to "What is your connection to Southbank Promenade?"

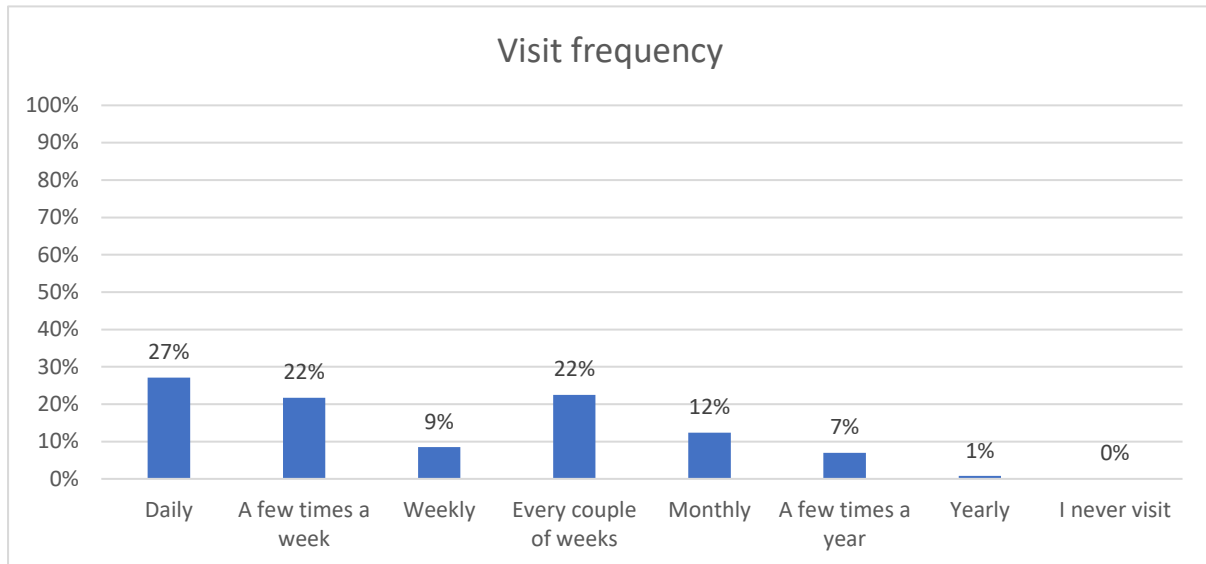


KEY FINDINGS:

- > Half of respondents were visitors to the area (50%).
- > Thirty-five percent of respondents were residents in the area.
- > Thirty-four percent of respondents selected 'I ride through the area'.
- > Just under a quarter of respondents (24%) worked in the area.

Visit frequency

Responses to "If you don't live or work in the area, how regularly do you visit Southbank Promenade?"



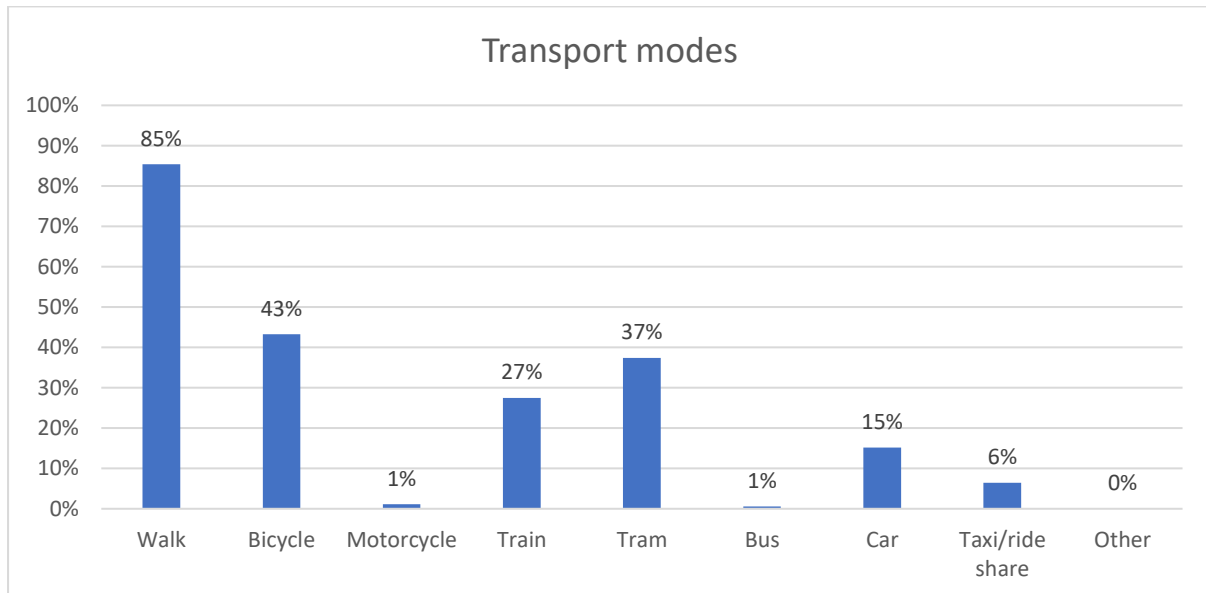
NOTE: This question was answered by 139 respondents who did not live or work in the area.

KEY FINDINGS:

- > Over one quarter (27%) of respondents visited Southbank Promenade daily.
- > The same number of respondents (22%) visit either a few times a week or every couple of weeks.
- > 92% of respondents visit at least once a month.

Transport modes

Responses to "Which transport modes do you typically use when in or around Southbank Promenade?"

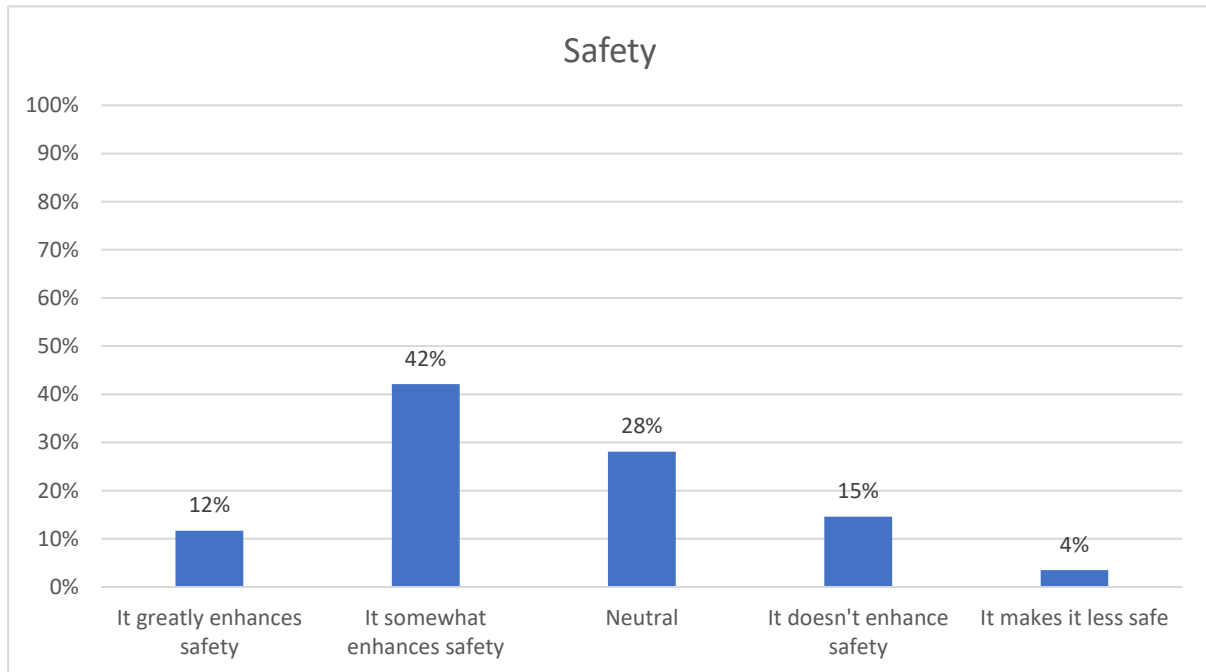


KEY FINDINGS:

- > The majority of respondents (85%) walk in/around Southbank Promenade.
- > Bicycle use was the second most common individual transport mode used in/around Southbank Promenade (43%).
- > Public transport was used by 65% of respondents. This included trams (37%), trains (27%) and buses (1%).

Safety

Responses to "To what extent do you think the proposed design enhances the safety of Southbank Promenade? Rate your answer with one star being the lowest and five stars being the highest."

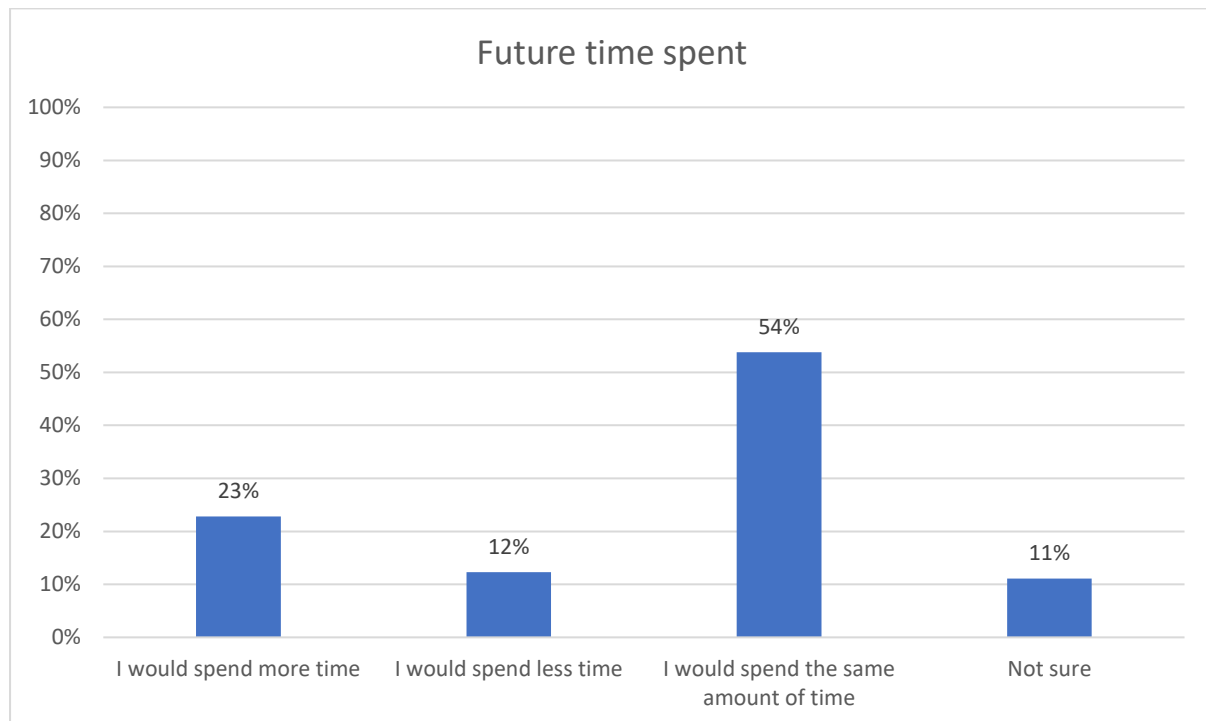


KEY FINDINGS:

- > Over half of respondents (54%) felt that the proposed design would increase the safety of Southbank Promenade at least somewhat.
- > Four percent of respondents felt that the proposed design would make Southbank Promenade less safe.
- > Forty-three percent were either neutral on this issue (28%) or felt that the proposed design would not enhance safety (15%).

Future time spent

Responses to "Do you think the works will make you want to spend more time on Southbank Promenade?"



KEY FINDINGS:

- > Over half of respondents (54%) thought they would spend the same amount of time on Southbank Promenade if the proposed works were carried out.
- > Almost one quarter (23%) of respondents thought they would spend more time on Southbank Promenade after the proposed works.
- > Twelve percent of respondents thought they would spend less time on Southbank Promenade after the proposed works.

Qualitative analysis overview

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

The most frequently commented on aspect of the proposed design was the issue of cyclist/pedestrian conflicts.

- > The overall sentiment amongst respondents was that cyclists currently pose a risk to pedestrians and each other, and that the proposed design doesn't go far enough to address this issue.
- > A sizeable number of respondents called for separated cycle paths to address user conflicts.

Trees were another highly commented on topic.

- > A substantial number of comments discussed the pros and cons of various tree varieties, and the general consensus was that the new trees must be carefully thought out and be fit for purpose.

A large number of comments called for minimal changes to be made to Southbank Promenade.

- > A considerable number of respondents felt that the current design is adequate and does not need changing.
- > A similar number of respondents noted that they preferred the existing lighting and balustrades, and did not want to lose these iconic design elements of Southbank Promenade.

Beyond these main topics, a number of other elements were discussed.

- > The widening of pathways and replacement of paving to facilitate a more accessible and welcoming space was applauded.
- > A considerable number of comments offered critiques of the proposed design.
- > Several respondents were looking forward to seeing the current Promenade be upgraded, and general appreciation for the space being rejuvenated.

Written comments analysis and reporting overview

ANALYSIS APPROACH

The following discussion presents results from a qualitative analysis of the two free-text questions included in the survey.

Q 6. What do you like most about the proposed design?

Q 7. Is there anything else you'd like to comment on?

The summaries that follow present the key points made under each theme and topic. The nature of responses to both Question 6 and Question 7 were similar, presenting mostly supportive or critical comments/suggestions. For this reason, the two questions have been discussed together, and comments have been separated into relevant themes and topics such as 'Cyclist/Pedestrian conflicts' or 'Trees'. A section titled 'Other topics' will contain additional comments that do not fit into these themes or topics.

HOW ANALYSIS WAS COMPLETED

To complete the analysis, Global Research analysts read each comment received from the community and organised them into themes and topics based on the points made. Some comments contained multiple points, relevant to multiple topics, resulting in a number of comments being coded to multiple places. The analysis was assisted by NVivo qualitative analysis software.

Analysts developed a coding schedule based on the desired objectives for the project, as listed by CoM and the content of comments. The objectives were:

- To understand overall support for the Southbank Promenade Update
- To identify and/or understand concerns the community may have about the proposed works, and
- To summarise community suggestions for the final design.

New topics were created, and comments coded to these as they arose, ensuring all comments and the points made were included in analysis.

Charts have been created showing the weight of opinions held by groups with different connections to Southbank Promenade for the three most frequently discussed issues – cyclist/pedestrian conflict, trees, and comments suggesting Southbank Promenade should be 'left alone'.

These three themes received significantly more comments than others. The remaining themes have been discussed individually under 'Other comments about the proposed design' but do not include charts.

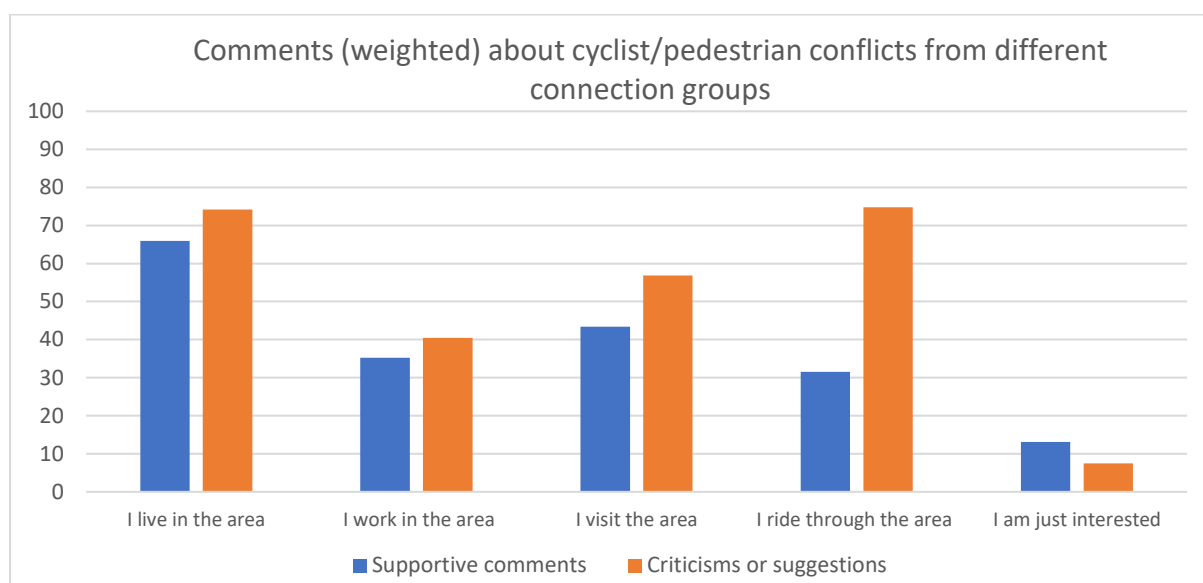
Comments on proposed design

Respondents were asked, “What do you like most about the proposed design?” and “Is there anything else you’d like to comment on?” Responses to both of these questions are discussed according to their relevant themes and topics and are discussed below in order of the frequency of comments made on each topic (most to least).

Cyclist/pedestrian conflict

145 comments

The most commonly mentioned element of the proposed Southbank Promenade upgrade was the current conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.



Note on the limits of this data

This analysis presents the weight of opinions from respondents with different connections to Southbank Promenade. It is worth noting that the small number of respondents in this engagement creates some analytical limitations. While the data shown is representative of the groups that responded to this survey, Global Research would suggest caution in extrapolating these results to be representative of the community more broadly. An explanation of how this analysis was completed can be found on page [11](#).

This chart also includes comments from 5 respondents who made supportive comments about cyclist separation that may have misunderstood that separate cycle paths are not part of the proposed design (4 from 'I visit the area' and 1 from 'I ride through the area').

KEY FINDINGS:

- > There were more comments offering criticisms or suggestions than support about cyclist/pedestrian conflicts.
- > Overall, the split was fairly even between all different connection groups, though those who ride through the area held stronger views.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

More comments on this topic were critical or suggestive in nature than supportive, with respondents generally expressing a desire for further separation of cyclists and pedestrians than what is currently proposed. It is also worth noting that several comments in response to the question “*What do you like most about the proposed design?*” mentioned ‘separated bike paths’, however, this design does not include completely separate bike paths. The widening of the main promenade is aimed at providing more space for both pedestrians and cyclists, to ensure that they are able to maintain a safe distance from one-another. One comment that illustrates respondents’ level of understanding reads:

The further separation of pedestrians and cyclists (though this was unclear in the landscape guide)

CYCLIST SEPARATION

110 COMMENTS

Cyclist separation was a topic discussed by a large number of respondents, many of whom were deeply passionate about this issue. Comments ranged from support for CoM’s acknowledgement of user conflicts and commitment to resolving this, to calls for separate cycle lanes on Southbank Promenade or even having cyclists banned from the area altogether. Overall, respondents expressed support for efforts made to reduce cyclist/pedestrian conflicts such as widening the promenade.

A considerable number of respondents made explicit calls for a separated cycle lane to be included in the new design for Southbank Promenade, stating that this was the most suitable solution to regulate conflict between cyclists and pedestrians. These comments included:

There needs to be a separation of bike and footpath for pedestrians.

I'd like to see a dedicated bicycle lane. There is currently lots of frustration for both cyclists and pedestrians

Please also consider including clearly defined bike and pedestrian lanes

the less opportunity for the two to mix the less opportunity for mishap.

Bicycles should be separated into two lanes - east and west bound.

Maintaining separation reduces the opportunity for mishaps

In response to the question “*What do you like most about the proposed design?*” a moderate number of respondents offered comments expressing support for cyclist separation. A few comments mentioned that they liked the addition of separated cycle paths or general separation of cyclists and pedestrians. These comments included:

Separation of cyclists and pedestrians

I also like the integrating of a designated bike path.

The separation of pedestrians and cyclists is also excellent.

It is important to note that total separation of cyclists and pedestrians through the provision of separated cycle paths is not part of the proposed design. This misunderstanding may indicate the need for more detail and clarity regarding the proposed design.

However, a small number of comments from this question offered general praise for the efforts made to increase cyclist separation, without specifically mentioning separate cycle paths. Examples include:

better division between cyclists and pedestrians

The (partial) separation of walkers and bicycles

Introducing more planters and seating may help to deter or slow cyclists which is highly desirable the make it a safer and more pleasurable place.

Indistinct walking paths to slow down cyclists

A small number of other respondents suggested that cyclists should be banned from the Promenade altogether, and that a separate route for cycles should be created elsewhere, to leave the Promenade for pedestrians only. A few of the suggestions offered by respondents included:

I live and have lived along the river for over 18 years and now fear for my safety with the increasing number of cyclists. Many Cyclists do not Observe existing safety requirements, Some even see it a game to ride as close as possible to pedestrians. this will not change with new plans, be best to keep the area cyclist free ...walk only, Divert and provide safe cyclist lane Along City Road.

I think the bike riders need a separate trail around the outside of the area. And make this promenade pedestrian access only.

Aim to include a continuous and easily legible path for bike riders using the capital city trail to intuitively direct them to protected bike lanes that are away from Southbank. If no protected infrastructure is provided bike riders will continue to ride at speed through Southbank.

didn't know why a pontoon under Princes bridge can't be installed and used only by bikes, then the bike should ride along the water level.

Several respondents who discussed cyclist/pedestrian conflicts within their responses to "What do you like most about the proposed design?" commended CoM for acknowledging the need to address user conflicts.

However, a considerable number of respondents argued that the proposed design does not adequately address this issue. Examples of such comments are seen below:

Reducing conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists is critical to the success of the landscape redesign. While this point is identified in the 'key issues' for the project, there is no design strategy that seeks to rectify this.

I can't like any design until it deals with the need for cyclists to pass through safely.

In particular, a couple of comments discussed how widening the Promenade may not be an appropriate solution:

How is the proposed wider shared pedestrian and bike path meant to slow cyclists down? Reducing pedestrian crowding will likely result in increased cyclists speeds, not lower.

Making the shared path wider will lower pedestrian crowding, and increase cyclist speeds, the exact opposite of what's needed. More complete designs should be released to the community

There was an overall sentiment amongst respondents who commented on the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians that the current design does not go far enough when it comes to providing separation between the two groups.

CONSIDER CYCLISTS

18 COMMENTS

Generally, respondents who discussed cyclist separation made comments from a pedestrian safety perspective. One cyclist agreed with what many others were saying, when they stated:

Addressing the issue of pedestrian and bike segregation. As a bike rider I am constantly amazed at how dangerous the behaviour of fellow riders is along the Promenade

Several comments, however, contained a different sentiment – arguing that cyclists' needs should also be considered in the new design. Comments that exemplify this included:

It feels like you're trying to design riders out, but this will remain a main cycling corridor

It seems much more crowded with trees in the middle and therefore increasing the conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. There are many more cyclists than the pictures reflect, and they need some space.

You have not allowed for cyclists at all.

The best way to do this, would be to install pontoon cycling tracks to float on the river (maybe on the city side) like further upstream on the river, so that cyclists and pedestrians can be completely segregated.

Forcing cyclists onto roads with lights and vehicles in what is often congested traffic areas detracts from general safety. Many riders take the river route to be away from cars and trucks.

Other respondents noted that the Promenade is their safest or most efficient option to and from work, and until other safe and efficient routes are provided, they will continue to use the Promenade. One comment read:

*Southbank Promenade will continue to be the prime route for city bound cyclists.
The light cycles along the Southbank Blvd corridor are not synced for cyclists
and the left turning traffic over the bike lanes is incredibly dangerous.*

A couple of comments made specific mention of areas that respondents felt were hazardous to cyclists or made general calls for improved safety for cyclists. These comments included:

*Need to fix eastern end of Linlithgow Ave bicycle lane coming off Alexander Ave.
Very difficult to access westwards bike lane, and cyclists will continue to use
Southbank Promenade unfortunately*

Make it safer for bikes to cross the road at Queens Bridge St.

Blue stones and bikes don't work

CYCLISTS ARE A HAZARD

17 COMMENTS

Several respondents made comments suggesting that the main issue with Southbank Promenade currently, is the risk posed by cyclists. In particular, these respondents felt that cyclists travelled at unsafe speeds and with little regard for pedestrians. When discussing cyclists, respondents made comments such as:

They are dangerous and never listen to speed limits.

*I think they will still be a nuisance and won't slow down when riding through.
They are not riding though to stop and use any facilities, they want to race
from one end to another just to get through.*

The bicyclists are a true hazard

A number of the more emotional comments addressing these concerns discussed feeling “terrified” of walking the Promenade because of cyclists or being “terrorized” by cyclists. The focus of these comments was often also on elderly people or young children who were considered particularly vulnerable. One such comment read:

*I use this as my primary access to city. I have no alternative and fear I will be
knocked over. A number of people living here are older. Cyclists will not stop coming
as they want their coffee stop so PLEASE exclude them. There is no shortage of
places they can go. I would love to send you a photo I took near the sign Cyclists
must dismount - no-one does. And they almost collide with each other.*

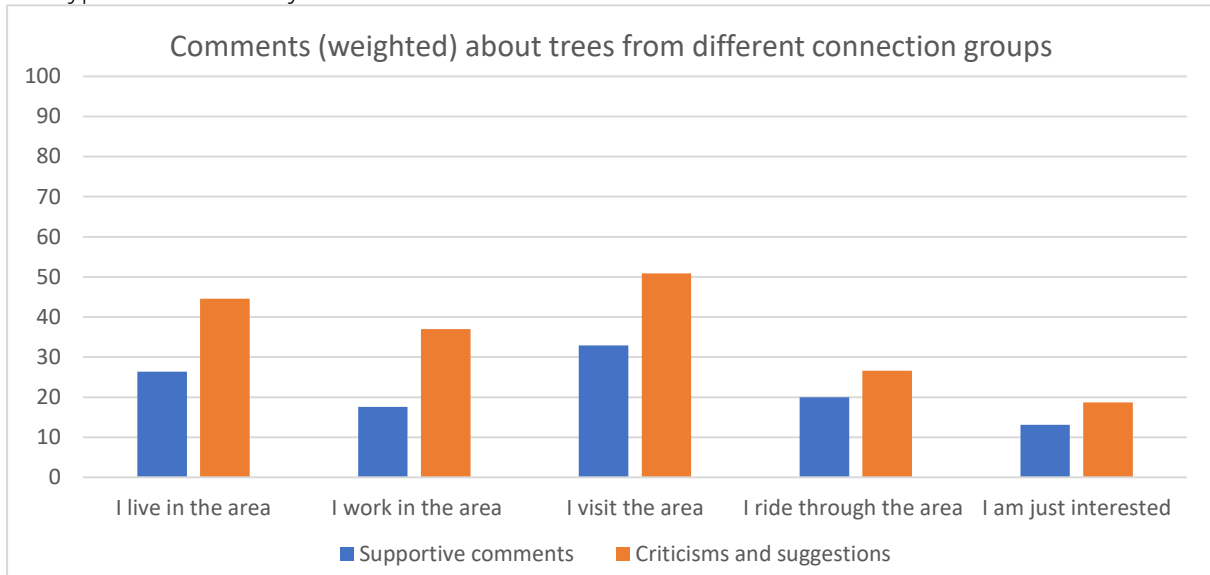
A couple of comments referenced current speed limits for cyclists, which they suggested are largely ignored. One respondent suggested that cyclists should be made to dismount on the promenade, or that signs should state “walking pace” rather than a speed limit number as it will be easier for cyclists to be aware of their speed. Other respondents called for more policing of cyclists who speed through the area, or behavioral changes to encourage divided circulation:

*need to train (encourage) people to keep left, this would hugely improve access
and flow*

Trees

134 comments

The second most frequently commented on aspect of the proposed design was changes to trees along the promenade. Overall, respondents supported improvements being made to the trees on Southbank Promenade, though there were different opinions expressed about the types of trees they wanted to see in the area.



Note on the limits of this data

This analysis presents the weight of opinions from respondents with different connections to Southbank Promenade. It is worth noting that the small number of respondents in this engagement creates some analytical limitations. While the data shown is representative of the groups that responded to this survey, Global Research would suggest caution in extrapolating these results to be representative of the community more broadly. An explanation of how this analysis was completed can be found on page [11](#).

KEY FINDINGS:

- > There were more comments that offered suggestions than outright support for the proposed design's consideration of trees.
- > Again, the split was fairly even across all connection groups.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

TREE VARIETIES

61 COMMENTS

A moderate number of respondents mentioned specific tree varieties. Several comments championed the retention of plane trees (either by retaining the current trees, or by replacing them with the same or similar varieties). The main argument for this was that plane trees complement the look and feel of the promenade, and the Victorian-era aesthetic of Melbourne, for example:

Will take council's word on the need to renew trees, but the planes there now are beautiful, elegant and befitting of Melbourne's image as a Victorian-era

city. If they are to be replaced, please no gums or other such straggly natives - they are nice in the appropriate setting, but not here - this is a built form inner-city promenade, not park or bushland.

Another respondent made a similar comment in support of retaining more European-style trees as opposed to natives, stating:

I also have strong reservations about the replacing of deciduous trees with natives. I'm as patriotically Australian as the next person, but Melbourne's elms & London planes are a defining visual feature of this city. The more that are replaced with local species the more the city looks like any other in Australia.

Meanwhile, others discussed why specific types of trees were inappropriate for Southbank Promenade. Examples of comments made about specific trees that were considered unsuitable included:

I do like the proposed plantings of Angophora, but attention needs to be paid to the type of paving as these trees deposit gum and sap that discolours concrete, for example.

Palm trees are also not very Melbourne (or Yarra River for that matter) and should not be used.

The new trees proposed need to be reconsidered: the fan palms are a poor street tree and not appropriate for the bank. Because of how cold the bank is, a deciduous tree is needed and I'd strongly encourage council to replant plane trees or something similar.

Consider replacing Mexican Palms with Livistona Australis (As in Acland Street) which are Victorian and more likely to be food/shelter for native birds, insects, and bats.

Several respondents discussed the incorporation of native trees and plants into the design. Four comments came from respondents who supported the addition of native trees in the area, who noted that they liked:

The prospect of native trees being planted

I like the removal of the current trees and their replacement with native species instead.

I like that it will have native trees.

One other respondent was not opposed to natives being used, but felt the proposed Melaleuca trees were inappropriate, stating:

The melaleuca tree is ugly when mature, it's not a canopy tree and will detract from the promenade. Consider another gum or other native

A few other respondents simply felt that the current elms and London planes were more uniquely Melbourne, and worried that if natives were used, the area would lose its signature look and feel, and would become like any other Australian city.

A small number of respondents were strongly opposed to the inclusion of Sydney gums and other natives on Southbank Promenade due to the risk they pose to cyclists and pedestrians when they drop limbs. Comments discussing this were very clear in their concerns for people's safety, including statements such as:

I do not like the replacement of trees with natives. Natives shed their branches and can kill passing pedestrians and cyclists

The Sydney gums are lovely, but they are huge and drop limbs. I really am not sure the new design is appropriate.

Additionally there's the serious threat of falling limbs which opens the council to litigation should one fall and injure or kill someone below.

The proposed Angophora costata trees are not suitable species for any public space and are unsuitable due to their having brittle wood and therefore quite prone to dropping branches especially as these trees mature.

Several respondents also made comments arguing that the new trees should be deciduous rather than evergreen. Respondents who commented on this suggested that there needs to be enough canopy shade in the summer months but also that sunlight is appreciated in the winter months. These comments argued that deciduous trees allow for appropriate sunlight all year round.

Deciduous because they not only give good summer shade, spectacular foliage in autumn, but provide light and winter sun to north-facing adjacent restaurants during winter.

the choice of the [above] tree species is quite adverse and unsuitable for this open space, whereas deciduous species would give shade in summer and open skies in winter which is requisite for this open public space.

Avenue trees suitable for Southbank Promenade would be Acer varieties such as Acer x freemanii 'Armstrong' (Freeman maple) or Acer x freemanii 'Autumn blaze' both of which are attractive smaller deciduous trees, are fast growing and thrive in Australia, or deciduous trees of similar stature

A small number of other comments echoed this sentiment. While they did not specifically mention a desire for deciduous trees, these comments made similar arguments for the need for appropriate shade levels throughout the year.

Please make this area beautiful with trees that will give shade and a feeling of walking in a park. We don't want a cement jungle.

One respondent noted that they liked the increased tree diversity in the plan, while a couple of others suggested a need for more tree diversity.

I like multiple things - tree diversity, focus on pedestrians safety, better lighting

More variation in planting and seating would be good.

One respondent made the following suggestion that addresses plant diversity:

As a landscape concept for a riverbank promenade, especially one as prestigious and important to the city as Southbank Promenade, one of the main elements would be an avenue of suitable deciduous trees. For diversity other species can be introduced at new nodes of park-like rest areas.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE RENEWAL OF TREES

57 COMMENTS

The general renewal or updating of trees on Southbank Promenade was commented on by a moderate number of respondents. These comments were generally simple positive statements, although many did not provide much detail. Comments often stated “new trees” as the element respondents liked most about the proposed design. Other comments included:

The refurbishment of the Trees that line the river. Would be great to see some more natives

I particularly like the addition of new trees near hamer hall,

I like the renewal of trees.

New trees replacing the stressed London Planes due to lack of soil and moisture.

Conversely, a small number of respondents opposed the removal and replacement of established trees, noting:

I don't like plane trees but I really disapprove of killing any established trees

The upgrade has cut mature, large trees and replaced them with tiny young ones

Please reconsider the replacement of existing deciduous trees. I think that they are integral to the urban fabric of the City of Melbourne. To lose these would be disappointing.

A couple of respondents felt that basic maintenance of trees was needed, rather than replacement. A couple of other respondents suggested that the existing trees should be replaced gradually, so that the area would not look bare.

Other positive comments made by respondents about trees included praise for the general focus on trees, and praise from a few respondents about improving general growing conditions by selecting trees that are better suited to the environment and improving soil quality.

I like the inclusion of all the trees

Fresh greenery to cool and provide calm

The focus on new trees.

Planting new trees in better soil and better growing conditions!

The widening of narrow areas and better conditions for trees, as well as more appropriate permeable paving around trees.

Ensuring trees have soil and plenty of water.

A moderate number of respondents also made general comments about trees in response to the question “What do you like most about the proposed design?”. These comments were simple in nature and tended to not offer much detail, but suggested general support for the proposed changes to trees on Southbank Promenade. Examples include comments such as:

Aesthetics: Trees

greenery

enhanced landscaping

MORE TREES

16 COMMENTS

Several supportive comments commended the inclusion of more trees in the area, with respondents appreciating the idea of more greenery, liveliness and birdlife in the area; offering remarks such as:

I think that the focus on trees is important.

I like the addition of new trees and landscaping.

Trees. We need more trees around here not only for human health, but to support the wonderful birdlife in the community. Respecting the river, respecting that the natural environment is what really brings people to the area.

The inclusion of more flora helps to create a more lively environment.

The natural environment is really the drawcard for this area. Whatever design and planning changes always remember this and make it a priority. Don't impinge on the river, on the birds, and wildlife. We need trees. More and more trees. Healthy soil and grasses. Lots of dogs/pets around here. Just having green spaces are vital.

A small number of respondents felt that the area needed even more trees and greenery than proposed in the design.

Minimal changes wanted

111 comments

Another common critique of the proposed works for Southbank Promenade was that the area should be 'left alone'.

LIGHTING

47 COMMENTS

A considerable number of respondents commented on lighting. Most comments suggested that existing lighting should not be removed or changed. In most cases, the comments included positive evaluations of the aesthetic value of the lights, and respondents argued that they represent an iconic aspect of the area, and of Melbourne more generally.

The original lights are very charming and seem perfectly suited to the atmosphere of Melbourne and the promenade.

Keep the existing aesthetic. Stop ripping up things and making them modern. People like the Victorian elements and look and feel of Melbourne

Although it was acknowledged by some respondents that some form of upgrade or enhancement was valid, the 'look' of the existing lights was highly valued. The following comment represents this:

I like the idea of enhanced lighting, but not at the expense of losing the existing lights, which are iconic to the original 1991 award-winning design for the promenade.

In many cases lighting was discussed alongside balustrades, and it was stated that together these constitute an iconic aspect of the Promenade for respondents (see next section for comments about balustrades). The following comments represent examples of those who discussed the two aspects simultaneously; these were frequently simple in nature:

Please don't replace the balustrade and lighting as they are full of character

Please don't change the award winning lighting and balustrades.

I would strongly suggest retaining the original balustrades and lights, and altering them (where needed) for the new design.

Several respondents who opposed the proposed lighting design characterized it as bland, boring, mundane, and as having 'no character'. A few comments provided more description around their dislike of the design for lighting, such as:

I presume these are a CoM preferred design/palette as they are the same lights and fencing used elsewhere throughout the city. It is a shame as I don't think these are good designs, they date quickly, look unattractive, don't have character or presence

I think new lighting is bland, I love the design already there, it is interesting and stylish.

*I don't think changing the lights is a good idea. The current design is beautiful.
I'm not a fan of the new design.*

*Not sold on lights that look like they project "out" rather than "down". Safety
yes, imitation daylight, no. Night should feel like night.*

The new pole lights look boring .

One respondent asked:

*Can the existing light poles be refurbished/relocated and new lighting design in
a similar character but to provide improved amenity? Good quality public
lighting is important- as is the evening character whilst promenading that's
everything is lit but not too bright and making it look like daytime.*

Note that conversely, five comments expressed support for replacing existing lampposts or improving lighting. These comments were general in nature and did not provide much detail, such as:

better lighting

improved lighting

Getting rid of the lamp posts

DO NOT CHANGE THE DESIGN

31 COMMENTS

Comments under this topic echoed one-another with their claims that the existing design is sufficient and does not need changing. This sentiment is summed up by the following comment:

*Why is this being proposed? Pre-Covid, Southbank remains one of the most
popular places in the city, and these designs remove all unique elements that
make it an interesting place.*

Several respondents took the position that although they did not see a need for the redesign, some minor maintenance was needed, such as fixing uneven pavements; adding more light; and making ramps DDA compliant. Below are some examples of such comments:

*There's nothing wrong with the existing, award winning design. Just fix the
uneven paving. Leave the rest alone!*

*I don't feel it's so bad that design works need to be done. It looks okay the way
it is now, and aside from remedial works like the footpaths repair work and
tree replacement, nothing much needs to be done. The Sydney gums are lovely
but they are huge and drop limbs. I really am not sure the new design is
appropriate.*

Surely tree and pavement maintenance is just that, maintenance. I don't believe a complete redevelopment is necessary, other than to separate bicycles and pedestrians and keep the pavement and trees well maintained.

The idea of replacing old with new just because its need a freshen up makes no sense. You cannot have old beautiful infrastructure but replacing everything all the time.

PREFER THE EXISTING BALUSTRADES

25 COMMENTS

A considerable number of respondents supported the retention of the green balustrades. As with lighting fixtures, the balustrades were spoken of fondly as attractive, iconic, and of good or 'classic' design.

The uniqueness of these as features of the area was highlighted in around a third of balustrade comments. Some comments were passionate in their advocacy. Examples follow:

Keep the features that make this area unique. It is important to recognise the good design features such as the balustrades and lights

Far from looking tired & worn, the lights & balustrades are significant examples of street architecture from the early 1990s and ought to be retained in any redevelopment.

The loss of the classic '90s street lamps, street furniture and balustrades is unacceptable from a heritage and cultural point of view.

Comments in support of retaining balustrades contained an element of fear that 'change for changes' sake' was occurring. This is shown in the following comment which went on to urge Council to retain the balustrades:

The idea of replacing old with new just because it needs a freshen up makes no sense. You cannot have old beautiful infrastructure but replacing everything all the time.

SIMPLE MAINTENANCE IS REQUIRED

8 COMMENTS

Several respondents commented that there is not a great need for a new design, and that maintenance of existing features would be sufficient to upgrade the area.

These comments, in a few cases, urged that the 1990s design be retained specifically for its iconic value (without citing any feature in particular), while others resisted the notion of changing so much of the look of the area. Most of the comments on this topic were descriptive and as such, a little longer than others.

Almost the same outcomes could be achieved with some simple maintenance of trees and infrastructure. The extent of works is enormous, and appears to take away all the existing elements that make Southbank a unique and popular city place.

*Keep the existing aesthetic. Stop ripping up things and making them modern.
People like the Victorian elements and look and feel of Melbourne, stop
replacing it with a new fashionable item. Maintain and enhance, not rip up
and replace every few years with ugly new fads of design.*

One respondent, having questioned the removal of existing features on the basis that nothing was wrong with the current layout, went on to question the project on environmental grounds. They stated:

*Also, considering environmental impact, do we need to waste scrapping
features and re making them just for a new look...couldn't the existing
infrastructure be repaired, or painted?... a fresh coat of powder coat?*

Other proposed design comments

135 comments

Other comments made about the proposed design can be seen below, organised into topics in order of frequency (most to least commonly mentioned). These comments were a mix of supportive comments and comments that offered criticisms or suggestions.

COMMENTS ABOUT WIDER UPPER PROMENADE

50 COMMENTS

A substantial number of respondents made comments in support of the changes being made to the width of Southbank Promenade, including a wider main promenade; improved access to the lower promenade; and the reconfiguration of stairs.

Respondents who commented on CoM's plan to widen the main promenade all offered supportive comments, though these tended to be general in nature and did not provide substantial detail. Examples of these types of comments included:

Widening the promenade.

It'll be good to have widened paths.

However, a small number of respondents offered more detailed comments such as:

Widening of the upper terrace to provide more space for pedestrians and cyclists to move through the space and reduce clutter

widening the narrower sections should help resolve some of the current issues.

the smarter staircase design that increases the amount of space on the upper promenade

more walking space

The lower level along the river was not widely used. This will allow wider walkway with accommodate more people and possibly stalls for pop-up markets.

Increased pedestrian space and reworking some of the 'dead space' along the lower promenade is also good.

Wider upper deck with fewer obstacles

Extending the main promenade at the eastern end of the project site, adjacent to Hamer Hall, was mentioned by a small number of people, who made comments such as:

I support making the lower promenade level with the upper promenade; making more room available for potential programming and use.

The attempt to resolve the Hamer Hall pinch point by widening the main promenade. This is a high user conflict area. Also improves connection with the river.

Generally, comments under this topic were supportive of opening up the lower promenade, though one respondent made the following point:

The integration of the upper and lower promenade I like in some ways, but one of the nice things about the lower promenade currently is a sense of privacy and seclusion within the city.

Another element praised by a few respondents specifically, was the improved access to the lower promenade and the reconfiguration of the steps.

the smarter staircase design that increases the amount of space on the upper promenade

Several respondents appreciated the more open and accessible design of the Southbank Promenade generally. The fact that the proposed design includes DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliance was mentioned by a couple of respondents as the element they like most about the design. A few other comments generally supported creating more open space, and increased accessibility, particularly to the lower promenade. Comments included:

Opening up the space is great.

I don't mind the extension of the lower promenade and accessibility improvements for people with a disability. Opening up the space is great.

a lower more accessible section for pedestrians

PAVING

26 COMMENTS

Paving was discussed by a moderate number of respondents, who generally felt that the paving on Southbank Promenade was in need of renewal or repair. Most of these comments were supportive of CoM's plans to renew the paving on Southbank Promenade. However, most comments were quite general in nature and did not provide additional detail other than general support for improved paving on the promenade. Examples of these general statements in response to "What do you like most about the proposed design?" included:

Replacement of uneven paving

improved pavement.

Two respondents offered more detailed comments, stating:

I like the replacement of uneven paving so that safety for pedestrians is improved.

I think making the area DDA [Disability Discrimination Act] compliant and fixing uneven bluestone

A few respondents liked that existing concrete pavers are to be replaced with bluestone pavers. One respondent also commented that they liked the permeable nature of the new

pavement. These responses were accompanied by a small number of respondents who raised concerns over slippery or wobbly surfaces being used, with two comments mentioning bluestone cobblestones as a trip hazard. One of these respondents suggested:

Southbank needs more character. Maybe a modern(flat) version of bluestone cobblestones. Something that echoes Flinders Street Station?

Another respondent also noted that bluestone pavers do not mix well with cyclists. Another called for CoM to limit paved areas, asking instead for CoM to:

Keep open spaces simple and not stepped like in front of the Recital centre which has become cluttered.

DESIGN LACKS CERTAIN ASPECTS

14 COMMENTS

Several respondents made comments or suggestions about elements they felt were missing from the proposed design. Suggestions given in this section ranged from making the area a smoke free zone; to putting trees on the bridges; to installing more CCTV cameras to increase safety.

A couple of comments highlighted areas that they felt had been excluded from the plan:

The level of connection that eateries have to the river appears diminished. They are a very important element in the life of the area. Also, the connection to St. Kilda Road appears poor or not included at all.

I do not like that there is no mention of the existing multichannel soundscape system.

One respondent questioned how CoM planned to involve Traditional Owners and First Peoples, asking:

How will Traditional Owners' and First Peoples input be reflected in the design and use of this important public space on a site of deep cultural significance?

Meanwhile, another respondent asked CoM to consider potential flood risks, stating:

One of the reasons originally for the high basalt walls was to ameliorate high floods reaching Southgate and other buildings. Has the removal of the walls been considered in light of the historical height of floods, bearing in mind that future floods will probably be higher because of climate change?

Other suggestions included:

Consider the use of recycled materials for all new infrastructure. Consider ending the fire show and changing to a light show. Consider increasing the permeable surfaces. Consider infrastructure that could increase interactions with the river (e.g. smart boat rentals)

Re-model the outdoor areas of restaurants at the Princes Bridge end.

Consider whether any de-cluttering can be done in the area of Southbank that isn't being upgraded at this time - including limiting the area and time it is occupied by special events.

Consider tasteful shade options by the riverside, such as a section of weatherproof umbrellas or canopies to provide walkers/photographers etc with protection from the sun (and rain).

The eastern end of the Promenade in front of Hamer Hall will be wider but then it narrows dramatically where the river wall turns southwards. Can this be removed or lessened to narrow the flow into the underpass more smoothly?

RENEWS, REVIVES OR BEAUTIFIES

12 COMMENTS

Several respondents reported that the element they liked most about the proposed work was the fact that it would renew, revive, or beautify the area. Comments in this section were more varied and praised different aspects that improve the appearance and atmosphere of the Southbank Promenade:

decluttering, simplifying the walkway layout

Some care and attention being given to this place

The project will refresh the area significantly

The connection to the river appears better and more in line with modern expectations of outdoor space.

Reinvesting rate payers' money back in a seriously underfunded part of the city.

I like the move of Clement Meadmore's sculpture

SEATING

9 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents offered support for the increased seating provision in the proposed design. When responding to the question, "What do you like most about the proposed design?" two respondents stated:

the rest areas. It will be good to be able to have spots to sit down and linger.

More seating to enjoy the view.

Four other comments were made expressing a desire for more seating and rest areas to be provided in the new design.

MORE INFORMATION NEEDED

8 COMMENTS

A small number of respondents made comments about the consultation process, expressing in particular that they felt there was a lack of detail in the Participate Melbourne design information. These respondents felt that the landscape drawings were too basic and

did not provide enough detail to ensure the public were well enough informed before answering the Participate Melbourne survey. Their comments included:

Your page doesn't ensure ppl view the changes before starting or during the questionnaire. It is actually quite useless as a form for collecting public opinion.

I couldn't really see the detailed plans on the website though so would like to see more detail on the bike lanes.

Provide more detailed information. What is shown here does not explain how the vision is to be practically achieved.

Another respondent stated:

Although there is a field for what we like most about the concept, there is no field for what we like least. Scrolling down the site, this questionnaire appears before detailed information about the concept, meaning many people will take the questionnaire before learning in detail what the MCC has in store.

CONCERN ABOUT COST OF WORKS

7 COMMENTS

A small number of comments expressed concern at the amount of money being spent on this project. One respondent suggested that CoM should provide a cost estimate so the public can see value for money. Other comments included:

I don't think money needs to be wasted on changing the lighting fixtures currently along the promenade. The original lights are very charming and seem perfectly suited to the atmosphere of Melbourne and the promenade. I would rather see the money spent on bringing my more local artwork into the space.

additional work including replacing perfectly good trees seems to be an incredible waste of money

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN ARE UNAPPEALING

5 COMMENTS

A small number of comments criticised elements of the proposed design. The general tone of these comments suggested that these respondents found the new design boring, mundane and lacking in design quality.

The proposed replacements are vile and banal, as though copied from a cheap 1997s shopping plaza.

Another respondent commented:

Another thing would be to try and incorporate wood/brick elements more into the design (generally across the city as well!). CoM's current design palette of these unattractive modern vertical lights, thin metal railings, metal furniture and bluestone paving everywhere has created a very cold, dark, and bland character for Melbourne at street level...

GENERAL SUPPORT

4 COMMENTS

In addition to the various supportive comments across different elements discussed above, a few respondents offered general support for the proposed works, with comments such as:

Keep up the great work! Thanks for making Melbourne, even more liveable.

Please do this asap and expand to QBS which is where I live.

Attractive reworking of current environment.

Other topics

16 comments

Other comments that did not fit easily into any of the above themes or topics or were outside of the project scope are included below.

OTHER COMMENTS - QUESTION 6

4 COMMENTS

In response to the question “What do you like most about the proposed design?” respondents commented:

People also walk dogs, that's ok if they clean up. What happens to the homeless who regularly sleep day and night now on the benches (check out in from of present food court area).

Traffic, always a problem, is now a 100x worse problem.

I do not like the sneaky way this question is worded.

Looks good need SMOKE FREE ZONE

OTHER COMMENTS – QUESTION 7

12 COMMENTS

In response to the question “Is there anything else you'd like to comment on?” a couple of comments simply stated “No”, while others offered further suggestions or critiques of the proposed design or suggestions beyond the project scope.

One respondent suggested a floating bar could be incorporated, while another very strongly argued against any new bars in the area, especially floating bars, which the respondent felt resulted in big profits for a private company but poor outcomes for locals (noise, public drunkenness and general nuisance).

Other comments and suggestions included ensuring street performers don't take up too much room on the footpath; using natural materials and avoiding bright colours; and:

Please don't bring back those horrible green bollards! I also think you did a great job with Southbank Blvd, it would be great to continue the landscaping theme into Southbank promenade.

The upgrade to Southbank promenade should occur in concert with the Northbank renewal - particularly the connection between Enterprize and

Seafarer parks, which is badly in need of widening and beautifying to truly 'open up' city access to the length of the river.

How your feedback will be used

- > All collated feedback will be shared with the project team for consideration when finalising the design proposal.
- > The report will be provided to City of Melbourne Councillors with an outline of the engagement process and an overview of the community's response to the proposed design.
- > The engagement report will be uploaded to the project website for the community to view.
- > The project team will prepare a detailed design response to the community feedback, including design rationale.
- > Further information on any relevant technical issues will be investigated as required, and collated for return briefings to Councillors.

This report has been prepared by:

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Global Research
Turning **Information** Into **Insight**