



City of Melbourne Improving Our Neighbourhood Parks and Streets Public Consultation –
Bedford Street Pocket Park

Findings Report

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Authorship & acknowledgements

This report was written by Dr Andrea Cook, Director at RedRoad Consulting and reflects the in-depth discussion, perspectives and ideas shared by the many community and business participants of this consultation process. We acknowledge these contributions with many thanks.

At a glance...

We wanted to hear from the community about expanding the Bedford and Courtney Street Reserves, North Melbourne, into a larger pocket park. We linked this 'parks' conversation with discussions about the feel and function of the 'streets' in the same neighbourhood following the construction of a new bike lane in Peel Street.

Gathered insights

Between 28 April and 24 May 2021, we gathered your insights via a range of feedback methods:



94 survey responses



6 idea wall contributions



110 pop up attendees



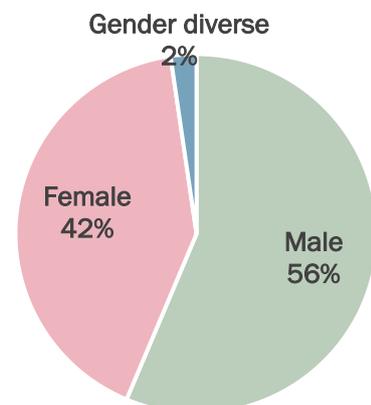
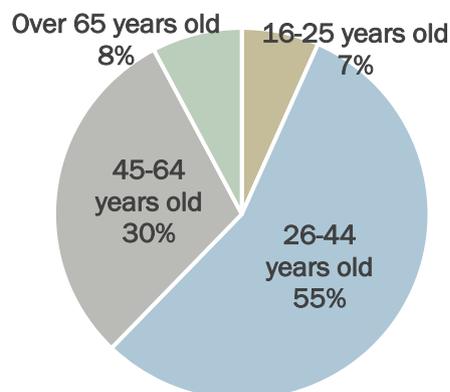
32 area walk participants



18 calls and emails

Who we heard from

Based on the survey, we saw that participants were:



locally based, with **80%** living in the neighbourhood

What you said

You told us the following about how you feel about the **parks** in this neighbourhood:



I think the two reserves pictured on the map could really be worked on to make them more active and welcoming public spaces. There's not really anything wrong with them at present, but I usually just pass by them on my bike. It would be nice to have a reason to stop, or to bring more people to that area. I think having a more dedicated park would add to the attractiveness and character of the area.

Survey participant (woman, 26-44)



The area (North Melbourne), arguably one of the most walkable neighbourhoods, has very little green space to appreciate on a casual stroll. Balancing green spaces in lieu of parking and cars is long overdue in my opinion.

Survey participant (aged 26-44)



I think it is ok to close the Courtney St slip lane – there is another road.

Pop-up participant, (woman, 34)



[It is] an opportunity to display outdoor cinema and have community events in public spaces.

Pop-up participant, (man, 33)



Idea: tree house, human sized chess board.

Pop-up participants, (boy and girl, 7 & 8)

What we heard

Your top three priorities for the expansion and greening of the Bedford Street Pocket Park project are:

1 Improving the current recreational offerings in Bedford Street Reserve (with BBQs, seating and picnic benches, gardening & games, dog-friendly facilities, etc.)

2 Closing the slip lane from Capel St to Peel St to create a new green area and expand the overall size of Courtney Street Reserve.

3 Taking road space and some parking bays around the Bedford Street Reserve to allow for more greening and open space along the street (especially if resident parking is prioritised for the remaining parking).

Other emerging ideas for change included...

We also heard a range of other **'convergent'** (commonly heard) and **'divergent'** (rarer but interesting) ideas during these engagements, including:

increase tree canopy and replace the trees taken out not long ago

provide pop up play space, a tree house, nature-based play element

more spots for gathering and sitting/relaxing

better lighting to prevent antisocial behaviour

keep Bedford Street home for local traffic only and slow cars down

activate the area using outdoor cinema and community events

use this as a chance to provide more opportunity to get involved in reimagining public space and to be involved in the Pocket Park design/installation

improve bike safety and bike lanes

provide community gardening space

add arts and nature-based sculptures to enhance the local identity

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01 Introduction

Context

In January 2021, the City of Melbourne was successful in securing funding from, the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) to create a new pocket park under the Department's Local Pocket Parks Program. The potential pocket park identified park expansion and streetscape greening in and around the Bedford Street and Courtney Street Reserves in North Melbourne.

The City of Melbourne project team then undertook preliminary project feasibility and preliminary project work to ensure the project could be 'technically' realised under the conditions of the funding. The project team also conducted the policy auditing work needed to ensure that the project helped to advance the strategic goals of City of Melbourne policies such as the [Open Space Strategy](#), the [Urban Forest Strategy](#) and [City North Structure Plan](#).

City of Melbourne was also implementing protected bike lanes in neighbouring Peel Street. As that project changed parking arrangements in the neighbourhood, Council was poised to begin a local area auditing process to scope how comfort, access, connection and safety might be improved for people walking in the area.

As the two projects were based in the same neighbourhood and were both at a point of engaging with shared/overlapping communities, a decision was made to 'link up' the two projects. The result was a shared engagement process to explore 'neighbourhood improvements to our parks and streets' for the area described in Fig. 01. The 'parks' related (in the main) to the Bedford Street Pocket Park component of the engagement and the 'streets' related to this Peel Street (and surrounds) local area audit component.

This consultation report details the key 'parks' findings from this linked up work.



Fig. 01: Neighbourhood map with Reserves (source: City of Melbourne)

How we engaged

The goal of these consultations was to maximise the shared opportunity for residents, workers and visitors to discuss how the feel and function of this local neighbourhood might be improved. Between 28 April and 24 May 2021, this involved approximately 260 people in the following activities:

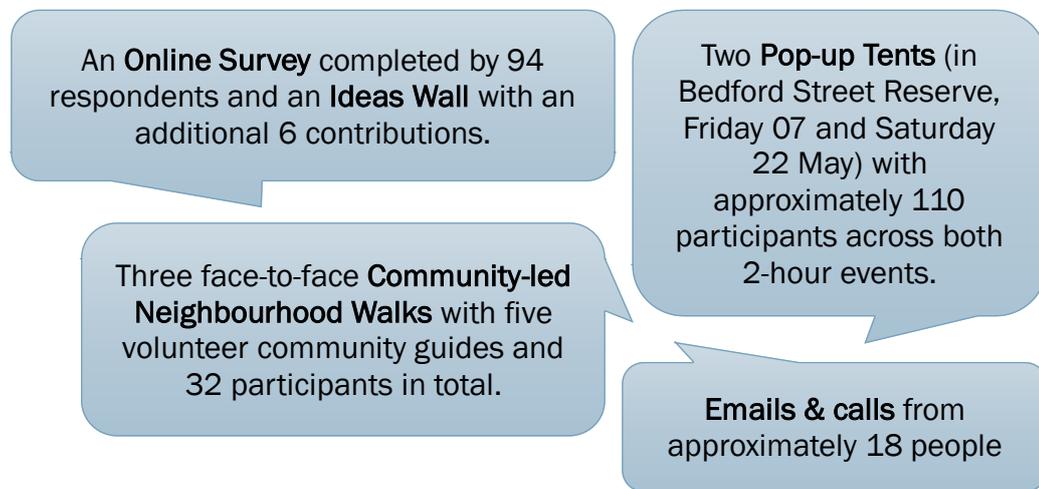


Fig. 02: Summary of the 'joined up' engagement activities

The questions that the City of Melbourne was eager to answer via these shared engagements included:

- Who uses the different reserves, streets and laneways in this area and how?
- What are people's experiences of these reserves, streets and laneways at different times and for different people?
- What are the opportunities to improve: accessibility, activation, place connection, [perceptions of] safety and quantity/quality of open space?
- What priorities do people place on various options to improve access, amenity and safety (perceived and actual)?
- What preferences do people have for mocked up site options (Bedford St Pocket Park-specific) and/or what other suggestions do people have?

The engagement activities were recorded in different formats: the surveys generated quantitative data via the Hive platform on Participate Melbourne and the pop-ups and walks generated facilitator and activity photos and notes that were transcribed and coded in NVivo qualitative software.

The consultations and the findings in this report represent the views of those participating rather than the views or decisions/commitments of the City of Melbourne. The consultation advice is part of – not the sum of – the information shaping the two projects' actions to improve the neighbourhood.

Who participated in this engagement?

From the online survey, which collected demographic data, we know that there was a slightly greater proportion of men (56%) than women (42%) and gender diverse/non-binary people (2%) participating. The bulk of participants (56%) were aged between 26 and 44 years old and a further 30% were aged 45 to 64. Those aged over 65 and those aged between 15 and 25 (8% and 7% respectively) were less well represented in the online engagements. No children under 15 participated in the online survey, though we did see stronger participation by children, young adults and those aged over 65 in the pop-up engagements.

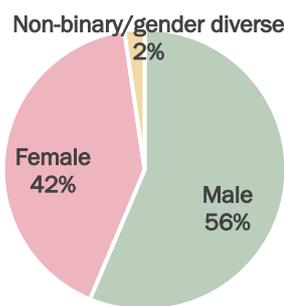


Fig. 03: Gender profile of online survey participants (N=87)

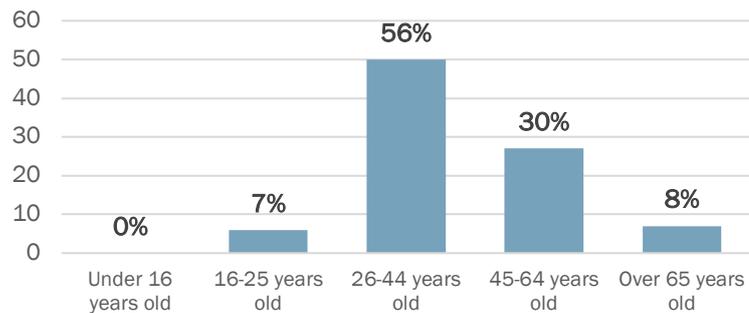


Fig. 04: Age profile of online survey participants (N=90)

Most participants (70%) were neighbourhood residents, workers or students and the remainder lived nearby or regularly visited or travelled through the area. A breakdown of where people lived showed the following:

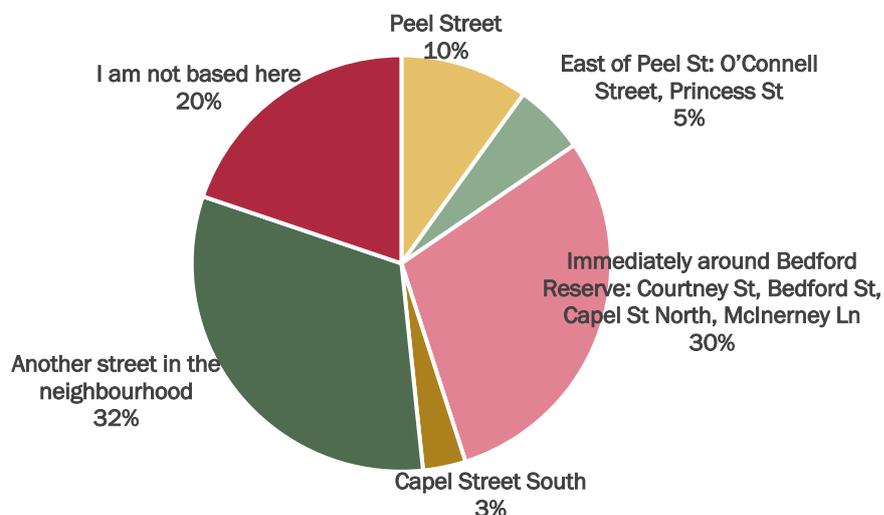


Fig. 05: Where participants lived (N=91)

Reflections on the approach

The methodology was a robust mixed approach and encompassed quantitative and qualitative elements. Participants, especially in the face-to-face pop-up activities, included many who can be sidelined in traditional consultation practices (for example, people from CALD backgrounds, including international students). Others (children, Indigenous Australians and those experiencing hardship such as homelessness) were less well represented in these engagement activities.

The debrief reflections by the project team touched on this limitation. In general terms, though, the City of Melbourne felt that the process participants were, broadly speaking, the people City of Melbourne wanted to speak to in answering the questions of this engagement activity. The smaller number of children involved (as an example) was not viewed as a critical limitation for the amenity and safety concerns being discussed, for example. Council officers were also clear about the value of the feedback provided by the children who did participate in this phase of consultations and about the potential for involving children in future discussions of the more detailed design of the Bedford Street Pocket Park.

Council officers received very positive feedback on the face-to-face activities, including the pop-up activities where the different ideas and options for the Bedford Street Reserve were discussed.



I would like to again express my thanks to Council for arranging this consultation with the community. We have resided (on and off) in the North Melbourne area for the past 14 years and to my memory this is a first. I thought it was very effective and it was wonderful to get to know my neighbours and Council members more.

Local resident/community walk guide, via email

02 Key findings

The following is a summary of the key findings from the various ‘joined up’ engagement activities, focusing on what people said and what we heard about ‘parks’ generally and the potential expansion of the Bedford Street and Courtney Street reserves specifically.

How do people use the existing open space reserves?

The community using the area is varied and includes:

- residents, including a sizeable number of international students
- business owners and workers
- students and staff at St Joseph’s College and Flexible Learning Centre
- shoppers, and those shopping at the Queen Victoria Market in particular
- site workers on construction/development sites
- people traveling through the area

Generally speaking, participants in the engagements were protective and appreciative of the existing Bedford Street Reserve and its part in the local neighbourhood life. They felt that it is an important pocket of green for this local community:



The Park is good and well utilised.

Pop-up participant (M33)



Great pockets of green so close to the CBD.

Pop-up participant

Across these different groups, there are some similar uses of the Bedford Street Reserve area. People enjoy eating/resting (e.g., friends and family having picnics, construction workers having lunch, etc.), recreating (playing badminton is quite popular, for example), moving through and enjoying nature (the trees in the Bedford Street Reserve and surrounds generated a lot of ‘liked’ comments across the consultations, for example, while others mentioned seeing/protecting wildlife as important).

“ *Apartment-living families need this space. Local residents had a Christmas party here. I’d suggest a BBQ.*

Pop-up participant (M33)

“ *It’s really well used. People come for picnics.*

Pop-up participants (M41 + F41)

The uses described by people tend to the more passive recreation activities and, while many people valued these activities, many saw scope for more to happen in the reserves to encourage people to stop and linger, visit, play, etc.

“ *I think the two reserves pictured on the map could really be worked on to make them more active and welcoming public spaces. There’s not really anything wrong with them at present, but I usually just pass by them on my bike. It would be nice to have a reason to stop, or to bring more people to that area. I think having a more dedicated part would add to the attractiveness and character of the area.*

Survey participant (F26-44)

The above quote also highlights the high active travel choices of local residents. Over 90% of the survey respondents reported that they would typically walk in/around the neighbourhood, 34% would cycle and 30% would use public transport. The current and potential uses of the Reserves are oriented to the needs of local residents and those passing by on foot or by bike and this, in turn, would generate more activity and a ‘better neighbourhood’:

“ *It's a very walkable environment so things that would encourage that like improved green space and better walking and cycling facilities would put more people on the street which will lead to a better neighbourhood.*

Survey participant (M26-44)

Finally, the community walks highlighted that people were more ambivalent about Courtney Street Reserve than Bedford Street Reserve, at least as it currently functions. Several people reported that they rarely, if ever, saw people using that area, in contrast to Bedford Street Reserve and/or that it wasn't a spot they used. A few people were confused by its description as a 'reserve', in fact: they thought of it more as a road verge as it had no seating or other facilities and houses a number of utility boxes and poles (Fig. 06).



Fig. 06: Photo of Courtney Street Reserve taken during a neighbourhood walk (source: RedRoad Consulting)

How do people experience the existing open spaces reserves?

In terms of how people experienced the Bedford Street and Courtney Street reserves, these consultations tapped into a range of more general experiences and quite specific examples from those participating.

In the survey and in general terms, people rated the neighbourhood as more convenient and safe and less green/natural, interesting and attractive (Fig. 07). However, even the most positive attribute (the convenience of the neighbourhood) was not rated so resoundingly.

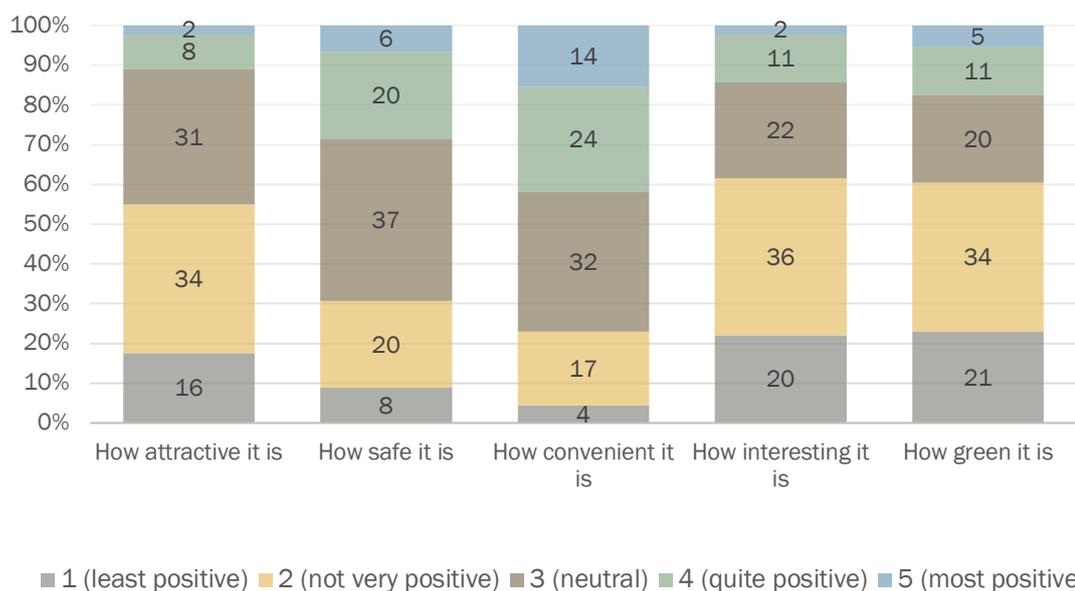


Fig. 07: 'Overall, how would you rate this neighbourhood's streets and public spaces?' (N=91)

The poor rating for 'how green it is' is important to this project and to understanding how these small open space reserves are experienced by the community and what they see as a priority for the City of Melbourne to act on in the area. In short: people are very attached to Bedford Street Reserve because it was a green and pretty oasis in the middle of an otherwise quite 'hard' area with a lot of cars and buildings.

“ *Traffic flow from Courtney to Bedford to Capel is annoying for pedestrians... In saying that, I love this area, the Bedford pocket park is a quiet space with beautiful trees.*

Survey participant (F16-25)

A few people reported negative experiences of the Bedford Street and Courtney Street reserves at night, based on low lighting and/or the perceived 'antisocial' activities of some park visitors (especially late at night). This created a hostile environment for neighbouring residents and for people wanting to walk or cycle through.



The park is dark and dangerous to walk at night.

Pop-up participant (F67)



The park at night is not lit well enough to stay.

Pop-up participant

The other negative experience people had of both the Bedford Street and Courtney Street Reserves was associated with traffic and parking and the impact that the car-dominance had on people's quiet enjoyment of the park space (and on creating any sort of environmental corridor linking to Flagstaff Gardens or other major parks). The traffic volumes along Courtney, Bedford and surrounding streets, the 'rat running', and the supply of parking that was available to non-residents were all mentioned.



There seems to be an unnecessary amount of public space given over to cars and car parking.

Survey participant (M26-44)

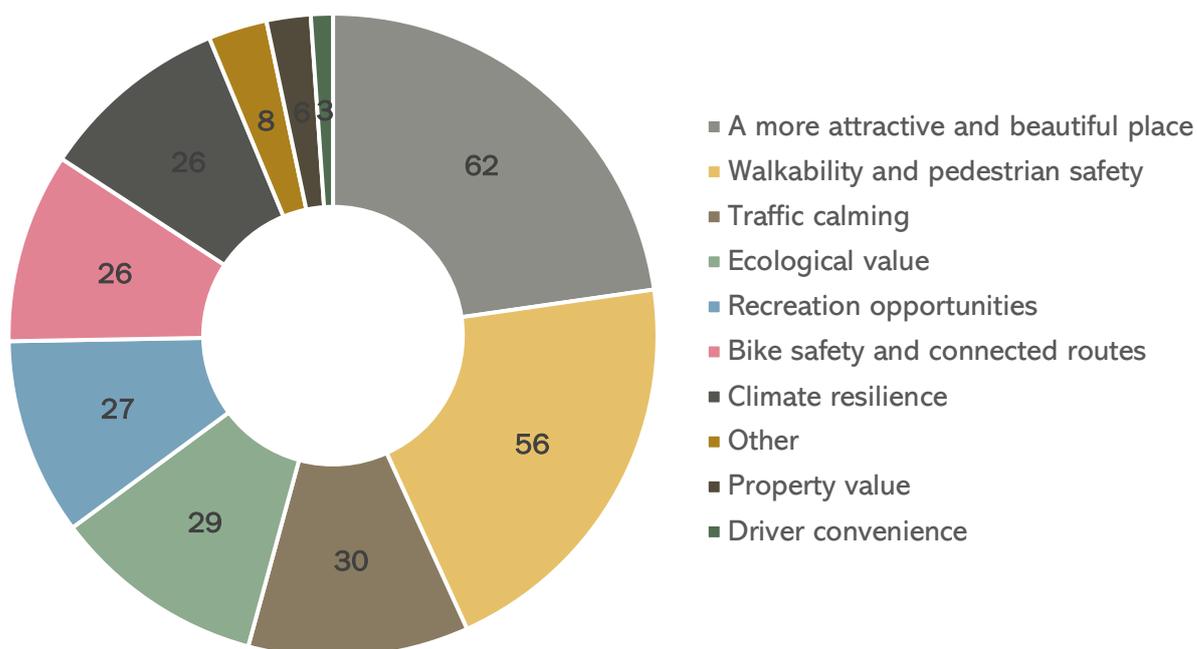


The area (North Melbourne), arguably one of the most walkable neighbourhoods, has very little green space to appreciate on a casual stroll. Balancing green spaces in lieu of parking and cars is long overdue in my opinion.

Survey participant (26-44)

What are the opportunities to improve the open space reserves?

The engagement activities generated a lot of ideas for neighbourhood and open space reserve improvements from participants. The survey provided valuable advice about the ‘vision’ people had for interventions in the neighbourhood more broadly: what people most wanted changes to achieve. This reaffirmed people’s focus on wanting an attractive and beautiful neighbourhood (66% of respondents chose this option as one of their three choices) that was walkable and safe for pedestrians (chosen by 60% of respondents) (see Fig. 08 with summary table).



Response	Total number of responses (N=289)	As a percentage of respondents (N=94)
A more attractive and beautiful place	62	66%
Walkability and pedestrian safety	56	60%
Traffic calming	30	32%
Ecological value	29	31%
Recreation opportunities	27	29%
Climate resilience	26	28%
Bike safety and connected routes	26	28%
Other	8	9%
Property value	6	6%
Driver convenience	3	3%

Fig. 08: ‘What are the key outcomes that you hope improvements to this neighbourhood could achieve?’ (N=94, multiple answers allowed)

Traffic calming (32%), ecological value (31%), recreation opportunities (29%), climate resilience (28%) and bike safety and connected routes (28%) each attracted similar support in the surveying. Retaining/improving property value (6%) and driver convenience (3%) rated very poorly as a goal of interventions while some ‘other’ ideas raised (9%) included:

- off-leash dog park (2 mentions)
- encourage native wildlife/indigenous species/improved landscaping (2 mentions)
- Traditional Owner involvement in planning and development
- better place to play for kids (there are more kids in the area than people realise)
- reduction in drug crime and vandalism

When asked to ‘balance’ different sorts of imperatives (using a ‘slider’ in the survey), we saw responses consistent with the previous discussions: people supported green/natural space over parking/asphalt space (Fig.09), local traffic over through traffic (Fig. 10) and restricted, resident-priority parking over open, freely accessible parking for all (Fig. 11).

Fig. 09, Fig. 10 and Fig. 11 are reproductions of those ‘slider’ responses, with the red bar/dots representing the mean and median responses to each question.

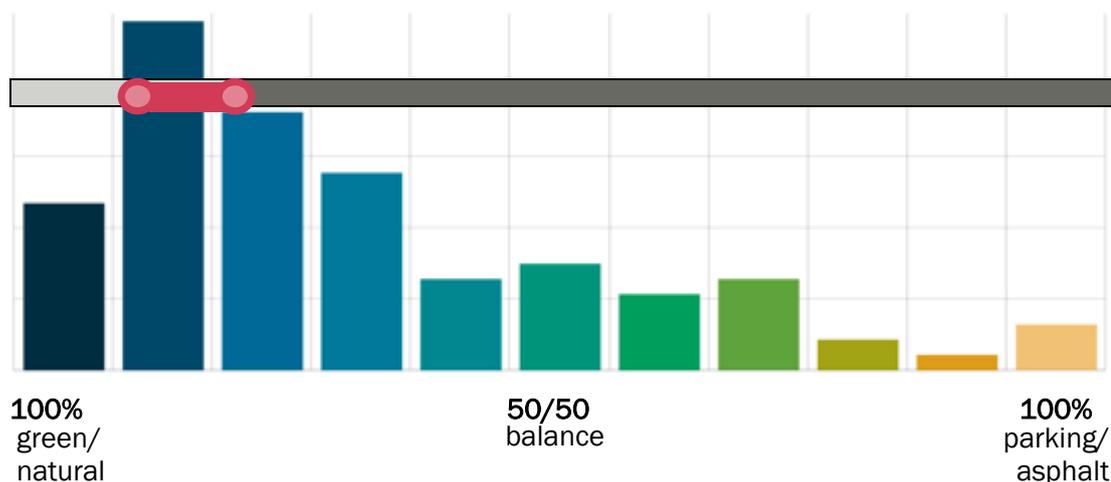


Fig. 09: ‘What is the right balance for the type and purpose of public land in this neighbourhood?’ (N=94 Red slider buttons represent the range between the median and average response)

Fig. 09 demonstrates a clear preference for allocating public space to green/natural space versus parking and paved space in the neighbourhood. This preference for greenery is also reflected in other consultation findings.

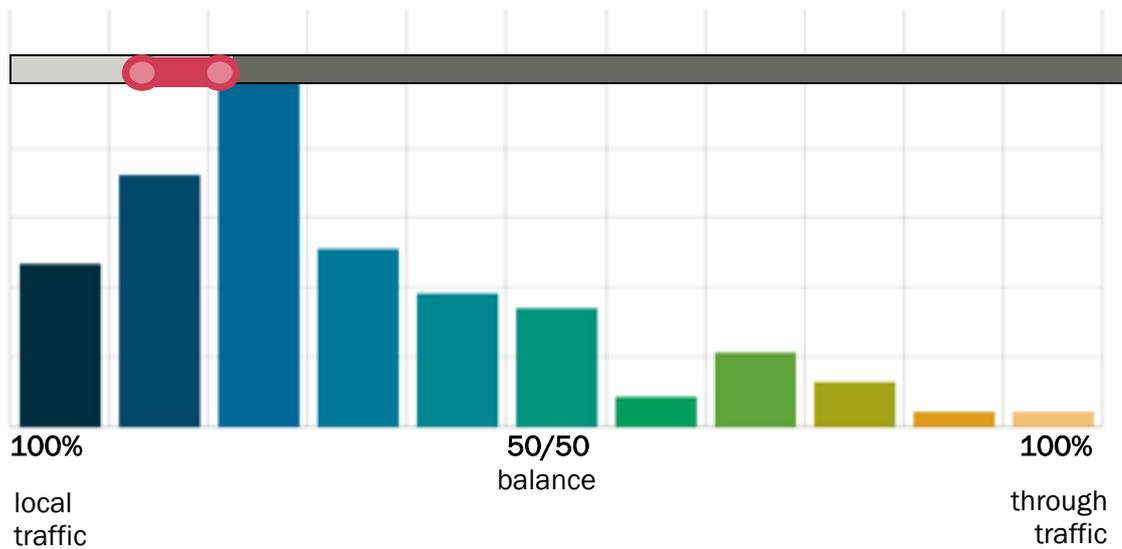


Fig. 10: 'What is the right balance when designing for vehicle movement through this neighbourhood?' (N=94 Red slider buttons represent the range between the median and average response)

Fig. 10 also demonstrates a clear preference for designing roads and traffic management around the movements of local traffic versus through traffic. This preference was also reflected in other consultation findings, particularly with respect to assuring the walkability and cyclability of the area. Finally, Fig. 11 also demonstrated a preference for local priority in parking provision, though this was the least definitive of the 'slider' responses with more spread of responses.

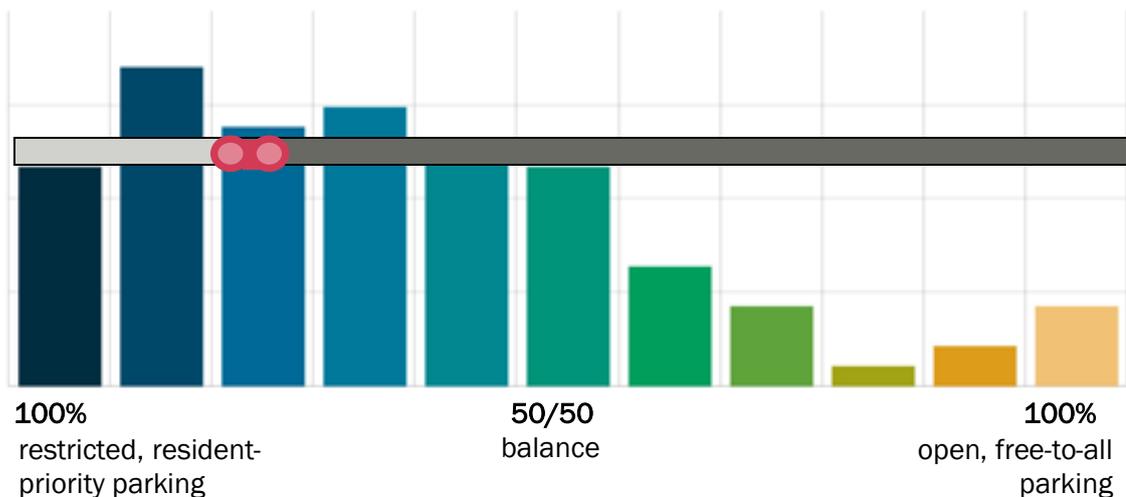


Fig. 11: 'What is the right balance for managing parking around Bedford Street Reserve?' (N=94 Red slider buttons represent the range between the median and average response)

The pop-up activities asked participants to reflect on some proposed Bedford Street Pocket Park ideas (Fig. 12) as well as giving people an opportunity to add their own ideas.

DRAFT BEDFORD STREET POCKET PARK IDEA POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE GREEN OPEN SPACE

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Net increase in green public open space (potentially up to 2700m²)
- Improved use of existing small parks
- Tree planting to increase tree canopy cover by 40% and improve local area cooling
- Improved pedestrian safety by reducing crossing distance
- Net increase in biodiversity through planting
- Improved stormwater retention through increase permeable surfaces and WSUD
- Improved beautification of local park and streetscapes

To enable park creation and streetscape greening, road space would need to be used. Potential changes to adjoining road space might include (to a greater or lesser amount):

- Re-prioritising traffic to local area traffic
- Considering a one-way section in Bedford Street to reduce through traffic rat-running
- Potentially a road closure at Courtney Street (between Capel and Peel streets) to create open space
- Reducing parking while maintaining sufficient resident priority permit parking



The Bedford Street Pocket Park is supported by the Victorian Government through the Local Parks Program.



Fig. 12: Draft-for-discussion Bedford Street Pocket Park Idea Plan for use at the pop ups (source: City of Melbourne)

The range of ideas generated fell into five broad themes, alphabetically listed:

- activation and community connection initiatives
- ecological/nature initiatives
- infrastructure, facilities and lighting initiatives
- street arts and beautifying initiatives
- traffic calming and parking initiatives

Ideas within these theme areas were often quite specific and in response to changes proposed in the preliminary Draft Bedford Street Pocket Park Idea plan. For example, people discussed the proposed changes to the Courtney Street slip lane, reduced parking and the option to turn Bedford Street into a one-way street in some detail.



*I think it is ok to close the Courtney St slip lane
– there is another road.*

Pop-up participant, (F34)

New ideas also emerged from those contributions, including a well-supported call to change the resident parking permit system to prioritise neighbourhood residents. Other comments wove a few themes together, as the following illustrates:



There are opportunities to:

1. Increase biodiversity, especially indigenous flora and fauna; 2. Encourage local community to participate in planting and managing urban greenery, through which a sense of place and community could be fostered; 3. Increase the size of Bedford Street Reserve and connect it with adjacent green spaces.

Survey participant, (M26-44)

The following is a list of the convergent (e.g., commonly heard) as well as some divergent (e.g., rarer but interesting) ideas offered for the Bedford Street Pocket Park and surrounding streets by participants in the community mapping activity of the first pop-up:

Activation and community connection

- more awareness of how to get involved in reimagining public space
- community gardening space (F25)
- Council to landscape the park with community providing input into things like species selection (M80s)
- encourage neighbourhood activity “need other people for comfort and company” (F67); I’d like to see more community activity (M40s)

Ecological/nature

- aggregate the green spaces (M40s); bigger and greener park (F41 + M41)
- increase tree canopy (M33); I like the idea of more trees (M25); more new trees; trees taken out not long ago need to be replaced; plant evergreen trees for the winter (M40s)
- add green and blue infrastructure (M40s); More green barriers for the noise/dust;
- plant more shrubs and bushes and small plants
- more nature and trees around for a “bit of a city + country combination” (M11)
- bird bath (M40s)

Infrastructure, facilities and lighting

- pop up play space/s (flying fox), tree house, human sized chess board (M8 + F8); play opportunities for children; add in some nature-based play element
- more gathering spots (e.g. a gazebo, seating) (M30); more seating – the seats are usually occupied during the day (M41 + F41); more accessible seating (M40s)
- Community BBQ (M38); BBQ
- better lighting to prevent antisocial behaviour
- drinking taps and more plants (M8); water and drink/refill taps (M40s); more bike racks (M30); more bins (F25)
- Could have a Verke (Indian micro shop) selling food/drinks (M11)

Street arts and beautifying

- an opportunity to display outdoor cinema and have community events in public spaces (M33)
- arts and culture, nature-based sculptures (M40s)
- arts installations – add more ‘identity’ to North Melbourne

Traffic calming and parking

- shut Courtney Street altogether as traffic cuts through the neighbourhood (F41 + M41); keep Bedford Street home for local traffic only; slow cars down

- get rid of parking (F41 + M41); reduce car parking around the reserve. Reduce the asphalt (M40s); Less parking, more trees and better bike lanes (M28)
- better bike safety (M8 + F8); better bike lanes (M28); separate the bike lanes from traffic for safety (M11); please charge fair market prices for residential parking permits; more resident parking. It is difficult to find parking on weekends (F62)
- Could close this slip lane and expand green area

What are the priorities for improvement?

The final focus for these engagements was to ask people about the preferences and priorities they held for the different actions that might be taken to expand and improve the Courtney Street and Bedford Street reserves.

The survey results generated some broad priorities for action in terms of what people thought would make the area, including the reserves, feel ‘more inviting and comfortable’ (Table 01) and ‘easier and safer to get around’ (Table 02).

Table 01: ‘What would help make this area a more comfortable and inviting place?’ (N=94, three choices allowed)		
Response	Total number of responses (N=273)	As a percentage of respondents (N=94)
More trees and greenery	78	83%
Larger and more useable parkland	54	57%
More people and activity	42	45%
More public art	27	29%
Less litter and vandalism	20	21%
Better lighting	18	19%
Other	13	14%
Cleaner walls and fences (no graffiti)	12	13%
Security solutions	9	10%

Together, ‘more trees and greenery’ (chosen by 83% of survey respondents as one of their three priorities) and ‘larger and more useable parkland’ (chosen by 57% of survey respondents) accounted for almost half the total number of responses about what would make the area feel more comfortable and inviting. These responses endorse the City of Melbourne’s plan to expand and improve the open space reserves and recommend that they green the neighbourhood more broadly.

‘More people’ and activity’ (45%) and ‘more public art’ (29%) were also favoured. Formal ‘security solutions’ (10%) was the least popular response.

In terms of what would make the area feel easier and safer to navigate, ‘more trees and greening’ (64%) was also the most popular response. So, again, landscaping was seen as a critical response and underscores the reserves expansion as a priority. The second most popular response was ‘more people and activity’ (48%) followed by ‘protected bike lanes’ (44%), ‘ability to see who is around you’ (39%) and ‘slower road speeds’ (39%).

Table 02: ‘What would help make this area feel easier and safer to get around?’ (N=94, three choices allowed)		
Response	Total number of responses (N=273)	As a percentage of respondents (N=94)
More trees and greening	60	64%
More people and activity	45	48%
Protected bike lanes	41	44%
Ability to see who is around you	37	39%
Slower road speeds	37	39%
More even ground surfaces	26	28%
Better signage/wayfinding	15	16%
Modified parking rules	12	13%

To drill down and gather more specific priority feedback, different ideas generated in the earlier stages of consultation were presented to people participating in the second pop-up for a ‘vote’. Participants were given three weighted voting dots and asked to apply them to a range of ‘idea sheets’.

The results demonstrate that people at the pop-ups were most keen to increase the recreational opportunities/facilities, the closure of the slip lane adjacent to Courtney Street Reserve to be reallocated to parkland and active travel) and to reallocate some parking bays around the open space reserves to create more green space/parkland.

Idea	'votes'	Sample comment/s
<p>There is interest in improving the current recreational offerings in Bedford Street Reserve and people have suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBQs • Seating and picnic benches • Casual games areas (for chess, table tennis, badminton, etc) <p>Do you have any other suggestions?</p>	73	<p>(Interactive?) art piece. (F20s)</p> <p>BBQ can attract more rubbish.</p> <p>Sundial?</p> <p>Playing area for kids.</p> <p>Make the benches more suitable for socialising eg. Picnic table.</p> <p>Encourage benches rather than spaces for kids. Have a more even ground for accessibility. (F24)</p>
<p>You are open to the idea of closing the slip lane from Capel Street to Peel Street to create a new green area and expand the overall size of Courtney Street Reserve. However, it would mean that vehicles would need to use Queensberry Street, not Capel Street to turn left into Peel Street.</p>	41	<p>Too much parking loss.</p>
<p>You are open to the idea of taking road space and some parking bays around the Bedford Street Reserve to allow for more greening and open space along the street (especially if resident parking is prioritised for the remaining parking).</p>	41	<p>Get rid of all non-local parking. (M25)</p> <p>Resident permit only parking.</p> <p>We need to split (parking) areas into smaller areas.</p> <p>Permit only parking.</p> <p>So locals can actually park locally.</p>
<p>Lighting in the reserves needs to be improved and placed strategically around seating and pathways to enhance perceptions of safety and reduce opportunity for antisocial behaviours.</p>	38	<p>Radar lights and orange colour to protect birds (they get confused with lights in the middle of the night). (M60s+F70s)</p> <p>Park is not inviting at night. (M30s)</p>
<p>You'd like the gravel landscaped areas to be replaced with low height (hardy, native and water sensitive) planting. The benefit of this change is that there would be more planting in the street, however there may be an increase in maintenance costs.</p>	32	<p>Understorey is super important for native species- having bushes and smaller plants instead of just grass/gravel means more habitat and more greenery for people and kids to enjoy!</p> <p>Something like Howard & William St Reserve would be good: dense planting feels safe and private, not exposed, with grass and play equipment. (F74)</p>

Idea	'votes'	Sample comment/s
<p>A reduction in through traffic in Bedford Street would be welcome. Narrowing Bedford Street to one direction (Adjacent to the reserve only) would reduce traffic speed and volume. However, vehicle access to the adjacent properties would be from Peel Street only.</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Like wide medians at Nth but NOT one-way section! (F30s)</p> <p>Traffic calming (speed bumps) but NOT one-way (M30s)</p> <p>Courtney St medians are a waste because you can't use them. Make them narrower, move traffic lane over, expand park. (M30s)</p> <p>One way would make getting home very convoluted!</p>

03 Conclusions and suggested actions

To test community views about a possible expansion of the Bedford Street and Courtney Street reserves and to respond to feedback regarding the delivery of a new bike lane along Peel Street, North Melbourne, the City of Melbourne initiated a 'joined up' community engagement process to explore 'neighbourhood improvements to our parks and streets'.

Between 28 April and 24 May 2021, approximately 260 people were involved in online surveying and 'ideas wall' discussion, two face-to-face pop-up tents and three community-led neighbourhood walks.

Through these consultation activities, people shared a range of experience of and expectations for their neighbourhood, focusing on:

- activation and community connection issues and ideas
- ecological/nature issues and ideas
- infrastructure, facilities and lighting issues and ideas
- street arts and beautifying issues and ideas
- traffic calming and parking issues and ideas

Priority ideas for actions were both developed by the participants in earlier activities and then 'voted' on by those taking part in the final activity.

The conclusions of this engagement process are suggested by the findings and discussion of the report. In summary, however, the suggested key actions by these consultations include:

1. The City of Melbourne should feel confident that **greening the neighbourhood and park** as a very strong priority. This includes expanding/connecting the two existing open space reserves into a pocket park, planting more trees and shrubs and replacing existing and proposed gravel landscaping with native, low maintenance greenery.
2. The City of Melbourne should **close the Courtney Street slip lane** and design the reclaimed spaces so as to connect and link the two existing spaces (Bedford Street Reserve and Courtney Street Reserve).
3. The City of Melbourne should **expand the community facilities offered in the park**. Popular options include: additional seating, a community BBQ, community gardening and gaming, dog-friendly facilities, additional bins (recycling) and added pedestrian-scale lighting.
4. The City of Melbourne should **support local community initiatives and events** that build community connection and activity in the reserves.

5. The City of Melbourne should **investigate new resident parking permit options** (e.g. a 5a/6a zone for this section of North or West Melbourne) that would prioritise parking for local residents around the new pocket park.
6. The City of Melbourne should consider how **some of the above actions might be implemented in a manner** that can involve interested community members (starting with those who have expressed their interest via these engagements).

The City of Melbourne will need to consider this consultation information and the above suggested consultation actions in the context of several information streams to inform the development of a concept plan for the Bedford Street Pocket Park. The consultation advice above, therefore, is part of – not the sum of – the information that will inform the project’s decision-making.

Implementation of some actions may also be beyond the scope of the current Bedford Street Pocket Park project and timelines. However, such actions can be explored through other programs or services operated by the City of Melbourne or others.