

Reimagining University Square

Phase 3

October 2015



Summary of community engagement:

University Square Draft Concept Plan *August 25 – October 5, 2015*



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

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BACKGROUND

University Square is located in Carlton – an historic inner-city suburb. Significant change continues to take place in this education precinct including rapid population growth, changing demographics, an increase in low and high-rise apartment dwelling, a new Metro line and stations and more demand on existing public open space.

The City of Melbourne is transforming University Square in partnership with the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Government. Two previous community engagement phases have already been undertaken as part of a four-phase process to inform and guide the project. This report relates to phase 3 of the engagement process.

The phase 3 Draft Concept Plan responded to previous community feedback and suggestions and set a new direction for the future of University Square by proposing the creation of a bigger park, planting a new generation of trees, giving priority to pedestrians, preserving open lawn areas, injecting life and activity, and responding to a changing population and climate.

The Draft Concept Plan was divided into six precincts: Barry Street, Leicester Street, Pelham Street, The Plaza, The Green and the Water Terrace. Participants were asked to comment on the plan through the Participate Melbourne website, at workshops or emailing the project team.

The phase 3 Draft Concept Plan community engagement ran from August 25 – October 5, 2015.

REPORTING

The Reimagining of University Square (Phase 3) engagement process received comments from 149 participants. These were collected through the Reimagining University Square website (115), workshops (9) and emails (25). The Reimagining University Square website received 4,806 views from potential consultation participants, with around 3% of these providing comments.

All submissions have been included within the synthesis and analysis that follows. The analysis is structured by the *precinct* areas that the plan is divided into, plus *trees*, *general* and *other* topics.

All comments have been read, analysed and synthesised according to the points made. The *topics* that structure the analysis are consistent with the points that the City of Melbourne (CoM) used to describe the key interventions for each precinct in the engagement information provided to participants. Cases where there has been a relatively small amount of comment on particular topics have still been included in the analysis in order to present the relatively small amount of comment on those topics.

Most comments provided by participants included multiple points and so contribute to the discussion on a number of different topics. This has resulted in the total number of comments across all topics being significantly greater than the number of original (whole) comments received.

In reading, analysing and synthesising participants' comments, every effort has been made to be as consistent as possible in grouping points made into the most logical topics. In completing this exercise some judgement calls were made, and if completed again comments could be categorised slightly differently. This is the nature of this kind of analysis. The goal though, has been to deliver a thorough and objective presentation of the range of submission points and the opinions raised within different topics.

The number of comments made on each topic are provided to indicate the relative amount of opinion provided on particular topics. These numbers should be treated as indicative, as a different summary approach could have yielded a slightly different result. It is felt though that the numbers provide a consistent indication of the weight of thought on particular themes and topics making a comparison possible that wouldn't have been the case if numbers were not included.

Direct quotes are included from participants to illustrate specific points, italicised and indented from the margins.

The following descriptors have been used throughout the discussion to consistently describe the number of comments which make similar points.

"Few/some" – 3-5 comments

"Several" – 6-10 comments

"Many" – 11-20 comments

"A large number" – 21-30 comments

The use of specific portions such as a "one participant", "couple" for two participants, "half", "three quarters", "two thirds" have also been used when appropriate.

At the start of each section, the text that was provided to participants during the Reimagining University Square engagement process to inform and prompt comments is included. Also, a *word cloud* presents the 20 most common words used by participants when commenting on each precinct. The size of words in each cloud is relative to how frequently that word was used.

The introduction to each section is followed by a summary of the key points made by participants in commenting on that section of the plan.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following discussion presents the most commonly made points by participants during engagement on the University Square Draft Concept Plan.

- There was a significant number of generally positive comments, including support for the overall plan. The greatest identified negative outcome to achieve the positive change was the loss of established Elm trees, the detail of which is discussed in the relevant precinct sections below.
- The Green (139) received the most comment of all the precincts; followed by The Plaza (86), Leicester Street (63), Barry Street (62), Water Terrace (34) and Pelham Street (33).

The Green

- Close to half of the comments disagreed with removing the trees along the central path because of their shading, heritage, historical, biodiversity and aesthetic values.
- There was also opposition to removing the internal paths in order to create a larger lawn. It was believed that if the path was removed, desire line tracks would be created by park users who would still walk across the park. Participants preferred the current layout because the smaller zones were believed to facilitate more passive activities and separate activities from each other.
- Those who supported the changes to The Green liked the idea of uninterrupted large open space, but generally still wanted a centre path retained, even if it was narrower than the current path.

The Plaza

- The provision of a basketball half court attracted a large number of comments. Support and opposition for its inclusion was relatively evenly balanced. Those in support of the half court commonly said it would be popular, contribute physical and mental health benefits and make good use of the space. Those in opposition of the half court commonly stated there were adequate facilities elsewhere and that this was the wrong location for such activity – the court would disrupt the peace and greenery, be inconvenient for those who have to walk around it, and would look tacky.

Leicester Street

- A relatively large number of participants commented specifically on bike lanes. Many requested a two lane cycleway as this would be more functional for multiple types of commuters as opposed to the proposed one lane. Many participants also stated the cycle lanes should be separated from vehicles and pedestrians.
- Narrowing Leicester Street was generally supported, although some preferred retaining a two-way road, because it would slow traffic better.

Barry Street

- Slightly more comments were in favour of closing Barry Street than maintaining the status quo. The key arguments supporting the closure of Barry Street were that this would enable better connections with the surrounding area, would increase the number of people in the area which would in turn increase security, and that the land would be put to more people-friendly uses, rather than vehicle use. The key arguments opposing the closure were that it would discriminate against disabled people who need parking close to the University and that personal security risks would increase due to a loss of passive surveillance from vehicle users.

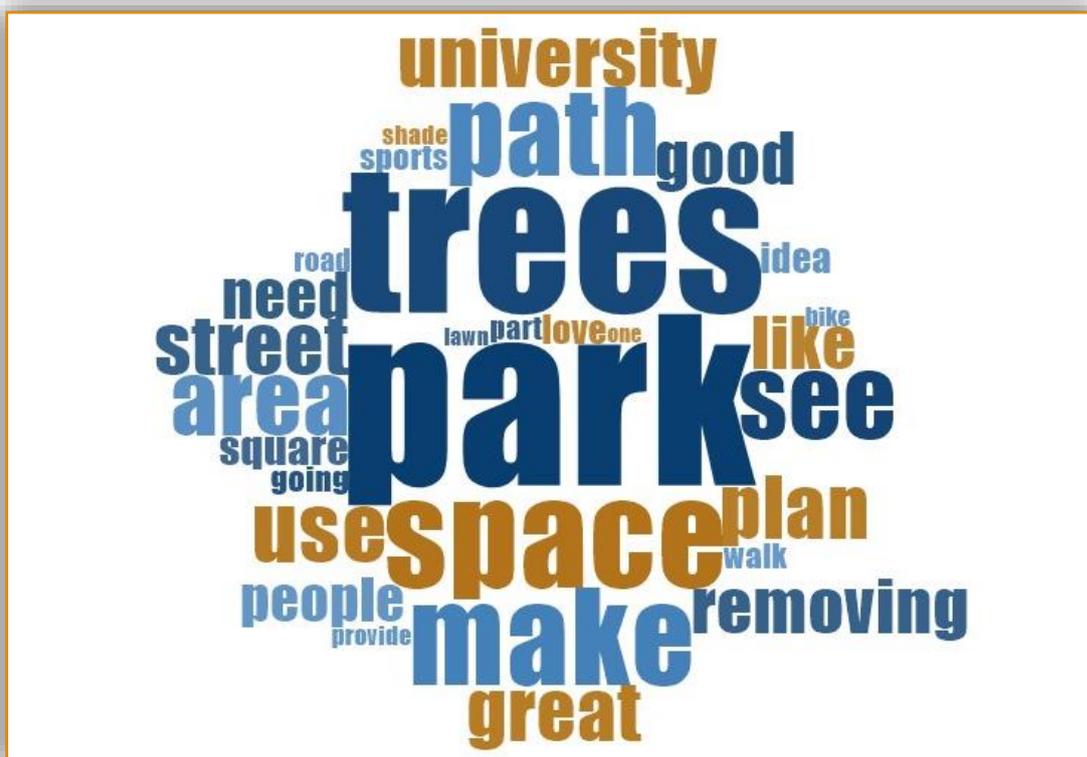
Water terrace

- The proposed Water Terrace concept was supported in around two thirds of the comments made on the proposal. The water feature was supported as it was thought to be cooling, good for dipping feet into and good for bird life in hot weather. Alternative views on the water feature included referencing Bourverie Creek or taking the form of a long stream/pond so that it was more natural than artificial. Those who opposed the water feature expressed concern about drought, water restrictions and it being a novelty for children. A few requests were also made to consider indigenous values.

Trees

- The removal of trees was the most commonly discussed across-precinct topic. Many wanted the existing Elm trees retained, particularly those in the middle of the park. A number of reasons were given for keeping them, including: shade, heritage value, habitat for animals and aesthetics. Shade provision was a key issue. It was felt by many that the park would not be used if shade wasn't present, particularly in the middle of the park in summer months.
- There was a mixed response to replacement tree types. Some thought Eucalyptus trees would be a great option because they grow in the environmental conditions whereas others were more in favour of deciduous European species, particularly Elms that let light in during winter and shade in summer. Other tree varieties were also suggested including fruit trees.

Word cloud of the most common 30 words across all Precincts and topics



FEEDBACK TYPES USED AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Summary

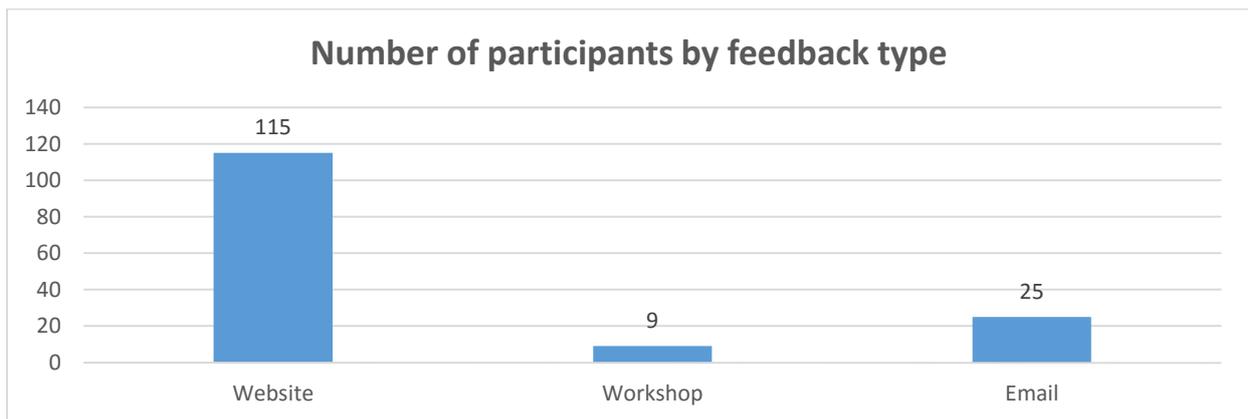
The website was the most common feedback medium for both number of participants (77%) as well as the number of comments (70%). The number of website visitors (4806) versus feedback from respondents (115), was 2.39% of website visitors. Participants were predominantly workers (57%), students (41%) and residents (34%), and in the age brackets of 26-35 (27%) and 18-25 (23%).

Number of participants and types of feedback

Number of participants

This chart presents the number of participants across the three different feedback types: *Website posts*, *Workshop comments* and *Email submissions*. It is based on the unique names that were collected from participants. In total:

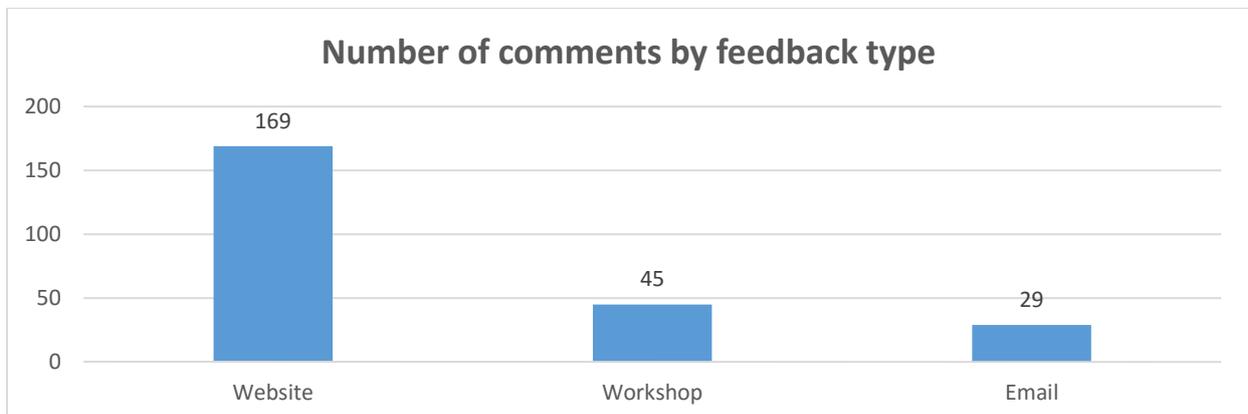
- 149 participants provided comment on the draft plan;
- 77% provided comment through the website, 6% via workshops and 17% via emails.



Number of comments

Participants were able to provide multiple comments on different parts of the plan via the website and workshop portals. This chart presents the number of individual comments that were received via the three different feedback options. In total:

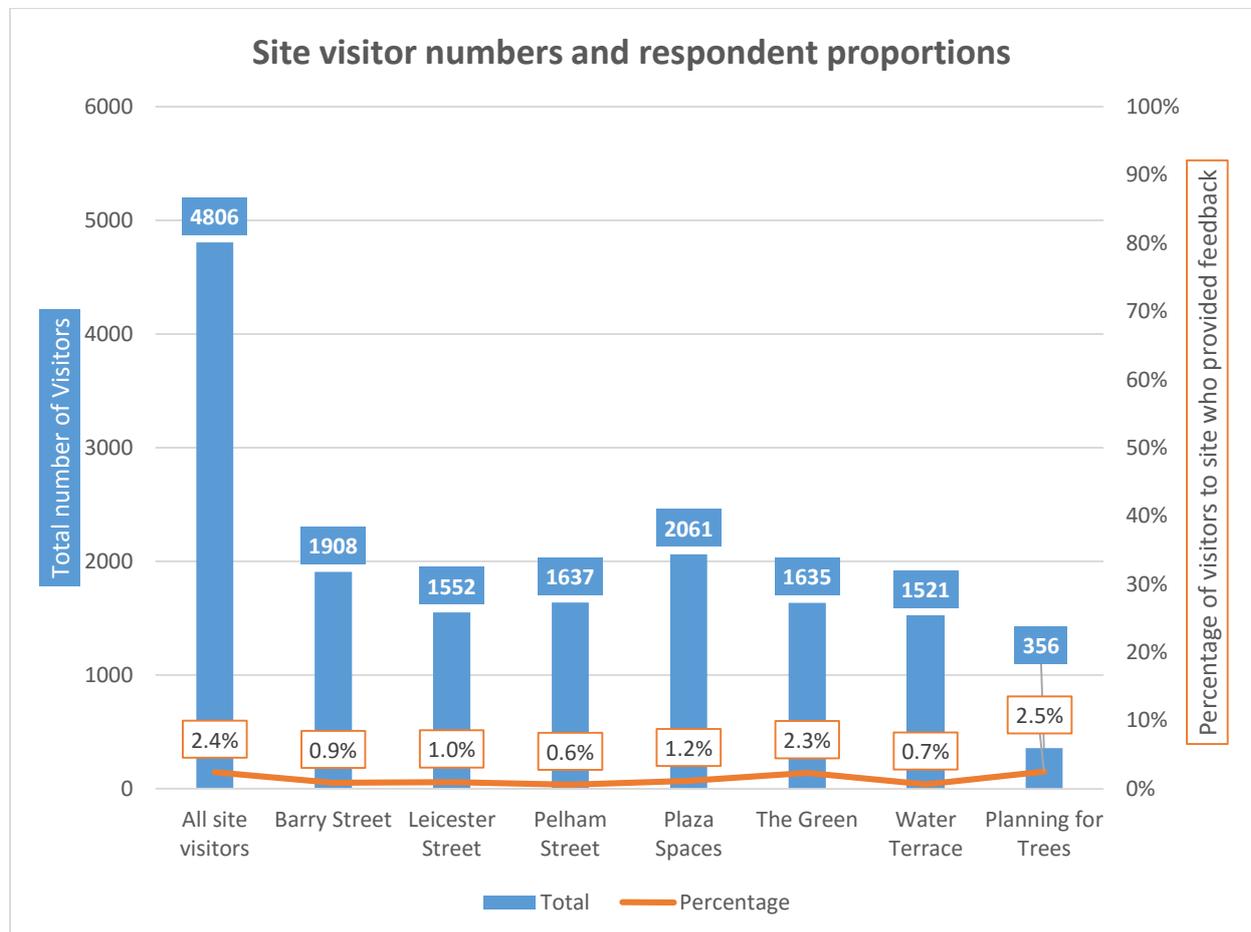
- 243 comments were received on the draft plan.
- 70% provided comment through the website, 19% via workshops and 12% via emails.



Proportion of visitors to *Participate Melbourne-Reimagining University Square* website who made comments

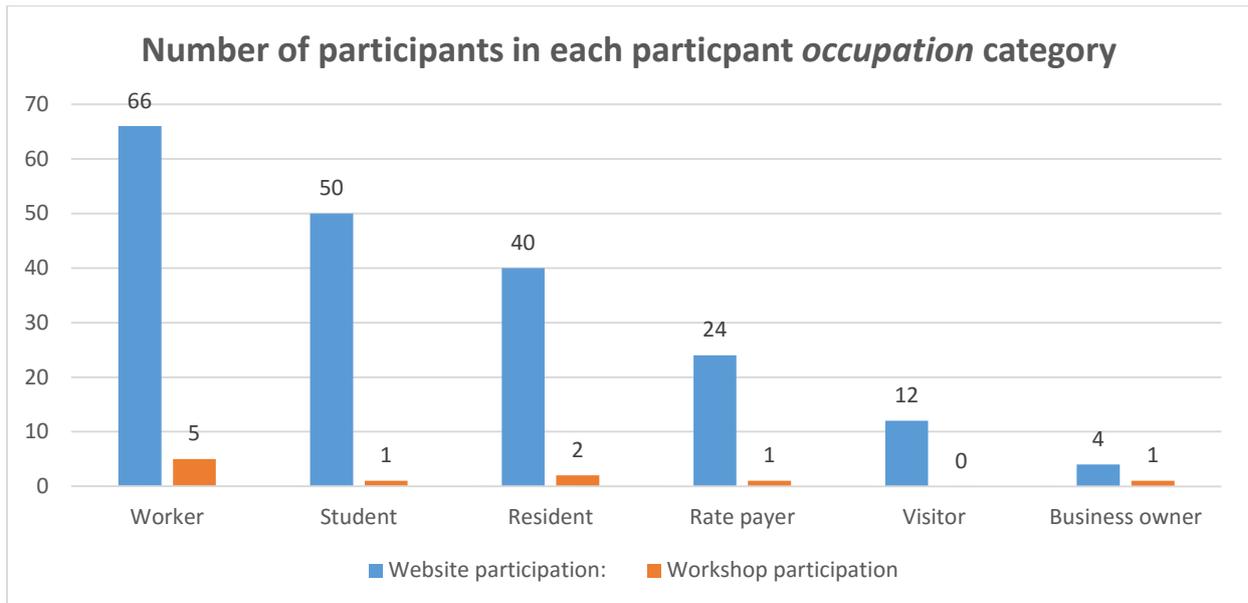
Website analytics make it possible to present the proportion of total visitors to the *Reimagining University Square* consultation web pages who made comment on the draft concept plan. There were 4806 total visitors to the site. Feedback was provided by 115 site visitors, which was 2.39% of visitors. The chart below presents the total visitors to the site overall, individual page visits and the proportions who commented. In total:

- 4806 individuals visited the site and of those 115 (2.4%) provided comments.
- Planning for trees (2.5%) and The Green (2.3%) received the highest proportions of comments, relevant to the number of visitors to individual pages.
- Pelham Street (0.6%) and Water Terrace (0.7%) received the lowest proportions of comments, relevant to the number of visitors to individual pages.
- Over 97% of visitors to the *Reimagining University Square* consultation web pages did not provide comments.

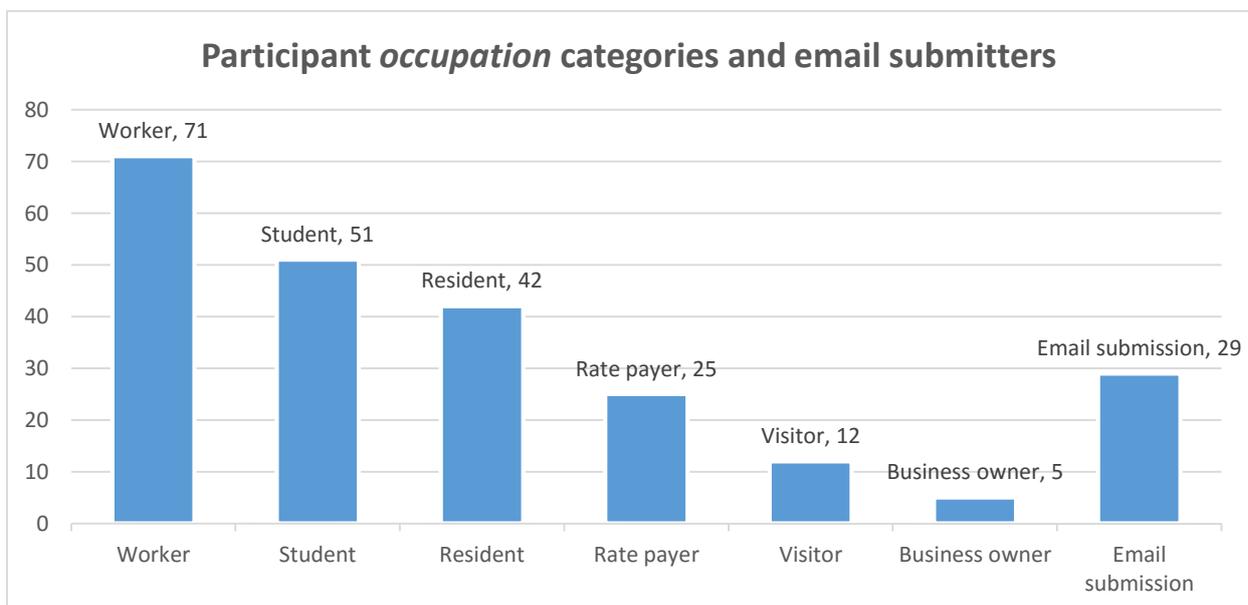


Types of City of Melbourne participants

The following chart represents the number of participants who identified with being part of each of the six *occupation* categories participants were able to select from. This has been calculated from the number of participants, not the number of comments made. Some participants identified with more than one category. Only website and workshop participants provided this information, so this data includes only those two groups, not email participants. The categories and their percentage of the total were: *Worker (57%), Student (41%), Resident (34%), Rate payer (20%), Visitor (10%) and Business owner (4%).*



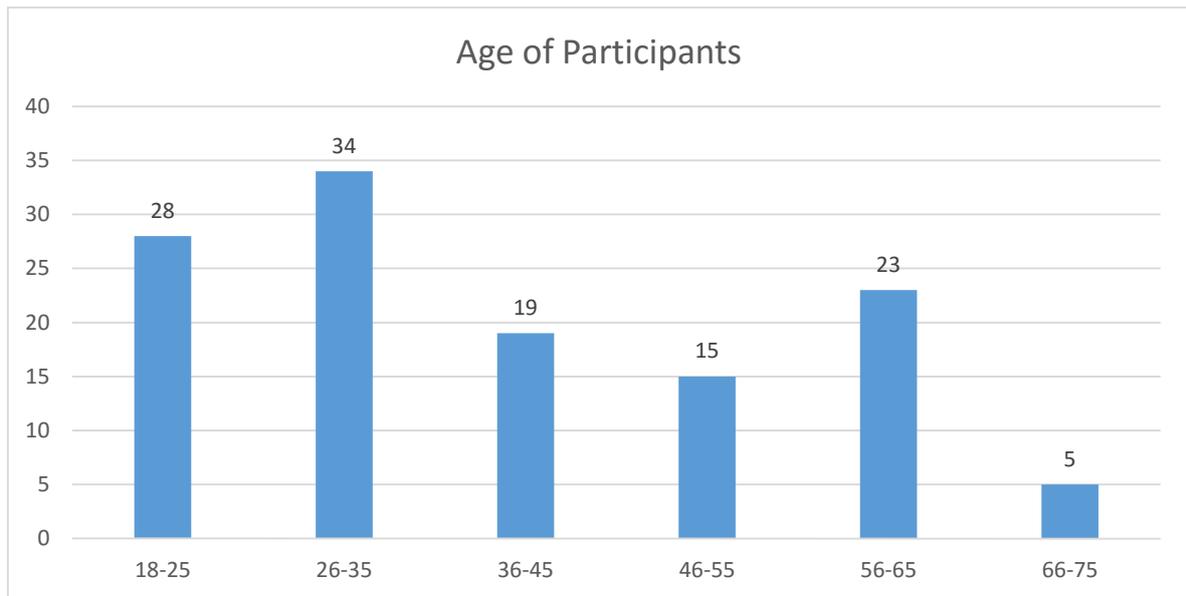
The chart below includes an extra section, *Email submissions*. This is because the submissions received via email did not include any of the *occupation* information that the *Workshop* and *Website* data had captured, so it is unknown which category these participants belonged to. They are presented in this chart in order to comprehensively present all participants who provided comments.



Age

The following chart presents the age proportions of the participants who provided age details. Again, this information is taken only from the *Website posts* and *Workshop comments*, as no age details were collected the *Email* participants. Age percentages were:

18-25 years (23%), 26-35 years (27%), 36-45 years (15%), 46-55 years (12%), 56-65 years (19%), 66-75 years (4%)



BARRY STREET – NEW PARK SPACES

By closing Barry Street to traffic and car parking, it is possible to increase the size of University Square by expanding the lawn and creating new park spaces in place of a road. The existing expanse of asphalt that is dominated by vehicles and hard edges will be transformed with spaces for:

- Extensive new tree planting and gardens including productive horticulture.
- Seating, outdoor dining, communal tables and movable furniture.
- Small events, food vans and public art.
- New public lighting that supports activities in these spaces.
- Better connections to surrounding buildings (space for emergency vehicle access retained).



[Ctrl + Click FOR MORE INFO](#)

Summary

62 comments

- Closure of Barry Street to vehicles received the greatest number of comments for this precinct. Slightly more comments were in favour of closing Barry Street than maintaining the status quo.
- The most commonly made points in support of closing Barry Street were:
 - The connections between the surrounding areas would improve;
 - Increased use will improve security;
 - Land would be put to more people friendly uses, rather than vehicle use;
 - Displaced car users could park somewhere else or use public transport.
- The most commonly made points in opposition to closing Barry Street were:
 - Closure will discriminate against the disabled who require parking close to the University;
 - Security risks will increase due to a loss of passive surveillance from vehicle users;
 - It is difficult to find alternative transport to private vehicle use, and so there is a subsequent need for parking.
- The facilitation of food vans in the area was supported, as this would attract people.
- Participants were in favour of planting more trees in this area.
- There was support for increasing the size of University Square along Barry Street.

Key topics

Discussion

Support for closing Barry Street (14 comments)

Comments in this topic supported the closure of Barry Street to traffic and car parking. The main reasons for supporting closure were that this would enable better connections between the surrounding areas, that an increase of people would increase security and also that the land would be available for more people-friendly uses.

Several comments argued against the need to keep the area open for vehicles. One participant stated that students and teachers should not need to drive to university as, in their opinion, it is well-served by public transport. They stated that if this was not feasible, they could pay to park in a commercial garage. Another participant made the same suggestion, mentioning that the underground carpark was “very convenient with lifts and multiple exits”, although more expensive.

A couple of participants commented about the need to reduce vehicles in the Barry Street area. One participant stated:

Glad to see this space is being returned to people. Cars already control so many of our public spaces. Let's celebrate a little victory in returning the space to people!

A few comments argued against the point that removing parking spaces would increase security issues and stated that a more pleasant environment would attract more people and actually make the area safer.

[A further discussion of security issues across the whole plan is discussed in the *Personal Security* topic in the *General* section.]

Two participants suggested replacing lost Barry Street parking with angled, rather than parallel parking, on Berkeley Street. They stated that spaces should be mainly for students who need to drive, should be affordable and for three or four hours.

A comment was made that disabled parking was needed, however the participant acknowledged that the whole road didn't need to provide this type of parking.

Concerns about closing Barry Street (10 comments)

In contrast to the comments above these participants opposed closing Barry Street to traffic and parking.

The most common arguments were that this would discriminate against those who are disabled and require parking close to the University. Increased security due to passive surveillance from those who use cars was another key argument opposing closure of the street to traffic. One commenter made the point that the changes should be made after there are more apartments in the area and subsequently more night time activity. This quote is consistent with a few other comments:

The car parking facilities on Barry and Leicester Street should be maintained at the current levels, as most Melbournians outside the boundaries of the CBD and inner-suburbs do not have access to PT and cannot travel vast distances with bicycles to the

CBD/Parkville from our homes. Removing parking would discriminate those who are disadvantaged, the elderly and the disabled.

A few participants stated that it is necessary for many University students and staff to use their own vehicle because public transport or cycling didn't adequately meet their needs, so parking spaces need to be retained to accommodate them.

Another participant said simply that the loss of parks would need to be compensated by parking spaces somewhere else.

One participant was concerned with the convenience lost by removing a thoroughfare.

One comment was made about there being no need to further expand the park, as in their opinion, it does not currently operate near capacity during the day.

**Events and activities
(7 comments)**

A few comments supported food vans in the area as they would bring people out to enjoy the city. Providing power outlets to reduce pollution from idling engines was suggested.

Food vans are always good, only problem is that many of them sit with their engines idle to power the van, and spew out gross pollution all around them. Perhaps a power outlet could be provided for vans to plug into, for a small fee? Thus, reducing the need for them to have their engines running.

Some respondents supported the provision of sporting opportunities, including: bike parking; ping pong tables and; half basketball courts.

One participant suggested a pavilion.

One participant stated that it was a good idea to not shut down the park for events.

A comment was made that it would be a "tragedy" if the square were to become available for an open sports ground and carnival and circus uses, as these events do not require permits. The participant suggested people using Royal Park and Princes Park for these activities instead.

**Trees and Gardens
(7 comments)**

A couple of general positive comments were made for planting trees or plants on Barry St and a few comments raised some questions or concerns.

The comments in favour of planting trees stated that they would be better than asphalt and would look great.

One participant suggested having a community garden in the area. Another proposed having fruit trees or a "huge vegie garden". One participant raised the question about who would maintain the productive trees.

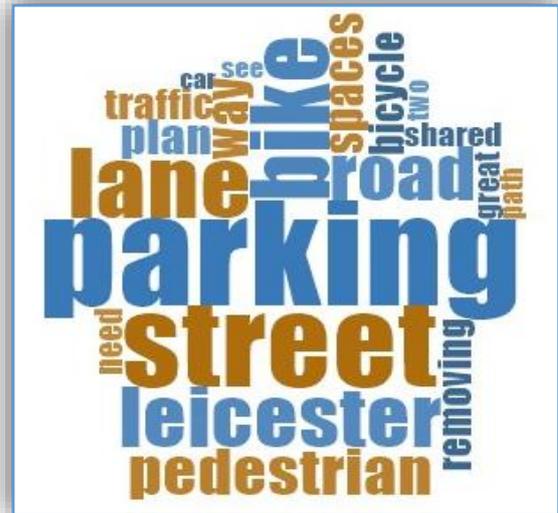
One participant thought that placing trees directly in front of Barry Street would not be aesthetically pleasing, but suggested having low plants and grass instead. Another comment was made about planting deciduous trees close to the buildings, as it gets dark very

	<p>early in winter, and “a canopy of trees even closer would make it worse”.</p> <p>[Ctrl + Click ALL TREE COMMENTS]</p>
Expansion of University Square (5 comments)	<p>Four of the five participants who commented on expansion of the park thought it was a good idea. The points made were quite general and stated that more green space would improve the area.</p> <p><i>The plan is extremely exciting and will contribute greatly to the multi-functional use of this important public space as well as add more green to our otherwise hard edged urban landscape.</i></p> <p>One participant made the point that they see no need to expand the park as it isn’t currently used to capacity during the day and the parking provided serves three University precincts at all hours.</p>
Outdoor furniture (2 comments)	<p>One comment was made stating that the addition of fixed and moveable seating was good, as currently the grass was too damp for people to sit on.</p> <p>Another comment queried how “stealable” the moveable furniture would be.</p>
Public lighting and safety (2 comments)	<p>Two comments were made regarding lighting in the area. One stated the area would be well lit and another that proposed lighting indicated that there would be night events as well as day events.</p>
Connections to buildings (2 comments)	<p>There were two comments made about the proposed changes to the Barry Street precinct ensuring better connections to the surrounding areas.</p> <p>One participant hoped that the University would create more “active edges” within its existing buildings that align the eastern and western edges of the square, rather than maintaining the “blank walls and vast expanses of glass”. Another stated that closing the street to traffic would help connections with the surrounding areas.</p>
Generally Positive (9 comments)	<p>There were several comments from participants who generally agreed with the proposed changes to the Barry Street precinct.</p> <p><i>I love the whole concept, and love the proposed Barry St changes.</i></p>
Other comments, suggestions and examples (4 comments)	<p>A small number of other suggestions were made.</p> <p>One comment suggested a pedestrian/cycle path on Barry Street to allow cyclists to get to and from the FBE building on Barry Street.</p> <p>One comment stated that UOM should contribute to security.</p> <p>One supporter of the removal of road space on Barry Street suggested having a similar treatment for “North Melb, East Melb, Carlton, etc”.</p>

LEICESTER STREET – ROAD WITHIN A PARK

Reducing the width of Leicester Street and maintaining only northbound traffic, allows us to retain essential bus services while still making University Square bigger and creating a road within a park. Leicester Street will change from a 30 metre wide expanse of asphalt and parked cars to a road within a park that:

- Can be easily crossed by pedestrians.
- Caters only for northbound traffic in a new 40 km/h speed zone.
- Has a dedicated bike lane.
- A new shared perimeter park path.
- Creates space for a new generation of park and street trees with smaller, more intimate lawn and garden spaces – connected to the newly expanded central lawn.
- Maintains loading zone and drop-off parking at the northern end of the street, close to the Grattan Street intersection.



[Ctrl + Click FOR MORE INFO](#)

Summary

63 comments

- Narrowing Leicester Street was generally supported, although some preferred retaining a two-way road, because it would slow traffic better.
- There was support for bus use of the road, with some feeling buses should have exclusive use.
- There were a relatively large number of comments about the provision of a bike lane. The most common request was for the bike lane to be two-way as this would be more functional for multiple types of commuters. A relatively large number of participants stated the cycle lanes should be separated from vehicles and pedestrians.
- Some participants were concerned about the removal of parking spaces from Leicester Street. Some stated that they should be retained, while others thought that they should at least be replaced elsewhere. The needs of specific groups were identified in support of retention, including: disabled, elderly, late night working students, non public transport users and local residents. A few participants specifically stated that they supported the removal of the parking spaces.
- There was general support for planting trees and developing a 'road within a park'.

Key topics

Discussion

Road Changes, direction and speed zone (19 comments)

Generally, participants were in favour of narrowing the road, but some preferred retaining a two-way design rather than reducing to one lane. Three participants sought to retain Leicester Street as a two-way street. One participant noted that one-way traffic encourages fast traffic. While another commented they would rather the speed limit was 30kmh as 40kmh was not slow enough and would create noise and pollution within the park area.

A few participants commented on bus services, generally supporting them continuing to use the street. Three participants acknowledged the importance of the bus service retention, and another desired a bus-only thoroughfare. One participant queried whether buses could be removed and instead use Bouverie Street though they also noted they understood the argument to retain the service. Concern was also expressed by one participant at the potential increase in journey time for buses.

Great also to see continuation of the bus route through this area.

Two participants made specific comments as to road width (one suggesting 6m wide, the other 5.5m wide), both seeking a two-way road that had a slow-speed residential feel. Two participants expressed concern at the inconvenience of removing a thoroughfare.

One participant suggested closing Leicester Street further down to encourage a cycle and pedestrian link to the CBD.

Bike Lane (14 comments)

Participants supported a dedicated cycle lane and strongly argued for this to be two-way.

Many participants generally stated they wanted the cycle way to be two-way (north and south-bound). Having two-way cycle lanes was argued to assist in facilitating easy access between the University and south-bound precincts and provide a secondary route for those students who did not want to commute in fast-paced commuter lanes. Concerns were expressed that having only north bound lanes would mean that cyclists would cycle the wrong way up Leicester Street, or use the footpaths, both of which are dangerous. One participant suggested the cycle way could be located on the west side as there are no intersections and another suggested it could be located on the other side of the trees.

Many participants agreed that the bike lane needed to be dedicated. Physical divisions such as a median strip (like Swanston Street) or a marked dividing lane was desired by several participants. One participant commented the bike lane should be high quality. A long submission from the Bicycle Network noted their support for a “designed road space” which included a designated bicycle space. They noted this was important due to the risks associated with sharing a road space with high-frequency busses and potentially increased traffic volumes as a result of the Barry Street closure. The Bicycle Network suggested consideration of off-road infrastructure. Their submission can be read in full.

Two participants noted the reduction of cycle treatment provision should the Leicester Street proposal go ahead. This, and a number of the points above, are well captured in the following comment:

Currently, there are dedicated bike lanes in both directions on Leicester Street towards Grattan St - meaning the current proposition would result in reduced cycle treatment provision - a poor outcome that would contradict the objectives of CoM's Bicycle Plan. Similar to the other comment, this is a fantastic opportunity to include a contraflow bike lane for south bound bike riders, in addition to the northbound bike lane, OR establish a physically separated bidirectional bike path. Either treatment option should be physically separated from the vehicular traffic lane, and not be a shared pedestrian/ cycle treatment. If dedicated, separated treatments aren't accommodated, cyclists will simply ride on the footpath...

One participant commented that Leicester Street is not a through route for people on bikes so the design of the street should reflect that with cyclists sharing the road and “sharrow markings” on the street for this.

**Car parking
(9 comments)**

Participants who specifically discussed car parking on Leicester Street were mostly concerned about their removal.

Several participants argued that car parks should be retained and a few suggested new ones are created to replace those that are being removed. It was commented that the parks are needed for the disabled, elderly, students working late at night (for safety reasons especially after trams have stopped), users who are not able to practically use public transport or cycle, local residents and the disadvantaged (as these car parks are among the cheaper ones).

A few participants noted their agreement with the overall vision for Leicester Street but also expressed concern around removal of car parking and sought to keep a handful. A few also commented on the current inadequacy of car parking in the area as it is.

If you're taking away essential all-day parking spots next to the park, have a plan to give us more parking spots. The parking situation at university is ridiculous as is, and there are plenty students who can't afford to live nearby and need to drive to university. And don't say 'just go to the underground carpark' because they fill up by 9am with all-day parkers every day. PLEASE. Don't just take the parking spaces away.

A couple of comments specifically supported removing the parking spaces. One participant acknowledged the arguments which opposed removal but noted they understood the bigger picture and believed removal would serve the greater good:

This is a great idea and I think would be welcomed by many. Sure, there is not much parking in the area but I think as long as there are a few disabled spots and maybe a couple of 1-2hr parks retained for people needing for whatever reason to access the buildings by car, those wanting all day parking can find it elsewhere.

**New green space and
trees (7 comments)**

Several participants agreed with the proposal for a “road within a park”, accompanied by new greenery. Flowering local trees and shrubs

	<p>to encourage local birds were suggested and candy floss trees and plane trees discouraged.</p> <p>One participant disagreed with planting trees in front of buildings on Leicester Street as you should be able to see the facades, they suggested low plants and grass.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I love the idea of expanding the size of the park to encompass the roads!</i></p> <p>One participant did not want to see the removal of any of the existing healthy, mature trees. One participant’s support was contingent on retaining parking.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Ctrl + Click ALL TREE COMMENTS]</p>
Shared Perimeter Path (1 comment)	One person commented their concern for pedestrian safety in a shared perimeter path.
Loading zone/Drop-off parking (1 comment)	<p>The following comment was made expressing concern and seeking clarification about the changes to the loading zone/drop off parking:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Here at Graduate House we have a residential college of 120 postgraduate students and visiting academics per night with at least thrice daily pick and drop off of passengers on airport shuttles going to and from the airport or to train stations. Next door too (and further south), the Melbourne Business School has accommodation for people attending their many courses, coming also from around Australia and the world. Please clarify that the loading zone and drop-off parking at the northern end of the street will continue to enable air-port shuttle, taxis and disabled car drop offs (for our more senior members visiting regularly).</i></p>
General positive (7 comments)	<p>There were several generally positive comments and agreement with the concept for Leicester Street.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I think this is an excellent proposition and will make Graduate House and the Business School much greener.</i></p>
Other comments, suggestions and examples (5 comments)	<p>A range of <i>other</i> comments were made.</p> <p>Two participants commented on lighting; one stating “re-lit – safety” and the other noting their preference for LED lighting.</p> <p>One participant stated “renewable energy”.</p> <p>One participant suggested including provision for skateboarders such as “grindable edging similar to the new Neil Street Reserve” or “small skate-able obstacles scattered throughout”. It was argued this might help draw skaters away from other locations but by having small obstacles, wouldn’t attract large groups. Consideration of pedestrian interaction to ensure it was conflict free was also pointed out.</p> <p>More street furniture such as benches was desired by one participant.</p> <p>One participant commented “Be aware 9A precincts will be impacted resident ratepayers”.</p>

PELHAM STREET – PARKFRONT AND BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR

A new park front is planned for the Pelham Street perimeter with better access and connections to surrounding streets and buildings. The focus will change from the existing central path ramp to new entrances at Leicester and Barry Streets and new shaded spaces that encourage people to meet, gather and explore the broader spaces of University Square. Key changes include:

- Removal of the steep central path and crossing.
- Generous entranceways at the corner of Pelham and Leicester Streets, and changes to the road alignment including the removal of the roundabout.
- The creation of seating walls and raised garden areas that form spaces for meeting and gathering.
- Feature plantings of tall Eucalypts, connecting with the pre settlement landscape.
- Modification of the existing Pelham Street median to create a storm water retention planting swale featuring new indigenous trees and understorey plantings.
- The creation of a green link with Lincoln Square by extending the central median on Pelham Street and removing central parking in Pelham Street between University and Lincoln squares.



[Ctrl + click FOR MORE INFO](#)

Summary 33 comments

- This precinct received a relatively small number of comments. Overall, there was support for developing a green link.
- A few participants made specific comment on the details of road design. This included retaining a few car parking spaces in specific places and the heights of road surfaces in specific places.
- A small amount of support was provided for eucalyptus trees, swales, meeting areas and improved access.
- There were a few comments in favour of retaining a central path.

Key topics Discussion

Green Link creation and removing parks (5 comments)

Three participants supported the green link. One participant noted it would make it more welcoming, and another noted car parks are “an eyesore and a poor use of public space”.

Extending the Pelham St median strip is a great idea. If this requires the removal of some carparking then that is fine by me...

	<p>One Melbourne Business School member sought “special consideration to be given in ensuring that at least two car parking/drop off zones are made available in very close proximity to the Schools main entrance, being the entrance closest to Pelham Street”.</p> <p>One other participant disagreed with the removal of the car parks as it would be “inconvenient”.</p>
Entranceways and road changes (4 comments)	<p>Two participants made reference to considering cyclist and pedestrian safety when redesigning the roundabout and entranceways. One participant suggested removal or redesign of the Leicester and Pelham Street roundabout and raised pedestrian crossing on all legs of the Leicester/Pelham intersection to give them right of way and increase safety.</p> <p>Two participants commented on the speed humps – one seeking their removal as they are annoying and the other querying whether they will stay.</p>
Central path (4 comments)	<p>Two participants commented the central path should remain. Suggestions for path design included “slightly narrowed, replaced with better surface materials and nicer plantings”; and paved not sand, as the wind blows it up.</p>
Planting Eucalypts (3 comments)	<p>Three participants agreed with the proposed planting of Eucalypts in the precinct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Love the idea of tall Eucalyptus plantings - great to spend time among tall trees.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Ctrl + Click ALL TREE COMMENTS]</p>
Swale, storm water and plants (2 comments)	<p>One participant agreed with the water harvesting initiatives.</p> <p>Another participant suggested planting larger trees in the median strip and having “passively water garden beds”.</p>
Meeting areas (2 comments)	<p>One comment suggested having more working/collaborative space to help transform the square into a meeting space between the various University buildings. They elaborated that by doing so, people would be drawn into this space and other events could be introduced, including markets, outdoor festivals and university sports.</p> <p>Another participant suggested a secondary gathering/transit zone.</p>
Better access and connections (2 comments)	<p>One participant said that they were really pleased with the plans to re-work the entry to the park, as it would reduce the wind.</p> <p>Another participant warned that by adding steps this would hamper less mobile pedestrians. They recommended ramps to counter this problem.</p>
Generally positive (4 comments)	<p>There were a few general comments that supported the changes. One suggested that extending the Pelham Street median strip is a “great idea”.</p>
Other comments, suggestions and examples (7 comments)	<p>Two participants made comments about bicycle lanes as seen in the cross-section visual. Both supported separate bike lanes. One participant specifically sought separated lanes 2m wide, both directions linking Pelham Street to Elizabeth Street. On a similar topic, another participant suggested installing more bike locks as the current ones fill up quickly.</p>

One participant suggested the median plantings for east and west of University Square to be like those on Queen St in the CBD (planter box, two parking spaces, planter box etc).

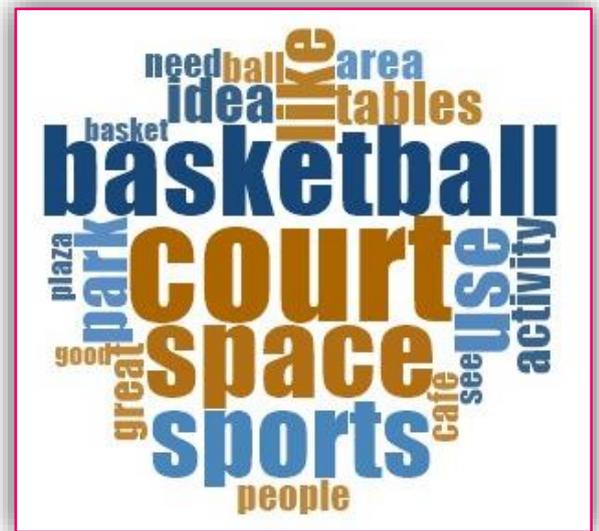
Another participant suggested a grandstand.

PLAZA SPACES

You told us that the existing plaza spaces above the Grattan Street underground car-park did not work. These bleak, uninviting spaces with failed vegetation and little activity made it useful only as a space to walk through.

A reimagined plaza has been designed to become the heart of University Square featuring:

- Diverse trees and gardens.
- Activities including a recessed basketball half-court, table tennis and chess.
- Communal tables with Wi-Fi and charging points.
- Barbecues and picnic tables.
- New shelters, central raised lawn areas and shade.
- An outdoor garden café with facilities to borrow outdoor furniture and sports equipment for use within the park.
- The potential for renewable energy generation and new public lighting that supports the activities within this space.



By locating the type of activities you wanted to see at University Square on the existing built form of the plaza, the open lawn of 'The Green' will be preserved.

[Ctrl + click FOR MORE INFO](#)

Summary

86 comments

- The provision of a half court for basketball attracted a large number of comments. Support and opposition for its inclusion was relatively even.
- The main reasons for supporting the inclusion of the court were:
 - That it would be popular and well used;
 - There are physical and mental health benefits from sport activity;
 - The court will make good use of the space.
- The main reasons for opposition were:
 - There were adequate facilities elsewhere already and this was the wrong place for this activity;
 - The court will disrupt the peace and greenery of the area, be an inconvenience for those who had to walk around it and look tacky.
- Utilisation of the court and plaza space for a variety of sports/games was sought. The inclusion of table tennis tables was suggested.
- There was mixed support for a cafe, with a number of suggestions and considerations for what this might look like provided.
- Increased shade, shelter, trees and gardens were generally supported.
- The proposed facilities, renewable energy and lighting were generally supported.

**Basketball
(23 comments)**

The comments supporting or opposing creating a half-court basketball court were relatively evenly split. Some additional comments suggested a more multi-use approach for activities.

Those supporting the proposed court liked the idea of promoting physical activity, connectivity, stress release, positive energy, space activation and fun. Several participants commented they thought the court would be popular and well used especially as there were not many courts in the vicinity. There was disagreement that the court would dominate the space or spill onto neighbouring activities which happens with some other ball sports. Two participants sought a full court instead of a half court.

I think the basketball court, particularly, will be well used. No reason why it should impact on the people "chilling" on the grass: it's well contained, and will give some "energy" and sense of fun to the area. So important to promote physical activity to combat stress and promote connectivity. Not everyone relaxes by resting quietly, so it's great to provide lots of options.

Those opposing the proposed court argued there were adequate facilities on campus (sports centre, nearby parks); the sport would interrupt the peace and serenity of the area; the court would look "tacky" and be a waste of money; that people would need to inconveniently walk around the game which would make the area less open; there isn't space or it is in the wrong place and that sports facilities are "gendered" and basketball in particular is height discriminative. Some preferred the space to be green. Some preferred other sports over basketball, such as table tennis.

The Plaza area is too cluttered and higgledy-piggledy. There are perfectly adequate sporting facilities on campus - a basketball hoop is ridiculous.

Three participants suggested making the area more multi-use, rather than just having a basketball court.

**Other sports
(13 comments)**

A range of sports additional to basketball were suggested as options for the area.

A few participants spoke generally about wanting a variety of activities to be available, rather than having only basketball facilities. These participants requested multipurpose facilities and a mix of line markings such as volleyball and netball as well as slots for poles and nets that could be hired.

Good to have a variety of activities. It should make for a more vibrant environment.

Four comments were made specifically requesting table tennis facilities. One participant urged not to go with the gaudy bright coloured tables, but to go with simple concrete tables as they would be much more timeless and durable. Another participant suggested having multiple tables as it would be frustrating if all tables were taken.

A few other suggestions were made by individual participants: cricket nets; chess; "Klop"; croquet. The participant who suggested Klop and croquet thought more relaxing and low key activities should be provided.

One participant disagreed with sports facilities more generally noting they have "gendered use" and the space should be a "peaceful oasis".

Cafes and equipment hire (9 comments)	<p>Overall there was a fairly even split between support and opposition for a cafe.</p> <p>Two participants argued a café was not needed as there were plenty in the vicinity already and better tables and seating were instead sought.</p> <p><i>Not sure we need yet another cafe in this space, there are coffee options close by, would be good to see a free space with tables etc, not being dominated by a cafe business, ie. keep as a park, not a retail space.</i></p> <p>One participant noted that the café idea is “risky” and another noted the space needed to “feel like it belongs to everyone and not patrons only”. A couple of comments offered general support for a café.</p> <p>Suggestions for the space included: CoM maintaining control over fit out to ensure quality; consideration of a Pizza shop instead of a café; bean bag lounge chairs like State Library; a “pop up feel” like House of Cards Truck, Crepe place on main campus or the Grub Food Van in Fitzroy and an indigenous garden with a “garden café/coffee shop”.</p> <p>One comment mentioned waste and recycling logistics. Another participant sought Frisbees to be included for hire use.</p>
Shelter and shade (5 comments)	<p>A few comments were made generally about needing more shaded or sheltered areas.</p> <p>One participant suggested having a canopy over the top of parts of the garden to make it an “all weather” attraction.</p> <p>Another participant stated that they would like to see more done to reduce the heatsink effect.</p> <p>[Ctrl + Click ALL TREE COMMENTS]</p>
Trees and garden (4 comments)	<p>These participants generally supported more trees and gardens and made some suggestions. One suggested more trees planted on the north side (but no palms) and another suggested a botanical garden would be good to attract bees and bird life.</p> <p>One participant suggested an indigenous garden and canopy attraction:</p> <p><i>I would have liked to have seen the top part of the Square be used to create an indigenous garden with a garden cafe/coffee shop. A canopy over the top of parts of the Garden would make it an all weather attraction. The indigenous garden in this prominent position would underline the significant connection of indigenous people to this land for the University and wider community.</i></p> <p>Another participant suggested engineering constraints related to 1.2m planter boxes.</p> <p>[Ctrl + Click ALL TREE COMMENTS]</p>
Facilities (BBQs, picnic tables, WiFi) (5 comments)	<p>These comments discussed a small number of facilities that could be provided.</p> <p>A few participants supported the provision of BBQ and picnic/table facilities (specifically long communal tables with charging points). Having such facilities was noted to facilitate get-togethers and events. One comment suggested there was generally a need for more seating.</p>

	<p><i>I love the idea of picnic tables, chairs, shelters, bbqs, and lounge spaces and agree that the current use of the space is not great.</i></p> <p>One participant commented about not needing wifi access in the area, as the population has an “obsessed dependency” on electronic devices and should just enjoy the open area and natural environment.</p>
Renewable energy and public lighting (4 comments)	<p>Renewable energy was supported by two participants who also noted that solar panels can double as shade and shelter when wet.</p> <p>One participant suggested having LED lighting and ensuring the area is well lit, while another asked if there would be night lighting.</p>
Generally positive (6 comments)	<p>There were several generally positive comments regarding the Plaza changes. For example,</p> <p><i>This is a very good re-use of the existing dismal space.</i></p>
Generally negative (1 comment)	<p>The one generally negative comment was to just leave the square the way it is because development would be a waste of money.</p>
Other comments, suggestions and examples (13 comments)	<p>There were a range of <i>other</i> mainly one-off ideas suggested, or questions raised about the Plaza.</p> <p>Three participants expressed concern about pedestrian and cyclist access across Grattan Street, noting that it needed to be improved. One participant suggested more needs to be done to enable foot traffic and suggested lowering the road slightly and having a walkover.</p> <p>Two participants suggested having toilet facilities as they are “essential for an activated park”.</p> <p>Additional suggested facilities included: bike parking to utilise the existing hard surfaces; cigarette bins (or a smoking ban); car parks are a necessity because of close proximity to the university; and CCTV or “blue phones” with a direct line to security to address safety and security for those walking through at night.</p> <p>The remaining comments were made on a variety of topics by individual participants. One participant sought the space to be kept small so as to not be intimidating for people, another stated “wintergarten”.</p> <p>One participant questioned if waste collection and infrastructure would come under Melbourne University maintenance.</p> <p>Another sought clarity around utilisation of the North-East corner and the transition between the plaza and the park – “change in level? Permeability?”.</p> <p>Other comments were that the Plaza is too cluttered and higgledy piggledy and the space needs to be small and facilitate the ability to have in-depth academic conversations, also that there seems there would be no space for a farmers market.</p>

THE GREEN

The strongest message we received was to preserve the lawn area at University Square.

The lawn area has been preserved and made larger and more usable. Changes to The Green include:

- Increased lawn area achieved by the removal of the existing central and diagonal paths and expansion to the existing kerb line.
- New perimeter paths within the Leicester Street and Barry Streets expanded park to become new pedestrian thoroughfares for access to adjacent sites and buildings.
- The relocation of the Temperance fountain to the Pelham Street entrance to the park.



[Ctrl + click FOR MORE INFO](#)

Summary

139 comments

- The Green was the most commented on precinct. Almost half of the comments on The Green disagreed with removing the trees along the central path because of their shading, heritage, historical, biodiversity and aesthetic values.
- Almost one third of the comments strongly disagreed with the removal of the central and diagonal pathways. The main reasons for this opposition were that walkers would cross the park anyway which would result in worn down *desire line* tracks and the removal of them would be a great inconvenience. Several suggestions were made for improving the proposed central crossing including a variety of ideas for materials used in construction.
- There was some opposition to significant changes to The Green in order to create a larger lawn, particularly the internal changes (removal of paths and trees). Participants preferred the current layout because the smaller zones were believed to facilitate more passive activities, as well as separating activities from each other. It was also stated that with the extended perimeter area there would be enough space for users without removing the paths. Some believed the changes would result in the loss of a historic space.
- Those in support liked the idea of uninterrupted large open space, but generally still wanted a centre path retained, even if it was narrower than the current path.
- Extending the perimeter path was generally supported, though not as a replacement for the central path.
- A few queried what will happen to the central fountain.

**Trees
(49 comments)**

Nearly all of these comments disagreed with removing the trees along the central path.

Many comments stated how beautiful the trees are and the aesthetic appeal they create in the area. Many participants would be sad to see them removed. The quote below includes a number of points that were common views of many participants.

The loss of the line of trees in the centre of the park will greatly diminish the value and aesthetic of the park. The avenue of trees in the centre of the park is one of its greatest assets, and also serves as an important role in shading and offsetting the summer heat. Removal of the trees for a large lawn I feel would be retrograde step and likely require greater water use in drought to keep a bare field of grass alive.

Many participants objected to the shade that would be lost with the removal of the trees, because shade makes it possible to use the space on sunny days. Several participants stated that the park would be used less with reduced shade, especially in the summer months. The point made in this comment was frequently made.

...the complete loss of shade trees from the middle of the the lawn is aesthetically and functionally a retrograde step in my opinion.

Preserving the heritage values of the trees were also important to several participants. This is one of their comments.

These have important heritage significance in formerly gracious Victorian streets where so much damage has been done to heritage buildings

Biodiversity values were also identified. A few participants also queried how birds and wildlife would be dealt with given the removal of the trees.

A few comments were made about not wanting the additional open space that removing the central trees would create. A few participants thought that there was enough space currently either side of the trees for activities. A few participants said that by creating the open space, it would make the park “boring” and a “downgrading of the space”.

I believe that cutting trees to make a park look “open” is one of the least environmentally decision a council could make. It simply does not make sense to me. Looking around to other squares and parks you will see that the most beautiful ones and best utilised are those that have small open areas with great variety of trees and plants.

A few participants liked the trees because they neutralised the sound of the traffic. One participant suggested replacing the Elm trees with indigenous trees that were similar aesthetically.

This is the beauty of historic Melbourne...not everything that is old should be cut down, replaced, prettied up.

A few participants suggested there should be a farewell service for the trees if they are removed.

[\[Ctrl + Click ALL TREE COMMENTS\]](#)

Opposed to crossing path removal (31 comments)

These comments disagreed with removing the paths which cross The Green. The most commonly mentioned reason for not removing the crossing path was that pedestrians would create a “worn area”, “goat tracks” or “desire lines” through the centre of the park, connecting the shortest distances. Just over half of the comments in this section made this point.

...and I agree with others who state that a worn area will end up diagonal as people walk the usual path.

Participants stated removing the path would be an inconvenience for pedestrians, particularly during rain as the grass can get muddy and boggy and the perimeter pathway is inconvenient. It was noted by a few participants that the pathways are used by a large number of people heading in a variety of directions.

...for most part of the year - whenever it rains - and this is Melbourne, so that is quite a lot - the grass gets quite boggy in some parts and if you were to remove the footpaths the park would be more of an obstruction rather than a place to walk through and enjoy.

The pathways, while being practical in nature, were also observed to also be a “nice walk”, a chance to walk away from cars and noise, and a great space for children to ride scooters and learn how to safely ride bicycles.

The removal of the path itself does not align with the needs of those who surround it.

A few participants made reference to the historical nature and significance of the paths, noting that they are an integral part of the Square and “the spirit, history and (an) essential part of the law school”.

Three participants disagreed with the reason for removing the paths – they liked the current configuration of pathways as it encouraged passive recreation and also served to separate leisure users from crossing from one zoned area to another. It was thought there was enough lawn area currently on each side of the path for activities. Related to this, it was stated that the current design facilitated passive rather than active recreation that would come with a bigger space, and this was considered desirable.

Crossing path suggestions (7 comments)

Several suggestions were made for improving the proposed central crossing path changes.

Two participants suggested a single path through the middle of the park; another suggested making the pathways narrower; one participant suggested replacing it with “crossways midway and further up”; and another suggested a planned network of crossing paths and making it into a “proper quadrangle” designed for crossing as well as a venue for temporary outdoor community activities.

Various suggestions were made as to the materials of the central crossing path: bluestone paving, compacted sand, gravel, sandstone, light coloured rocks and smooth cobblestone.

**Larger usable lawn
(24 comments)**

Around two thirds of these comments opposed significant changes to this area to create a larger lawn, particularly the internal changes (removal of paths and trees). Around one third were generally in favour of the changes, although some of these still wanted a centre path retained, even if it is narrower than the current path.

Around half of the comments opposing the changes argued there would be sufficient park/lawn space on either side of the path, particularly if the area is widened on the perimeter. For some, the divisions in the current design meant that more activities could be separated from each other and so not interfere with the neighbouring activity. One participant suggested that the area should be intentionally divided into separated spaces for particular activities to take place within. This was one comment.

The existing avenue of trees down the centre of the square is worth keeping- it enables more shade, and it helps create three areas in the square once it's all covered with grass. As a member of a uni sports team who trains on the square on a regular basis, it would be ideal to keep some sort of separation so that other users don't interfere, and vice versa.

Additionally, a few participants expressed concern that the space would lose its history and sense of place should it be turned into open lawn. It was commented that the park is a “hallmark” of the area and had a “lovely historic feel”. It was argued by two participants that open lawn would be a downgrade from the status quo.

The current park provides sufficient lawn area for the area's needs, and the park is a hallmark of the area. Changing it so drastically will mean that the space is just another boring park. The paths and the trees should be retained

Three participants disagreed with the proposed “usable” nature of the lawn, commenting that the lawn is better for “passive recreation” such as sitting and picnicking as opposed to ball sports and carnivals/events.

A few comments opposed cutting the trees down if they weren’t dying to create an open area.

The third of comments in favour of the changes on the whole offered general support for the proposed changes. This was one of these comments.

The idea of making the square larger and making the green untainted by footpaths is fantastic.

About half of the comments that generally supported the changes made reference to retaining some form of central path. This was one of these comments.

I like the idea of the big open grass area, perhaps it just needs a simple, narrow path down the middle.

**Perimeter path
(9 comments)**

These comments were in favour of extending the perimeter of the park although a few participants stated that users would continue to walk through the middle of the park rather than use a perimeter path.

A couple of participants stated that increasing the overall size of the park by extending the perimeter will be positive. This was one comment.

The idea of making the square larger and making the green untainted by footpaths is fantastic.

Those who stated that the central paths would still be used even if a perimeter path was provided stated that users take the fastest route and also prefer the pleasant walk through the middle of the park.

There is a direct line of sight from the Grattan St gate of the University to the Law Building, and pedestrians will simply walk straight down the middle and not detour around the outside. The lawn areas are sufficient on either side of the path, particularly if they're widened.

Fountain relocation (3 comments)

Three comments were concerned about keeping the existing historic fountain.

Generally positive (6 comments)

Several general comments were made in support of the proposed changes to The Green.

Love the open green spaces!

Other comments, suggestions and examples (10 comments)

A range of 'other' comments were made about the Green.

Three comments related to sport were made: creating a playing/ sports field would downgrade the space; request for a cricket pitch and; a question asking if ball sports would be allowed.

Some suggestions were: A fountain in the middle; provide a public toilet; lighting is needed for night time users.

One participant gave a very comprehensive comment about how The Green should double as a venue for temporary outdoor community activities (markets, fairs, concerts, festivals, pop-ups, lunches, interactive displays) for students and residents. They argued this would help integrate the university and the community. This participant went on to say:

The Green needs to be more than just a lawn. It needs paths, power outlets, lighting, an outdoor kitchen, somewhere that a stage could be erected etc. It is a space that can be used and enjoyed by people, not just green grass and trees to look at. This would have to be managed but would add to the liveliness of the community.

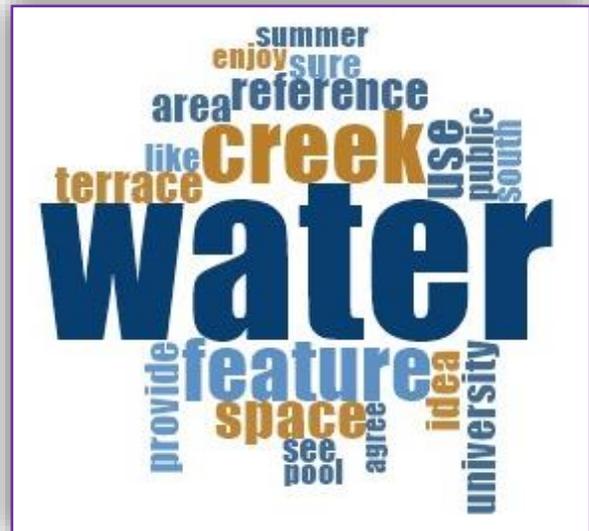
Three participants made comments about providing more outdoor furniture such as seating, with two participants raising questions about theft and noting the furniture may need to be heavy or immovable.

One participant queried whether The Green will be smoking/non-smoking and suggested having cigarette bins if it was a smoking area. Another participant asked about dogs – whether they are allowed off the leash, and if their owners will clean up after them.

WATER TERRACE

Located in the transition area between the plaza spaces and 'The Green', the water terrace will be a new space at University Square that includes trees, gardens and aquatic plantings with a focus on water play. It features:

- Water play spaces with water jets and misters.
- Integrated public art with the potential to reflect the rich indigenous story of this site. University of Melbourne's Billibellary's Walk.



[Ctrl + Click FOR MORE INFO](#)

Summary

34 comments

- The Water Terrace received a relatively small number of comments.
- Overall the proposed Water Terrace concept was supported in around two thirds of the comments made on this topic. The benefits of a water feature were considered to be: great for children and adults to dip their feet in and play; provide general cooling and; be good for bird life.
- Consideration of incorporating the Bouverie Creek was raised by some and reference was also made by a few to the South Lawn pond as an exemplar of how to incorporate water. The need to consider indigenous values was also raised.
- The one third who opposed the water feature were concerned about its presence during droughts and subsequent water restrictions, and that it was inappropriate in this space, especially since it is aimed at children and this area is predominantly used by adults.

Key topics

Discussion

Water play spaces (17 comments)

Around two thirds of participants' comments in this section supported inclusion of a water feature in the proposed space. Around one third of comments were opposed, with a few of these in favour of regenerating Bouverie Creek.

Reasons for support included being nice for adults and children to put their feet into, good for families, a "refreshing addition" to the Square, good for birds in hot weather and providing general cooling for summer.

Regarding Bouverie Creek, two participants commented riparian shrubs could be included, while others sought the actual resurrection or use of the creek - either feeding into the water terrace, or by being visible to the public (similar to the Sewer Museum in Paris). It was suggested a creek is a more appropriate feature than something artificial, as it is linked to

	<p>indigenous heritage, but could also provide biodiversity services, be part of a storm water system and contribute to a more calming landscape.</p> <p>Three participants thought that the water feature should take the form of the long stream/pond on the South Lawn. One participant commented that this pool is highly regarded, useful and in rough alignment with the old creek.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I don't think there is any need for a water feature in this small space however agree with previous posters that something like the South Lawn pool or a reference to the creek (not sure how that would be possible) would be far more appropriate.</i></p> <p>One participant thought the water feature inclusion could take the form of bio-retention pools or bio-swales which would also have educational and interactional benefits.</p> <p>A few participants outright opposed the water play space, the main reasons being that it was inappropriate during drought and water restrictions, that it was too novel and it is aimed at children which it was argued there are few using the area.</p> <p>One participant commented permeable surfaces would be needed, another commented that it would need to be well designed and constructed and another that it might encourage “pesky seagulls”.</p>
<p>Public art and indigenous story (3 comments)</p>	<p>Three comments suggested that the water feature should acknowledge the indigenous heritage of the area. This was one comment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Who is being consulted for the water terrace design if it is meant to reflect the indigenous history of the area? Please ensure this s gone about the right away.</i></p>
<p>Generally positive (6 comments)</p>	<p>These comments were general statements of support of the water terrace concept plan, making comments such as “great idea”.</p>
<p>Other comments, suggestions and examples (8 comments)</p>	<p>A range of <i>other</i> comments and examples of how the water feature should be delivered were provided.</p> <p>One participant queried where the shade is, another queried whether native trees would be planted, and a comment was made that toilets are needed.</p> <p>Mentioned earlier, references were made to Melbourne Uni’s South Lawn as an exemplar for a water feature by a few participants, along with the “Sewer Museum” in Paris, where the public can walk over the top of a live sewer.</p> <p>Two participants commented on issues needing to be resolved. One specifically referred to environmental issues and the other seemed to refer to the water feature in general.</p>

PLANNING FOR TREES

The 51 mature Elms (*Ulmus* spp.) are a defining character of University Square. Many of these are now in decline with 18 (35%) being assessed with less than 12-months useful life expectancy and 23 (45%) having between 1-5 years.

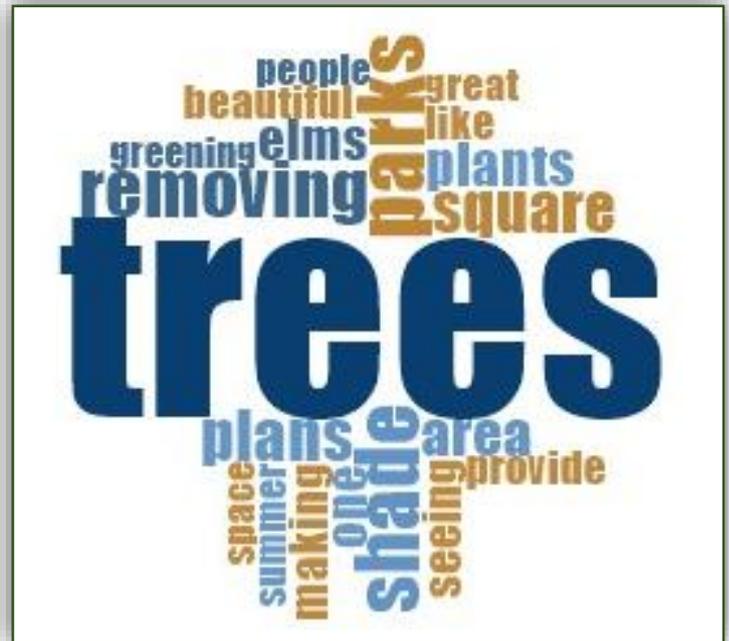
With 80% of the total elm tree population at University Square in severe decline, we need to act now to ensure that we manage the trees that can be retained and remove trees so that we can plant a new generation of trees.

It is proposed that tree removals will be undertaken in a selective manner over three to five years of overall park refurbishment works.

Tree numbers and tree species diversity will increase significantly at University Square.

Approximately 250 new trees are proposed. A mix of climate-appropriate and deciduous and evergreen species will ensure that a new urban forest is created at University Square for the future.

[Ctrl + click FOR MORE INFO](#)



There were comments made about trees across all of the different precincts that were consulted on in this engagement process e.g., Barry Street, The Green etc. This section predominantly presents the cross-cutting themes, such as retaining trees, providing shade and replacement tree species. These comments came from the specific consultation questions about trees and from the comments made on each precinct.

Discussions related to trees, specific to each precinct area, are included in each precinct section's discussion. Links to those specific discussions are included within this section.

Summary

87 comments

- The removal of trees was the most commonly discussed topic related to trees. Many wanted the existing Elm trees kept, particularly those in the middle of the park. A number of reasons were given for keeping them, including: shade, heritage value, habitat for animals and aesthetics.
- Some participants suggested a staged removal of trees and it was suggested to deliberately leave some to show to people what happens when trees die. A few participants were complimentary of the succession plan that had been put in place.
- Regarding replacement tree types there was a mixed response to planting Eucalyptus trees, with some believing they would be a great option because they grow in the conditions whereas others were more in favour of deciduous European species, particularly Elms that let light in during winter and shade during summer. Other tree varieties were also suggested including fruit trees.

- Providing shade was a key issue, with many objecting to removing trees because of this issue. It was felt by many that the park would not be used if shade wasn't present, particularly in the middle of the park in summer months.
- Concern was shown for the loss of habitat for animals that currently live within the park if the trees are removed.

Key topics	Discussion
<p>Removal of trees/keep trees (27 comments)</p>	<p>The majority of participants objected to removing the Elms from the area, however a few participants praised the succession planning that had been put in place for the dying trees.</p> <p>There were many comments from participants who wished to keep the existing Elm trees, particularly those in the centre of the park. The main reasons given for keeping them were the shade they provide, their aesthetic, historic, heritage and biodiversity values (including habitat). Many sought the preservation of the Elms.</p> <p><i>...the loss of the line of trees in the centre of the park will greatly diminish the value and aesthetic of the park</i></p> <p>One participant commented that they thought removing the trees was an “unnecessary use to taxpayer resources”, and they wished to see the report “deeming the trees useless”.</p> <p>It was suggested the removal of trees should be “staged”, leaving some existing trees for some years until others have begun to grow. Some participants proposed leaving the trees as long as possible before cutting them down and leaving some dead trees as a form of respect for the past was also suggested.</p> <p>A few participants praised the Council for the thought and effort they had put into succession planning for the dying trees. This was one comment.</p> <p><i>Very well handled. I love these elm trees, but am convinced by your arguments of their age and "mortality spiral". I look forward to the renewal.</i></p>
<p>Tree types (20 comments)</p>	<p>There were a number of different suggestions for the type of trees that participants thought should replace the existing Elm trees.</p> <p>The most common suggestion was for native trees, for example Eucalypts, as they “require far less water and physical labour to maintain” or “flowering local trees and shrubs to bring local birds”.</p> <p><i>I love the idea of more trees, native trees and planning for the future.</i></p> <p>On the contrary, three participants specifically stated not natives and several participants preferred similar European trees or the same species (Elms).</p> <p><i>I like the idea of slowly replacing the elms. They are what Melbourne is all about. I find the Eucalyptus in the concept images conspicuous. It might be politically correct at this current time but long term we are going to be judged for putting native plants in ridiculous places. Melbourne is a town for grand old trees and long term shrubs.</i></p>

A few comments were made against some specific trees: Eucalypts, Plane trees and “candy floss trees”. Two participants didn’t like Plane trees due to the “fluff” and pollen they create. Some felt that European trees fit with the character of the area better than native trees. One participant summed this opinion up this way.

Melbourne is a town for grand old trees and long term shrubs.

A few participants suggested having a variety and diversity of species – native/exotic, evergreen/deciduous, large/small, and mature/young. Fruit trees were also suggested by two participants, in particular apricot, mandarin and apple trees and berry plants.

Deciduous trees were suggested by a few who appreciated the light in winter and shade in summer.

One participant suggested having some “conformity” in the avenues.

**Shade and tree placement
(20 comments)**

Many participants made comments about the trees in the centre of the park serving an important role in shading and offsetting the summer heat. Without this shade, some explained that the lawn wouldn’t be unusable in the summer months. This quote covers many participants’ views.

The centre trees are important shade for eating lunch in the sunny months. Please consider replacing these in your plans. The Melbourne sun is too strong and shade, especially green cool shade is hard to find.

A few participants suggested replacing the trees with shady tree types rather than the types of gum trees in the current design. One participant suggested native trees along the side of the park. Another participant said that the shade from the trees kept the cars parked on Leicester Street cool in summer.

A participant stated it was unclear if the arcade/pergolas with the wisteria would be retained, and believe they are a pleasing aspect at the end of the square.

One participant commented that creating an open space was not a healthy decision, they stated:

Here is where I would like also to make the point that we should contribute to a healthy environment in a country that holds the highest risk of skin cancer, so how is it that an open park with no trees would be beneficial to the current landscape of University square?

One comment was made suggesting the CoM leave a couple of trees for 10 or so years so that the public could see what happens when a tree goes into decline. They believed it would help get more support for the removal of the trees and would reduce ‘push back’ once people saw what happens. Another participant stated removing the tree shade was not a choice, as the trees are dying. They also disagreed that the area is currently ‘highly used’ as some claim and were in favour of removal.

**Protecting animals
(9 comments)**

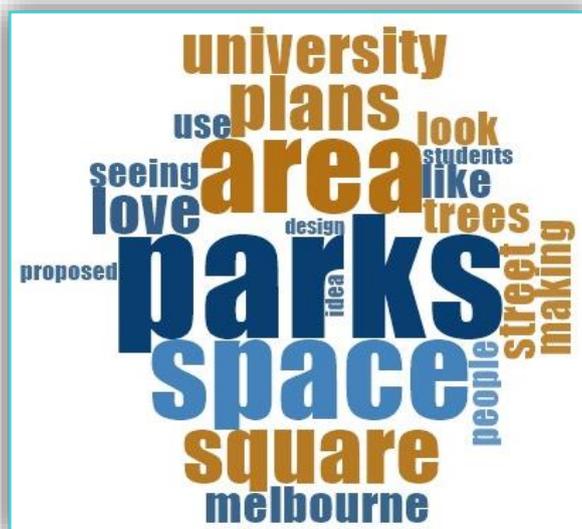
Concern was shown for the loss of animal habitat when trees are removed. It was felt there is currently a significant number and variety of species in the area and they should be planned for if changes are made.

The main concern from participants was the displacement of possums living in the hollows of the Elm trees. A few participants suggested building possum hutches or artificial hollows, which could also be used by bats, birds

	<p>and other mammals. One participant suggested planting fruit trees so that possums would not have to eat out of rubbish bins.</p> <p>One participant suggested building bird houses in the area and another planting native trees to encourage animals and birds. Rainbow lorikeet, parrots and pigeons were mentioned in particular as birds that frequently use the central trees.</p>
Barry St Tree comments	Ctrl + Click BARRY ST TREE COMMENTS
Leicester St Tree comments	Ctrl + Click LEICESTER ST TREE COMMENTS
Pelham St Eucalypts	Ctrl + Click PELHAM ST TREE COMMENTS
Plaza spaces - Shade	Ctrl + Click PLAZA SHADE COMMENTS
Plaza spaces - Trees	Ctrl + Click PLAZA TREE COMMENTS
The Green Tree comments	Ctrl + Click THE GREEN TREE COMMENTS
Generally positive (2 comments)	A couple of comments were made generally agreeing with the plan for the trees in University Square. One participant explained that their favourite part of the plans were the new trees being planted.
Generally negative (1 comment)	<p>One generally negative comment was made:</p> <p><i>Never seen such a stupid plan - you are making a great space worse. This is a very much loved space for students to relax in and removing the shade will all but destroy that in the hotter months.</i></p>
Other comments, suggestions and examples (8 comments)	<p>Five participants sought to farewell the trees, commenting that this would be of great importance.</p> <p><i>I imagine you're well aware what a major upheaval this will be for everyone who loves these grand old treasures.....so: can we ease the grieving process by giving them a send-off? Perhaps a community picnic w some trees-y music? Or some poetry? Whatever....I think recent experiences w the tree register that turned into a database full of love letters to favourite trees is proof enough of the depth of humans' relationship w trees</i></p> <p>Another participant commented that having more trees and plants would help with the wind-tunnel that can be created in the area, as well as making it “more interesting and enjoyable”.</p> <p>Argyle Square, Lincoln Square and the Exhibition Gardens were provided as exemplar parks for high use, and notably have the presence of a variety of trees and plants.</p>

GENERAL

A place was provided on the website to capture general comments. There was also a number of comments which encompassed all areas of the plan. This section includes these comments as well as several suggestions made and comments about the planning process.



Summary

79 comments

- Related to the overall plan, there were significantly more generally positive comments than generally negative comments.
- A number of suggestions for things to be added to the plan were made. These were all relatively unique and are described in the suggestions section below.
- Personal security was discussed in a few different parts of the plan. Safety in public places at night was the biggest concern. There were different view-points put forward related to the area becoming more or less safe as a consequence of the changes.
- As a result of the proposed plan a significant number of car parking spaces will be lost. A few participants disagreed with the loss and thought they should be replaced somewhere else, while a few thought replacing hard surfaces with grass was a good idea.
- There were mixed views on the provision of facilities for skateboarders, amongst the several comments that were made.
- Amongst the few comments that were made, there was general support for the inclusion of a café and food trucks.

Key topics

Discussion

Suggestions (11 comments)

A variety of broad suggestions were made by individual participants for additions or changes to the plan.

One participant suggested building a lawn-bowling centre, as the demographics of the central Melbourne region are “ideal for the development of a sporting complex such as this”. The location was also considered good for commuters.

Other features such as a bouldering wall or slack line were also suggested so that people could perform some “low key casual physical exercise” with friends.

One participant suggested not reducing the northern tiled area too much as some people do exercise in that area.

A playground for children was also suggested.

Build solar panels to charge vehicles from.

Another participant suggested a “Solar Trapeze” to be strung between the Rock Walls that currently reside on University Square. There was a request to work with the CoM on this proposal.

A suggestion was made to build a “single Xtremescreen Hoyts cinema” in the University Square.

One participant suggested having large tables that fit around 10 people for students who bring their lunch to university. They thought that communal seating would be utilised more than the proposed benches or deckchairs.

There was a suggestion made to give the University of Melbourne management of the Square, as it would be easier for them to “activate the square with community events”.

Another participant suggested that the Council provide forecasts on neighbouring roads.

A participant proposed marking the engineering achievements of those who had previously worked near this location. A list of people were suggested, including: Alexander Kennedy Smith, Mephan Ferguson, Louis Brennan and the Kernot brothers.

**Personal security
(8 comments)**

Personal security was a topic that was discussed across a number of different precincts.

Several comments were made about the safety of pedestrians in University Square, particularly at night. A couple of comments were made about the lighting in the park, with one participant explaining that it was important for her particularly as a female pedestrian walking to the car park late at night. One participant suggested leaving Barry Street as it is until there were more apartments built around the area making it more active at night. They thought the area would not be safe at night unless this was the case. A suggestion was made for “blue phones” with a direct line to security in case of duress.

A few comments were made about the park being safe enough. One participant explained that by opening up the park as a wider space with more people and more sight-lines, it would both feel and be safer. Another participant explained that security was an issue everywhere, and that it just needed to be factored in and contributed to by the University of Melbourne. One participant said:

I think the concerns about safety are valid but consider that there are many parks around the area which aren't patrolled at night and there doesn't seem to be a need for this. As someone who walks around here a lot and is often nearly run over by people driving too fast or not paying attention I think it's fantastic to close it off.

Parking and road changes (8 comments)	<p>There were several comments made about the loss of 120 car parking spaces, with some participants agreeing and others disagreeing with the changes.</p> <p>Some participants suggested that there was already a shortage of car parks in the area, so reducing the number of parks even further would “exacerbate the problem”. A couple of participants suggested replacing the car parks in another area nearby. One participant explained that the current layout was fine, and that it would be a waste of money to change it.</p> <p>Two participants were happy with the plan to reduce the amount of “car parking, vehicle traffic and ugly expanses of asphalt”.</p> <p>A couple of participants made comments about closing roads to traffic, one saying that it would “serve no purpose” and the other saying it was a “terrible idea”.</p>
Skateboarders (6 comments)	<p>Several comments were made about skate boarding. Most were about how this activity could be provided for.</p> <p>Several comments were made about wanting to get skateboarders out of Lincoln Square and to provide facilities within the park draw skaters away from there.</p> <p>Two participants suggested the provision of structures robust enough for skaters to use. One participant recommended “grindable edging similar to the new Neil St reserve”. Another suggestion was made for small obstacles scattered throughout the park to ensure it does not attract large groups of skaters to one area.</p> <p>A couple of participants were not in favour of skating, one suggested not designing like Lincoln Square to attract skaters and one participant asked:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How will you manage/mitigate skateboarders and the potential for anti-social behaviour?</i></p>
Cafes and food trucks (6 comments)	<p>A couple of participants wondered if there would be enough room for food trucks or small cafes in the proposed area.</p> <p>One comment was made regarding the need for weather conditions to be taken into consideration when building the café, particularly shelter from the wind. One comment was made that the area is quite large and so a large café could be accommodated within it.</p> <p>One participant was pleased with the idea of food trucks as it would make for more “active edges”.</p> <p>A comment was made by the owners of Baretto and Porta Via cafes, saying that they were very keen to work with the City of Melbourne to</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>renovate both café... to seamlessly integrate with and enhance the proposed changes to the park.</i></p>
Planning process (4 comments)	<p>A couple of comments were made congratulating the CoM for the “extent of investigation and analysis” and for the effort put in to organising an information session on the University Square.</p> <p>Two participants commented on the website. One stated that it needs to be mobile accessible and the other that the interactivity and ease of giving feedback is good.</p>

Generally positive (26 comments) A large number of positive comments were made about the proposed plan. Participants described the plan as “exciting”, “interesting” and “inviting”.

I just wish to congratulate your team and Council on a terrific concept plan for University Square. The plan is extremely exciting and will contribute greatly to the multi-functional use of this important public space as well as add more green to our otherwise hard edged urban landscape.

Generally negative (3 comments) A couple of participants were disappointed with the loss of the “heritage European character” of the park due to the loss of the Elm trees. One participant suggested replacing these trees with the same species. Another participant said that they were generally disappointed by the concept plan.

Other (7 comments) One participant suggested that there may be too much going on in the plan for the number of people who will actually use the park. They explained that it would be a pity if money was wasted on facilities that wouldn’t be fully utilised.

Another participant said they really liked the plan but it would have been more helpful for them to see current photos of the site.

One participant commented on the cost of the proposed plan and stated that all they see happening is a stack of trees being cut down and a water feature added that would be turned off during the next draught. They did not see how the park could be cut into six precincts.

One participant was against turning the park into a big open green as it would probably turn into a soccer field rather than a quiet place for everyone to enjoy.

One participant suggested creating a “cycle-friendly” area, unlike that in Carlton Gardens where cyclists are forbidden from riding through the park.

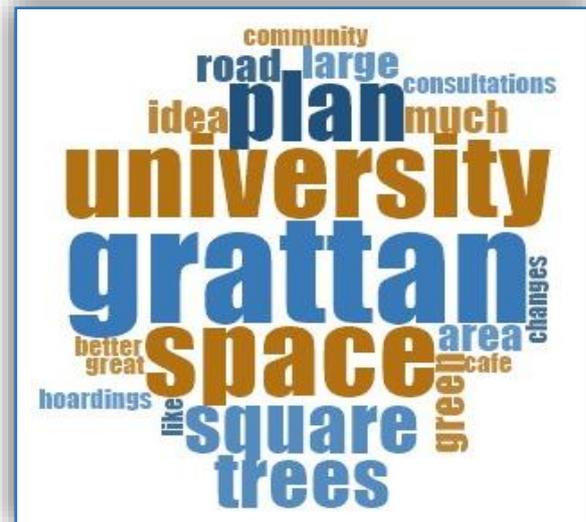
Are there any provisions for cyclists to move through the precinct? I love the fact that motor traffic will be discouraged from this area, but it would be a shame to see a similar situation to Carlton Gardens, where cyclists are forbidden from riding through the park. Make it cycle-friendly please!

One participant spoke of the character of Melbourne, and the need to keep this alive:

What needs to be taken into account is the beauty of Melbourne is never found in the clean clear cut edges of a perfect-ikea-park. That kind of design is best left for Sydney or the Gold Coast. Please keep the essence of Melbourne, keep a little grunge, a little chaos amongst the beauty. The real aspects of parks in the city that people love is not the perfectly placed boulders or the water features. It's the randomness that nature brings to the middle of the city.

OTHER

There were a number of comments which did not fit into any of the categories above. These included comments outside of the current plan area, as well as some questions that were asked by individual participants.



Summary

22 comments

- A number of comments were made about areas just outside the plan. Grattan Street was the area most commonly discussed, with some wishing that it was included.
- A number of questions were asked of planners, which are listed under precinct areas below. Where relevant, these questions have also been included within earlier sections.

Key topics

Discussion

Comments outside of the plan (6 comments)

There were several comments that specifically mentioned Grattan Street, however this was not mentioned in the proposed plan. One participant suggested closing the street for all vehicles except emergency services. Another participant urged the CoM to create an “easier and safer bicycle route” from Royal Parade to the University buildings south of Grattan Street. One comment was made saying that Grattan Street “really needs some attention”, while another said that it was a “pity” that Grattan Street hadn’t been narrowed in the plan.

One submission went into detail about the “very large advertising hoardings” that cover the vents in the Barry Street section of the Square. The participant wanted these removed as they were offensive to them.

Questions (16 comments)

There were a number of questions asked by participants which have been incorporated into the list below, in relation to the plans for the precinct that was being responded to.

Barry Street

- How will you manage/mitigate skateboarders and the potential for anti-social behaviour?
- Could we have a community garden here?

Leicester Street

- 10 spaces for carparking to be retained where?

Pelham Street

- Will any of the construction works impact the current populations of animals and birds?
- Will the speed humps stay?

Plaza Spaces

- Does waste collection/infrastructure come under Melbourne University maintenance?
- What is the interface to Grattan St?
- Any changes to the crossing?

The Green

- Will ball sports be allowed?
- Dog allowed off leash? Owners clean up after them?
- Adequate shade/seating?
- Smoking/non-smoking? (cigarette butt bins)
- Will it become a “heatsink”? How will it be mitigated?
- What are the plans for the trees that are going to be left around the perimeter of the park, will more elms be planted to start replacing the dying trees?

Planning for Trees

- “Productive trees” – who will maintain?
- I am also concerned about the destruction of heritage trees. How many will be cut down as part of this plan? Are they nearing the end of their lifespans or not?
- Is there any plans to incorporate fruit trees or a huge vegie garden that the City of Melb could water and maintain (no different to watering flowerbeds/shrubs and weeding)?

General

- Also, could the council provide forecast on the traffic load on neighbouring roads if two roads are at the same time?

Planning Process

- Is there further consultation that I can take part of to raise these points? A neighbour mentioned meeting at the Melb Uni Law Building?
 - Please could someone who is working on this project from the City of Melbourne get in touch with me to discuss the proposed Solar Trapeze that I am planning to be strung between the lift wells (Rock Walls) that currently reside on University Square.
-