

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee**Agenda item 6.6****Bedford Street Pocket Park Final Concept Plan****22 November 2022****Presenter:** David Callow, Director Parks and City Greening**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the community feedback received (Attachment 2) on the Bedford Street Pocket Park draft concept plan which has been used to finalise the Bedford Street Pocket Park final concept plan (Attachment 3) for approval.
2. Community engagement on the Bedford Street Pocket Park draft concept plan was undertaken between Thursday 1 September and Thursday 29 September 2022. As changes to the current road arrangements in Bedford, Capel, and Courtney Streets were required to implement the proposal, a separate statutory road discontinuance notification process was also undertaken over the same period and was the subject of a report to Council on 25 October 2022.

Key issues

3. A total of 134 online survey responses to the draft concept plan were received, with over 90 per cent of respondents supporting the proposal. Strong support was shown for increasing greening and biodiversity, providing new recreational opportunities including a playground, park furniture, picnic area with barbeque, and informal recreation, and for improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
4. Four respondents were concerned about the reduction in car parking or previous parking changes made to implement the Peel Street bike lane project. Future parking provisions will prioritise resident parking and locate general parking in close proximity to businesses within the project area. A net loss of approximately 28 car spaces is proposed to create the new park.
5. Community feedback was specifically requested on the inclusion of a barbeque in the picnic area, with 66 per cent of respondents providing support for the inclusion of a barbeque. A barbeque will be retained in the final concept plan, but it is proposed that its use is monitored for two years after installation, as community support for barbeque facilities does not always translate to on-site use. Should it be determined that the barbeque is not providing value for the community, an allowance will be made for it to be removed or relocated to another site where it can be better utilised.
6. Feedback on the draft concept plan from Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) identified that there was insufficient access to a fire hydrant booster attached to private property at 182 Capel Street North Melbourne. Provision of this access is required under Australian Standard 2419. The final concept plan shows the indicative extent of the playground and access area for FRV. The precise playground extent and layout will be confirmed in the detailed design, and the access area for FRV will be integrated in the park to ensure it provides a safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing public open space outcome.
7. Overall, a high-level of support was demonstrated for the Bedford Street Pocket Park draft concept plan. Pending detailed design completion and the public tender process to engage a construction contractor, it is anticipated that the proposed delivery program for construction will commence in mid-2023.

Recommendation from management

8. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 8.1. Endorses the Bedford Street Pocket Park final concept plan to proceed to finalisation of the detailed design and tender for works.
 - 8.2. Notes the proposed commencement of construction mid-2023.
 - 8.3. Authorises the General Manager Strategy, Planning and Climate Change to make any further minor changes if required to the Bedford Street Pocket Park final concept plan prior to completion of the tender process.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 6)
2. Bedford Street Pocket Park community engagement summary (Page 4 of 6)
3. Bedford Street Pocket Park final concept plan (Page 6 of 6)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. Implementation of the Bedford Street Pocket Park final concept plan required the discontinuance of parts of Bedford, Capel, and Courtney streets (roads) under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*. At its meeting on 25 October 2022, the Council resolved to discontinue the roads. Once the discontinuance is gazetted, the former roads will be reserved for public purposes in accordance with the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* to be included in the park.

Finance

2. The estimated project cost, based on the draft concept plan, is \$6.5 million. Funding for the project will be sourced from the endorsed Pocket Parks budget. A Victorian Government Local Parks Program grant agreement was signed by Council in 2019, which is contributing \$1 million towards the project. We have received 50 per cent of this grant funding to date.
3. Project costs may be subject to change pending design development and projected market conditions. The final cost plan will be undertaken after endorsement of the final concept plan.

Conflict of interest

4. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

5. In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

6. Community engagement on the Bedford Street Pocket Park draft concept plan was undertaken between Thursday 1 September and Thursday 29 September 2022. As changes to the current road arrangements in Bedford, Capel, and Courtney Streets are required to implement the plan, a statutory road discontinuance notification process was also undertaken over the same period. An infographic is provided at Attachment 3 that provides a summary of the community feedback received on the draft concept plan.
7. Community engagement on the draft concept plan was undertaken via the following engagement methods:
 - 7.1. Participate Melbourne sub-page created for the Bedford Street Pocket Park draft concept plan, which included an online survey, the draft concept plan, rendered sketch perspectives, FAQs, and information regarding the public notice for road discontinuances
 - 7.2. 5,222 letters were sent to owners and occupiers with information regarding the community engagement process for the draft concept plan and statutory road discontinuance notification process
 - 7.3. Five A1 size signs were installed on-site with a QR code that provided a link to the Participate Melbourne website
 - 7.4. An in-person meeting held with adjoining land and business owner abutting the proposed road closure in Courtney Street

7.5. Email notification to various external stakeholders and social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Relation to Council policy

8. Bedford Street Reserve and surrounding areas in North Melbourne were identified as high priorities for requiring additional open space in the City of Melbourne Open Space Strategy 2012. The Bedford Street Pocket Park project will significantly increase the quantity and quality of public open space in its North Melbourne catchment area and contribute to improving biodiversity and greening outcomes for the city.

Environmental sustainability

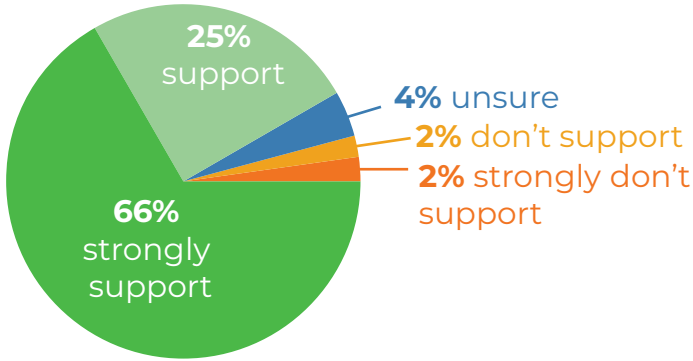
9. The total amount of public open space for both Bedford Street and Courtney Street reserves will increase from approximately 1500m² to 3000m², with a considerable portion of the new public open space being permeable.
10. 19 trees in stress or decline have been identified for removal as part of the project. All existing mature Elm trees in Bedford Street Reserve will be retained. A net increase of 79 new native and exotic tree species are proposed in the final concept design, which will increase shade provision, canopy cover, and contribute to improving biodiversity and local area cooling in the warmer months.
11. A rain garden is proposed in Courtney Street Reserve. The rain garden will capture, utilise and filter stormwater before it is discharged to the drainage network.

BEDFORD STREET POCKET PARK

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The City of Melbourne is looking at improving open space provision and streetscape greening in the eastern part of North Melbourne. After an initial consultation phase in April/May 2021, City of Melbourne launched a second phase in September 2022, asking the community for their feedback on the draft concept design for the Bedford Street Pocket Park.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT



“ More green space and community facilities are needed in this pocket of North Melbourne. I can't wait for the project to be complete. ”

WHAT YOU TOLD US

Support for the proposal:

People were excited about the prospect of more greenery in urban spaces and the environmental and social benefits this will likely bring.

There was enthusiasm for the plan to enhance amenity for the community, especially families living in apartments, through things like the playground, seating, BBQ and passive recreation activities.

People felt the new layout and design would improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, while still maintaining sufficient vehicle and parking access.

Comments and suggestions:

While some people were concerned about the loss of parking, vehicle access and road congestion, others advocated for further prioritising pedestrians and cyclists over cars through more cycle infrastructure, fewer carparks, and additional traffic calming measures.

Ideas for even more trees, native planting, and wildlife corridors to support biodiversity, while ensuring planting does not block light.

More options for recreation facilities such as exercise equipment or sports courts for badminton or basketball.

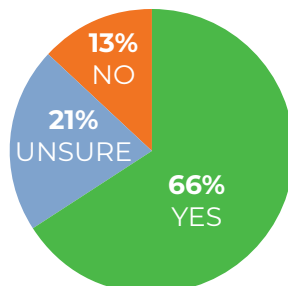
Appropriate consideration and maintenance of amenities like toilets, the BBQ, bike parking, and adequate shaded seating.

Provide a safe and accessible for various users, including children and families, and dogs and their owners.

Opposition to the proposal:

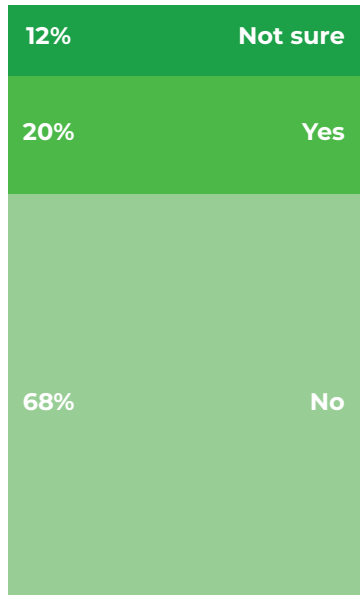
Those who opposed the proposal expressed concerns about vehicle and parking access, with both residents and business owners concerned about the impacts of losing parking spaces in the area.

SHOULD THERE BE A BBQ INCLUDED IN THE DESIGN?

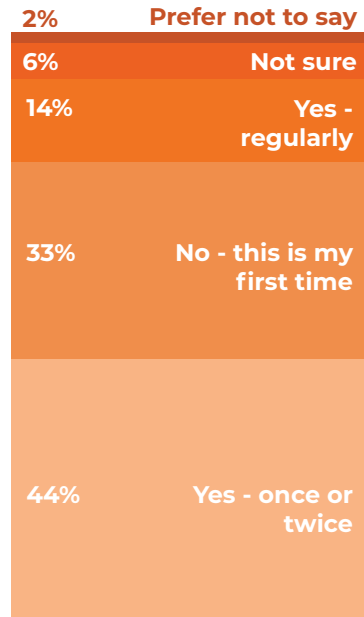


The majority of people supported the inclusion of a BBQ, but some people had concerns with the BBQ maintenance creating potential issues with smoke, litter, and attracting unwanted wildlife.

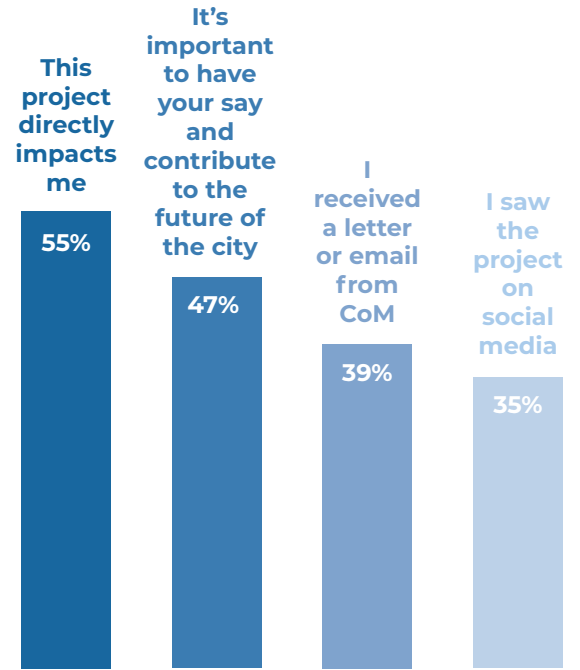
Did you participate in the first stage of the consultation in April-May 2021?



Have you participated in a consultation with City of Melbourne before?



What motivated you to participate in this consultation?



WHO WE HEARD FROM

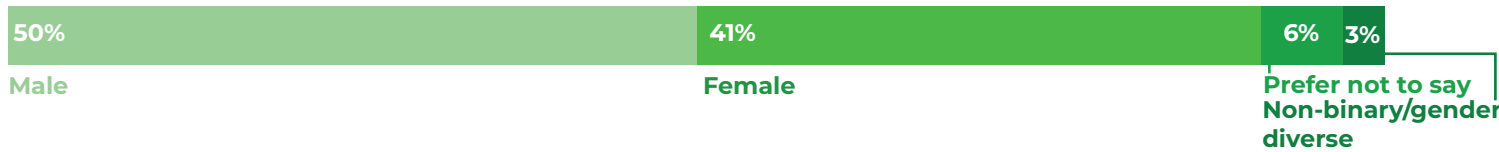
141
total responses

134
online surveys



7
independent submissions

Such a great initiative to activate dead end streets and bring more greenery into the city edge.



46%
of respondents were living in homes they were paying off with a mortgage

32%
of respondents were renting privately

20%
of respondents fully own their home

25%
of respondents were born overseas

20%
of respondents identify as LGBTIQ+

12%
of respondents speak a language other than English at home

1%
Business owner

1%
Prefer not to say

66%
of respondents were located in North Melbourne

BEDFORD STREET POCKET PARK FINAL CONCEPT PLAN

Legend

- ① Picnic area with BBQ
- ② Linear open space
- ③ Lawn area
- ④ Courtney Street median strip extension
- ⑤ Playground
- ⑥ Community activities space with table tennis
- ⑦ Raingarden
- Extent of works
- Indicative extent of playground
- Indicative extent of hardstand area for FRV access

