Public Realm Framework

Community Consultation Findings 2024

Banyule
City Council

Executive Summary

The Banyule Public Realm Framework (PRF) responds to the critical need for strategic direction in public realm management, focusing on design excellence and industry best practice. It aims to coordinate Council responsibilities such as streetscape renewal, open space maintenance, playground renewal and advocacy in large infrastructure projects presenting a 10-year vision and key design principles.

Consultation involved two phases: stakeholder consultation and broader community feedback. The engagement methods included online and face-to-face sessions, surveys, and presentations to advisory committees.

During the consultation period, 80 online surveys were received, predominantly from residents of Banyule, particularly Ivanhoe, Heidelberg Heights, and Macleod. Engagement methods aimed to reach a broad audience and key stakeholders.

Key takeaways from engagement with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, Advisory Committees and information sessions highlighted diverse perspectives and priorities regarding public spaces, including the need for biodiversity preservation, accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability.

Survey results reflected community support for the vision statement and indicated alignment with design principles in urban, open, links and transport spaces, albeit with some concerns and suggestions for improvement.

Based on consultation feedback, several changes and inclusions were proposed, including document name change, layout adjustments, removal of complex terminology, and incorporation of biodiversity objectives.

The Banyule Public Realm Framework reflects a collaborative effort to enhance the quality and sustainability of public spaces, guided by community input and strategic objectives.

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Project Overview

Note: during community consultation the document's name was Public Realm Strategy and now is has changed to Public Realm Framework[1] to better communicate its strategic objectives and will be referred to Public Realm Framework from now on.

The preparation of a Banyule Public Realm Framework (PRF) is in direct response for the critical need of a resource that provides strong strategic direction and embeds design excellence and industry best practice.

The project will co-ordinate a place-based and typological approach to public realm responsibilities of Council (streetscape renewal, WSUD, public art, lighting, pocket parks/parklets, public toilets, State infrastructure). It will present as an overarching strategic plan that establishes the 10-year vision, key principles, definitions, and typologies of the public realm.

The PRF is supported by the Technical Notes, however this is operational and was not included in the consultation.

Engagement Objectives

Objective 1	To inform the community on how Banyule plans, designs, and manages its public realm.
Objective 2	To build community awareness on the relationship between this Framework and other key related pieces of work, such as Neighbourhood Character, Open Space, Public Art, etc.
Objective 3	To receive feedback from the community on the vision, key directions, and objectives.

Stages of Engagement

Consultation consisted of two phases. In the first phase we conducted desktop analysis and stakeholder consultation. After the first consultation phase, we prepared a Draft Public Realm Framework. Phase two involved community feedback on the Draft Public Realm Framework.



- Desktop analysis
- Internal Stakeholder consultation
- Consultation with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation

- Community Consultation
- Advisory Committees Consultation

[1] Definition of 'framework' by Collins Dictionary: A **framework** is a particular set of rules, ideas, or beliefs which you use in order to deal with problems or to decide what to do.

Changes to the Public Realm Framework

Based on what we learned from the consultation, changes and/or inclusions to the Public Realm Framework are listed below:

Phase 1	• Include interpretive signage and public art as general design elements in the Open Space typologies. • Include a Wurundjeri foreword.
Phase 2	• Change the name of the document Public Realm Strategy to Public Realm Framework to better communicate its strategic objectives. • Amend the Vision Statement to include the notion of Caring for Country. • Include a First Nation's definition of Country and Caring for Country. • Include further references to Council biodiversity objectives. • Amend hierarchy diagram. • Amend document layout, colours, etc based on the Accessible Written Communications Guide. • Add Document Influence Diagram. • Amend Context Plan. • Remove Place-based Precincts. • Remove complex terminology, and inclusion of glossary. • Amend reference to General Design Elements and remove 'standard' requirements. • Include Industrial Area in Urban Space typology. • Include different precedent imagery. • Local Roads typology to move to Transport typology. • Amend Action and Implementation Plan.

Who we heard from

During the consultation period (21 November 2023 - 26 February 2024), Council received a generous response of 80 online surveys from the community, reflecting enthusiasm and commitment. The below results are a combination of demographics collected through the various engagement methods.

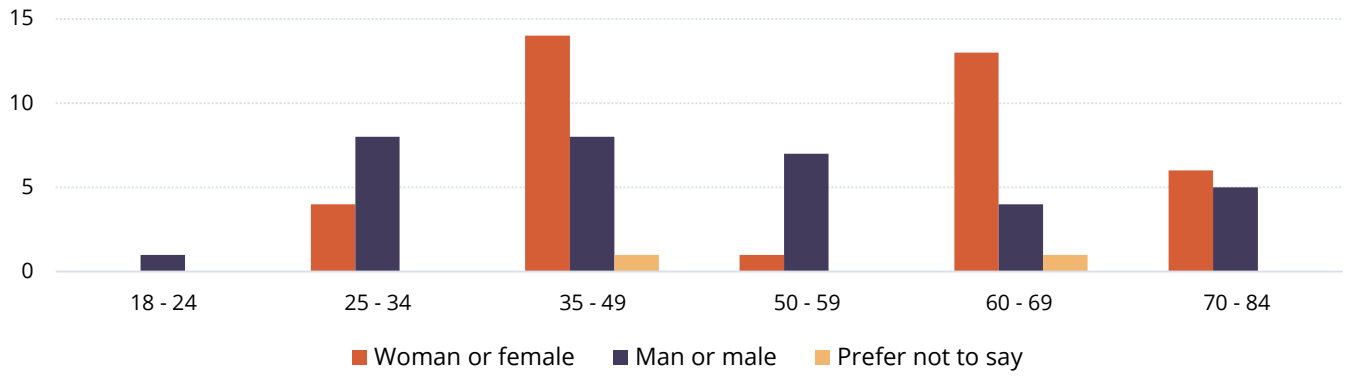
Gender

54% woman or female

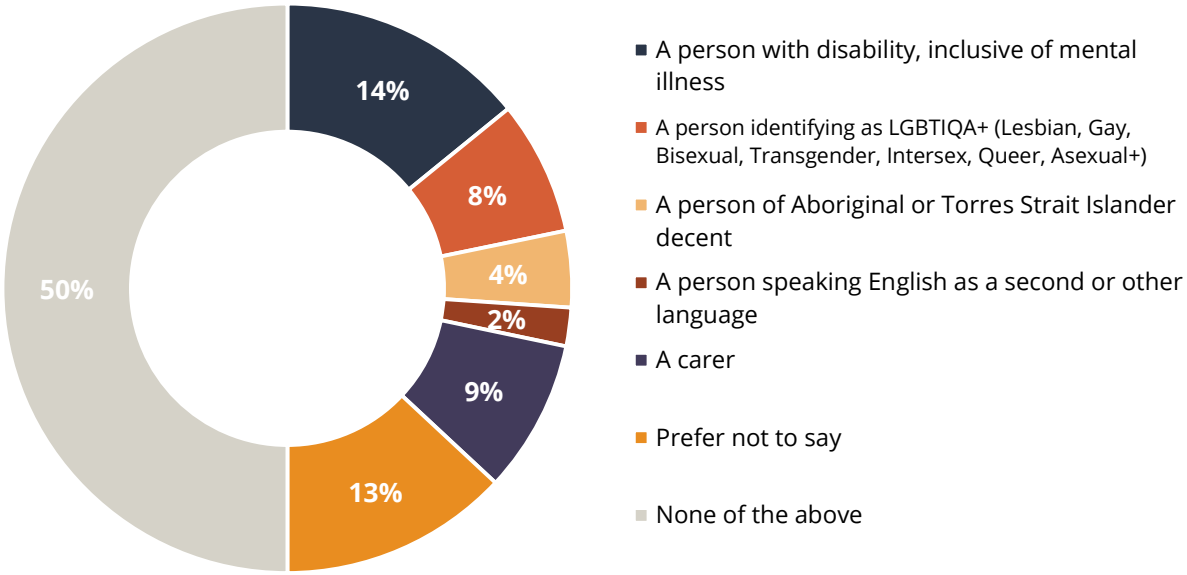
41% man or male

5% **prefer not to say**

Age groups

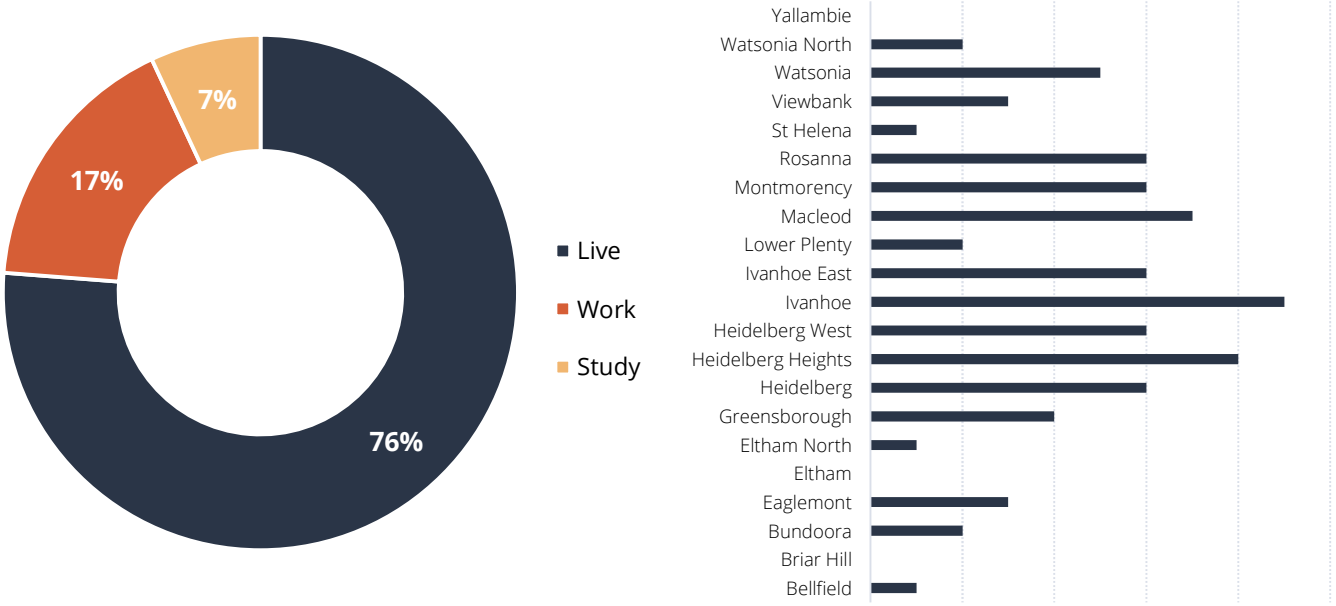


Access and Equity



Relationship to Banyule

From the responses, 76% live in Banyule and majority of those are from Ivanhoe, Heidelberg Heights and Macleod. We received zero responses from people living, working or studying in Briar Hill, Eltham and Yallambie.



Engagement Methods

Five main engagement methods were delivered through the engagement process to capture input from the community and key stakeholders. These engagement methods were supported by advertising and social media campaigns to reach and promote with a broad audience.



1 Online info session



80 online surveys



1 Face-to-face info session



6 Presentations at Advisory Committees



3 Hard copy survey



4 Written submissions

What we heard

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation

Banyule's First Nations Team helped facilitate an engagement session with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation.

The engagement with the Corporation was held through two online meetings with three Aunties representing the community. The session focused on ways in which Wurundjeri and Council can work together to be respectful of the natural environment. The below points are the key takeaways from the discussion.

- Consider biodiversity and the need for connecting spaces for fauna to move
- Restorative approach to natural environment
- When using new technology, make sure future impact has been considered
- When designing new projects, work Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation to incorporate story telling where possible as wayfinding or public art
- Work with Narrap Rangers.

Advisory Committees

The team presented at six Advisory Committees. Below is a snapshot of the key takeaways from each.

Age Friendly Committee

A presentation to the committee took place on 22 February 2024. The presentation included an overview of the document and discussions on each of the typologies included. The below points are the key takeaways:

- Need for more public toilets.
- Activity centres provide a sense of community and belonging.
- Lack of public benches. Benches are essential for older adults as they provide a place to sit and rest. Public benches to face each other to encourage people to stop, gather and socialise.

- Parklands in one participant's area of Banyule are well maintained, feel safe and provide a community hub for locals to gather and socialise. This is a common sentiment in their neighbourhood with locals loving the parklands and walking to one of the coffee shops.
- More water fountains for both people and their dogs along walking paths as this would encourage more people to walk, particularly young people and school kids.
- Heat and a lack of shade is a barrier to using public transport and provided the example of walking from Greensborough train station to the council office
- More signage for parks, green spaces and places of interest noting that this information is readily available online, but a lot of older adults are unable to access information online.
- Issue with accessibility of the plan, noting issues with the small print, graphics and colours that make it difficult to read.

Arts and Culture Advisory Committee

A presentation to the committee took place on 1 February 2024. The presentation included an overview of the document and discussions on opportunities to incorporate public art in the Public Realm. The below points are the key takeaways:

- Consider sharing resources with neighbouring Councils, e.g. Heidelberg artists trail signs extend throughout three municipalities.
- Consider opportunities for recognisable or repeated creative placemaking throughout the municipality (such as train at stations) which would give sense of place and belonging.
- Ensure public art is included in early stages of planning of new or upgraded civic or green spaces – ensure there are no missed opportunities in the planning process. Avoid the need to retrospectively place art in new public spaces.
- Consider incentives for local artists to bring forward creative ideas.
- Consider getting artists involved in early stages of planning.
- Currently, it seems that if an open space is developed in a sports oval, for example, its limited to that use. These spaces need considerations around making them multi-use.
- Identify smaller spaces that can be activated, e.g. carparks and laneways.
- Consider creating spaces in sparse parks, e.g. public artwork around intermittent seating or bike racks how to get creative with this kind of infrastructure?
- Specific areas/suburbs are looking for 'identity' or recognisable features and artwork. Create belonging.
- Consider identifying opportunities for local artists within their own communities.

Disability and Inclusion Committee

A presentation to the committee took place on 6 December 2023. The presentation included an overview of the document and discussions on each of the typologies included. The below points are the key takeaways:

- Wide footpaths
- Easy access to shops
- Outdoor seating areas well contained.
- Toileting facilities should be considered for people with disability and consider describing what features the accessible toilets offer.
- Parking spaces that accommodate vehicles with back access.
- Basket swings are a great option for people with disability, especially those with limited neck control.
- Cyclists on Shared use paths create hazards for non-cyclists.

Environment and Climate Advisory Committee

A presentation to the committee took place on 14 December 2023. The presentation included an overview of the document and discussions on each of the typologies included. The below points are the key takeaways:

- PRS must lead to good design decisions made from the outset
- How can the strategy help people to live and travel more sustainably? For example, bike stations, access to potable water, edible gardens, rest and shade stops along walking / cycling routes to provide comfort along the journey.
- Really strong values statement or vision needed for the PRS that embeds sustainability
- PRS should provide direction for public lighting that meet sustainability standards.

Multicultural Advisory Committee

A presentation to the committee took place on 29 November 2023. The presentation included an overview of the document and discussions on each of the typologies included. What committee members felt were important in public spaces:

- Café culture, eating and drinking outdoors on the street.
- Have trees and shade coverage.
- Access to places to sit.
- Spaces for people watching.
- Access to great outdoor space
- Access to bike pathway that allows travel in different directions across the municipality, not just into the city.
- Access to more bike pump stations around the municipality – for example needed in West Heidelberg
- Spaces that are designed for people to come together like European cities.
- Spaces that are engaging for kids and older people
- More access to drinking water taps
- Clean space for people to get together.
- To note that old places have memories and beauty.

RAP Advisory Committee Meeting

A presentation to the committee took palce on 15 November 2023. The presentation included an overview of the document and discussions on each of the typologies included. The below points are the key takeaways:

- It should incorporate that it is Important to respect our Elders, important to care for community, important to care for country and the environment. Recognise the importance of community spaces like Barrbunin Beek.
- First Nations design principles to be embedded in design so that it is not an afterthought.
- Further consultation with key community members was requested. This included a meeting and continuous conversations with two RAP members and led to the incorporation of concepts like Caring for Country in the document

Survey Results

Vision statement

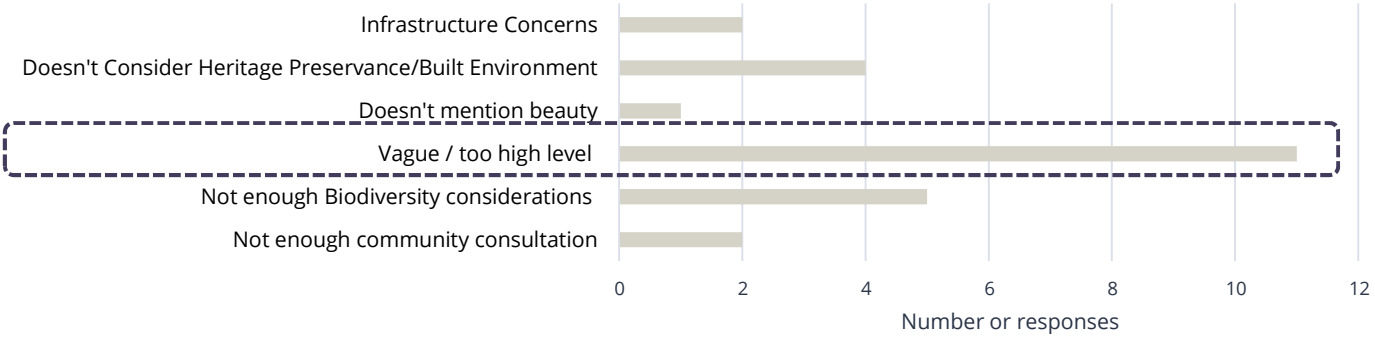
Do you support the vision statement?

One of the things we wanted to understand was community support for the Vision Statement.

Yes 49% **No 12%** **Somewhat 39%**

This response shows that 49% of the respondents support the Vision Statement, 12% do not support it, and 39% somewhat support it.

This question included an optional follow up question asking for the reason they chose that answer. The following themes appeared most frequently in people's responses. A vast majority of responses have been grouped as '**vague or too high-level information'**.



Urban Spaces

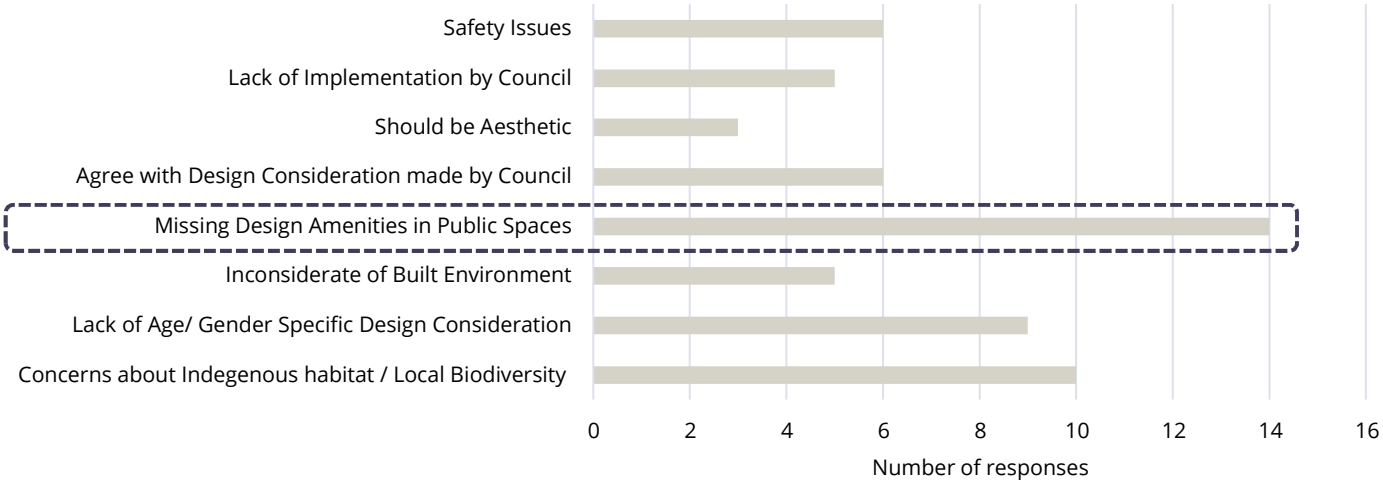
Do the design principles for your area of interest align with your expectations for our public spaces?

Respondents had the opportunity to answer if the design principles aligned with their expectations of Urban Spaces.

Yes 52% **No 18%** **Somewhat 30%**

This response shows that 52% have their expectations aligned with the design principles, 18% do not have their expectations aligned with the design principles, and 39% somewhat.

This question included a follow up question asking for the reason they chose that answer. The following themes appeared most frequently in people's responses. A vast majority of responses have been grouped as **'missing design amenities in public spaces'**.



Open Spaces

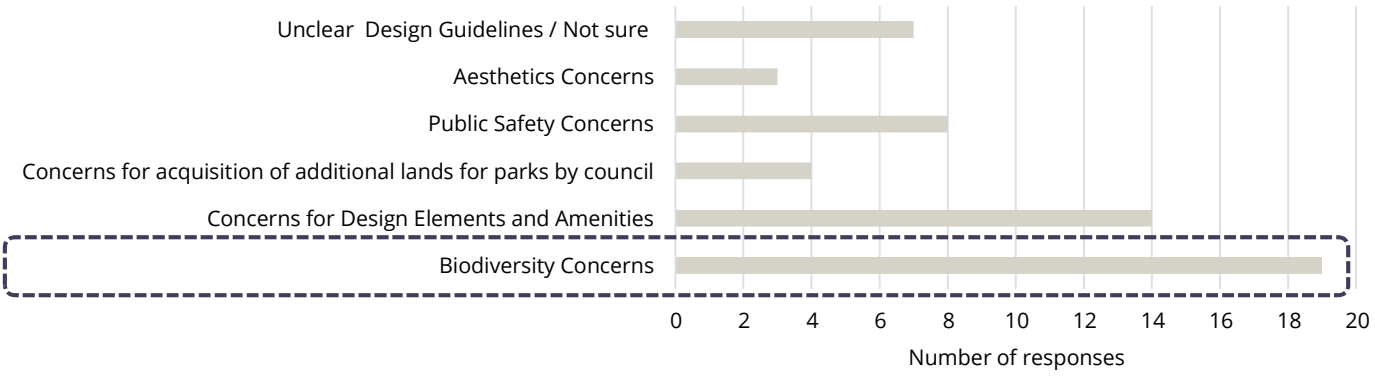
Do the design principles for your area of interest align with your expectations for our public spaces?

Respondents had the opportunity to answer if the design principles aligned with their expectations of Open Spaces.

Yes 41% **No 26%** **Somewhat 33%**

This response shows that 41% have their expectations aligned with the design principles, 26% do not have their expectations aligned with the design principles, and 33% somewhat.

This question included a follow up question asking for the reason they chose that answer. The following themes appeared most frequently in people's responses. A vast majority of responses have been grouped as **'Biodiversity concerns'** as the reason for choosing their answer.



Transport

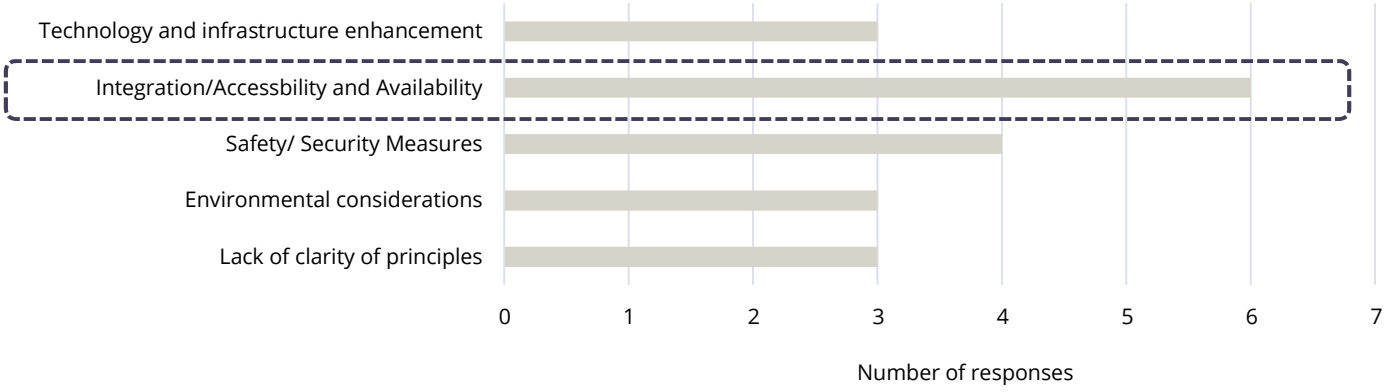
Do the design principles for your area of interest align with your expectations for our public spaces?

Respondents had the opportunity to answer if the design principles aligned with their expectations of Transport.

Yes 36% **No 28%** **Somewhat 36%**

This response shows that 36% have their expectations aligned with the design principles, 28% do not have their expectations aligned with the design principles, and 36% somewhat.

This question included a follow up question asking for the reason they chose that answer. The following themes appeared most frequently in the responses. A vast majority mentioned **'Integration/Accessibility and availability'** as the reason for choosing their answer.



Links

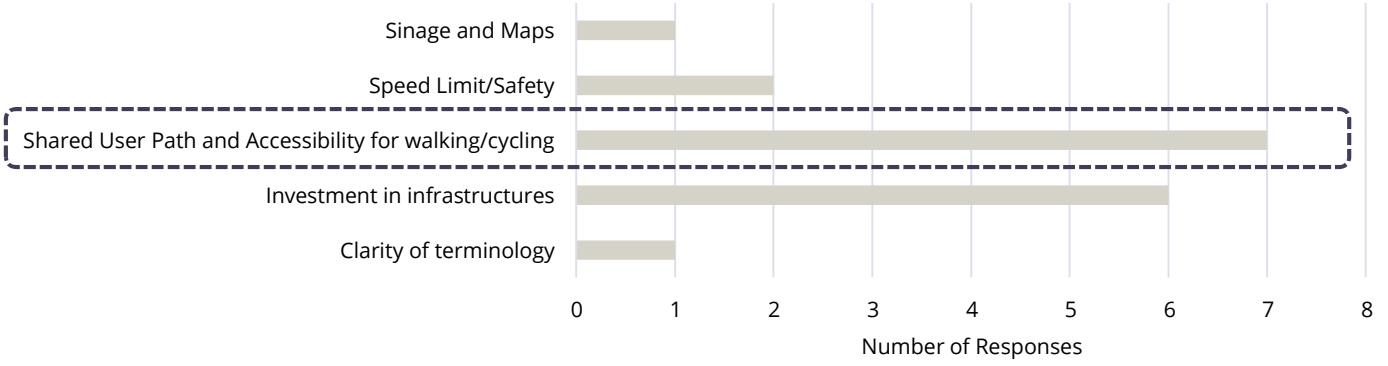
Do the design principles for your area of interest align with your expectations for our public spaces?

Respondents had the opportunity to answer if the design principles aligned with their expectations of Links.

Yes 33% **No 11%** **Somewhat 56%**

This response shows that 33% have their expectations aligned with the design principles, 11% do not have their expectations aligned with the design principles, and 56% somewhat.

This question included a follow up question asking for the reason they chose that answer. The following themes appeared most frequently in the responses. A vast majority mentioned **'shared user path and accessibility for walking/cycling'** as the reason for choosing their answer.



Gender equality in the public realm

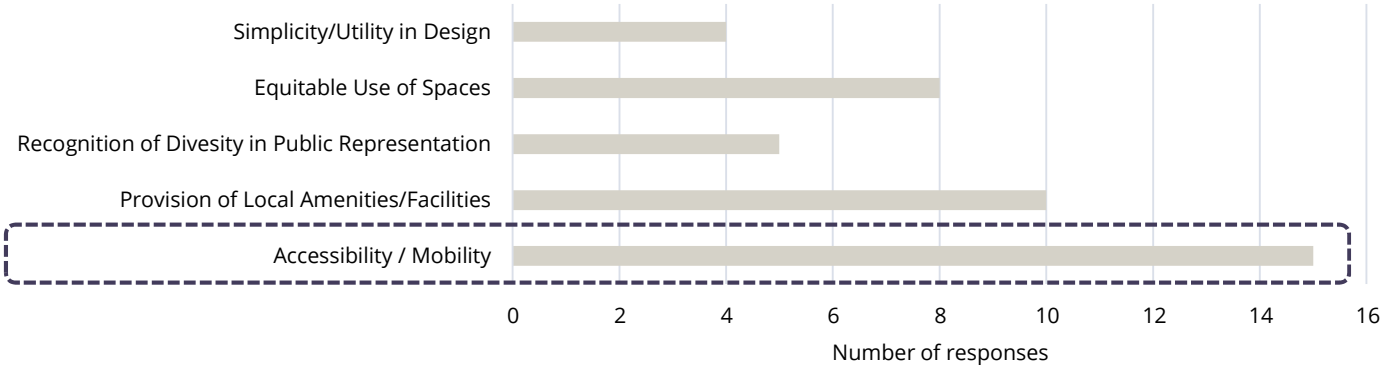
Some questions were included to assist with Council's requirement to undertake a Gender Impact Assessment to make sure the Policy is inclusive and equitable to all members of the community.

In your experience, do you believe that Council's public spaces and facilities are designed to be inclusive and accessible for individuals of all genders, ages, abilities, backgrounds and circumstances?

Yes 39% **No 25%** **Somewhat 36%**

This response shows that 39% have their expectations aligned with the design principles, 25% do not have their expectations aligned with the design principles, and 36% somewhat.

This question included a follow up question asking Is there anything missing or that you would like Council to consider? The following themes appeared most frequently in the responses. The most common theme was **accessibility / mobility** as a factor to make public spaces inclusive.

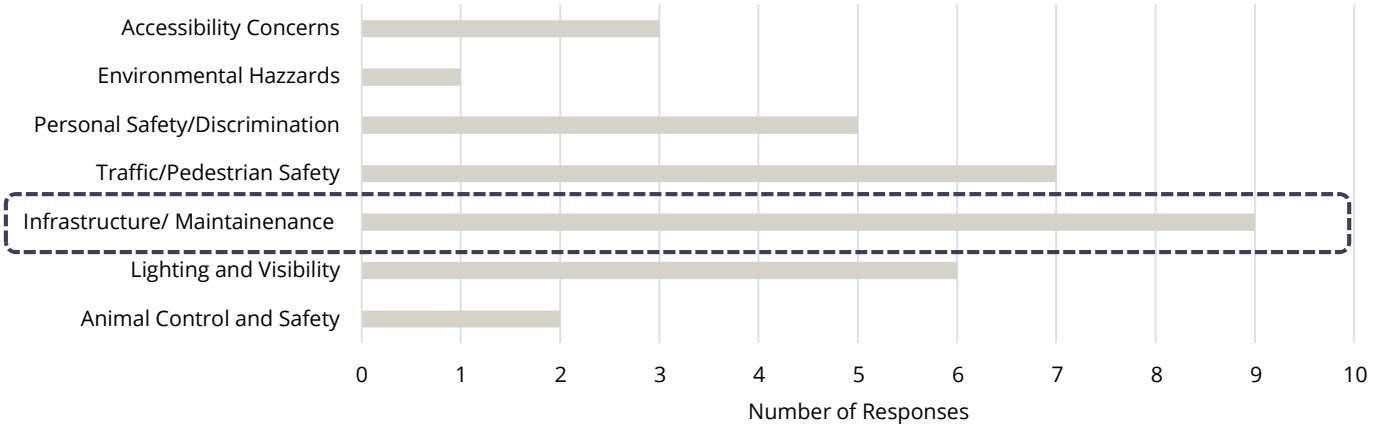


Are there specific challenges or safety concerns that you have encountered in our public spaces?

Yes 33% **No 11%** **Somewhat 56%**

This response shows that 39% have their expectations aligned with the design principles, 25% do not have their expectations aligned with the design principles, and 36% somewhat.

This question included a follow up question asking for the reason they chose that answer. The following themes appeared most frequently in the responses. A vast majority mentioned **'infrastructure / maintenance'** as a factor to make public spaces inclusive.



Note: we received concerning descriptions of incidents in some of our public spaces in response to this question. These incidents have been raised with our Community Resilience team which has regular meetings with Police and other stakeholders.

Have you ever felt excluded or uncomfortable in any of our public spaces due to issues related to gender, age, ability, background, circumstances, or safety? (e.g. disability, gender, age, ability, background, circumstance)

Yes 39% **No 54%** **Somewhat 7%**

This response shows that 39% have their expectations aligned with the design principles, 25% do not have their expectations aligned with the design principles, and 36% somewhat.

This question included a follow up question asking for the reason they chose that answer. The following themes appeared most frequently in the responses. A vast majority mentioned **'lack of safety and security'** as a factor to make public spaces inclusive.

