

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

Draft *Bentleigh Structure Plan 2023*
Community engagement summary report
OCTOBER 2023

Background

Bentleigh is an attractive shopping destination with good access to public transport, community amenities and local employment.

It is identified as a Major Activity Centre (MAC) in the Victorian Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050*. *Plan Melbourne* sets a clear objective for MACs like Bentleigh to support new housing in activity centres and other places that offer good access to jobs, services and transport.

To coordinate the sort of growth that comes with an increasingly popular area, we developed a structure plan for Bentleigh in 2018. Council decided not to move ahead with it before more strategic work was done and a *Housing Strategy* was developed.

The draft *Bentleigh Structure Plan 2023* (draft *Plan*) has now been developed in response to *Plan Melbourne's* objectives. It outlines a 15-year plan for the growth and improvement of Bentleigh. Its preparation was guided by independent urban design and transport advice, as well as the *Glen Eira Housing Strategy* and *Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021–2025*, adopted in late-2022 and mid-2020 respectively.

The draft *Plan* builds on previous community consultation. It aims to help achieve a vibrant and viable shopping strip that includes economic and land use needs, heritage protection, buildings and development, transport and parking, open space and place making opportunities.

This report summarises the methods used to engage with the Glen Eira community and the feedback we received from the engagement period from August to September 2023.

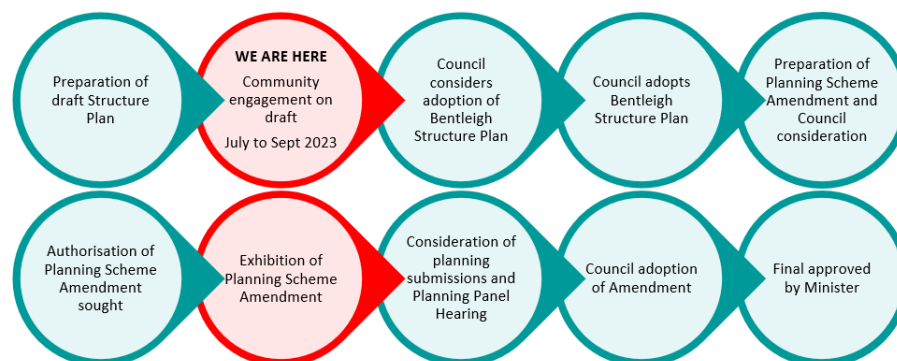


Figure 1: Structure Plan and Planning Scheme Amendment process. Red means public consultation phases.

Executive summary

Council engaged with the community on the draft *Plan* over a six-week period from 31 July to 11 September 2023. The opportunity to provide feedback on the draft *Plan* was promoted through Council's communications channels, including *Glen Eira News*, Council e-newsletters and a mailout to more than 4,100 addresses, including households and businesses.

Three in-person drop-in sessions and a walking tour were held and Council offered more detailed engagement with the Bentleigh Traders' Association. Community members could provide feedback via the online survey, by email, by phone or at in-person engagement activities.

A summary of the engagement activities is provided below, along with a snapshot of the feedback we received. More detailed analysis of the feedback is provided later in the report.

In total, Council received **122 written responses** (**105** survey responses, **17** emails - including a petition with **221** signatories), and **nine** phone calls. **30** people attended the drop-in sessions and **seven** people attended the walking tour.

Online community survey

A total of **105** surveys were completed by 104 community members (suggesting one community member completed the survey twice). **44 per cent** of participants identified as a woman or girl while **56 per cent** identified as a man or boy. **59 per cent** of participants were between the 30 to 59 age bracket.

A summary of responses received to the survey is provided below:

Open space opportunities

- **77 per cent** of participants indicated they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that we should seek opportunities to create open space in the draft *Plan*.
- **45 per cent** of participants indicated they thought the proposed open space location was suitable.

Retaining character

- **55 per cent** of participants indicated that accommodating growth above the commercial strip was better than doing it in other parts of Bentleigh.
- **51 per cent** of participants indicated they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that measures such as height limits and upper-level setbacks for new development would help to retain the character of Centre Road.

Sustainable transport

- **51 per cent** of participants (53) indicated that there were enough measures proposed to encourage walking and cycling in the centre.

Streetscape

- **50 per cent** participants (52) indicated they would **not** support a reduction of any on-street carparking for the planting of larger canopy trees, while 44 per cent (46) said they **would**.

Employment

- **43 per cent** of participants (45) responded that the draft *Plan* would encourage employment opportunities in the centre.

Through free text boxes, more than 20 per cent of participants mentioned the following points:

- **36 per cent** of participants indicated **Council should accommodate growth in the centre close to services**, when asked if they thought that accommodating growth above the commercial strip was better than doing it in other parts of Bentleigh.
- **29 per cent** of participants indicated they had **safety concerns about mixed modes of transport in spaces**, when asked about sustainable transport modes in a growing centre.
- **25 per cent** of participants indicated **Council should prioritise greenery in Bentleigh** when asked about sustainable transport in a growing centre.
- **21 per cent** of participants indicated we should **preserve and/or restore the character and heritage of buildings where possible** in the centre when asked about retaining character in a growing centre.
- **20 per cent** of participants indicated they would like a **building height limit reduction in the centre** when asked about retaining character in a growing centre.

Emails

We received **17** email submissions from **13** community members for the draft *Plan*. One of the emails was a petition with **221** signatories. Themes expressed in submissions via email aligned with those expressed in the online survey.

The main themes of emails included:

- concerns about overshadowing;
- concerns about proposed building height limits;
- consideration of proposed building setbacks
- need to protect the centre's character and heritage;
- querying of the planning process and principles;
- the prospect of increased traffic; and
- concerns about losing carparking.

Themes from the petition:

- Consider feedback from Councillors that objected to the draft *Plan* going to community consultation.
- Consider community feedback from previous consultations.
- Planning decisions have lacked balance, advocacy and justification.
- Council has been dismissive of resident feedback.
- Proposed tall buildings (seven plus storeys) adjacent to residential heritage areas — inconsistent with basic planning principles.
- Permanent height controls needed (five storeys maximum).

Drop-in information sessions

A total of **30** community members attended our three face-to-face drop-in information sessions at Bentleigh Library and Youth Hub and spoke with strategic planners about the draft *Plan*.

Walking tour of Bentleigh

Seven community members attended our walking tour through Bentleigh's centre on Thursday 24 August 2023. The activity was led by strategic planners and involved six stops where attendees were told what was proposed in the draft *Plan*.

Phone calls

Council received **nine phone calls** from eight community members about the draft *Plan*. They spoke with a strategic planner and generally sought clarification on aspects of the document.

Engagement methods

We engaged with the community around the draft *Plan* over a six-week period from 31 July to 11 September 2023. Our online survey was open to everyone and we sought feedback on the draft *Plan's* key ideas. While the online survey was our main method of gaining community insights and feedback, we also provided a phone number for community members to call Council officers to discuss the project and an email address to receive questions and feedback from community members.

We conducted face-to-face drop-in information sessions and a walking tour of the Bentleigh Major Activity Centre with community members. Participants learned more about the draft *Plan* with officers as they walked through the precinct.

The engagement was promoted via Council's communications channels, including a mailout to property owners and occupiers around the draft *Plan* study area boundary. We created postcards to promote the engagement and provided them to the Bentleigh Library and Youth Space, Godfrey Street Community House, Glen Education Bentleigh Kindergarten and Bentleigh Maternal and Child Health Care Centre.

We included information about the engagement in *Glen Eira News*, in various Council e-newsletters, on social media and in an email to other stakeholders in the area. The detailed communication activities and their reach are outlined below.

Communication activities	Reach
<i>Glen Eira News</i> articles, including a page 7 standalone on the consultation (August edition)	All households in Glen Eira
Mailout to property owners and occupiers within 400 metres of the draft <i>Plan</i> study area boundary	4,101 property owners and occupiers
Other Council e-newsletters	Community Engagement e-News: 23 August and 4 September 2023 (4,422 recipients) Sustainability e-News: 28 July 2023 (4,011 recipients) Community Development e-News: 3 August 2023 (548 recipients) Economic Development e-News: 3 August 2023 (7,724 recipients)
Have Your Say project engagement page live with survey available, and updates made as required	105 surveys completed (by 104 community members) 2,639 page visits 871 documents downloaded
Hard-copy draft <i>Plan</i> and postcards	Town Hall Service Centre and Bentleigh Library and Youth Space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two hard-copy draft <i>Plans</i> each 50 postcards each

	Godfrey Street Community House, Glen Education Bentleigh Kindergarten, Bentleigh Maternal and Child Health Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 postcards each
Social Media posts via the Glen Eira Council platforms	Instagram 1,900 accounts reached 35 likes One comment Facebook 813 accounts reached 17 post engagements 15 clicks One share
Emails to key stakeholders (including Bentleigh Traders Association, Glen Eira Historical Society)	303 recipients
Glen Eira City Council website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homepage ribbon Project page What's on (for drop-in sessions and walking tour) 	Project page: 191 visits What's on: 39 visits Clicks to Have Your Say: 149 clicks

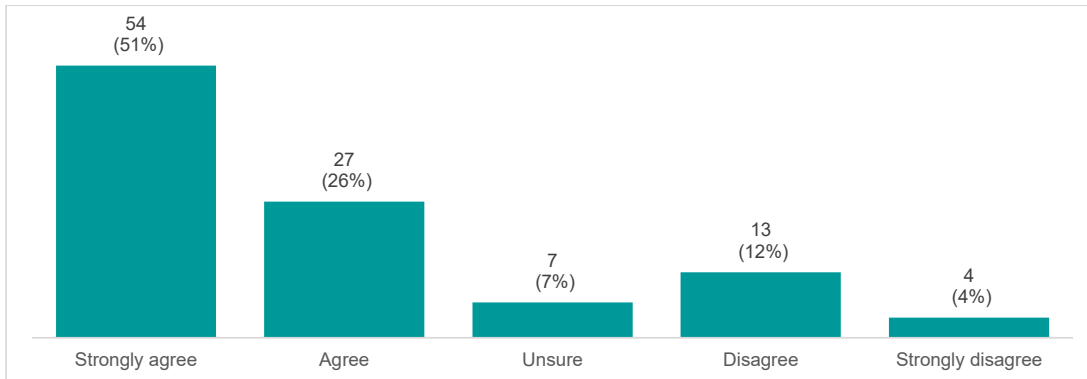
Engagement activities	Number who participated
Online community survey	105 surveys completed (by 104 community members) 2,639 total visits 871 document downloads
Emails	17 email submissions (by 13 people) (includes a petition with 221 co-signatories)
Calls	Nine calls (by eight people)
Community drop-in sessions (face-to-face) x 3	14 booked, 30 attended
Walking tour through Bentleigh centre	Nine booked, seven attended

HAVE YOUR SAY ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

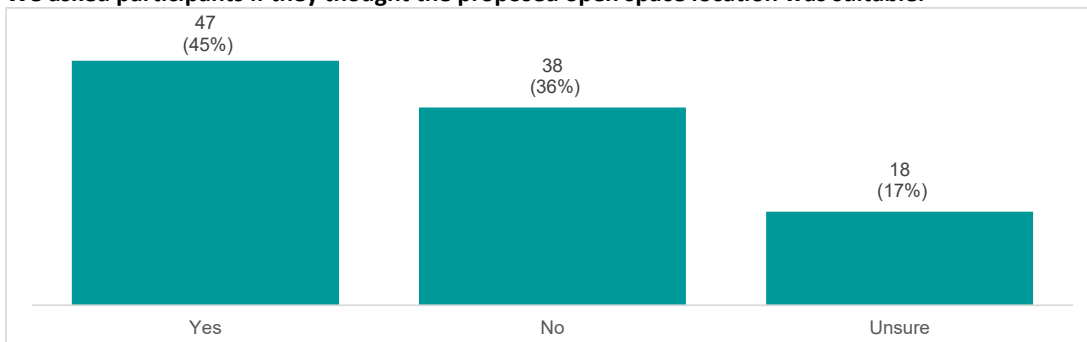
We received **105** survey responses during the community engagement. The survey responses were submitted by 104 community members suggesting that one person completed the survey twice.

OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

We asked participants if they agreed that we should seek opportunities to create open space in the draft *Plan*.



We asked participants if they thought the proposed open space location was suitable.



We asked participants if they could think of another location in the Bentleigh centre that would be suitable for open space. Those who did specified (in no particular order):

Locations (23 responses)	
Bent Street	
Nicholson Street	
Bleazby Street	
Bendigo Avenue	
Daley Street	
Jasper Road	
Robert Street	
Acquire new land and convert into green space	
Above railway	
Add to existing parks	
Upgrade Bentleigh Plaza	

Turn the tennis courts behind Bentleigh RSL into green space
Away from shops

We asked participants if there was anything else they wanted to add about open space opportunities.

Key themes of participant feedback	Number of mentions by respondents (Total responses 45)
Pop-up space as part of the temporarily implemented Bentleigh Urban Living Room project was rarely used	12 per cent
More open space generally required	11 per cent
Unsuitability of area for green space	10 per cent
Improvements needed to make Bentleigh Plaza more functional and appealing	9 per cent
Removal of carpark may impact number of visitors to shops	7 per cent
Improving of walking and cycling connections	6 per cent
Carpark is well used and needed	6 per cent
Suitable seating required along the shopping strip	4 per cent
Worry about implications of population growth	3 per cent
Concerned about safety due to unwanted activities	3 per cent
Already have sufficient open spaces	3 per cent
More greenery and trees would be great addition	3 per cent
Would like to see eventual removal of cars from Centre Road shopping strip	3 per cent
More open space required west of train line	2 per cent
Importance of environmental protection	2 per cent
Other	6 per cent

Key free text comments included:

"My experience is these are well-used during the day, less so at night. If Council were to make this parking less available by converting to open space as proposed, this may have a material impact on the numbers of visitors to the MAC. We are demonstrably still a car-dependent community, especially in Bentleigh East where I live." — Woman, 60-69-year-old, Bentleigh East

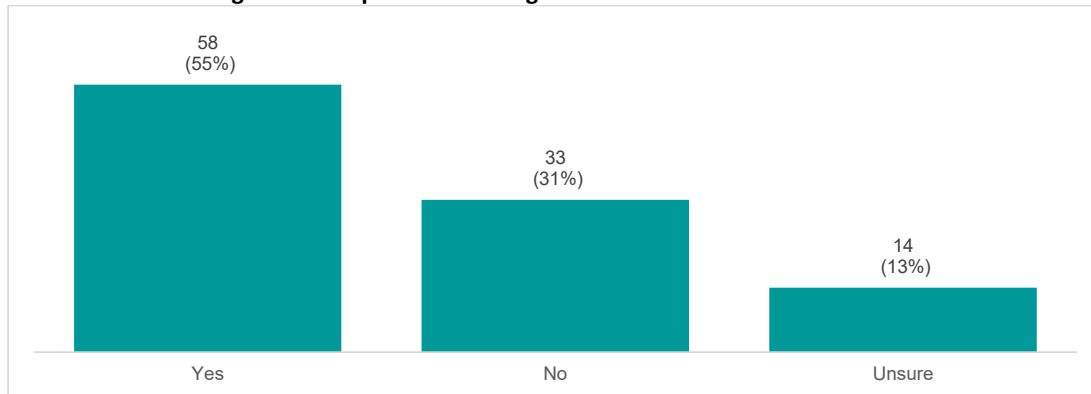
"Bentleigh needs far more open space and green space for passive recreation." — Man, prefer not to say, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

"I like the principle of the open space area suggested but am worried because of its location behind the shopping strip and away from main roads that it might become a focal point for antisocial behaviour. It would need to be carefully designed and managed." — Man, 60-69-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

"Proposed area is close to the pop-up recreational area in the carpark which was not very successful" — Man, 60-69-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

RETAINING CHARACTER

We asked participants if they thought that accommodating growth above the commercial strip was better than doing it in other parts of Bentleigh.



When asked to explain why, participants said:

Key themes of participant feedback	Number of mentions by respondents (Total responses 81)
Accommodate growth in the centre close to services	36 per cent
Existing and future traffic concerns	13 per cent
Preservation of character and heritage	12 per cent
Carparking provisions need to be carefully considered	11 per cent
Proposed building heights concerns	11 per cent
Overshadowing concerns	10 per cent
Keep growth away from residential streets	10 per cent
Growth good for the local economy	6 per cent
Not in favour of growth above the centre	6 per cent
Noise concerns with growth in the centre	5 per cent
Concern about population growth on the centre	5 per cent
Greenery and open spaces important to integrate	3 per cent
Would promote modes of transport other than driving	3 per cent
Make the Bentleigh Plaza more functional and appealing	2 per cent
Environmental protection	2 per cent
Growth along railway lines would be least impactful	2 per cent
Other	7 per cent

Key comments included:

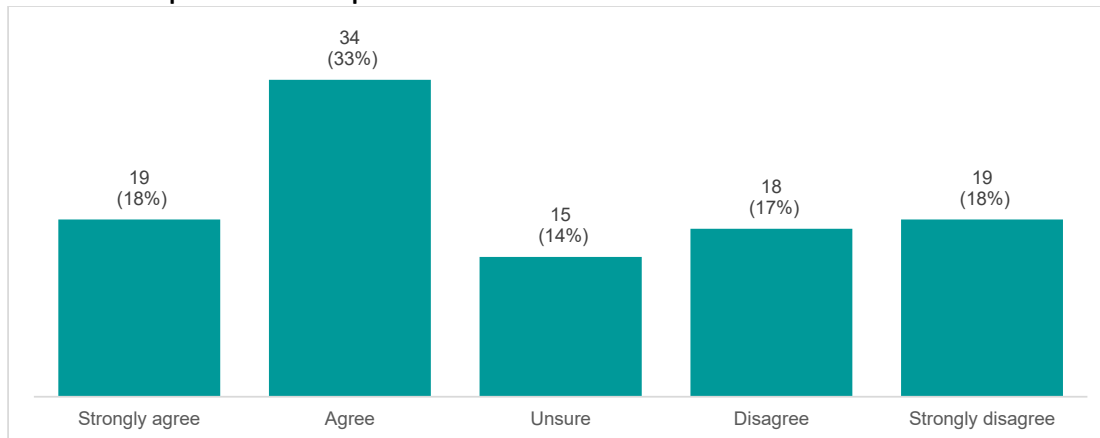
"Reflect what other countries do to expand housing in areas where there are shops, services etc."
— Woman, 40-49-year-old, Bentleigh East

"If the proposed plan is accepted and goes ahead, it will ruin the suburb as we know it through high level buildings and reduced parking" — Man/boy, 19 and under, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

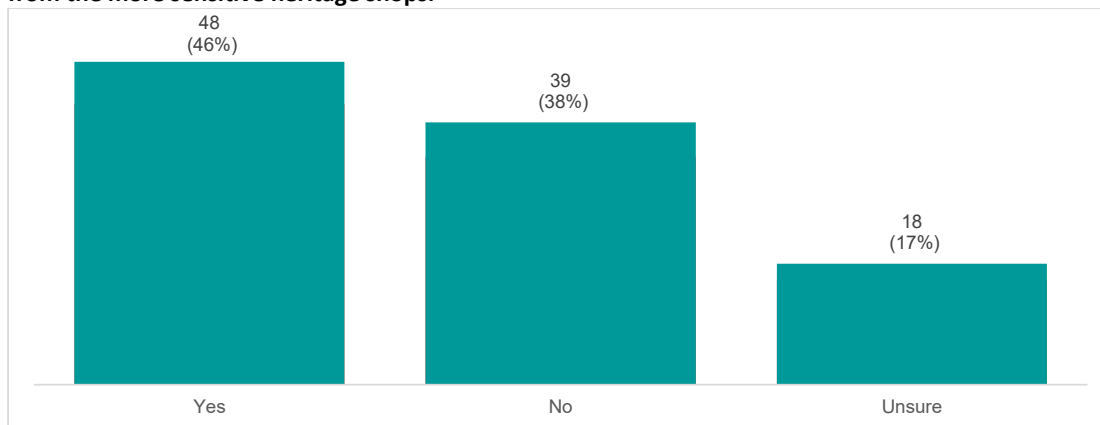
"I strongly disagree with the inclusion of increased building heights for residential or commercial property." — Woman, 30-39-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

"I am a very strong advocate for heritage protection and support council's adoption of the Bentleigh Heritage Precinct HO69 plus others for Rose Street and The Highway. Given the rapid population growth being experienced by Melbourne, the idea of limiting Bentleigh's share of this growth to the shopping strip along Centre Rd would be preferable as this would help the suburb retain some of its character and community that has made it a great place to live in the past." — Man, 60-69-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

We asked participants if they agreed that measures such as height limits and upper-level setbacks for new development would help to retain the character of Centre Road.



We asked participants if they thought it was a suitable approach that areas to the western and eastern ends of the centre were most suitable for higher density buildings as they would be away from the more sensitive heritage shops.



We asked participants if there was anything else they wanted to add about retaining character in a growing centre.

Key themes of participant feedback	Number of mentions by respondents (Total responses 53)
Preserve and/or restore character and heritage of buildings where possible	21 per cent
Building height limit reduction	20 per cent
Design of buildings in a way they help create village feel	10 per cent

Improvements need to be made to communal spaces making them more functional and appealing	10 per cent
Overshadowing	7 per cent
Carparking provisions need to be considered carefully	7 per cent
Worry about implications of population growth	7 per cent
Environmental protection considerations	5 per cent
Impacts on local traders (both good and bad)	4 per cent
Setbacks are essential in preserving heritage and character	3 per cent
Accommodate residential density close to services	3 per cent
Higher density building close to services makes sense	2 per cent
Keep residential streets as they are	2 per cent
The centre should remain as it is	2 per cent
Prioritise inviting greenery in the centre	2 per cent
Visual bulk too great	2 per cent
Other	10 per cent

Key comments included:

"If this is the approach then there has to be a focus on car parking. I think multi-level car parks are a better use of space than the current car parks available in the area. I also think that short term car parking eg. 15 - 30 mins needs to be implemented on Centre Road and longer-term parking needs to be encouraged behind the shopping strip." — Woman, 50-59-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

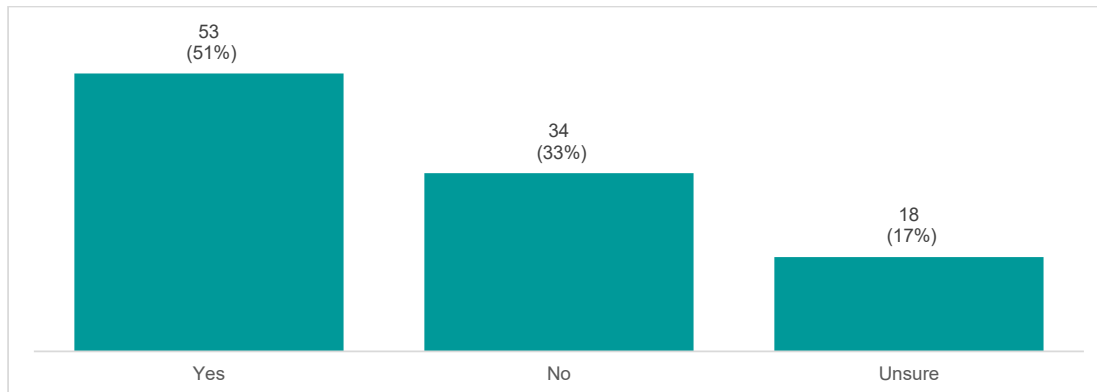
"I don't see the point of a height limit as long as the set back is abided to." — Man, 20-29-year-old, Carnegie/Glen Huntly/Murrumbena

"This plan is disgusting. A majority of buildings along Centre Rd to be five storeys?! This does nothing to retain the character and village-feel of a much-loved area. Without on-street parking, people will not want to stop and browse shops. This will kill businesses. Look at Acland St as an example. Leave the street alone and fix potholes, footpaths and lighting in our streets instead." — Woman, 40-49-year-old, Bentleigh East

"I understand that many will say that progress is necessary, however it does not need to spread to such tall limits. The streets along the rail line would make so much more sense. They also provide for residents not requiring additional car spots being super close to Bentleigh MacKinnon and Patterson railways." — Man, 50-59-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

We asked participants if there were enough measures proposed to encourage walking and cycling in the centre.



We asked participants if there was anything else they wanted to add about sustainable transport in a growing centre.

Key themes of participant feedback	Number of mentions by respondents (Total responses 47)
Safety concerns about mixed modes of transport	28 per cent
Extending the shared user path network in the area	17 per cent
Encourage take up of non-car modes of transport	16 per cent
Traffic congestion concerns	8 per cent
Electric modes of transport should be encouraged	6 per cent
Worry about implications of population growth	4 per cent
Removal of on-street carparking may impact number of visitors to shops	4 per cent
PT services should reflect patronage	4 per cent
Carparking provisions need to be considered carefully	4 per cent
Removal of cars from Centre Road	4 per cent
Carpark is well used and needed	3 per cent
Keep traffic lanes for cars	3 per cent
Improvements need to be made to communal spaces making them more functional and appealing	3 per cent
Keep off-street carparks	2 per cent
Other	5 per cent

Key comments included:

“Centre road and surrounds is already too busy for bikes. I can’t imagine how much busier it will be by adding thousands of people living there. You’d have to close roads and parking to make it safer for me and the kids to ride around Bentleigh.” — Man, 40-49-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

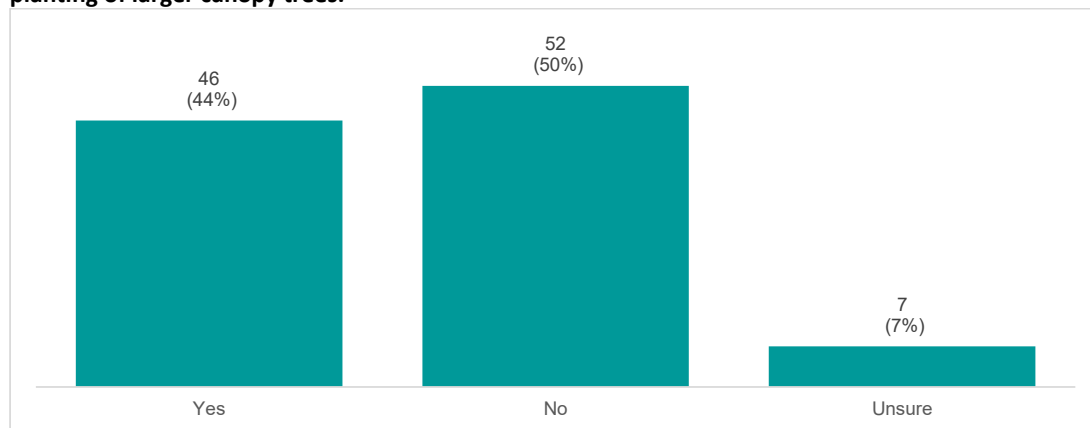
“I can tell you that Gilbert grove is not a suitable cycling route. At best, you take your life into your own hands just to get through the street safely in a car due to the amount of parked cars along the street. This will be even more dangerous if the proposed buildings at each corner of Gilbert grove and Centre Road go ahead as per the draft structure plan with substantially extra residents moving in. Putting a cycling route on Gilbert grove is an accident waiting to happen, I sincerely hope Council does not go ahead it.” — Man/boy, 19 and under, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

"Please stop considering just the younger and fitter Bentleigh residents. I am older and mobility-impaired and also deserve to be able to access all areas of my suburb. All these pedestrian/cyclist only areas make it difficult for those who must use cars/taxis." — Woman, 60-69-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

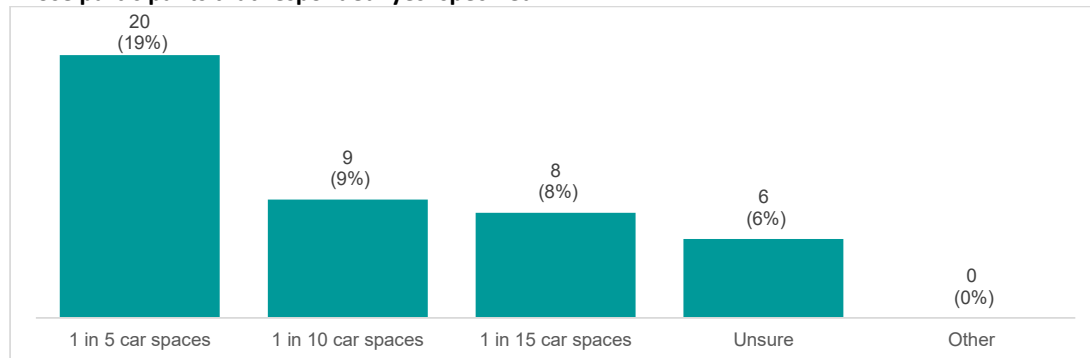
"I would like more bike paths please. Especially off-road bike paths. The rail trail should be extended. Can you please fix the bike trail that runs along next to the railway line? I mean the part where you must get off the path and ride on the road near McKinnon station. Also, I would like it to be easier to go by bike to Brighton and get to the bay." — Woman, 40-49-year-old, Carnegie/Glen Huntly/Murrumbeena

STREETSCAPE

We asked participants if they would support a reduction of any on-street carparking for the planting of larger canopy trees.



Those participants that responded 'yes' specified:



We asked participants if there was anything else they wanted to add about sustainable transport in a growing centre.

Key themes of participant feedback	Number of mentions by respondents (Total responses 56)
Prioritise inviting greenery in the centre	25 per cent
Carparking provisions need to be carefully considered	16 per cent
The look and feel of walking the centre could be improved	13 per cent
Carefully consider appropriate trees to plant	8 per cent

Improvements need to be made to communal spaces making them more functional and appealing	6 per cent
Worry that parked cars will move to residential streets	6 per cent
Encourage more bicycle transportation to the centre	5 per cent
Removal of on-street car parking may impact number of visitors to shops	4 per cent
Environmental protection	4 per cent
Overshadowing concerns	3 per cent
Invest or allow businesses to create more inviting spaces	2 per cent
Increase space for outdoor dining	2 per cent
Removal of cars from Centre Road	2 per cent
Traffic network concerns with changes in flow	2 per cent
Suitable seating required along the shopping strip	2 per cent
Other	11 per cent

Key comments included:

"A long consistent paving style creates the village look and feel going the full length of the open planned area" — Man, 50-59-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

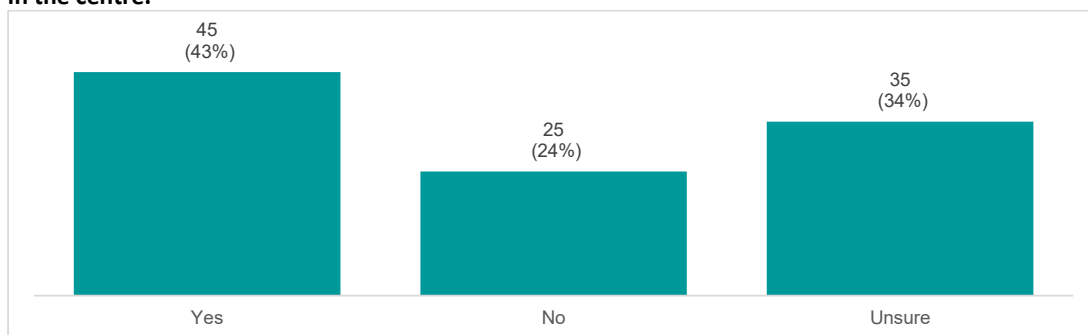
"Desperately needs more native trees and ground cover." — Man, 20-29-year-old, Carnegie/Glen Huntly/Murrumbena

"Bent Street is barely navigable for parked cars thanks to overdevelopment." — Man, 60-69-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

"Love the idea of greening the road, there are numerous examples of this in other places." — Man, 50-59-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

EMPLOYMENT

We asked participants if they thought the draft *Plan* would encourage employment opportunities in the centre.



We asked participants if there was anything else they wanted to add about employment in the Bentleigh centre.

Key themes of participant feedback	Number of mentions by respondents (Total responses 22)
New and appealing spaces needed to attract businesses	5 per cent
Support existing businesses in the centre	4 per cent

Encourage business with staff parking	3 per cent
Ensure accessibility requirements of new spaces met	2 per cent
Increase employment opportunities	2 per cent
Business spaces that cater to all types of work	1 per cent
Will more floor space equate to more employment?	1 per cent
Being realistic	1 per cent
Affordable shop rent important	1 per cent
Moving cars off Centre Road would allow more business	1 per cent
More work for engineering professionals in area	1 per cent
Construction works hurting accessibility to businesses	1 per cent

Key comments included:

"I think commercial spaces and office spaces need to be encouraged to as to attract people to Centre Road during the week." — Woman, 50-59-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

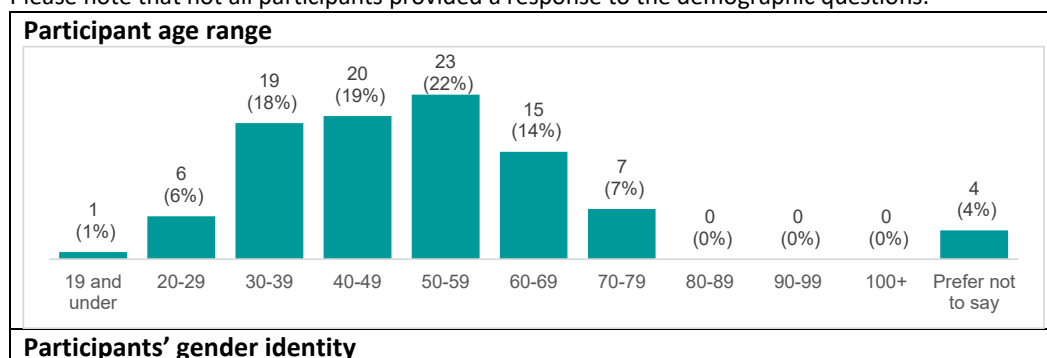
"Over four decades I've seen the Bentleigh centre grow - some of it has been very good, other very poor. Whilst understanding that Council can't control a lot of aspects or bad taste on design and colour schemes, residents / ratepayers want to live and have activities in an attractive area."
— Prefer not to say, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

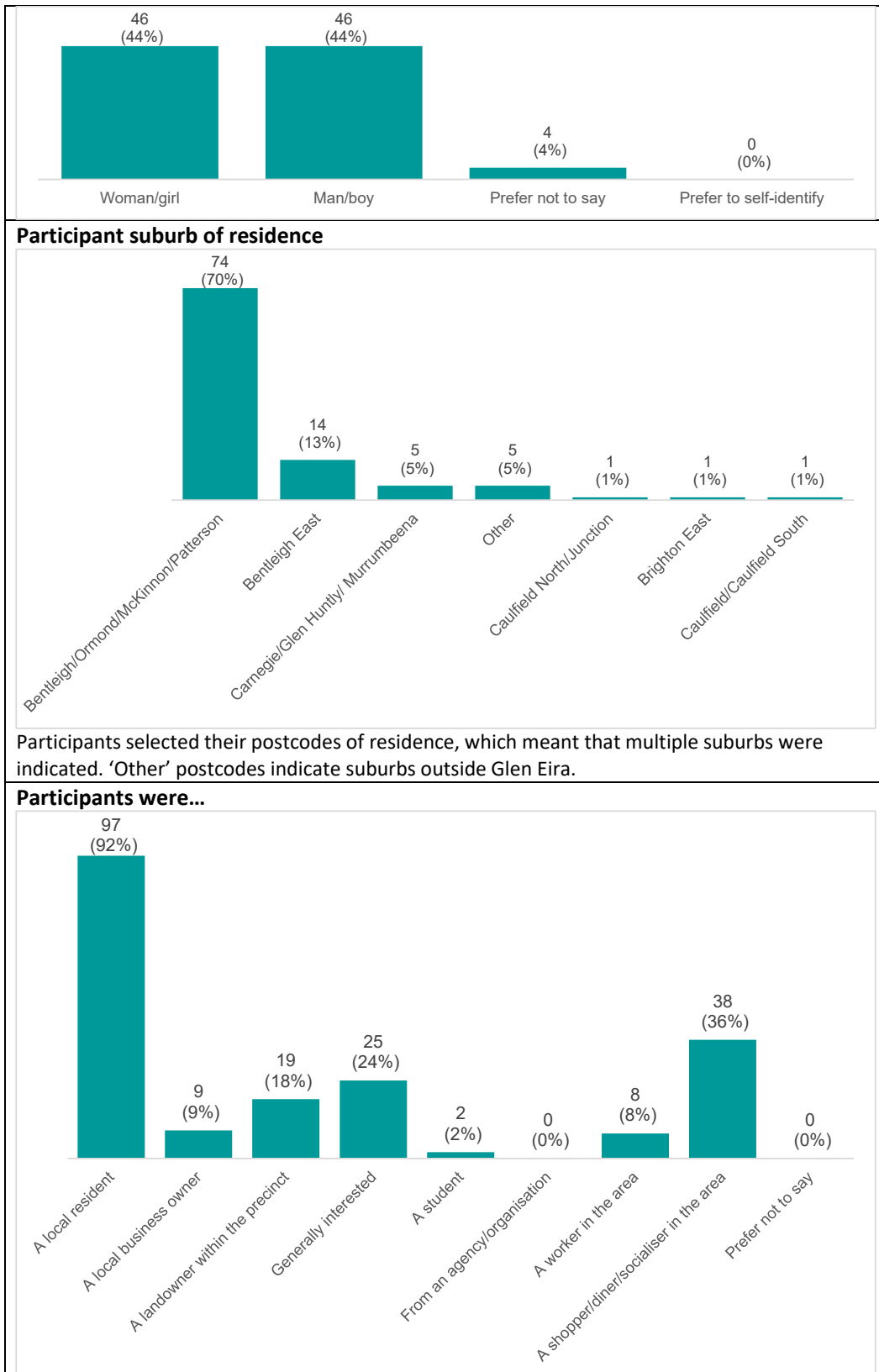
"There are currently many vacancies in Centre Road. Owners must be held responsible for making these more attractive and cleaner. Many businesses on centre road look terrible and unkempt."
— Woman, 50-59-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

"Rent around the strip needs to be affordable to attract business." — Woman, 60-69-year-old, Bentleigh/McKinnon/Ormond

WHO PARTICIPATED IN OUR COMMUNITY SURVEY?

Please note that not all participants provided a response to the demographic questions.





Participants could choose as many options as were relevant. Those that indicated 'other' specified:

- Agent for a landowner.
- I own a unit in Bentleigh, currently renting it out but with the intention to reside there in the future.

Emails received

Over the community engagement period for the draft *Plan* we received **13 emails** from community members with their feedback and ideas.

The feedback we received via email was similarly themed to the submissions received from the online survey:

Key themes of emails	Number of mentions by respondents (of 17 total emails)
Concerns about overshadowing	7
Concerns about proposed building height limits	7
Need to protect the centre's character and heritage	6
Querying of the planning process and principles	4
Proposed building setbacks necessary	4
The prospect of increased traffic	4
Consideration of proposed building setbacks	4
Concerns about losing carparking	4
Reduced amenity for residents	3
Carpark removal's implication for business	3
Retain existing or plant more suitable trees	2
The need for suitable building designs	2
The need to protect the environment	2
Need to address disability access in the centre	1
Bentleigh Plaza hasn't worked well as a community space	1
Sustainable elements should be a key priority	1
The need for more open space	1
Proposal won't benefit the area	1
Pop-up space as part of the temporarily implemented Bentleigh Urban Living Room project was rarely used	1
The need to improve walking and cycling links	1
Querying of the activity centre boundary	1
Footpath should be expanded	1
Querying the sale of land	1
Concern about duration of possible construction impacts	1

One of the emails included a petition signed by 221 people. Key themes from the petition were:

Key themes of petition
Consider feedback from Councillors that objected to the draft <i>Plan</i> going to community consultation
Consider community feedback from previous consultations
Planning decisions have lacked balance, advocacy and justification
Council has been dismissive of resident feedback
Proposed tall buildings (seven or more storeys) adjacent to residential heritage areas, inconsistent with basic planning principles
Permanent height controls needed (five storeys maximum)

Key comments included:

"I have a complete dislike of discretionary heights simply because they mean absolutely nothing when developments get to VCAT. They do not work. We have demonstrated that Mandatory heights work, and that, with sound argument, can obtain ministerial approval. Our Planning Department should not be fearful of the 'Panel' who might try to stop us from retaining control."

"I can see merit in providing a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists, but I am opposed to any narrowing of roads and streets. Centre Rd is already a choke channel for vehicles that have to drive through it."

"We also find a lot of barriers for our customers in the community as majority are in wheelchairs and require community access bathrooms with hoists and plinths. Also, we have quite a few customers who reside in the area who would like more opportunity to access the area on the weekends."

Drop-in information sessions

We held **three drop-in sessions** held during the engagement period at the Bentleigh Library and Youth Space on Jasper Road, which is ideally located at the project area and convenient for local community members to engage.

30 community members attended these face-to-face sessions and spoke with Council Officers about the draft *Plan*. Questions asked were generally of a personal nature and how the draft *Plan* would impact their property.

Themes covered in discussions at these sessions included:

- heritage buildings and local character protection;
- improvements to the Bentleigh Plaza, making it more functional and appealing;
- parking, such frustration at not having a multi-level carpark;
- traffic flow concerns and whether road closures could occur;
- reduced building heights;
- overshadowing concerns;
- environmental sustainability objectives;
- increasing foot traffic in the Bentleigh centre; and
- encouraging transport modes other than cars.

Walking tour through Bentleigh

The walking tour was attended by **seven community members**, including residents and traders.

It involved Council Officers taking attendees through the centre in a walk and talk-style format. It was an opportunity for interested community members to ask questions and engage face-to-face while taking in the project area firsthand.

The Council Officers highlighted key areas that related to the draft *Plan* and took questions from attendees throughout the session.

The themes that were raised included:

- retaining car spaces;
- key public spaces; and
- inclusions within setback boundaries, ie. balconies.

Image of a walking tour through Bentleigh with community members on Thursday 24 August 2023.



Phone calls

Council received **nine phone calls** from community members about the draft *Plan*. They spoke with a Council Officer generally seeking clarification on several aspects of the draft *Plan*.

The themes covered included:

- activities carried out during consultation;
- promotion of consultation;
- need to address disability access in the centre;
- reduced building heights;
- traffic and congestion;
- residential growth zone;
- improvements to the Bentleigh Plaza, making it more functional and appealing; and
- more greenery of the centre.