



**Merri-bek**  
City Council

# Designing Our Neighbourhoods

Merri-bek City Council

Engagement Summary Report  
Prepared by Conversation Co.

August - September 2022

*Conversation Co.*



# 1. About this report

Conversation Co was engaged by Merri-bek City Council to design and support the delivery and analysis of pop-up engagements. The pop-ups aimed to consult the community on neighbourhood character, housing design and new housing locations to inform the review of the existing planning policy.



## 2. Acknowledgement of Country

Merri-bek City Council and Conversation Co acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek, and pays respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations' communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

# 3. Executive Summary

## Overview

Between July 2022 and August 2022, Merri-bek City Council engaged with its community about the neighbourhood character, housing design and locations for Merri-bek City. The project delivers an engagement program to meet the legislative requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020*. This project will directly inform Merri-bek's Neighbourhood Character, Design and Housing Local Policies of the Merri-bek Planning Scheme.

## Participation

A total of 257 persons participated in the engagement program - 123 (49.0%) attended a community pop-up, 126 (47.9%) persons responded to the online community survey, six (2.3%) persons contributed to the interactive map and three submissions, and one industry survey response were received.

## Overview of key engagement findings

### Neighbourhood characteristics

Looking at trends across Merri-bek overall, participants most valued Vegetation (117 selections) followed by Built Form (109 selections) and Streetscapes (99 selections). The least preferred options were Topography (65 selections) and Views (45 selections).

### Brunswick

Similar valued characteristics to Merri-bek City, with two thirds of participants believing Brunswick is different from other areas in the municipality, related to the older styles of housing and historical value.

### Brunswick East

Values vegetation, with residents seeing this as the top theme making the area unique to the rest of Merri-bek. Residents described access to open, green space, views, and the importance of setbacks as points of interest.

### Brunswick West

Built form and streetscapes were more important to participants commenting on this suburb than other areas, celebrating Brunswick West's wide streets and older style homes with historical value.

### Glenroy

Built form and setbacks were equally as important to participants commenting on Glenroy, as vegetation. Residents preferred lower density, large block sizes and less subdivision in Glenroy, describing this as creating a 'quiet', 'family feel' to the neighbourhood.

### Coburg

Streetscapes and built form were most important to participants commenting on Coburg. Most participants valued the retention of period homes, green and open spaces, and large canopy trees.

### Coburg North

Vegetation, built form and setbacks were highly valued by those commenting on Coburg North, believing the unique housing and lower density made it different to other areas in the municipality.

#### **Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South**

Built form, topography, vegetation and streetscapes were most valued by those commenting on these suburbs, believing that wider streets, footpaths, nature strips, low density and large blocks contributing to 'suburban feel'.

#### **Hadfield**

Similar valued characteristics to Merri-bek City, valuing vegetation the highest. Participants want to preserve the 1960s and 1970s brick and weatherboard houses.

#### **Fawkner**

Topography was of higher importance to participants commenting on Fawkner than other areas of Merri-bek.

#### **Oak Park**

Topography and views were of higher importance to participants commenting on Oak Park than other areas of Merri-bek.

#### **Desired future neighbourhood characteristics**

Participants were asked "*Thinking about neighbourhood characteristics and features, what would you like to see our neighbourhoods look like in the future?*". The most common characteristic participants selected was vegetation with 90 comments, which included the desire for more plants, vegetation and trees across streets, nature strips and private gardens. The second common characteristic was streetscape, including diversity of housing types, nature strips and older style housing. Housing height and density was the third common characteristic, with many people requesting a stop to higher density development, and mixed views towards townhouses and apartments.

#### **Housing design**

Participants were asked for examples of good housing design in their street or neighbourhood, and to provide comments on why they believe this to be the case.

The highest-mentioned categories were apartments and townhouses (25 comments). Although this was a positively framed question, this category contained fairly even positive and negative responses. Good quality building materials was equally mentioned (25 comments) with a sentiment that new builds constructed from 'good quality' materials were an exception to most development. This was followed by architectural style (21), environmentally sustainable design (12), the size of private open space and balconies (8), and proximity to community services (8).

#### **Housing location**

Participants were asked to select from four factors related to housing location. All four factors were valued by participants; location close to public transport had the most responses (156), followed by access to community services, protection of heritage and character and access to activity centres.

#### **Change Area Locations**

Participants were asked "*Do you agree with the locations of each change area?*" and "*Why/why not?*" with a map showing the change areas.



23% (29) people responded they agreed with the locations of the change areas, citing the concentration of higher density housing near public transport.

25.4% (32) people responded they did not agree, expressing concern there is already too much development, the quality of the housing is poor, and that increased density causes congestion and lack of parking. 51.6% (65) responded “unsure” about the locations of the change areas.

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# 4. Methodology

## 4.1 Introduction to methodology

**Timeframe:** July to August 2022

**Purpose:** To identify what residents like and value about their streets and neighbourhoods, and where they think new housing should be located.

**Desired Outcome:**

- Outcomes Summary Report providing an analysis of the community engagement.
- Residents have the opportunity to participate.

**Engagement Method:**

- Online Survey
- Online interactive map
- Community pop-ups
- Written submission

**Table 1: Engagement Questions**

Engagement Question	Question Type	Survey	Pop up
Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?	Open	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What features or characteristics do you like/value about the street or neighbourhood you live in, work, go to school or visit?	Multiple choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Thinking about neighbourhood characteristics and features, what would you like to see our neighbourhoods look like in the future?	Open	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
What elements do you think are important in the design of new housing? (Multiple choice)	Multiple choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there good examples of new housing in your street or neighbourhood? What is good about them?	Open	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Are there examples of housing in your street or neighbourhood that you think could be better designed? Why?	Open	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
What factors do you think Council should consider when identifying suitable locations for housing?	Multiple choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Council has identified housing change areas in the following locations throughout Merri-bek: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you agree with the locations of each change area?</li> <li>Why/Why not? (Open ended)</li> </ul>	Yes / No / Unsure  Open	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## 4.2 Engagement activities

### Survey

The survey was provided online and promoted via the Merri-bek City Council project page. A total of 126 participants completed the online survey, which focused on three key topics:

- Neighbourhood character
- Housing design
- New housing location

Respondents were asked to provide demographic identifiers including gender, age, postcode, household type, disability, languages other than English, whether they identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and their connection to Merri-bek.

### Interactive Map

A map of Merri-bek was provided on the Conversations Merri-bek project page for participants to nominate particular streets or properties and express their likes or dislikes about these areas. Participants were encouraged to submit photographs of these areas. A total of seven contributions were made on the interactive map.

### Submissions

Three lengthy written submissions were received - one from an individual, one from the [REDACTED], and one from [REDACTED] [REDACTED].



### Community Pop-ups

Seven place-based community pop-ups were planned across Merri-bek at different locations and at different times. Pop ups were planned for the following locations due to their community appeal:

- Saturday 30 July
  - Fawkner Library / Leisure Centre
  - Harmony Park, Gaffney St, Coburg
- Wednesday 3 August
  - Glenroy Library
  - West Street Shops, Hadfield (had to be cancelled due to high winds)
- Saturday 6 August
  - Glenroy Library
- Saturday 13 August
  - Campbell Turnbull Library, Brunswick West
  - Brunswick Library (relocated from Loreto John York Park due to poor weather forecast)
- Thursday 18 August
  - Online session was scheduled to replace Hadfield Shops pop-up, however no participants RSVP'd.

Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions. An option was provided to scan a QR code and complete the online survey, although few people took up this option.

### 4.3 Strategies to support participation

Community participation was supported through the following initiatives:

- **Communications Campaign:** Run through Merri-bek City Council. This included promotion on Council's corporate channels and social media as well as signage in customer service centres, libraries, and maternal and child health centres.

- **Dedicated Project Page:** A dedicated project page was created on Council's corporate website, a consistent location for the community to access information and participate via the survey.
- **Facebook Campaign:** Council promoted the project to Arabic, Italian and Greek speaking residents using a targeted Facebook campaign, with the main "call to action" for residents to call the Language Link service. Across the three languages 2100 residents saw the advertisement at least once, with 38 link clicks through to call.
- **Incentivisation:** Coffee vouchers for local cafes were provided at the pop ups.
- **Going to where people enjoy gathering:** Pop ups were held at locations across Merri-bek where they typically attract a crowd and a cross-section of the community.

#### 4.4 Barriers to participation

- **Planning jargon:** Engaging meaningfully with the public on subjects like design, architecture and planning can present barriers in terms of educating the public in 'planner speak', design processes and governance.
- **Weather:** Winter weather may have posed a barrier to some participants attending pop ups, with two pop up events needing to be cancelled due to poor weather conditions.

## 5. Who participated?

A total of 257 persons participated in the engagement program - 123 (49.0%) attended a community pop-up, 126 (47.9%) persons responded to the online community survey, six (2.3%) persons contributed to the interactive map and two submissions were received.

Figure 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the 126 survey respondents. Demographic data was not collected at the community pop-ups. Data demonstrated that the survey respondents were predominately:

- Female (60.3%).
- Aged in their thirties (34.1%) or forties (30.2%).
- English speakers at home (78.6%).
- Residents (rather than workers or students in the area).
- Living in Glenroy, Brunswick/Brunswick West, Pascoe Vale, Coburg/Coburg North.

#### 5.1 Participation by other Demographic Identifiers

Participants who reported they spoke another language at home (other than English) nominated 15 languages including Spanish (n=5), Italian (n=5), French (n=3), Greek (n=3), German (n=2) and Urdu (n=2).

**Figure 1: Characteristics of engagement participants (community survey)**

Demographic Characteristics	Community survey*	Demographic Characteristics	Community survey*
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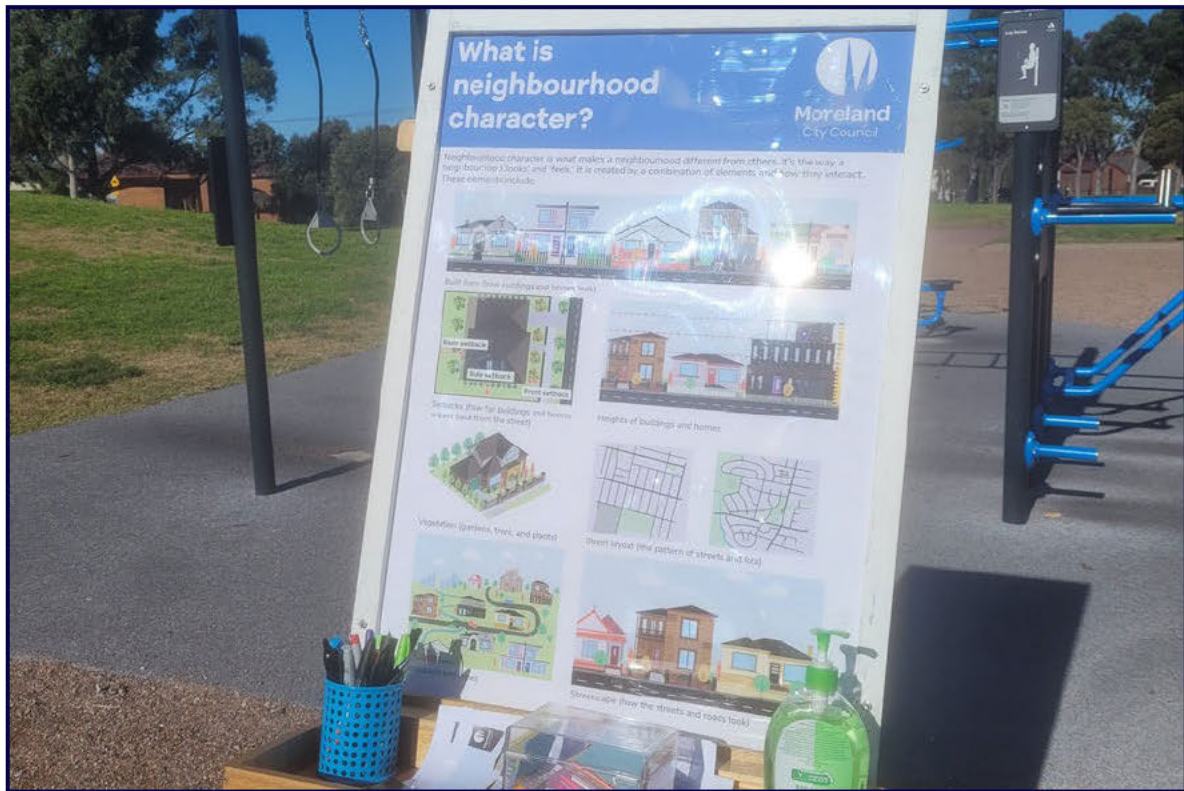
Male	32 (25.4%)	Lives in Brunswick	20 (15.9%)
Female	76 (60.3%)	Brunswick East	9 (7.1%)
Non-binary	2 (1.6%)	Brunswick West	13 (10.3%)
Use a different term	0 (0.0%)	Coburg	13 (10.3%)
Prefer not to say	12 (9.5%)	Coburg North	10 (7.9%)
		Fawkner	4 (3.2%)
Under 20 years	0 (0.0%)	Fitzroy North	0 (0.0%)
Aged 20-29	9 (7.1%)	Glenroy	27 (21.4%)
Aged 30-39	43 (34.1%)	Gowanbrae	0 (0.0%)
Aged 40-49	38 (30.2%)	Hadfield	6 (4.8%)
Aged 50-59	17 (13.5%)	Oak Park	9 (7.1%)
Aged 60-69	11 (8.7%)	Pascoe Vale	14 (11.1%)
Aged 70-79	6 (4.8%)	Pascoe Vale South	1 (0.8%)
Aged 80+ years	0 (0.0%)	Tullamarine	0 (0.0%)
Spoke English only	99 (78.6%)	Lived in area**	123 (97.6%)
Spoke another language	25 (19.8%)	Worked/studied in area**	22 (17.5%)
		Visited the area**	7 (5.6%)
		Other connection**	3 (2.4%)

\* Some respondents preferred not to answer these questions so percentages will not add to 100%.

\*\* multi-response question, percentages of total respondents (n=126) so will exceed 100%

Only about half of the survey respondents completed information about their housing tenure, with 63 residents identifying that they were owner / occupiers and 3 residents selecting that they were renting.

Of those that provided information on their dwelling type (67 participants), the majority lived in separate houses (45) and semi-detached houses (16), with only five participants living in apartments.



## 5.2 Participation by Suburb

The majority of participants lived in and/or chose to comment on the suburbs of Glenroy (27), Brunswick (20), Pascoe Vale (14) Brunswick West (13) and Coburg (13). Smaller numbers of participants responded from Coburg North, Oak Park and Hadfield.

The absence of participants residing in Gowanbrae, Fitzroy North and Tullamarine was expected due to the small number of residents in these areas, and that the suburbs are shared with neighbouring local governments.

Comments made on the interactive map of Merri-bek concerned streets and properties in Brunswick (3 comments), Pascoe Vale (2 comments) and single comments for Brunswick East and Fawkner.



## 6. Neighbourhood Character -Key findings

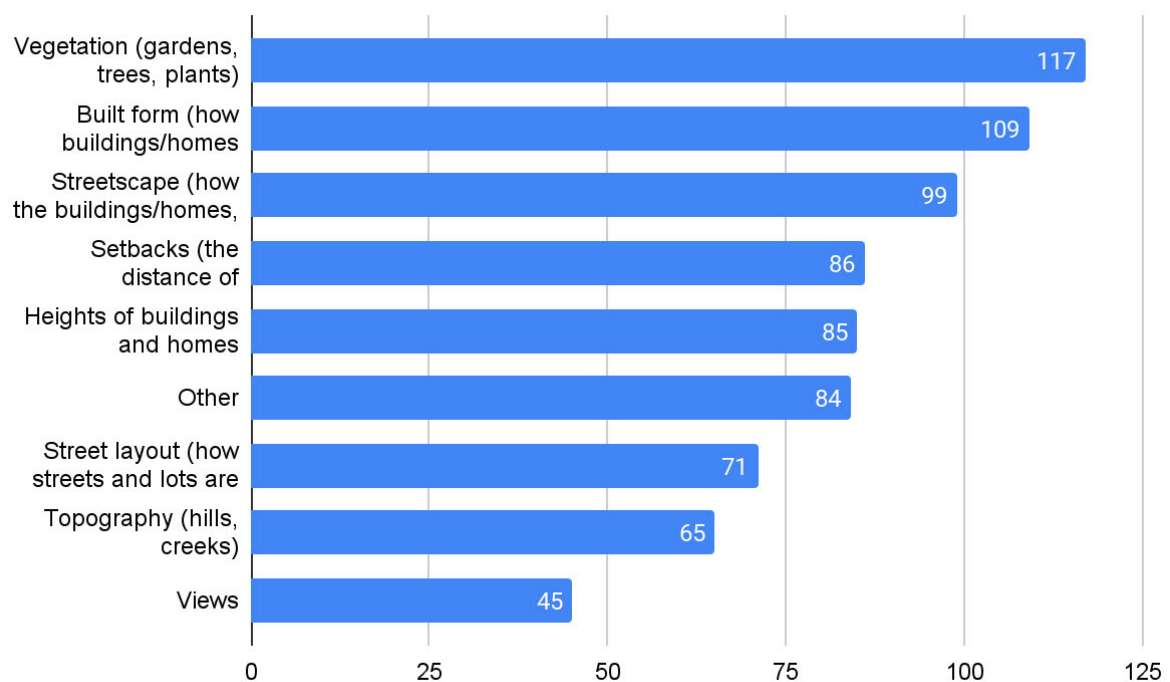
### 6.1 Valued characteristics across Merri-bek

Participants were asked “What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?”; participants could select responses from a multiple choice list, which included:

- Built form and architecture
- Setbacks
- Streetscapes
- Vegetation
- Green space, landscapes and topography
- Housing density & building heights
- Street layout, connectivity and mobility
- Other (free text)

There were 761 responses to this question and many participants selected more than one response. Looking at trends across Merri-bek overall, participants most valued Vegetation (117 selections) followed by Built Form (109 selections) and Streetscapes (99 selections). The least preferred options were Views (45 selections) and Topography (65 selections). This question was intended to capture participants’ valued characteristics of their street or neighbourhood and will be explored in more detail, broken down by suburb below.

**Figure 2: Valued features and characteristics across Merri-bek**





## 6.2 Valued characteristics and “different” attributes by suburb

The following questions have been analysed by suburb

- “What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood” and
- “What makes this neighbourhood or street different from other areas in Merri-bek?”

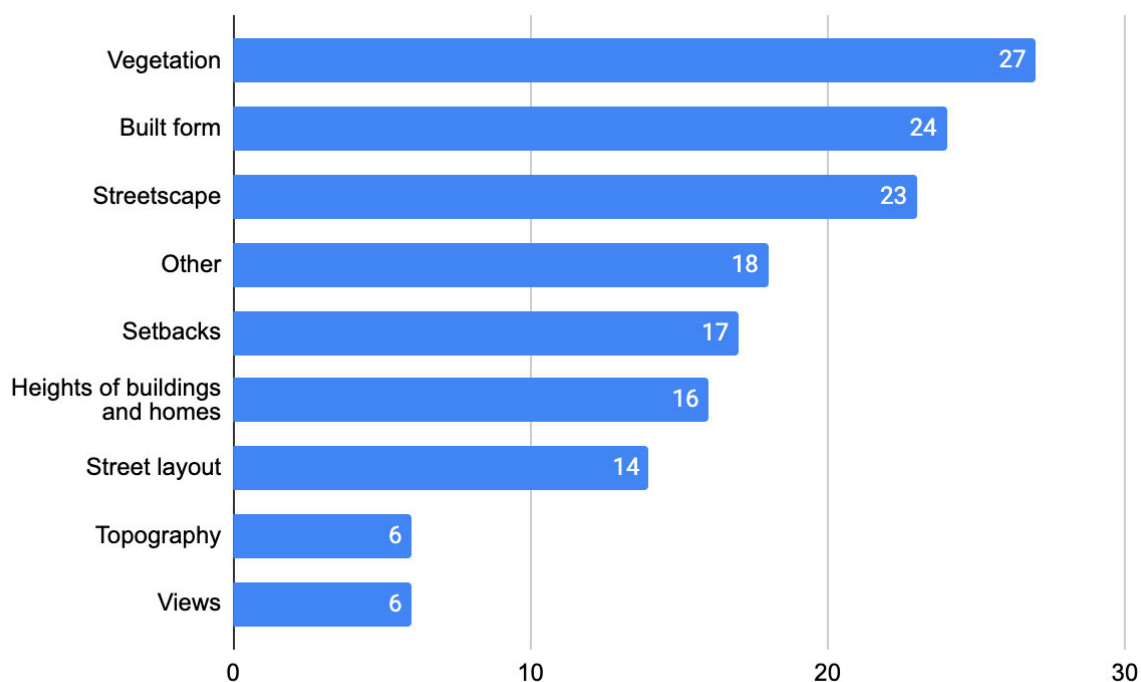
It is important to note some suburbs have had higher levels of representation than others and the following analysis is presented as a guide or indication only and is not statistically significant.

## Brunswick

There were 30 respondents that lived in Brunswick or selected the additional option to talk about Brunswick in the survey, with 15 people commenting on Brunswick at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 3: Features and characteristics - Brunswick



\*When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 3, the most common feature participants valued about Brunswick was Vegetation (27 selections) followed by Built form (24 selections) and Streetscape (23). This is consistent with the features that participants valued across all of Merri-bek.

A high proportion of participants chose to provide additional information, shown as “Other” in Figure 3. These responses included enjoying living in a multicultural neighbourhood and friendly community where people knew their neighbours, that Building heights and design were unpleasant. Three comments expressed that they did not like or value any of the options presented as Brunswick was ‘overdeveloped’.

### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; ‘Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?’ 18 participants answered ‘yes’, five participants answered ‘no’ and five were ‘unsure’. Residents provided a variety of reasons for why they felt their areas were different to other neighbourhoods in Merri-bek, which is explored in more detail below:

In terms of neighbourhood character, the most common mentions related to the theme of **Streetscapes** - a total of 5 mentions related to the look and feel of streetscapes with 3 mentions enjoying the older style of housing and historical value that period homes add to the neighbourhood character. This was supported by mentions surrounding **Built form** celebrating the architectural style of period homes and wishing to preserve this. There were 3 negative mentions describing new development as destroying the historical significance and feel of this neighbourhood character. In terms of **Housing design**, further mentions saw higher density development as detrimental to health and wellbeing through the choice of building materials like concrete and

*“Not only is it ugly, it feels unsafe at night, it's just concrete and the whole character of Brunswick is gone”*

*“Other arterial roads such as Lygon Street and Nicholson Street have lost a lot of their character due to over development”*

Mentions discussing **heights and density** understood Brunswick as higher density than other areas in Merri-bek. Sentiment towards heights differed, with some mentions celebrating the mix of medium density housing with small businesses as good for community life and others understanding building heights as detrimental to sunlight, green space and overall neighbourhood feel on a street level.

In terms of **vegetation** most comments focussed on a lack of green space, plants and tree canopy, with comments expressing further development may risk compromising existing green spaces. Others mentioned that lack of green space and concrete, high density housing in Brunswick creates urban heat, affecting their health, wellbeing, and ability to walk around in summer. Positive mentions focussed on front gardens and colourful plantings in nature strips.

Further mentions discussed **housing location** remarking on convenience and mobility in terms of access to small local business and shops, linkages to other parts of the city, public transport, walking and cycling, services and proximity to workplaces. Negative comments surrounding mobility focussed lack of infrastructure creating competition between modes of transport, presenting a risk to safety.

Of the comments that discussed **other** aspects, the bulk focussed on the width of streets and laneways with positive comments surrounding traffic calming and negative comments surrounding parking and traffic congestion. Further mentions discussed: accessibility of pathways and streets for people with a disability, maintenance, and refurbishment of neglected areas such as Sydney Road and Breese Street and former industrial areas.

**Figure 4: Places of interest - Brunswick**

"I call this the ghetto of brunswick .. if this is what's to come god help us. not only is it ugly , it feels unsafe at night, its just concrete and the whole character of brunswick is gone"

"Great culture and amenity - worst accessibility. Looks tired, litter everywhere. I think it should lean into nicer style development - keeping terrace-retail-pub feel"

"The beautiful flowers in the centre median, the big trees in the centre median, the trees on both sides of the road, the house setbacks from the road all make the street very visually calming and beautiful"

"Overdevelopment has made this area claustrophobic and it feels unsafe. Concrete and hard surfaces adding to urban heat island effect"



"Albion Street is stifling in summer and street designs not good for wellbeing. Particularly in summer it was difficult to walk anywhere along Albion and Sydney without baking"

"Parkland and current overdevelopment"

"the gateway to Melbourne, needs of a serious spruce up and accessibility effort. It looks like its about 2-3 decade behind the rest of the main streets of Melbourne"

"This neighbourhood is very densely packed with too much traffic. As the older buildings are being "developed" we are losing too much green space and sunlight"

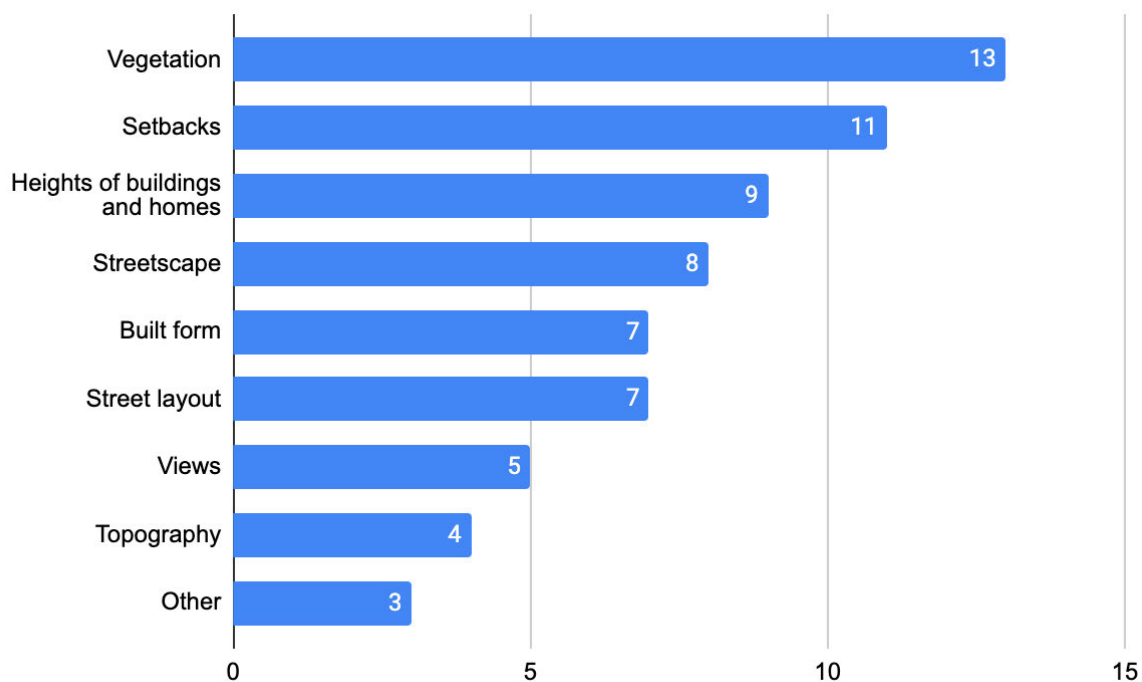


## Brunswick East

This section includes feedback from the 13 community members who participated in the survey only; no residents of Brunswick East were consulted in pop-ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 5: Features and characteristics - Brunswick East



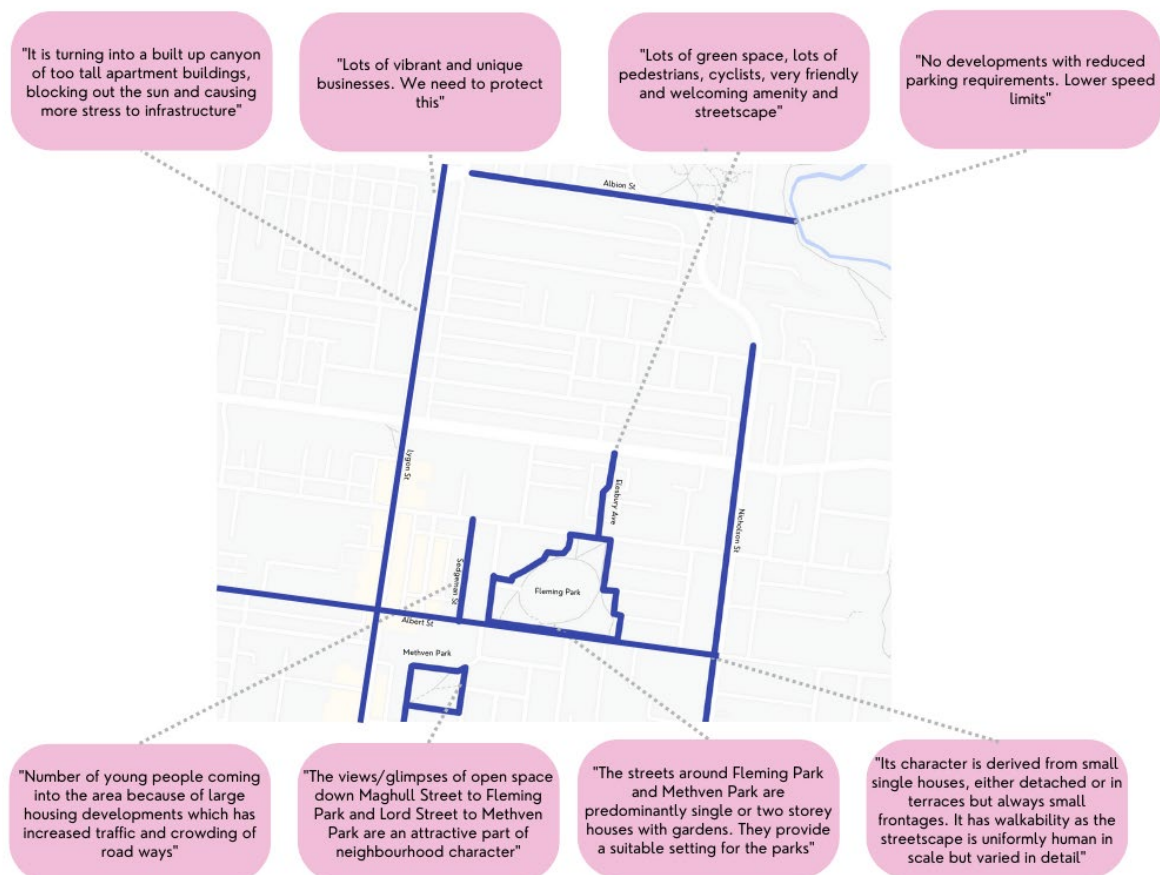
When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 5, the most common feature participants valued about Brunswick East was Vegetation (13 selections). This was followed by Setbacks (11 selections) and Heights of Buildings (9 selections). Although valuing vegetation is consistent across all of Merri-bek, enjoying setbacks and heights of buildings was less common across the municipality.

### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; *'Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?'* Nine participants answered 'yes', one participant answered 'no' and four answered 'unsure'. Residents provided a variety of reasons for why they felt their areas were different to other neighbourhoods in Merri-bek; the most common mentions related to neighbour character was the theme of **Green space** - the majority of comments understood Brunswick East as having more open and green space comparative to other parts of Merri-bek. Residents understood this as an inviting part of the neighbourhood character which also provided nice views. Additionally, residents saw green space as a community asset or amenity that was conducive to active transport, leisure, and community connection. Other mentions explored setbacks and front or back gardens as aesthetically pleasing or useful for drainage and permeability which was observed as lacking in newer higher density development.

In terms of **housing location**, residents observed Brunswick East as an area with less car dependence that was convenient for alternative transport- active transport options. However, some **other** mentions felt that with new development this was changing, introducing more road congestion and stresses on other infrastructure. Further mentions explored higher density as obstructing views and sunlight.

**Figure 6: Places of interest Brunswick East**

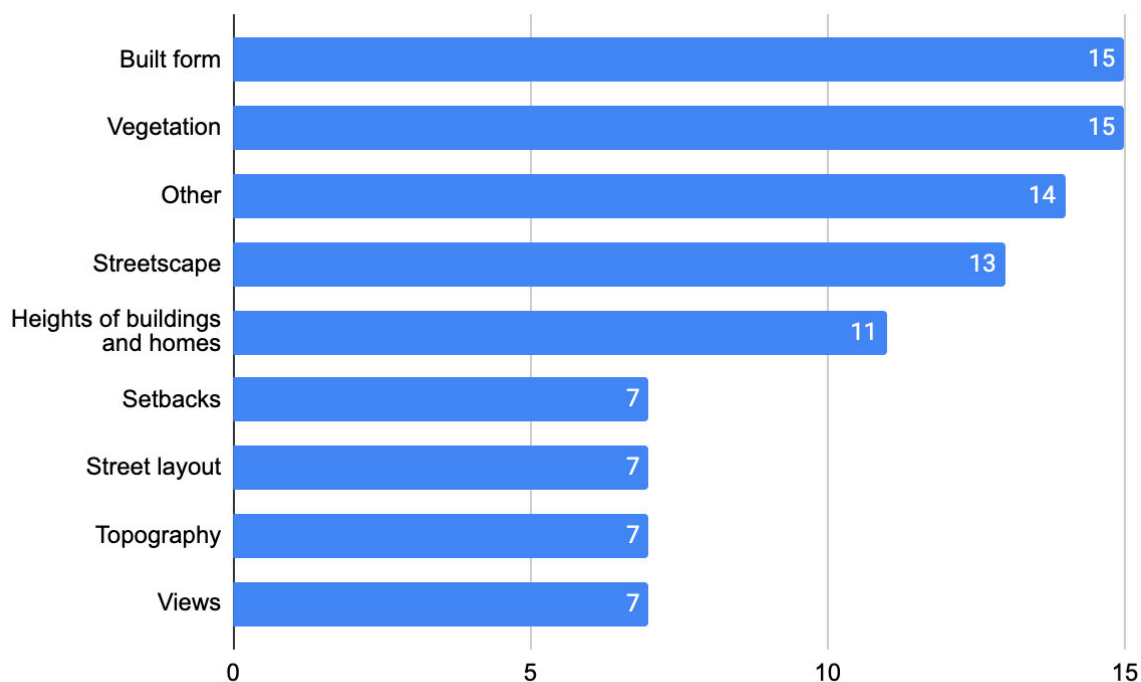


## Brunswick West

There were 16 respondents that lived in Brunswick West or selected the additional option to talk about Brunswick West in the survey, with six people commenting on the suburb at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 7: Features and characteristics - Brunswick West



When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 7, the most common features participants valued about Brunswick West were Built form and Vegetation (15 selections each) which was consistent with the findings across the municipality.

There was a high number of participants that selected “**Other**”, providing additional comments covering a diverse range of topics including valuing being close to the city, public transport and shops, issues with trucks, tolls roads and congestion, valuing streetscape diversity and cultural diversity. One participant commented that their street was “pretty awful”.

### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; ‘Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?’ 13 participants answered ‘yes’, two answered ‘no’ and 1 was ‘unsure’. Residents provided a variety of reasons for why they felt their areas were different to other neighbourhoods in Merri-bek. The 13 participants that felt that Brunswick West was different to other areas in Merri-bek provided the following reasons:

In terms of neighbourhood character, five comments focussed on **Streetscape** with mentions celebrating Brunswick West’s wide streets, older style homes with historical value.

In terms of **density**, residents enjoyed the lower density, 2-3 storey building heights and less industrial zones, compared to other parts of Merri-bek. Residents preferred the complementing styles of older homes and felt that new developments compromised this. In terms of **Vegetation**, positive comments focussed on front gardens and street trees as giving character to their neighbourhood however, other mentions discussed Brunswick West as lacking gardens and adequate tree canopy.

*“Houses all have nice gardens and are similar in style and attractive. This is a street that retains the Brunswick feel that people value.”*

Comments that discussed **Housing location** described Brunswick West as lacking amenities and access to public transport, with residents using services and amenities in Brunswick. Two further mentions described Brunswick West as poorly serviced and maintained, describing the suburb as neglected compared to other parts of Merri-bek. This sentiment was balanced by other positive mentions of the convenience to parks and nature reserves.

*“Brunswick West has wider streets and bigger blocks, and more access to parkland.”*

In terms of **housing design** residents liked the larger blocks and big setbacks with mentions describing this as adding to the ‘quiet’, ‘safe’ ‘family friendly’ feel of the neighbourhood. Residents felt the planning and block size allowed for generous sized homes suitable for growing families.

**Other** comments related to traffic calming and road safety in places such as Albion St and Hope St. Mentions discussed development leading to congestion on roads, changes to perceptions of safety, big development leading to urban heat island effect and shading of parks and public spaces

*“Brunswick West is neglected by Merri-bek City Council”.*

*“Overdevelopment has made this area claustrophobic and it feels unsafe”.*

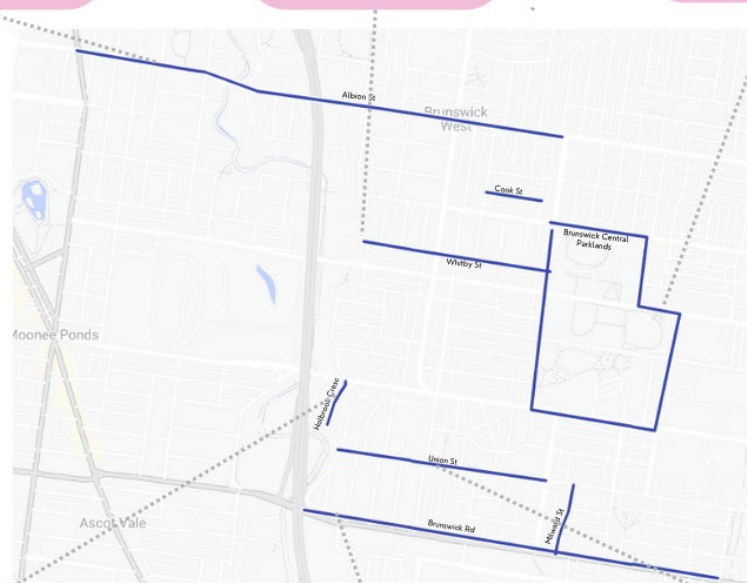
*“Concrete and hard surfaces adding to urban heat island effect”.*

**Figure 8: Places Of Interest Brunswick West**

"Fix up Albion street Brunswick West. Or rezone to Moonee Valley city council to become Essendon"  
"Plant Trees"

"Wide street, views of landscape, Whitby Manor heritage building, houses all have nice gardens and are similar in style and attractive".

"around the park is currently mainly 1-2 storey and has heritage overlays on many houses. Many residents look after and take pride in their gardens. Neighbourhoods feel quiet, safe and family friendly"



"houses the street were built by the same builder (late 1927 to mid 1928), with the exception of one house, one of the originals that was demolished and replaced by a McMansion"

"It doesn't have as many shops and cafes!! Poorly serviced by Pt".

"Union st playground is also not great!"

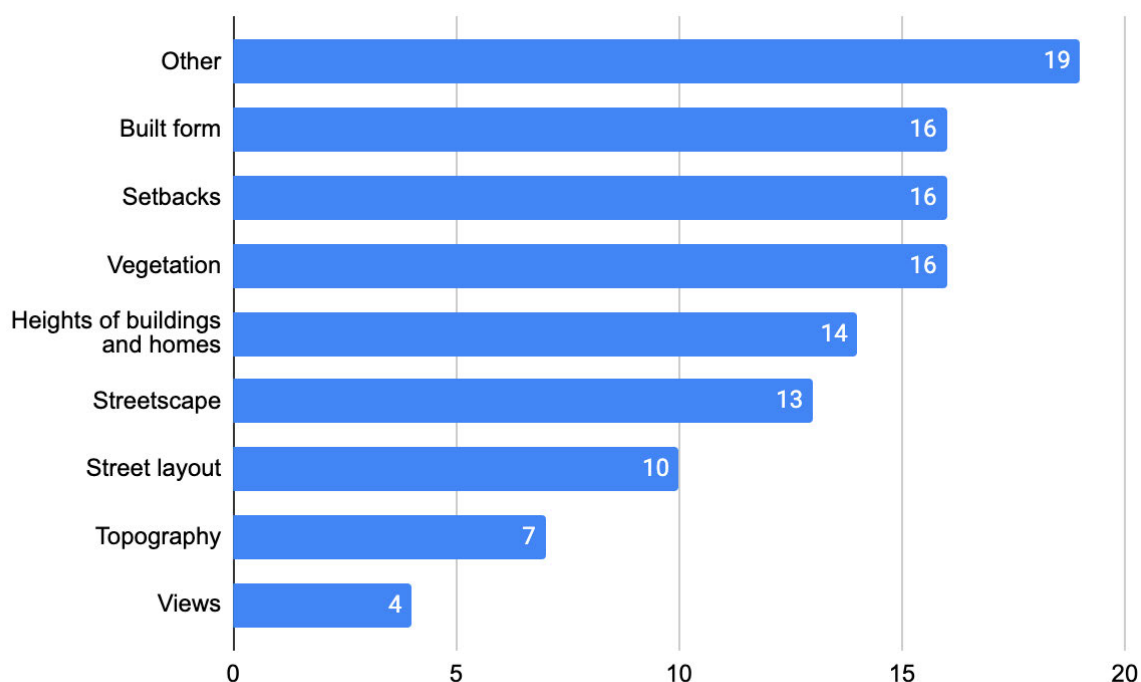


## Glenroy

There were 32 participants responding to the online survey who commented on Glenroy, with an additional nine people commenting on Glenroy at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 9: Features and characteristics - Glenroy



When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 9, the most common features participants valued about Glenroy fell into the **'Other'** category (19 selections); unique in comparison to the findings across Merri-bek. These comments focussed on the high rate of subdivision and townhouse development in Glenroy and included complaints about maintenance and rubbish in the neighbourhood, large homes, walkability and access to amenities, quality of local businesses and schools 'improving' or having 'potential'.

### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; *'Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?'* 25 participants answered 'yes', 4 answered 'no' and 2 were 'unsure'.

The participants from Glenroy that believed their suburb was different from other areas of Merri-bek provided the following reasons:

In terms of neighbourhood character, most participants discussed **Streetscape** with mentions related to parking in Glenroy. Residents felt that subdivisions and new townhouse or unit developments have increased the number of multi-dwelling properties with on-street parking creating parking, congestion, and road safety issues in narrow streets in Glenroy. In terms of **heights and density**, residents preferred lower density, large block size and less subdivision in Glenroy, describing this as creating a 'quiet', 'family feel' to the

neighbourhood. Most comments opposed higher density development as participants understood their street as lacking infrastructure like; adequate or updated playgrounds, green spaces or community facilities and street lighting to accommodate growth. Additional mentions wished to keep 2-3 storey heights to protect neighbours' privacy.

*"Nice big trees, More single lot houses rather than double story units, access to green areas"*

*"No need for front fences. No power poles. Walking distance to quality shopping strip West St".*

In terms of **vegetation**, residents celebrated mature tree canopy and access to green areas. Other comments requested more canopy cover, street tree planting in residential streets and around the train station and additional green spaces.

*Some of the 'parks' that developers state on the plans are taking the Mickey. There are real dodgy practices such as selling a townhouse as a two bed plus study to get around providing two car parks.*

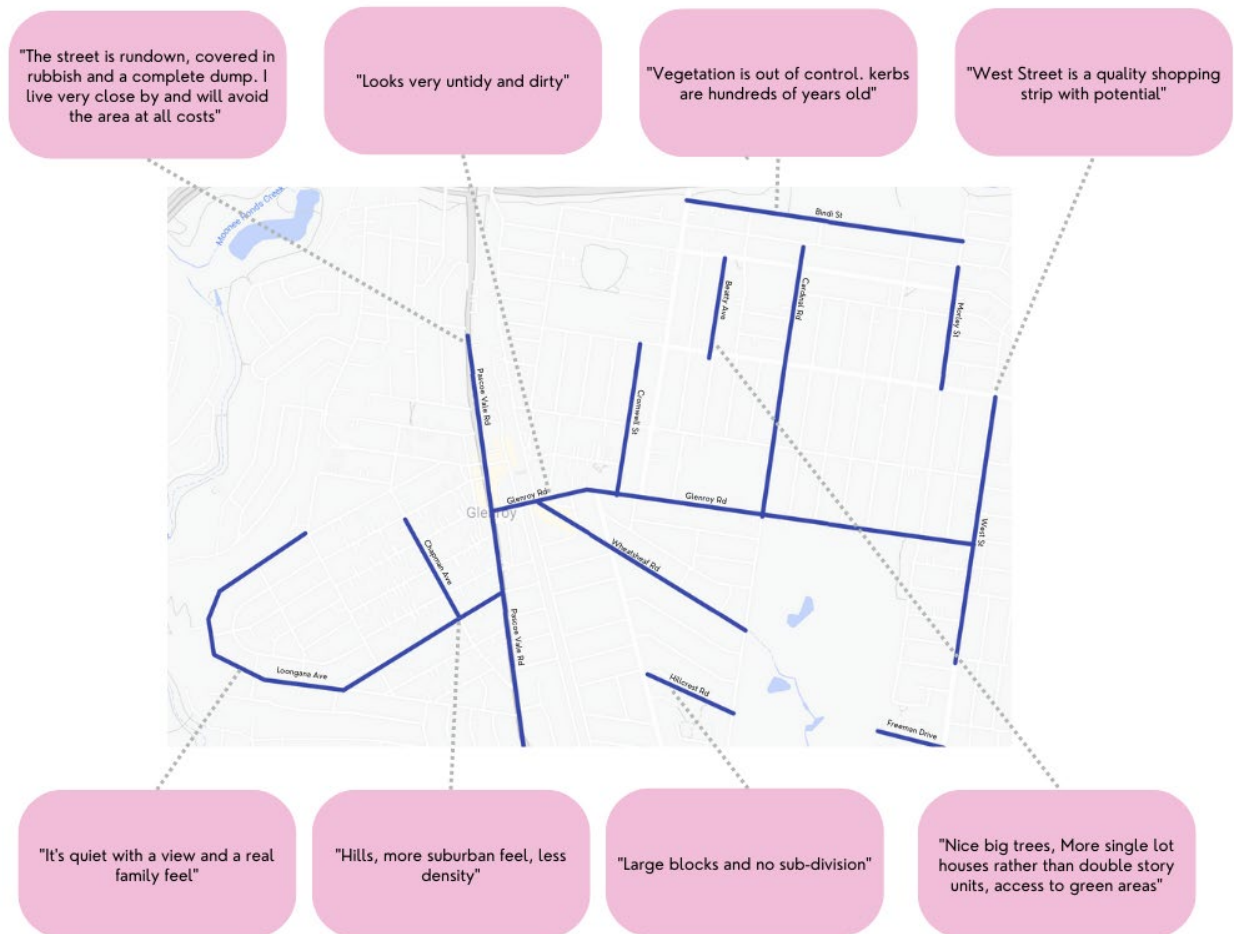
The majority of **other** mentions outlined maintenance issues in Central Glenroy, describing it as underfunded or neglected compared to other parts of Merri-bek. Residents felt older homes and blocks were rundown, streets and footpaths were old and damaged with rubbish dumping issues. Street trees and plantings were also described as uncared for and lacking maintenance. Pascoe Vale Road, Wheatsheaf Rd and areas surrounding the train station were described as 'filthy' or 'unsafe'. Residents were also unhappy with the amenities and mix of businesses in central Glenroy

*"Looks ugly, rubbish everywhere. graffiti everywhere. vegetation is out of control. kerbs are hundred years old..."*

*"It's dirty and feels unsafe to walk around as a solo woman"*

*"Why can't our community retail precinct look better, be cleaner, be safer?... I shopped at West St every day for years, I now drive to Moonee ponds. It's cleaner and safer".*

Figure 10: Places of Interest - Glenroy

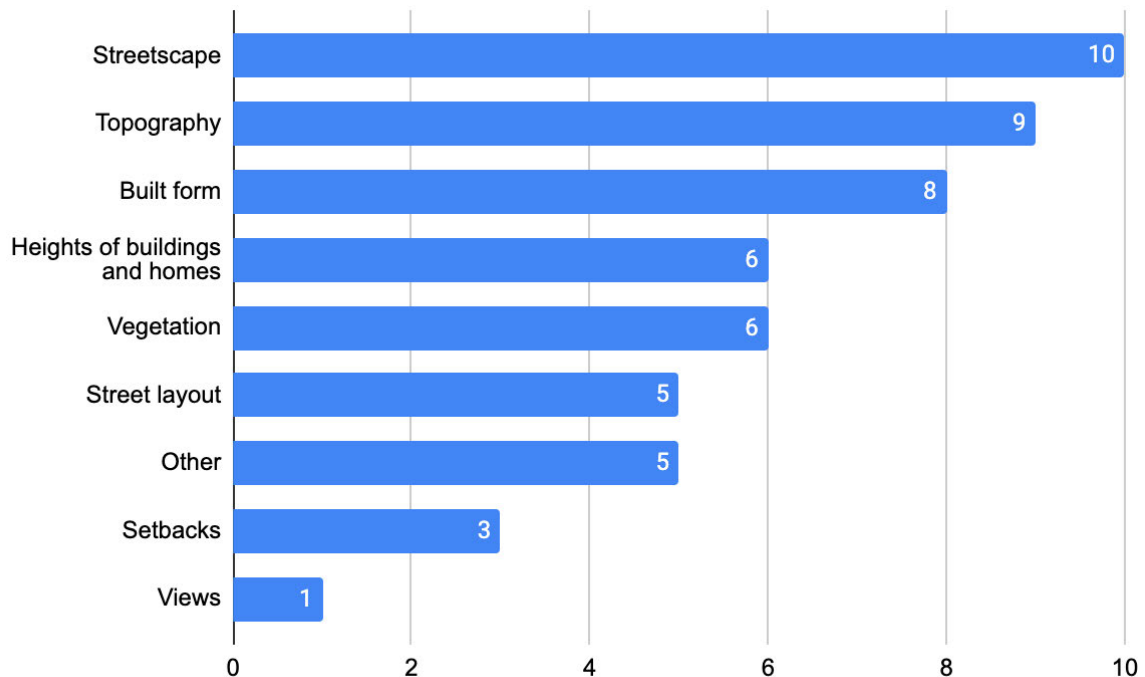


## Coburg

There were 20 people that commented on Coburg on the survey, and three people at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 11: Features and characteristics - Coburg



When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 11, the most common features participants valued about Coburg were streetscape (10 selections) followed by Topography (9 selections) which differed to the whole of Merri-bek findings in which topography factored at the bottom. Vegetation (6 selections) as a feature was ranked lower than other categories compared to other suburbs.

### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

Of the participants commenting on Coburg, 17 people believed Coburg to be different from the rest of Merri-bek. Most participants valued the retention of period homes and opposed higher density development. Participants valued the green and open spaces, and large canopy trees.

*"It's very rare to live in a private horseshoe shaped street with a park/playground in the centre, with towering gums and lots of birds and nature strip gardens. We're so lucky."*

*"Quite green and nice streets but still very close to transport and shops, feels busy still."*

*"It is particularly ugly."*

**Figure 12: Places of Interest - Coburg**



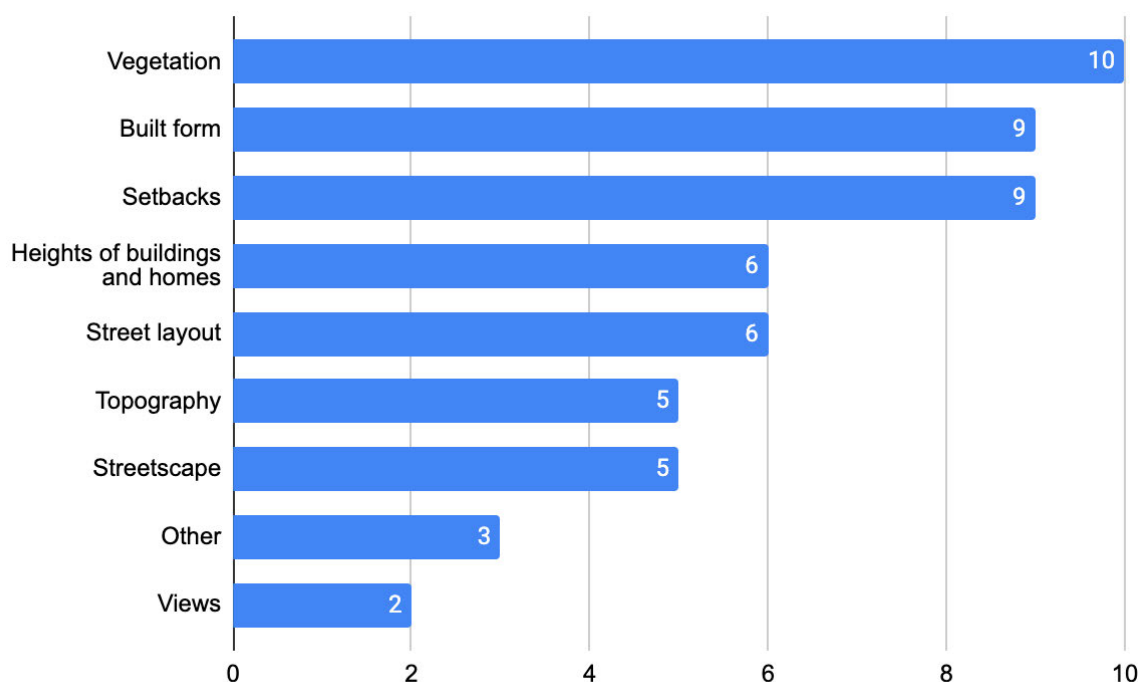


## Coburg North

There were 16 people that commented on Coburg North on the online survey, with two people commenting on the suburb at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 13: Features and characteristics - Coburg North



When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 13, the most common features participants valued about North Coburg was Vegetation (10 selections) followed by Built form (9 selections) and Setbacks (9 selections). This is consistent with findings across Merri-bek however, valued setbacks more than other areas. The findings from this question differ from neighbouring Coburg. From this we can assume that Coburg and Coburg North are considered uniquely different to each other by their residents, with different priorities and valued features.

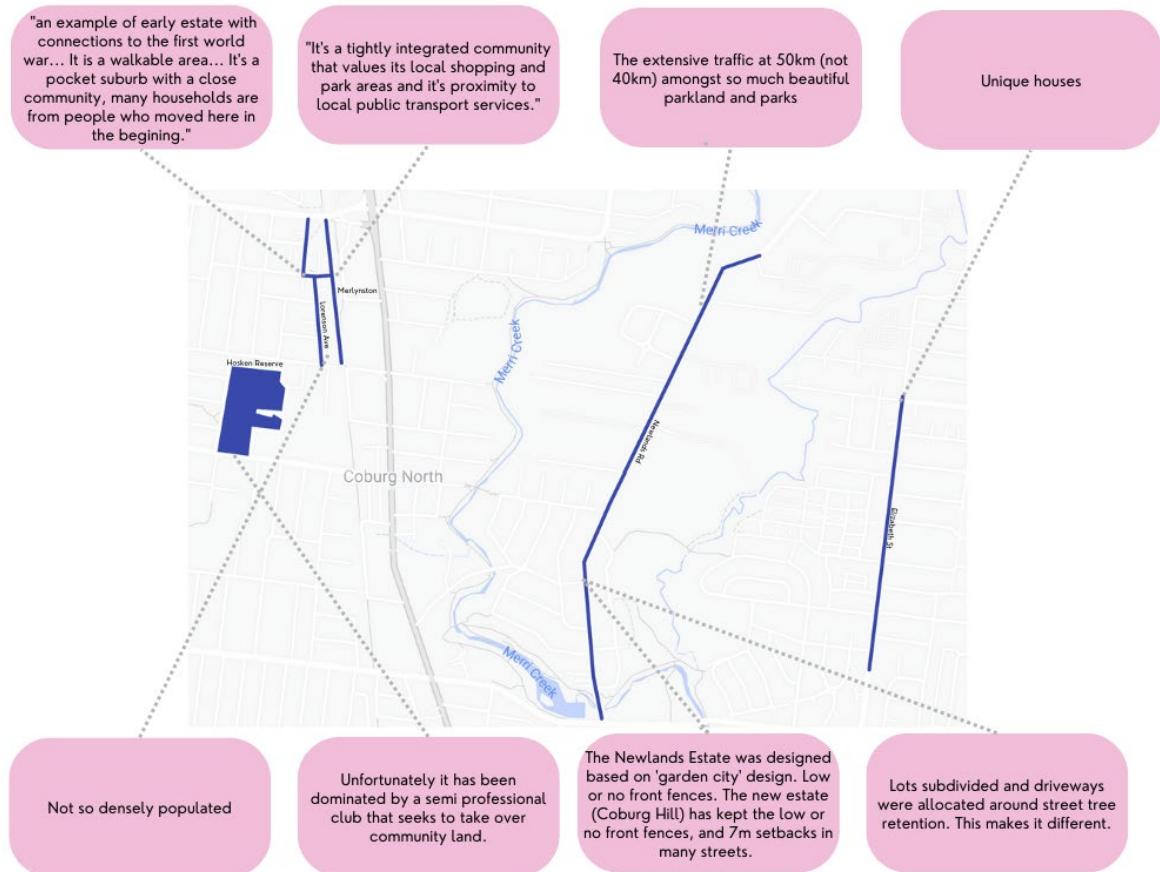
### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

Of the 13 respondents to the question; 'Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?', nine participants answered 'yes', zero answered 'no' and four were 'unsure'. Those that felt this area was different from other parts of Merri-bek because of its unique housing, less population density and having a strong sense of community. One person commented that there are "lots of extreme high rises", and another expressed concern with the speed cars are able to travel down Newlands Road.

*"The Newlands Estate was designed based on 'garden city' design. Low or no front fences. The new estate (Coburg Hill) has kept the low or no front fences, and 7m setbacks in many*

*streets. Lots subdivided and driveways were allocated around street tree retention. This makes it different."*

**Figure 14: Places of interest - Coburg North**

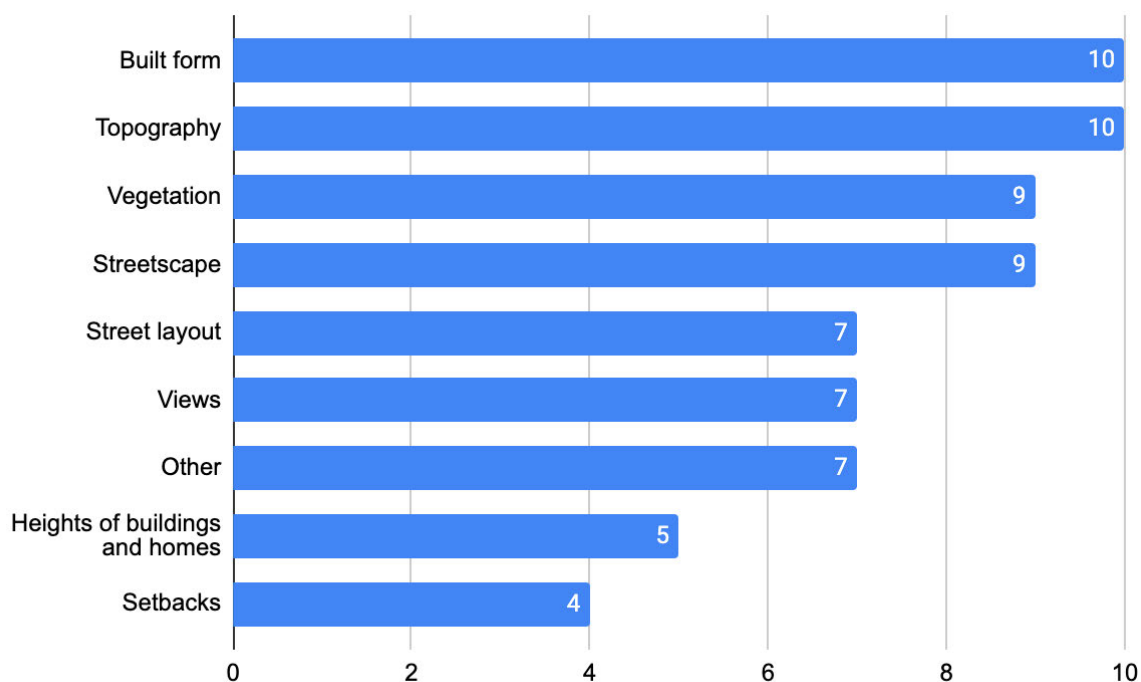


## Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South

There were 18 people that commented on Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South on the online survey, and seven people at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 15: Features and characteristics - Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South

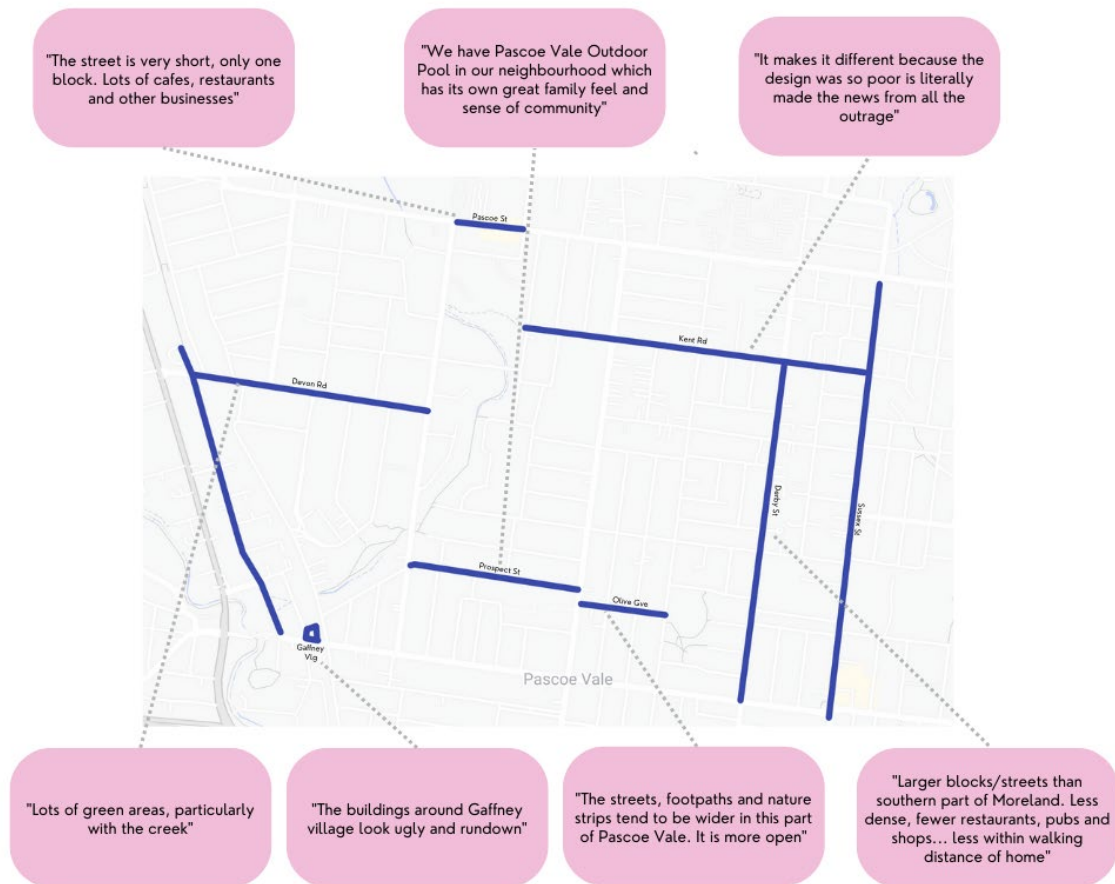


When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 15, the most common features participants valued about Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South were Built Form and Topography (10 selections each). The prioritising of Topography differed from findings across Merri-bek and can be attributed to Pascoe Vales' proximity to hills and creeks.

### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; 'Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?' 13 participants answered 'yes', two answered 'no' and three participants were 'unsure'. Residents provided a variety of reasons for why they felt their areas were different to other neighbourhoods in Merri-bek. In terms of neighbourhood character, comments related to **streetscapes** celebrated the wider streets, footpaths, nature strips, low density and large blocks contributing to 'suburban feel'. Residents also enjoyed the unique **topography** of the area, views, hills, and access to green space. **Housing location** mentions felt Pascoe Vale was lacking in public transport links, infrastructure and had fewer amenities than other suburbs of Merri-bek. Mentions focussed on the importance of public amenities such as Pascoe Vale pool for community connection and wellbeing.

Figure 16: Places of Interest - Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South



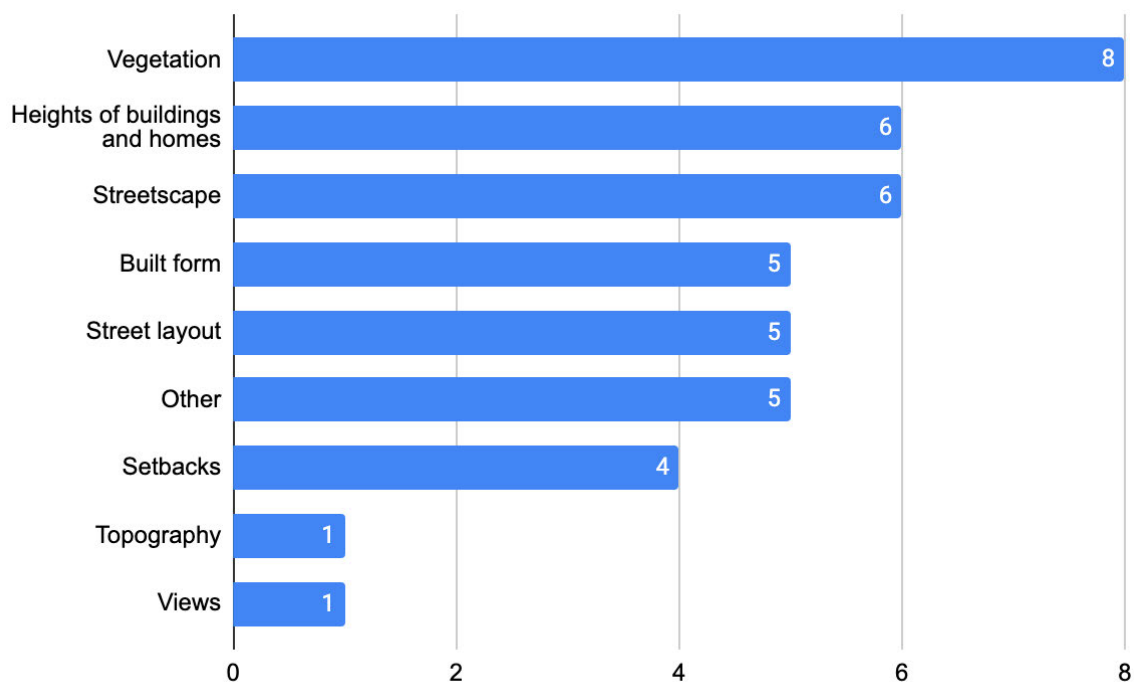


## Hadfield

There were 12 people that commented on Hadfield on the online survey; no participants from this suburb were reached at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 17: Features and characteristics - Hadfield



When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 17, the most common features participants valued about Hadfield were Vegetation (8 selections), Heights of buildings (6 selections) and Streetscape (6 selections). This is consistent with findings across the municipality. Hadfield residents also valued traffic calming measures and the maintenance of street plantings and private gardens.

### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; *'Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?'*, seven participants answered 'yes', two answered 'no' and three participants were 'unsure'. The participants that believed that Hadfield was different from other areas in Merri-bek, provided the following reasons:

Three participants commented that the area was less attractive than other neighbourhoods in the municipality, with poorer quality open space, less shops, and issues with rubbish.

Three other participants commented on the 1960s and 1970s brick and weatherboard houses that should be preserved, with the seventh participant commenting the area is "Residential zone but without any clarity of planning, vision, amenity".

Figure 18: Places of Interest - Hadfield

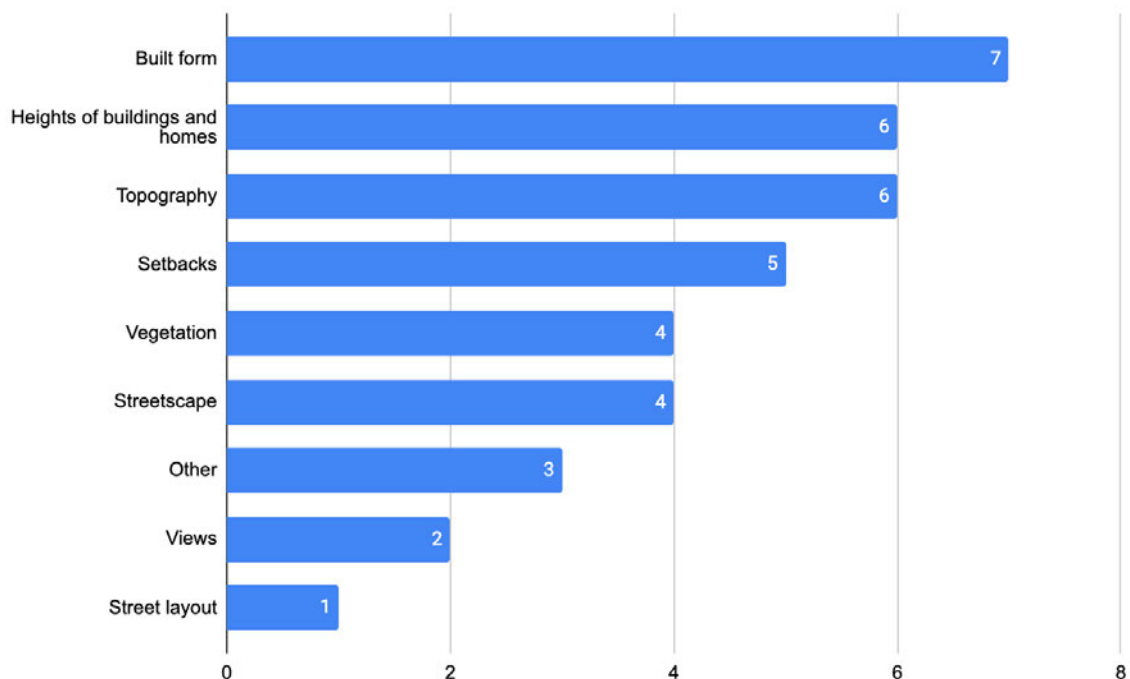


## Fawkner

There were only four participants that chose to provide responses regarding Fawkner on the online survey, with nine participants commenting on the suburb at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 19: Features and characteristics - Fawkner



When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 19, the most common features participants valued about Fawkner were Built form (7 selections), Building Heights (6 selections) and Topography (6 selections). Fawkner preferences differed from the findings across Merri-bek, giving less value to Vegetation and Streetscape, however, this may be a result of low participation rates.

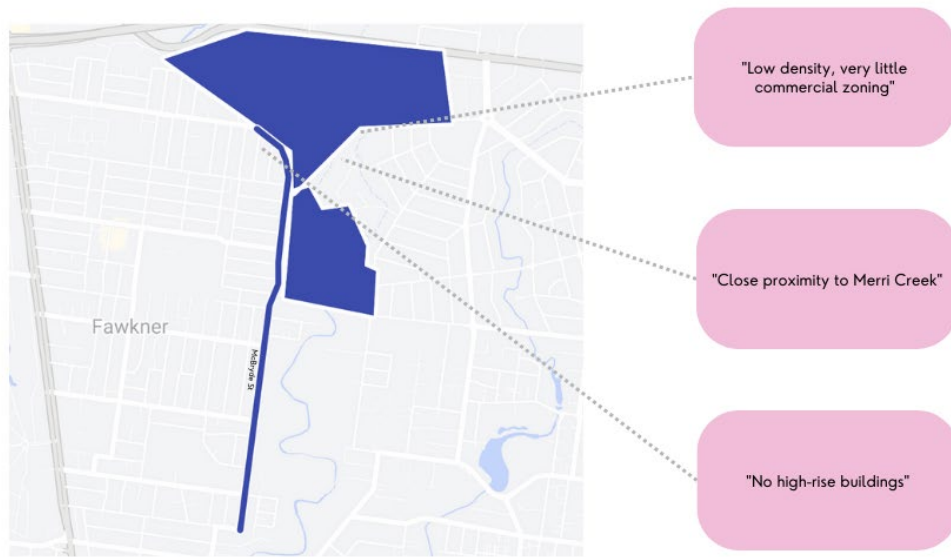
### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; ‘Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?’, three participants answered ‘yes’, zero answered ‘no’ and one participant was ‘unsure’. Respondents outlined the following features of their neighbourhood:

*“North Fawkner around Moomba Park - Low density, very little commercial zoning.”*

*“More residential than most of Merri-bek; fewer restaurants/cafes/businesses and many empty shop fronts so you need to leave the suburb to do a lot of things. Footpaths are in terrible condition and are a hazard, especially for people with mobility issues. Poor tree cover and few dedicated parks (green space that isn’t also a playground or sporting ground).”*

**Figure 20: Places of Interest - Fawkner**



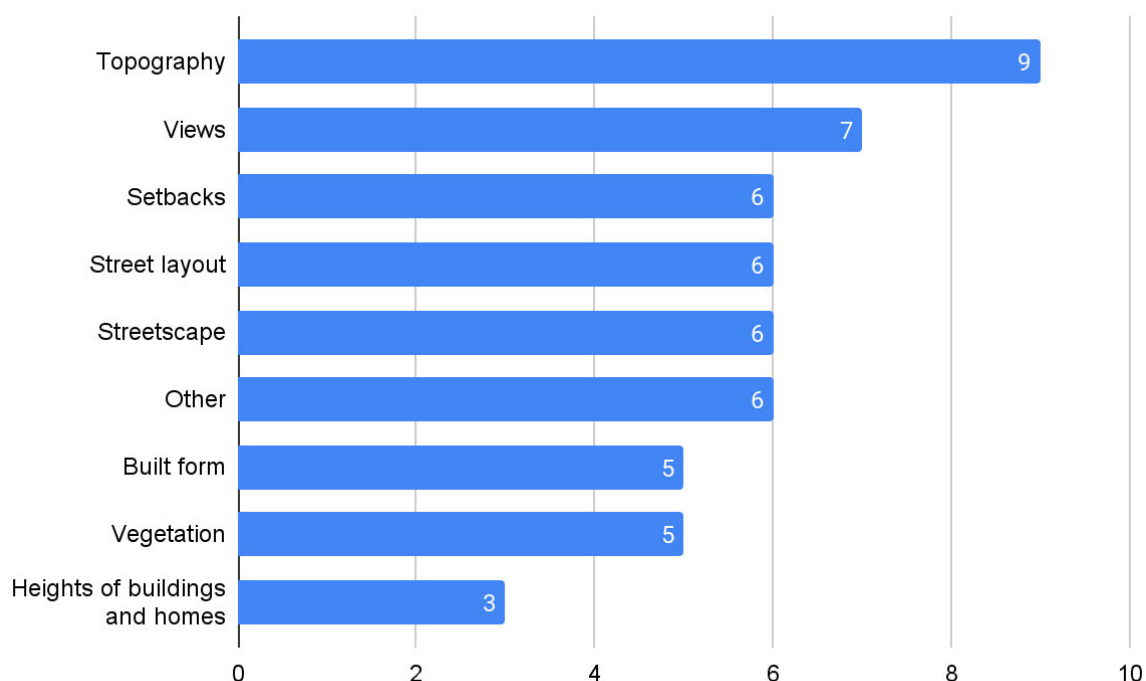


## Oak Park

There were eleven people that responded to the online survey that commented on Oak Park; no participants from this suburb were reached at the pop ups.

### What features or characteristics do you like/value about this street or neighbourhood?

Figure 21: Features and characteristics - Oak Park



When asked about what features and characteristics they liked or valued in their street or neighbourhood, participants were able to select more than one option. As shown in Figure 21, the most common features participants valued about Oak Park were Topography (9 selections), Views (7 selections) and setbacks (6 selections). This differed from findings across the municipality as no other neighbourhoods prioritised their views as highly.

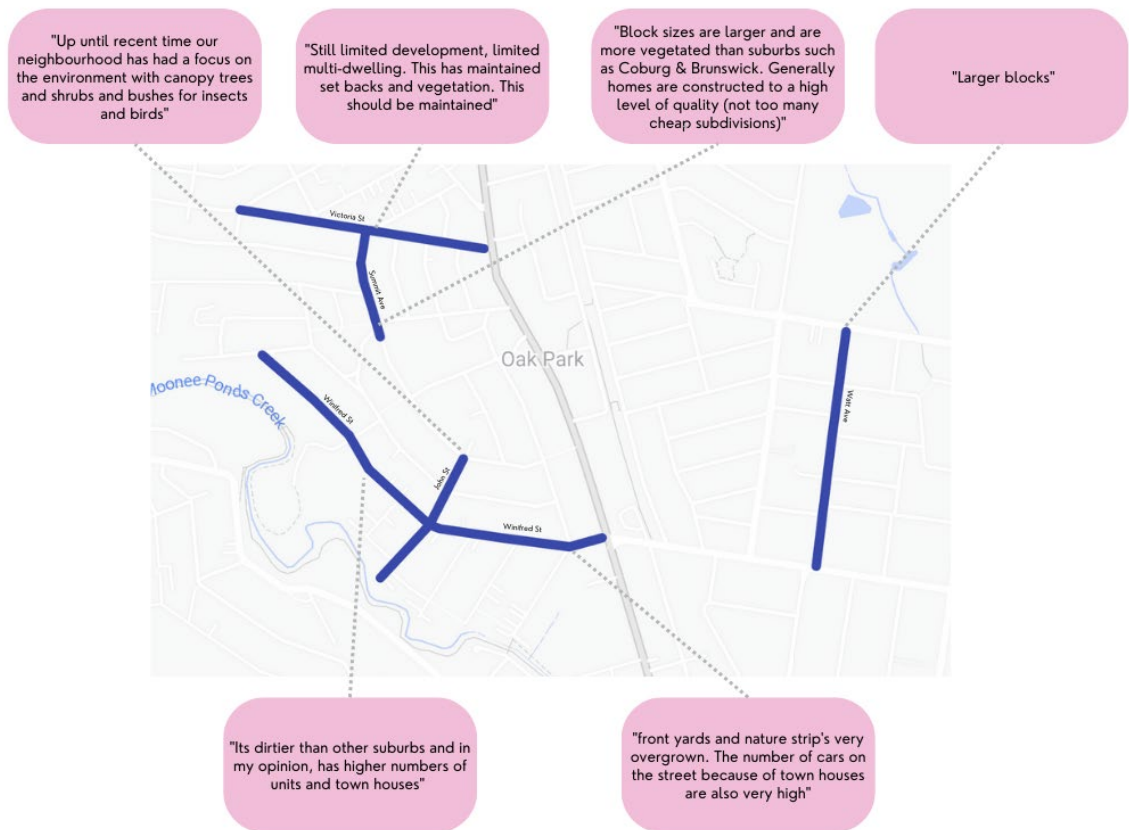
### What makes this neighbourhood or street different to other areas in Merri-bek?

When asked; 'Do you think this neighbourhood or street is different to other areas in Merri-bek?' All the eleven participants who selected Oak Park said "yes". The most common reason was the larger blocks, with less subdivision than other neighbourhoods, however one participant asserted that Pascoe Vale and Oak Park had more subdivisions than Brunswick and Coburg.

Comments included valuing the views of the city, proximity to the creek, focus on the natural environment and the area being quieter than other suburbs. Whereas participants generally felt the area had more vegetation and good setbacks, one participant referring to Winifred Street believes that there is:

*"Lack of greenery, large buildings set very close to the street. No buffer between footpath and roads. Traffic is constantly reduced to one lane. I also highly value the connection to the creek through street laneways".*

**Figure 22: Places of Interest - Oak Park**



### 6.3 Desired future neighbourhood characteristics

Survey respondents and participants at the community pop-ups were asked the question: “Thinking about neighbourhood characteristics and features, what would you like to see our neighbourhoods look like in the future?”.

Overall, 232 participants provided a comment about the neighbourhoods of the future. Table 2 shows the most common characteristics participants nominated in descending order of the number of mentions.

**Table 2: Desired future characteristics of Merri-bek neighbourhoods**

Characteristics	Detail of desired features (number of mentions in brackets)	Number of mentions
<b>Vegetation</b> (gardens, trees, plants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ More plants and vegetation (22) e.g. in streets near Merri Creek</li> <li>➤ More street trees - fruit/food sources, indigenous (19)</li> <li>➤ More native vegetation to support wildlife (13)</li> <li>➤ Maintain or increase current vegetation levels, greener look (11)</li> <li>➤ Community gardens, nature strip/verge gardens, policy for front yard gardens (11)</li> <li>➤ Mature plants/trees - taller trees, more canopy, tree selection important (9)</li> <li>➤ More trees in gardens, policy for new developments (5)</li> </ul>	90
<b>Streetscape</b> (how the buildings/homes, gardens, paths and roads in a street look and feel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Street car parking (17)</li> <li>➤ Diversity of housing types (12)</li> <li>➤ Nature strips (8)</li> <li>➤ Older style housing (5)</li> <li>➤ Footpath upgrades (5)</li> </ul>	55
<b>Heights of buildings and homes and density</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ High density housing (17) eg. not wanting anymore high-density housing, requests for height limits</li> <li>➤ Townhouses and apartments (13) both for and against</li> <li>➤ Medium density (6) and low density (6)</li> <li>➤ Height (6)</li> </ul>	51
<b>Built form</b> (how buildings and homes look)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Architectural styles (17) e.g. architectural forms from different time periods, new developments complementing existing buildings</li> <li>➤ Historical significance (12)</li> </ul>	40

	➤ Height appearance (7)	
Housing design	➤ Environmentally sustainable design (20) ➤ Good quality building materials (6) ➤ Size of private open space and balconies (3) ➤ Large front yards (2)	43
Housing location	➤ Protection of heritage and character (8) ➤ Near activity centres (6) ➤ Near community centres (4)	21
Setbacks (how far buildings and homes are set back from the street)	➤ Important for amenity ➤ Maintain or increase setbacks (generous) ➤ Front and side setbacks, rear for northern areas ➤ Setbacks for apartments, Pascoe Vale	20
Landscape	➤ Open green spaces, contact with nature, landscaping, wetlands	6
Street views	➤ Unobstructed views to city and nearby green spaces ➤ Views along Merri Creek	5
Street layout (the pattern of streets and lots)	➤ Street layout (unspecified)	1
<i>Other features not directly relevant to neighbourhood character</i>	<i>Examples: types of shops in activity centres, economic development, speed limits, safety, recreation, community connection, graffiti</i>	145

*Note: Some participants made multiple mentions of one broad characteristic, in their comment e.g., two different points of view about trees.*

## 6.4 Feedback from submissions and interactive map

### 6.4.1 Submissions

Three written submissions were received - one from an individual, one from the [REDACTED] and one from [REDACTED].

The individual submission raised several points regarding past residential development in Oak Park and some broader points about the local planning scheme.

Regarding Oak Park the submission proposed that past development has resulted in large footprints on blocks, loss of canopy trees and permeable surfaces and increased private car traffic/parking. The submitter contends that Council should have a shared vision for the area to assess future development applications, not relying on case-by-case assessments. On the broader planning issues the submission refers to understanding the 'carrying capacity' of an area, setting an ideal



neighbourhood population and establishing the associated infrastructure needs. Reference is also made to the Department of Transport's *Movement and Place framework*.

The [REDACTED] submission was 20 pages in length including photographs and maps and covered numerous topics, both in and out of the scope of this project. Regarding neighbourhood character, the Network's submission states that:

- Neighbourhood character is very important to Brunswick residents.
- It is important to retain the existing styles of inner urban and urban garden character.
- Council should require front setbacks, recessed upper levels that back away from the street and sides, and a roof pitch.
- Council should encourage developers to retain all existing workers' cottages and "alternative" developments.
- Council should limit sheer walls on corner lots.
- Council should consider areas in Brunswick that do not currently have heritage overlays.

The submission also identified some future actions for Council relating to its planning scheme (Clause 32.09 Neighbourhood Residential Zone) in its planning scheme, and the necessary application of revised Neighbourhood Character Statements.

The [REDACTED] submission highlighted the need for improvement to the Neighbourhood Character Policy to support the objective 'to recognise, support, and protect neighbourhood character, cultural identity, and sense of place' and suggested the following actions:

- Prioritising development projects that demonstrate a commitment to First Nations engagement.
- Providing incentives for developers to create high-density projects optimised for liveability and environmental sustainability.
- Including guidance on sustainable design principles, vegetation and landscaping, accessibility, and non-residential tenancies into the Merri-bek Good Design Advice Sheets to better support design that enhances neighbourhood character.
- Embedding the Good Design Advice Sheets within Council policy and ensuring new developments subscribe to good design principles.

#### 6.4.2 Interactive Map

The interactive map activity had seven contributions, from six participants. All seven comments identified a negative attribute of a street or building. The mapping feedback is summarised as follows:

- Two comments concerned the need to revitalise a derelict building on Jewel Street Reserve in Brunswick (landowner not known).
- Two comments concerned the materials use, design of townhouses and lack of trees on/around Austin Crescent in Pascoe Vale.
- One comment concerned the unattractive streetscape and lack of vegetation in Breese Street, Brunswick.
- One comment concerned the need to revitalise a small strip shopping centre in Fawkner (out of scope).
- One comment concerned traffic controls and road safety (out of scope).

### **6.4.3 Industry Survey**

There was one response to the industry survey, the details of which can be found in the appendix.

# 7. Housing design

## 7.1 Good examples of housing design

Participants of both the survey and community pop-ups were asked whether there are any examples of good housing design in their street or neighbourhood, and to provide comments on why they believe this to be the case.

The highest mentioned categories were apartments and townhouses (25 comments). Comments surrounding apartments and townhouses were evenly positive and negative. The 11 negative comments surrounding apartments and townhouses outlined; lack of landscaping, infill development causing traffic and greenspace issues and a sentiment that apartments and townhouses lacked character or failed to reflect the surrounding neighbourhood aesthetic. Good quality building materials was equally mentioned (25 comments each) with a sentiment that new builds constructed from 'good quality', 'sustainable materials' or 'attractive materials' were an exception to most development. The following four categories are high priority for participants; architectural styles receiving 21 mentions, followed by environmentally sustainable design (12), the size of private open space and balconies (8), and proximity to community services (8).

Direct community comments:

### **Apartments and townhouses**

- "In Morley street there were 2 new townhouses built- 2 storeys. Not too high though."
- "Would be nice to see development more like the Barry Street townhouses in Brunswick. I like the design and bricks, and how not everything is white, grey or brown. The landscaping is also nice, not just a square of turf out the front."

### **Good quality building materials**

- "Some new builds have used the period character shape as a template but built with modern materials. They're visually appealing and add to the value of surrounding properties."
- "The Anderson Collection townhouses in Pascoe Vale South look good in the renders. The brickwork detailing and quality of materials is good."

### **Architectural styles**

- "[REDACTED], beautiful Hampton style home. Really stands out, classy, architecturally designed."
- "[REDACTED]. Architecturally they're interesting and different."

### **Environmentally sustainable design**

- "[REDACTED]... It has a sociable street interface; construction is robust, durable and sustainable; internally the spaces are well designed - energy efficient, light and comfortable."
- "I like the Nightingale developments in terms of design, environmental concerns and accessibility, and would like to see similar models but not in high rise / multi level developments."

## 7.2 Housing design improvements

Participants of both the survey and community pop-ups were asked whether there were examples of housing in their street or neighbourhood that they think could be better designed. Of the 126 survey participants, and 123 pop-up participants, the highest overall category mentioned was good quality building materials (32), followed by apartments and townhouses (23), architectural styles (22), and environmentally sustainable design (12).

A further four categories were seen to have a relatively high volume of comments, and each received a total of nine mentions. These categories were the size of private open space and balconies, setbacks from other homes, setbacks on the front of the property and height appearance.

Direct community comments:

### Good quality building materials

- "[REDACTED]. Poor quality materials and unkept."
- "Townhouses at [REDACTED] - car parking dominates the site, low quality materials, no garden or green."

### Apartments and townhouses

- "There needs to be less townhouses jammed into a block to allow for appropriate parking, decently sized bedrooms and interior (with people working from home more) and a backyard."
- "[REDACTED] is very average, though I haven't seen inside. It is two townhouses on a corner block, which take up too much of the site, and overlook into an adjoining primary school."

### Architectural styles

- "All the units in [REDACTED] are terrible, low grade, eye sores due to total lack of design, they look so worn after a short time of being built."
- "[REDACTED] is a typical example of the ugly cookie cutter townhouses everywhere built purely for investment."

### Environmentally sustainable design

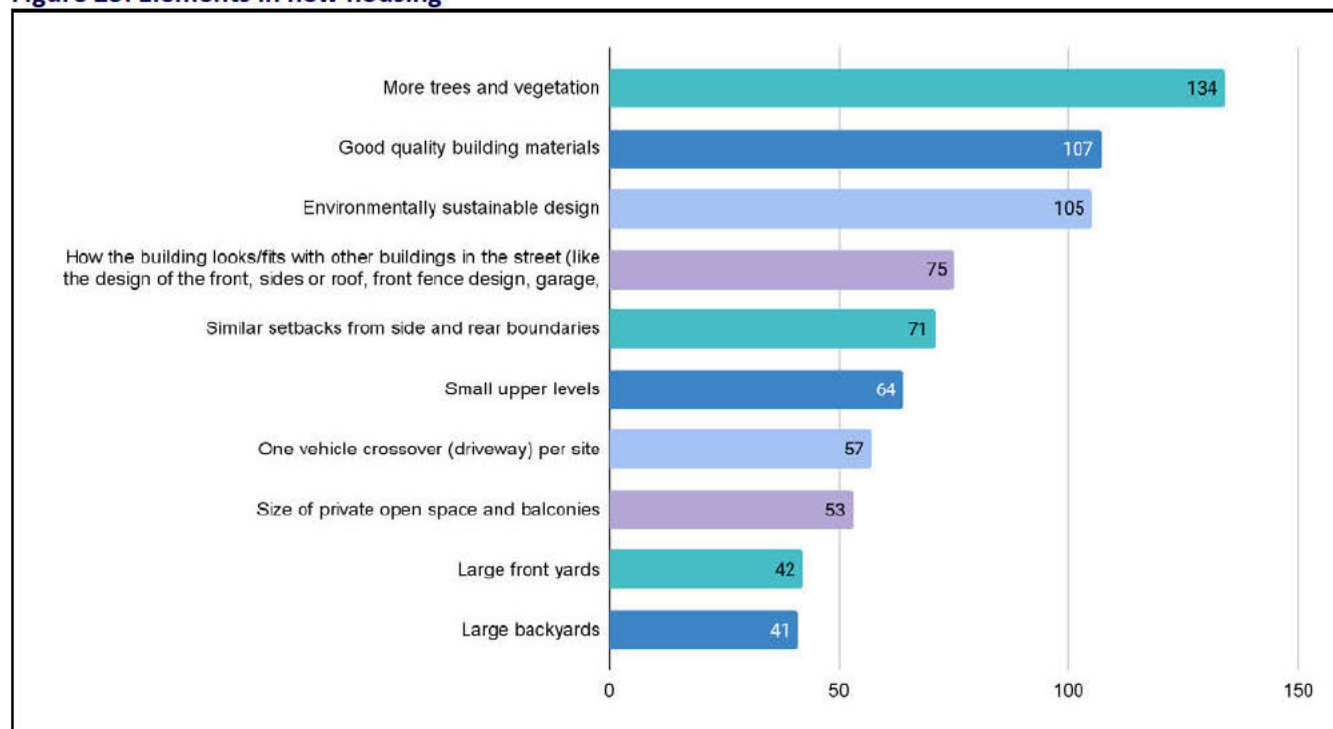
- "We need to ensure homes are built sustainability and utilising all the land for use. Also, should not contribute to urban heat islands. ie lots of black roofs etc."
- "Too many unsustainable big houses in Pentridge and Coburg Hill."



### 7.3 Elements in new housing design

Participants in the online survey and community pop ups were asked “What elements do you think are important in the design of new housing?”. The most important element to the Merri-bek community was including more trees and vegetation in the design of new housing (134), followed by good quality building materials (107) and environmentally sustainable design (105).

**Figure 23: Elements in new housing**



Participants were given the opportunity to provide further comments, with 16 people taking up this option, their comments included:

- Adequate off-street parking (7)
- Environmentally sustainable design, such as solar panels, permeable surfaces, bike infrastructure and sustainable native vegetation (4)
- The importance of larger and flexible rooms (2)
- The need for disability access and universal design (2).

*“Hard to say, but new housing has to be good quality, sensitively designed for the neighbourhood, good access to greenery and/or space to grow productive plants. Buildings must have accessible design, so we are not discriminating against people with limited mobility. Our new housing must be decided by the wellbeing and equality for our community, not the profit margin for developers.”*

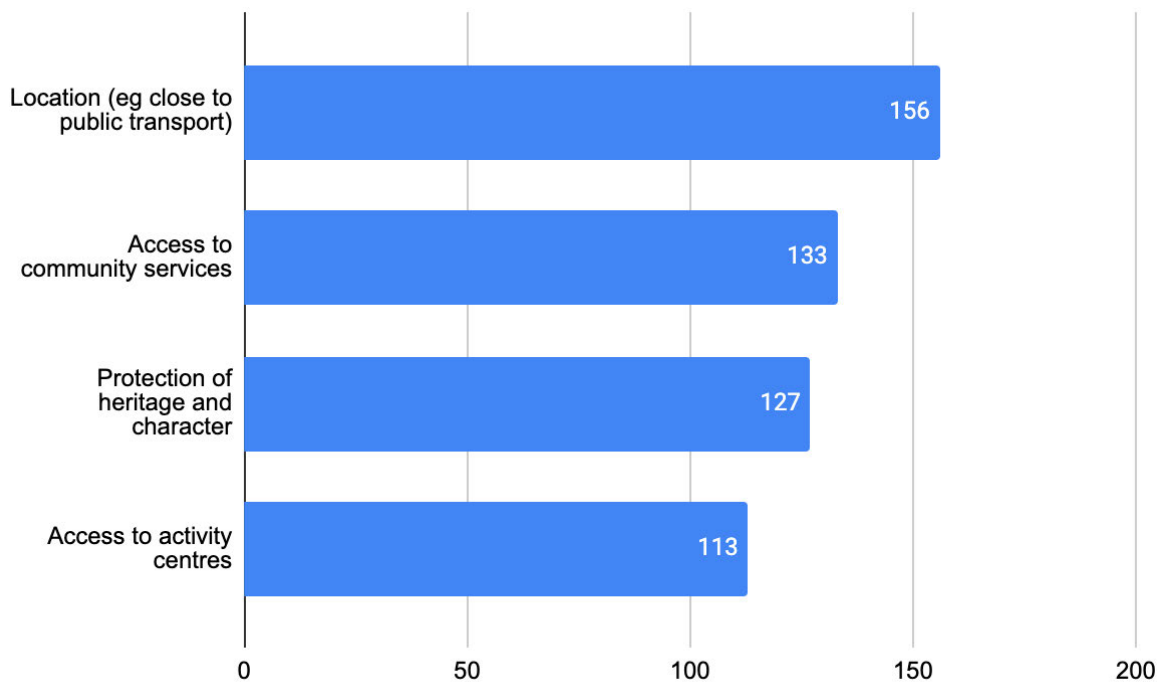
*“Housing with larger and more flexible rooms/areas to house families as they grow. The more that we stay in one place the better for the environment as we consume less and for social cohesion and connectedness.”*

## 8. Housing Location

Participants were asked “What factors do you think Council should consider when identifying suitable housing locations?”. 57 people who contributed to this activity in the pop ups, with the ability to select up to three factors, 126 people participated in the online survey with ability to select as many factors as desired.

All four factors were valued by participants; location close to public transport had the most responses (156). Participants were able to respond “other” and provide further information - the most frequent responses were regarding traffic, congestion and parking caused by additional housing, as well as considerations of affordability, disability access, protection of the environment and capacity of local infrastructure such as schools.

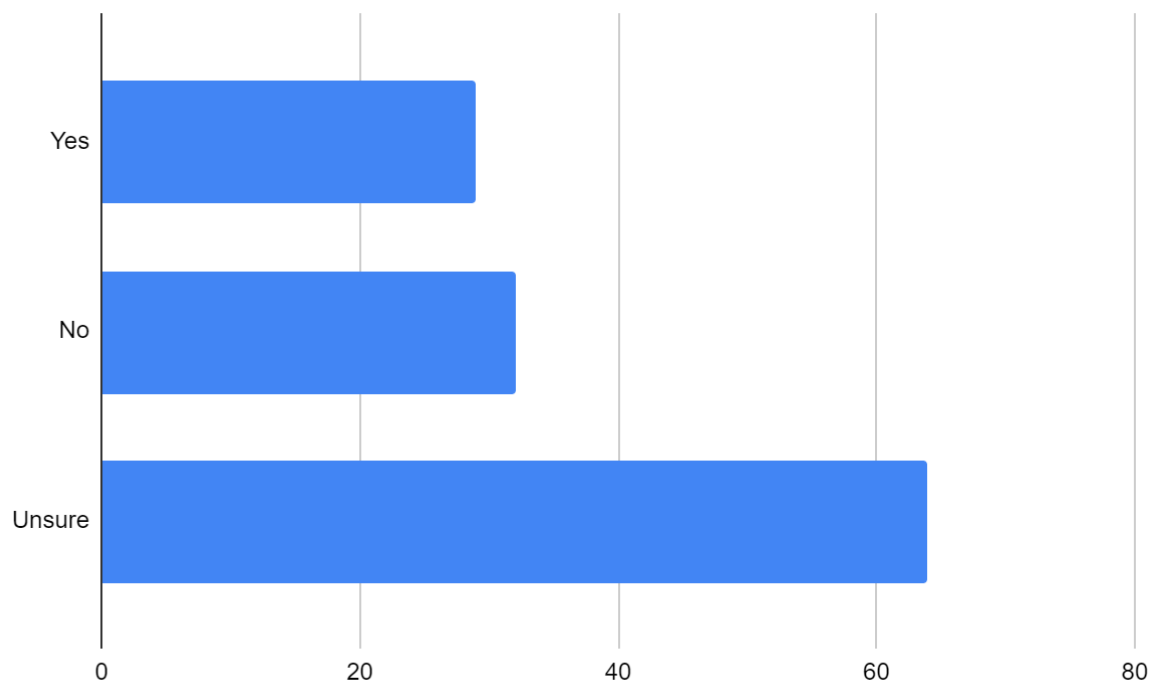
**Figure 24: Housing location factors**



## 9. Change Area locations

Participants were asked “Do you agree with the locations of each change area?” and “Why/why not” with a map showing the change areas. This question was only asked in the online survey, there were 126 responses.

**Figure 25: Change area locations**



\* Unfortunately, the map was not available due to a technical issue for the first 20 respondents.

23% (29) people responded “yes” they agreed with the locations of the change areas. The main reason people supported the change was concentrating higher density near public transport.

*“Concentrated growth along key transport networks while maintaining residential areas. Would value deep consideration/integration of affordable housing along the significant growth areas.”*

25.4% (32) people responded “no” they did not agree with the locations of the change areas. The main concerns expressed were that there is already too much development, the quality of the housing is poor, and that increased density causes congestion and lack of parking. Some participants noted that they did not trust the planning controls to control development (3), and others believed the suggestions are valid as long as they are sensitive to heritage character, and have access to trees, open space and transport (3). Other participants expressed concern for loss of neighbourhood character (3) and open space (2).

*"I believe we already have enough units and apartments in the area which has already caused significant problems with traffic, lack of parking, collection of waste, etc. I would suggest the number of developments be reduced until some concrete plan is put together to address these issues first."*

*"With more people working from home, infill and social housing could be more dispersed and not just concentrated around the train station (Pascoe Vale Station) (which in this case is not necessarily the most desirable place to live.) More diverse housing types rather than pockets of \*\*\*\*boxes please."*

51.6% responded "unsure" about the locations of the change areas, with 19 of the 65 people unable to view the map. Of the remaining 46 participants, 24 people did not provide a reason, and seven people commented that they did not have enough information to form an opinion.

The remaining participants (13)

- commented that increased density would have negative impacts on local infrastructure, such as open space, roads, tram capacity and school's intake and traffic congestion (7)
- requested that change could be spread more evenly across the municipality (2)
- acknowledged that change was needed to accommodate population growth, but wanted this to be done in way that maintained amenity, character, and access to services
- expressed concern regarding the interfaces between high and low density (2).

*"Infrastructure needs to be improved before you can move thousands more people into the area at a rapid pace."*

*"It is difficult to have a blunt map of where change can happen, as for good amenity, lots of other things like services, design etc are required. It is fine to say that significant change can happen in parts of Brunswick, as it moves from commercial to residential, but lots more is required for this to provide good amenity for the community."*

*"We obviously need to accommodate population growth, so of course some areas need to be denser, but it's a question of how we do it in each of the areas."*

# 10. Recommendations

## 10.1 Process recommendations

**Continue to make it easier to understand this project:** Consider ways to make the strategy accessible and clearly communicate the scope of participant feedback. Building on the success of using the neighbourhood characteristics infographic, Council could consider creating a brief summary document with diagrams or a map of which places in a neighbourhood were in scope or out of scope i.e. front gardens but not businesses.

**Close the loop:** Consider ways to keep people updated on the project. Issue a statement and update the Council project page thanking participants for their contribution to the project and for sharing their ideas. Be clear about the findings of the engagement, present an opportunity to clarify the findings.

**Share the data:** Consider ways you can share this data within Merri-bek and with the community, such as creating a snapshot of the engagement data, to bring the data to life with infographics to help participants digest the information in an easy form.

**Adherence to the Local Government Act 2020:** Keeping participants informed in engagement and the project is called 'closing the loop' - the information loop is currently open. Participants have shared their ideas and their feedback through the engagement process and are waiting to see what happens next.

A new requirement of the Act requires Councils to share the information that has been collected and inform the community as to how this will shape thinking.

## 10.2 Reflections from facilitators

Engaging meaningfully with the public on subjects like design, architecture and planning can present barriers in terms of educating the public in 'planner speak', design processes and governance. It's our role to support the community to understand complex concepts, technical terms, and the scope of their contributions.

The value of facilitated pop-up engagement in these types of projects is that it provides an opportunity to explore the reasons, feelings and dilemmas participants consider when responding to engagement questions. At pop ups, facilitators were able to answer questions, reframe and guide participants' initial feedback to form meaningful responses of value to engagement outcomes. Responses in a survey format are less targeted than this and can sometimes produce feedback which requires further clarification. Care is taken to situate, contextualise and triangulate data across these different engagement methods and closing the loop is essential to ensure we have this right.

Overall, the advantage of a mixed methods engagement strategy is multiple points of access for the community, to demystify jargon, clarify scope, answer questions, and seek clarification about responses.



# 11. Appendices

## Appendix A. Industry Survey Response

**What is the name of the company you work for?** [REDACTED]

**Please share a medium density housing project that you think is successful and why.**

[REDACTED]. This is a considered design response maximising activated frontages and sense of address, convenient provision, and location of services such as bins, mailboxes, and generous allocation of both private and common garden area (due in part to the retention of the large tree within the heart of the site). The architecture is unapologetically contemporary and utilizes a balanced mix of stepped and sheer walls. Most dwellings have north-facing windows to living rooms.

**What part of this policy is the most challenging to implement and why? What are some common challenges that you face with Council's neighbourhood character policy when preparing/commencing the design of new developments and speaking to your clients?**

Council has inconsistencies when applying neighbourhood character (with exception to residential growth zones). Often the emerging character is ignored even when it contradicts the zoning or community expectations.

**What aspects of Council's neighbourhood character policy do you agree with and why?**

Residential Growth Zone and Mixed-Use Zones provide more freedoms and flexibility when it comes to formulating a design response. They are not heavily restricted by neighbourhood character.

**What aspects of Council's neighbourhood character policy do you not agree with and why?**

Council's refusal to accept emerging neighbourhood character in certain contexts.

**What aspects of Council's neighbourhood character policy need to be improved?**

'Neighbourhood Character' is often a throw-away blanket term used to indicate a development is deemed inappropriate. If neighbourhood character is raised as an issue, the grounds of concern need to be more specific.

**What are the key features you use to assess preferred character of an area/street?**

Prevailing front setbacks, materials, architectural style, building heights, presence of new infill development, main street vs residential street in hinterland