



EXPANDING PAKINGTON STREET RESERVE IN ST KILDA

Engagement Summary Report

September 2026





Acknowledgement of Country

Wominjeka. Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their legacy and spiritual connection to the land and waterways across the City of Port Phillip and pay our heartfelt respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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Introduction

Project background

Pakington Street Reserve in St Kilda is expanding to increase public open space. Our Public Space Strategy 2022 – 2032 identified Pakington Street Reserve as a park that needs to be expanded, due to the lack of open space in Balaclava.

Balaclava and St Kilda East have the lowest amount of open space of all the neighbourhoods in our City. Currently, Balaclava and St Kilda East have eight open spaces, making up only 5% of the total neighbourhood area. This is significantly lower than the City of Port Phillip average of 17%.

Recently, 49, 49A and 51 Pakington Street in St Kilda have been acquired by Council to increase public open space by expanding Pakington Street Reserve. This comes after a previous project in 2025, where the reserve expanded to encompass the site at 43 Pakington Street.

These small parks will provide important open space to our community, minimise the urban heat effect and help to cool our city. They will help to support Balaclava's growing population, which is expected to grow by almost 9% over the next 15 years.

The size and residential location of the small parks will mean they're not active recreation spaces. Instead, they are designed to provide small green spaces where our community can enjoy sunshine, nature, relax under a tree and socialise with friends and family.

After initial feedback on the location in March and April 2025, we developed a concept design for the expanded reserve.



What we set out to achieve

During July – August 2026, we asked the community for feedback on the concept design, including the reserve layout, playground, seating, accessibility and community garden.

We wanted to know how the community felt about the proposed design, what they liked about it, what elements they felt could be improved and whether the elements of the design met their needs.

About this report

This report outlines how Council has engaged to date on this project and summarises what we have heard from the community.

Before reading this report

The following should be considered in reading this report:

- The findings are based on qualitative feedback from people who chose to take part. This means the views shared are not statistically representative of the whole community and may only reflect a portion of local voices.
- While we aim to include diverse perspectives, some community members may have faced barriers to participation, including people with disability, multicultural communities, older people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Participants refers to everyone involved in the engagement; respondents refers to those who answered a specific question or activity.
- The report summarises what we heard. Feedback has not been independently verified, so some comments may be incorrect, unachievable or outside the project scope. Not all individual comments are shown; themes, quotes and numbers are used to reflect the range of views.
- Some people may have contributed more than once across different activities, which may result in unintentional double-counting.

What we did

Between 27 July and 23 August 2026, we delivered a range of communications activities to let the community know about the project and collected feedback through a mix of engagement activities.

Communications activities

To increase awareness of the engagement process, we did the following:



Corflute signage in and around the Reserve

x 5

Four corflute signs about the engagement process and the opportunity to provide feedback were placed onsite at the Reserve.



Postcards x 1100

866 postcards were posted out to the local community, explaining the engagement process and inviting people to provide feedback. A further 234 postcards were made available to the community at the St Kilda Town Hall ASSIST counter.



Emails x 5

Emails were sent directly to known neighbours, residents and community groups who have maintained ongoing interest in the project.



Newsletters x 2

Project information and an invitation to engage was included in two editions of the *Have Your Say* newsletter during the engagement period (July, August).



Social media posts x 2

Social media posts were included on both Facebook and Instagram on Tuesday 28 July to promote the engagement process.



'Have Your Say' website

Council's dedicated engagement website, 'Have Your Say' included a page for this project, with information on the process, a timeline, contact details, and opportunities to engage.

Engagement activities

To collect feedback from the community we did the following activities:



Survey

This survey was hosted online at the *Have Your Say* page and downloadable in Word and PDF formats from the *Have Your Say* page. It was also made available in hard copy paper format at ASSIST counters. This survey collected demographic details about participants and asked for community feedback on the project.



Neighbourhood Pop-up

This project delivered a community pop-up onsite at the Reserve on Thursday 13 August from 4 – 6pm.

Reach and participation

Reach through communications activities

Activity	Reach	Insights
Social media posts	11,456	- Facebook post – 9,184 views, 22 interactions, 21 link clicks - Instagram post – 2,272 views, 28 interactions, 5 link clicks.
Newsletters	4,820	Have Your Say is a monthly newsletter with 4,820 subscribers.

'Have Your Say' website

**709 views,
363 unique
visitors**

- Most visitors came to the website directly (70.6%) or via a search engine (13.3%), with 8.9% via social media and 6.8% via websites.
- 13 visitors decided to follow the page.

Participation by engagement activity

Approximately 81 community members participated in this engagement process. This was spread across the engagement activities below:

Activity	Number of participants	Further detail
Survey	55	57 surveys completed by 55 participants.
Pop-ups	23	
Other (online)	3	One document upload via Have Your Say, one formal Customer Request (CRM) and one direct email were received.



Image: Artist's impression – new play area at Pakington Street Reserve.

Who we heard from

Demographics

We asked the survey and pop-up participants a series of demographic questions. The following section explores those demographics.

GENDER

Of the 78 people who responded to this question, almost two-thirds identified as female (49 participants or 63%). Just under one-third identified as male (24 respondents or 31%). Two respondents (2%) identified as non-binary and three said they would prefer not to say (4%).

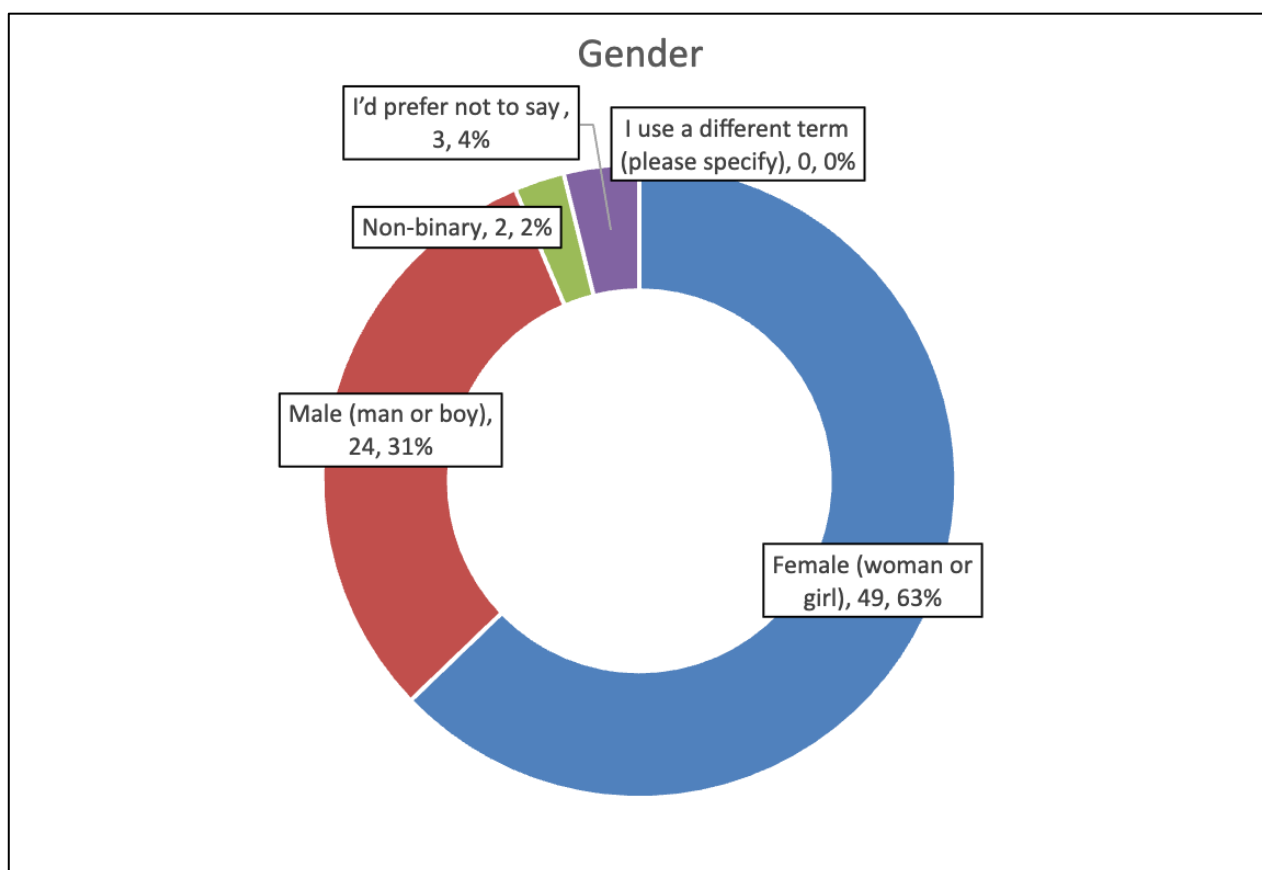


Figure 1: Number of respondents by gender (n=78)

SUBURB

The feedback was very local to the Reserve, with 69 respondents (93.2%) saying they lived in St Kilda, a further three (4.1%) lived in St Kilda East, one in Middle Park (1.4%) and one in Windsor (1.4%).

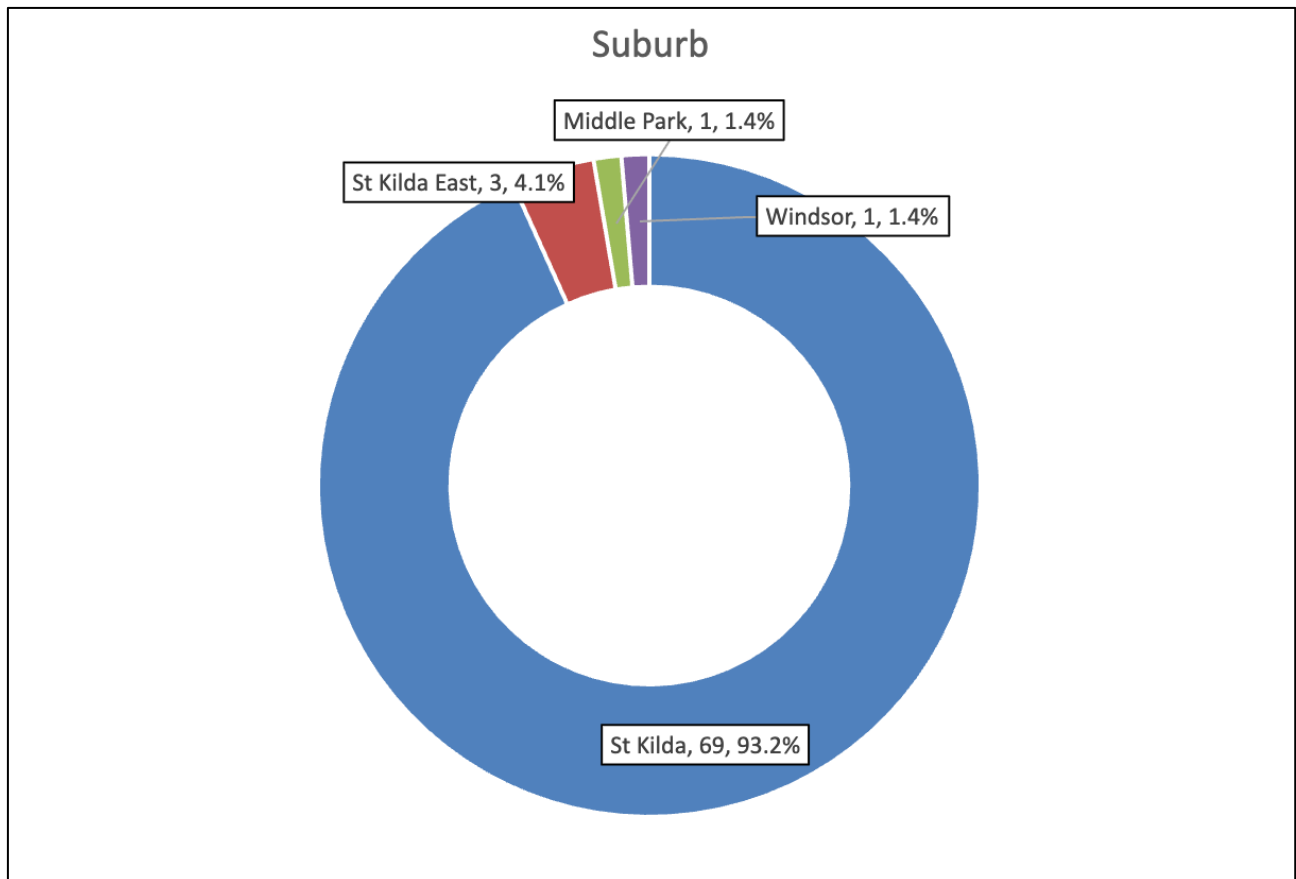


Figure 2: Number of respondents by suburb (n=74)

AGE

The highest represented age group was people aged between 35 and 49 years who made up 45% of the respondents (35 respondents).

The two next largest cohorts were respondents between 50 and 59 years (12, 15%), and 25 and 34 years (11, 14%).

We received feedback from four children between the ages of 5 and 11 (5%).

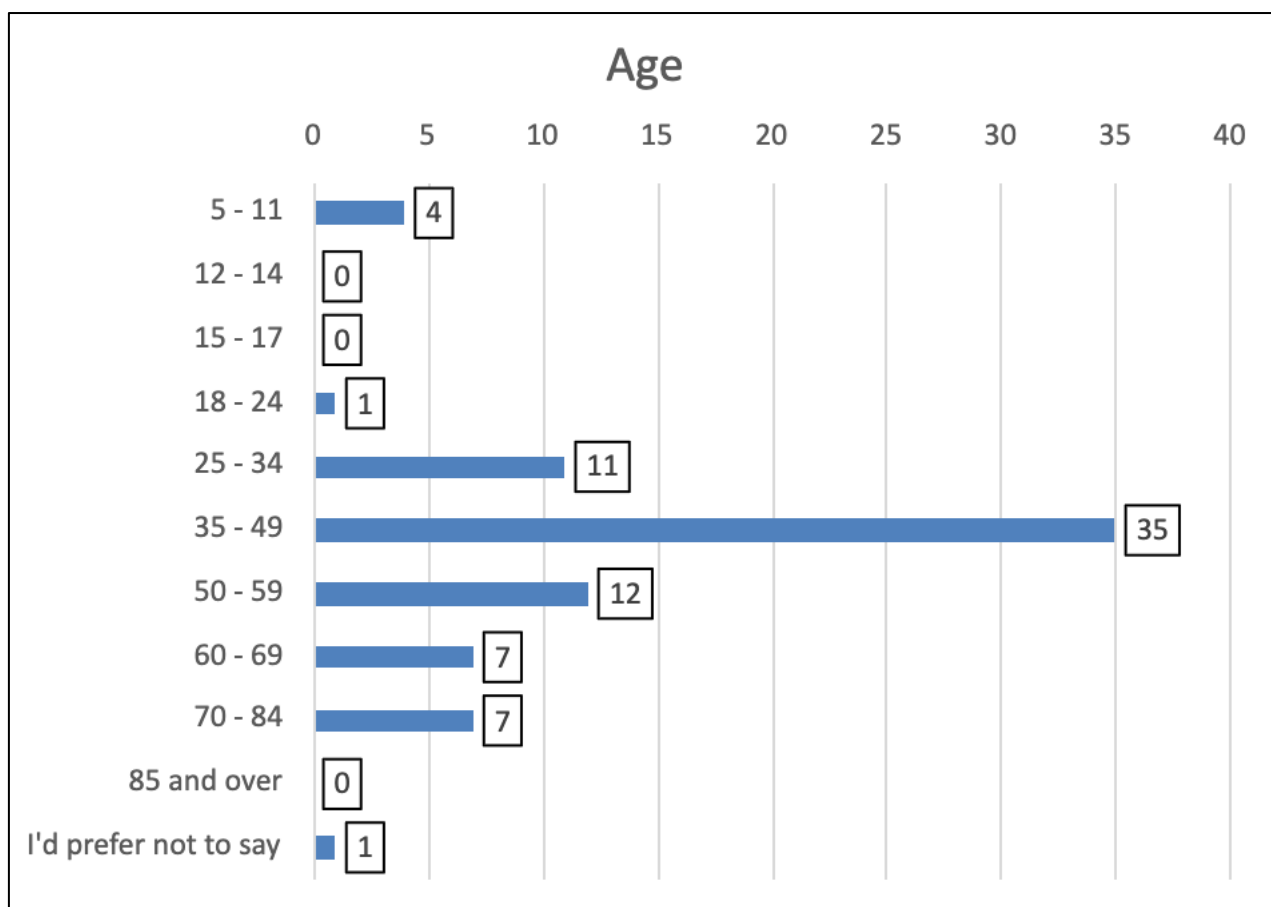


Figure 3: Number of respondents by age (n=78)

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We asked people if they identified with any of the following statements. The statements included are listed here in order of number of responses:

- 'I identify as LGBTIQ+' (15 responses or 19%).
- 'I am a person with disability' (9 responses or 12%).
- 'I speak a language other than English at home' (9 responses or 12%).
- 'I am from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background' (1 response or 1%).

PAST PARTICIPATION

To help us understand if we were engaging with new community members, we asked if participants had provided feedback on any other Council projects in the past 12 months.

28 respondents said they had provided feedback to Council in the past 12 months (36%). 30 respondents said they had not (38%) and 20 were unsure (26%).

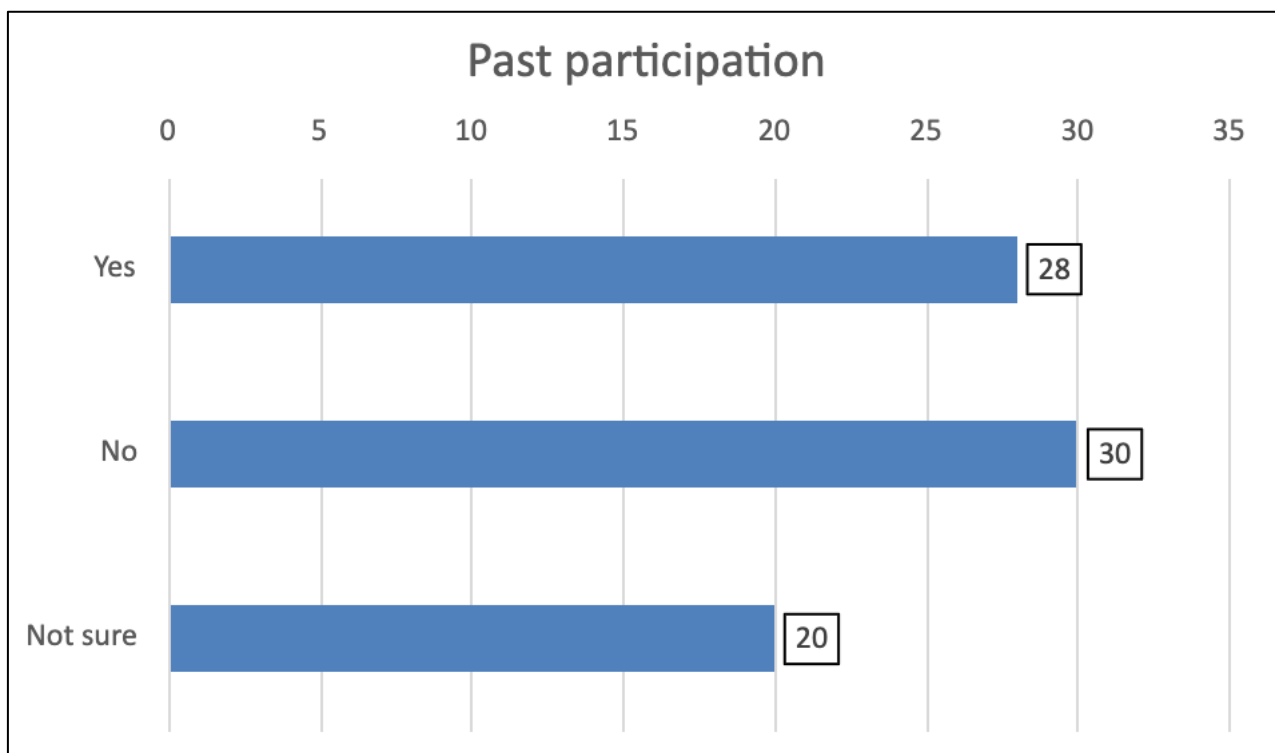


Figure 4: Number of respondents who selected whether they had provided feedback to the City of Port Phillip in the last 12 months. (n=78)



What we heard

We asked 3 open ended questions for survey participants to answer:

- “What do you like most about the design?”
- “What elements could be improved?”
- “Do you have any other feedback?”

COMMUNITY SENTIMENT ABOUT THE PROPOSED DESIGN

Based on 76 survey responses, community sentiment towards the proposed expansion of Pakington Street Reserve was generally positive, with 59 respondents (78%) either excited about or happy with the design. However, feedback demonstrated a wide range of views on how the reserve should function, particularly regarding play opportunities, open space and dog use.

The most valued aspects of the concept design were the expansion of open green space, native planting, increased tree canopy, opportunities to connect with nature, and the retention of community-focused features such as seating and the community garden. Many respondents welcomed the environmental benefits, biodiversity outcomes and the enhanced sense of place created by the Reserve expansion.

The most frequently requested improvement was additional or more diverse play equipment. While some participants supported the proposed nature play elements, many felt the play space did not provide enough challenge, variety or appeal for a range of ages. In contrast, others preferred a quieter, greener park with fewer play facilities and more planting, shade and habitat. Requests for BBQs, shelters, exercise equipment, improved lighting and seating were also common.

Several recurring themes emerged around safety, including concerns about antisocial behaviour, visibility, lighting, dog management and the interface with the adjacent drain. Opinions regarding dogs were particularly divided, with some requesting an off-leash area and others seeking stronger separation between dogs and children's play spaces. There was also strong interest in celebrating local and First Nations history, particularly through interpretation of the waterway known locally as "Secret Creek". Overall, feedback reflected strong community interest and a diverse range of perspectives on the future role and character of the Reserve.

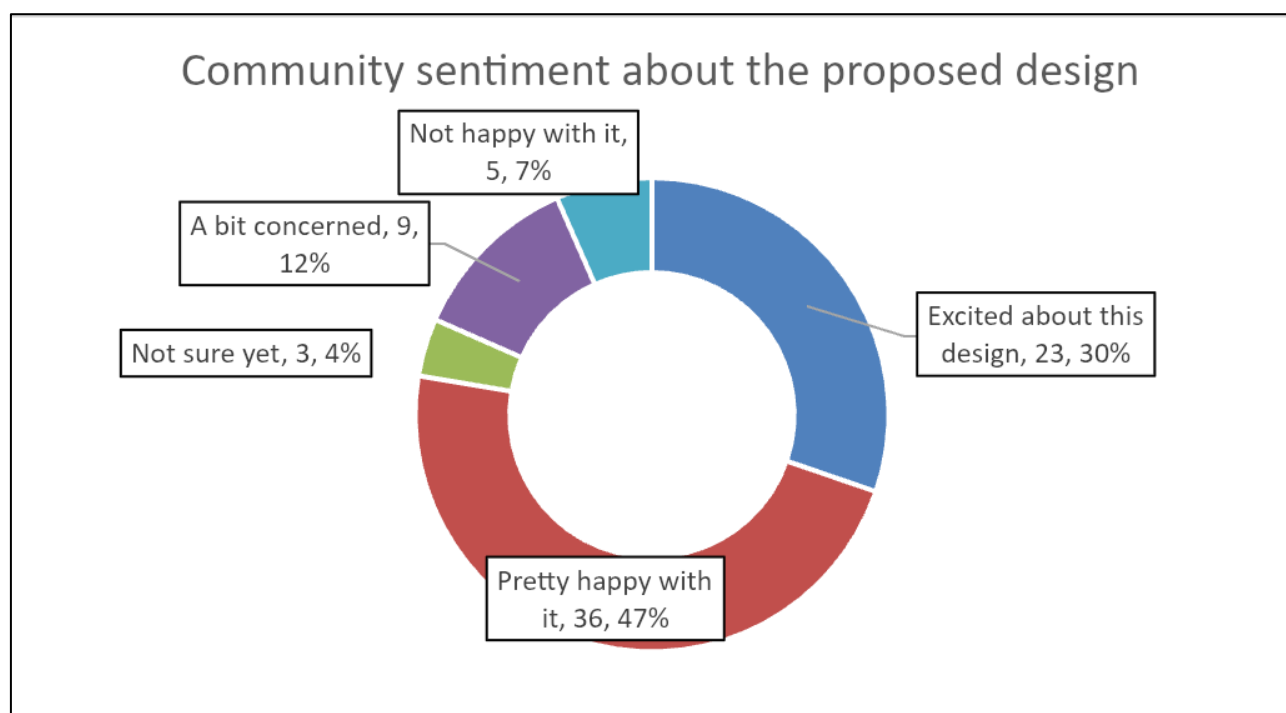


Figure 5: Overall, how do you feel about the proposed design? (n=76)

WHAT THE COMMUNITY LIKED MOST ABOUT THE DESIGN

Of those who answered the question, 'What do you like most about the design?', 39 respondents (61%) most liked the open lawn space that the new design provided. 11 respondents (17%) were pleased with the additional play equipment

provided that catered to older aged children. 8 respondents (13%) appreciated the variety of different zones and areas. The additional tree planting, native planting and rocks and natural elements were liked by 7 respondents (11%).

A sample of verbatim responses to this question:

- *“There are a number of things I particularly like. The long communal table feels like a fantastic addition and I can imagine it being used in lots of different ways by families and the wider community. I also really like the edge seating, the natural trail elements, and the increased native planting. It feels like a well-considered design that encourages people to spend time in the park.”*
- *“The proposed increase in tree canopy and integration of seating, play and social spaces throughout the reserve is great to see.”*
- *“In the little space available a great deal has been achieved.”*
- *“Love how it makes a quiet sanctuary close to the library and away from nearby busy streets. I live very close by and have a baby so excited to use this space.”*

ELEMENTS THE COMMUNITY FELT COULD BE IMPROVED

Of the 72 participants who responded to the question, “What elements could be improved?”, 24 respondents (33%) voiced their request for the playground to be upgraded. Here are some of these verbatim responses:

- *“We have watched its play value progressively diminish through successive redevelopments. This expansion should be the opportunity to reverse that trend. Please give Pakington Street a proper, challenging, imaginative and well designed playground that activates the reserve and makes it somewhere local families actively want to spend their time.”*
- *“PLAY EQUIPMENT! Not enough. Should include some of the features that are included in the Point Ormond Playground. Sensory, engaging, challenging, attractive.”*



- *"The existing kids playground equipment, most of it isn't used, we need better equipment for many of the young kids that live in the surrounding area. Outside of the swing, none of it gets any use."*

16 respondents (22%) requested additional facilities like toilets, barbecues, exercise equipment, additional bins or more lighting. Here are some verbatim responses:

- *"I know it's out of scope but hopefully BBQ and shelters in a future stage would be great."*
- *"Much more lighting needs to be installed in corner areas including within kids playgrounds to avoid people taking drugs in these areas during the evenings."*

10 respondents (14%) suggested designating a dog off leash area would improve the design. Here are some verbatim responses:

- *"There are a lot of owners of small dogs in this neighbourhood and it would be good to have a fenced are for them to be off leash (big dogs go to Alma Park)."*
- *"Adding a dog off leash area."*

9 respondents (13%) requested for the stormwater drain that runs adjacent to the Reserve to be acknowledged for its historical significance. Verbatim responses included:

- *"Would love some recognition/celebration of the "St Kilda Main Drain."*
- *"Promote the local indigenous history of the waterway. I know it as "Secret Creek" – this is a delightful name that speaks to the history of the waterway and much more evocative than "St Kilda Drain."*

HOW WELL THE DESIGN ELEMENTS MET THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

Feedback on the proposed design varied considerably across participants, with a broad range of perspectives and preferences expressed throughout the engagement process, both online and at the pop up.

Of those who responded, 22 (39%) said they don't plan on using the playground equipment. 20 (35%) said it would either meet their needs really well or mostly meet their needs. 15 respondents (26%) said it either doesn't really meet their needs or doesn't meet them at all. Here is a sample of verbatim comments:

- *"My household will enjoy the open space with shade trees, native shrubs and grasses. We hope to see plenty of birds use the space too."*
- *"While it's great to expand the park, and make it a place when more people may come and spend time. However, the design does not factor in the numerous people in the area who appears to have Dogs and to use the Park for their dog."*
- *"Please install playground equipment with a high reuse value rather than equipment that is occasionally played with."*

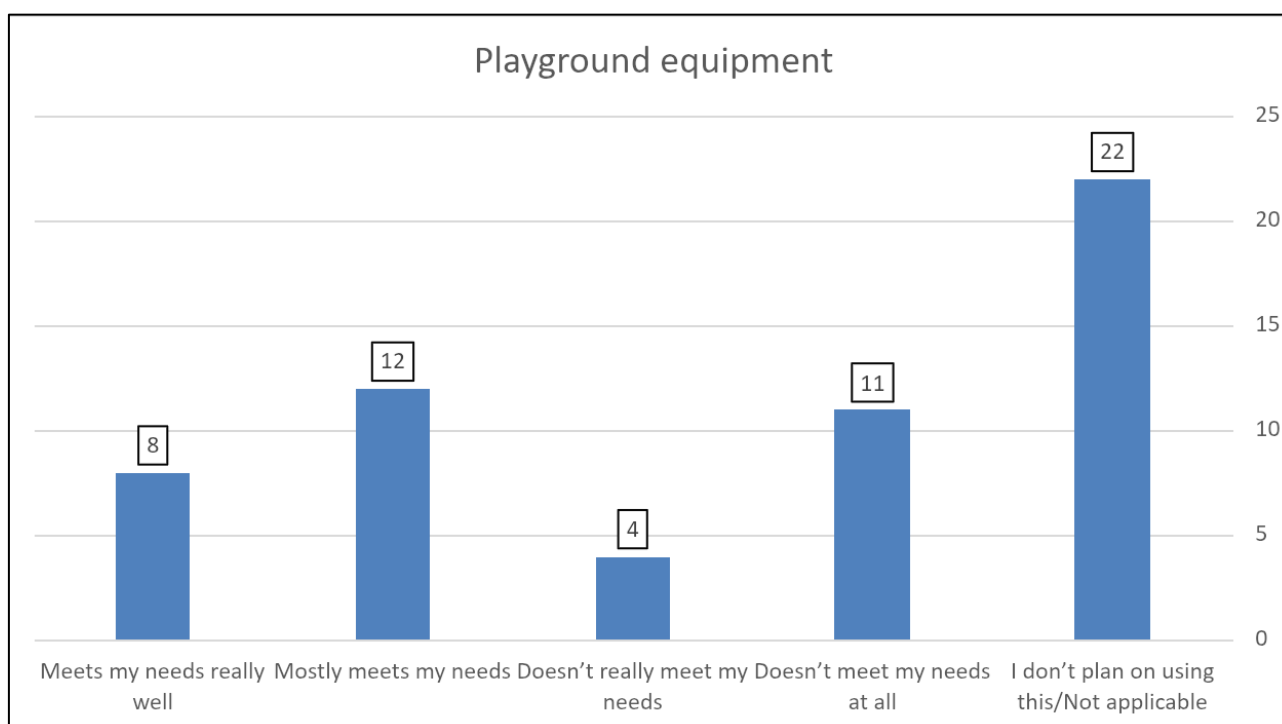


Figure 6: How well do the following elements of the design meet your needs? – Playground equipment (n=57)

Of those who responded, 44 (77%) said the seating would either meet their needs really well or mostly meet their needs. 6 respondents (11%) said it either doesn't really meet their needs or doesn't meet them at all. 7 (12%) said they don't plan on using the seating. Here is a sample of verbatim comments:

- *"The long communal table feels like a fantastic addition and I can imagine it being used in lots of different ways by families and the wider community."*
- *"The proposed increase in tree canopy and integration of seating, play and social spaces throughout the reserve is great to see."*
- *"More seating for singles and couples for break out areas"*
- *"Better seating for older people"*

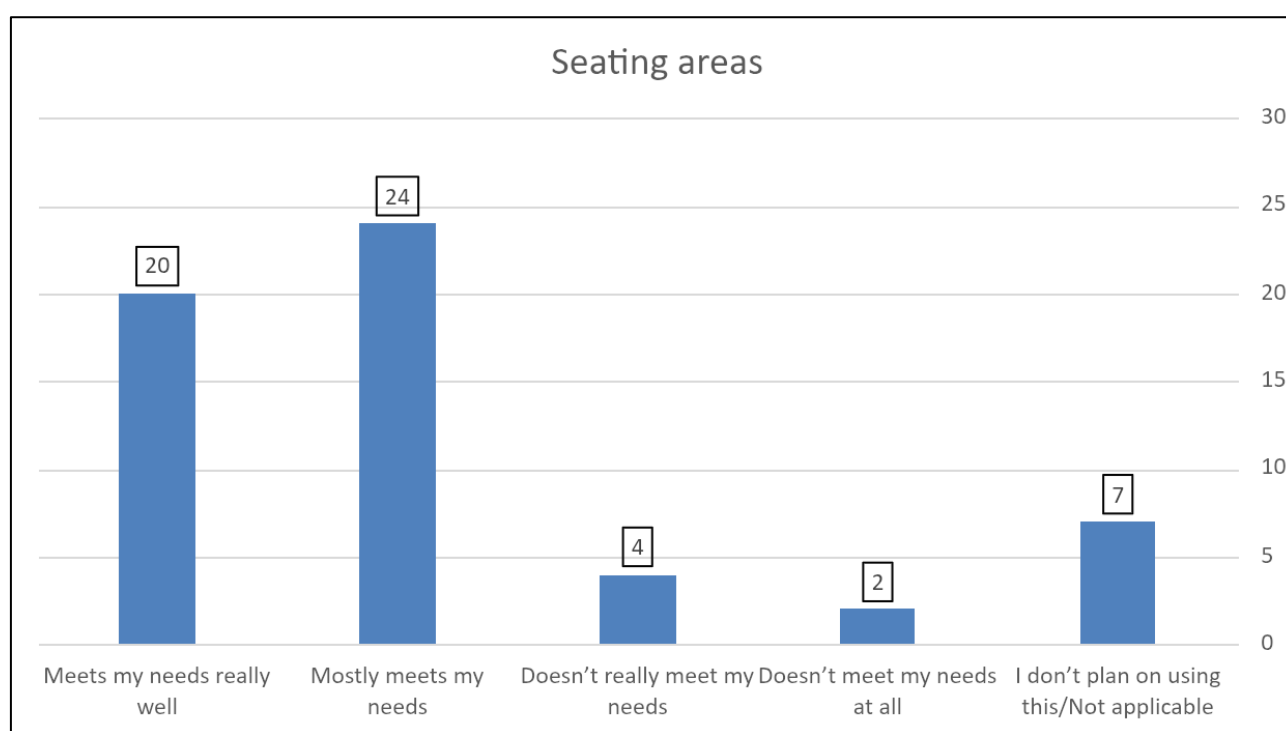


Figure 7: How well do the following elements of the design meet your needs? – Seating areas (n=57)

Of those who responded, 49 (86%) said the accessibility and pathways would either meet their needs really well or mostly meet their needs. 3 respondents (5%) said it doesn't meet their needs at all. 5 (9%) said they don't plan on using the accessibility and pathways. Here is a sample of verbatim comments:

- *“Overall, I think the proposed layout looks thoughtful and versatile.”*
- *“Retention of bins and footpath is good – many people pass through the reserve rather than spend leisure time in it. Allowing for a 2nd entrance to the reserve from Pakington is also good.”*
- *“Please focus on more lighting in corner garden areas and also upgrading the existing play equipment.”*
- *“If Council proceeds, it should first commit to a comprehensive safety and management plan, including better lighting, regular ranger patrols, rapid removal of graffiti and rubbish, CCTV where appropriate, and ongoing monitoring of the site’s impact on the surrounding neighbourhood.”*

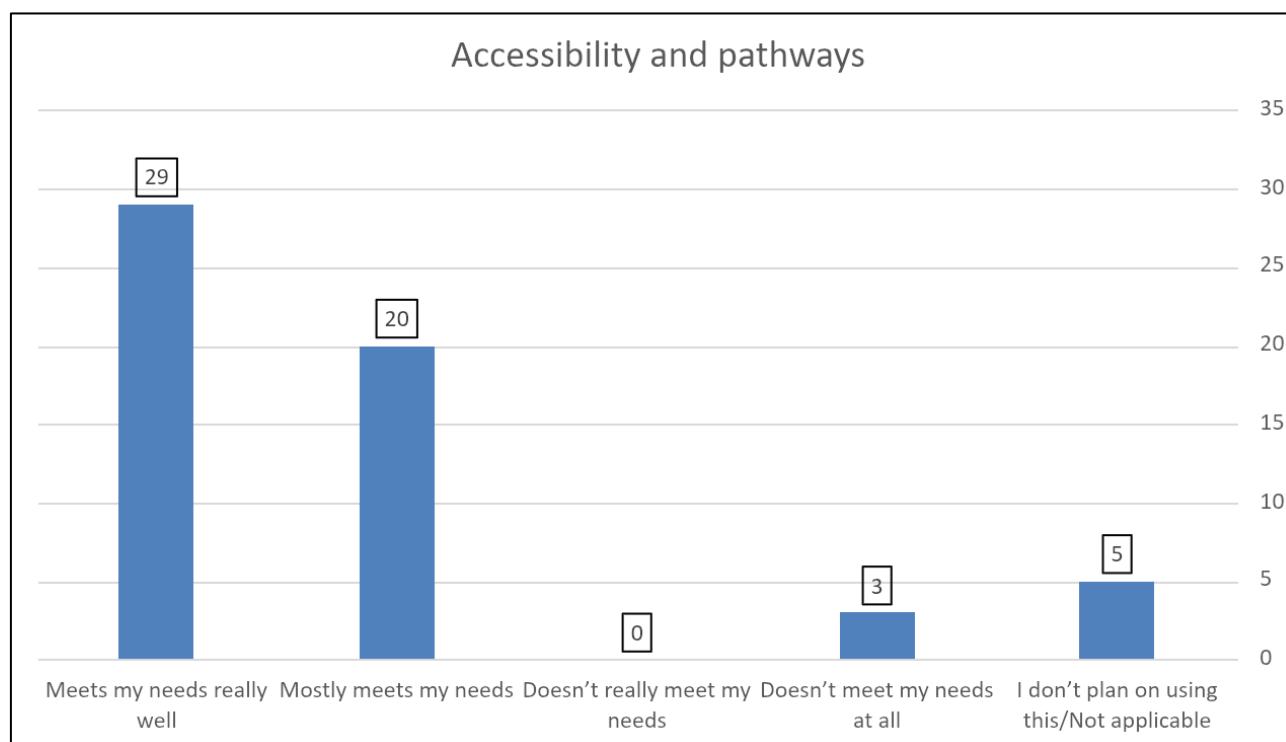


Figure 8: How well do the following elements of the design meet your needs? – Accessibility and pathways (n=57)

Of those who responded, 34 (60%) said the community garden would either meet their needs really well or mostly meet their needs. 8 respondents (14%) said it either doesn't really meet their needs or doesn't meet them at all. 14 (25%) said they don't plan on using the community garden. Here is a sample of verbatim comments:

- *"Great open space, native plantings, keeping the communal garden. Looking good!"*
- *"I like the idea of a community garden, more green space, trees, rocks."*
- *"Keeping the community garden. Mix of sun and shade. Indigenous plants."*

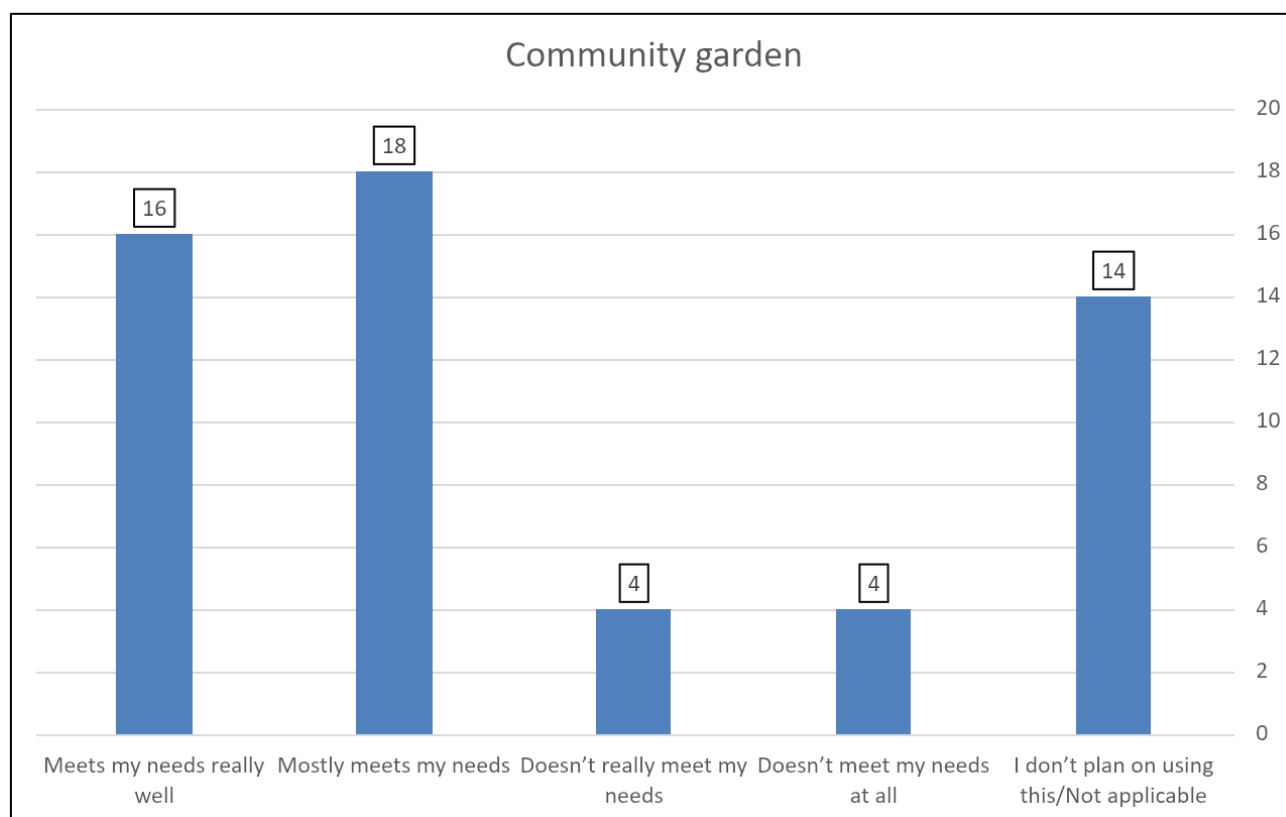


Figure 9: How well do the following elements of the design meet your needs? – Community garden (n=57)

HOUSEHOLD INTENTION TO USE THE PROPOSED PLAY SPACE EQUIPMENT

38% of respondents said they would not use the proposed play space equipment at all, compared to 29% who said they would all the time.

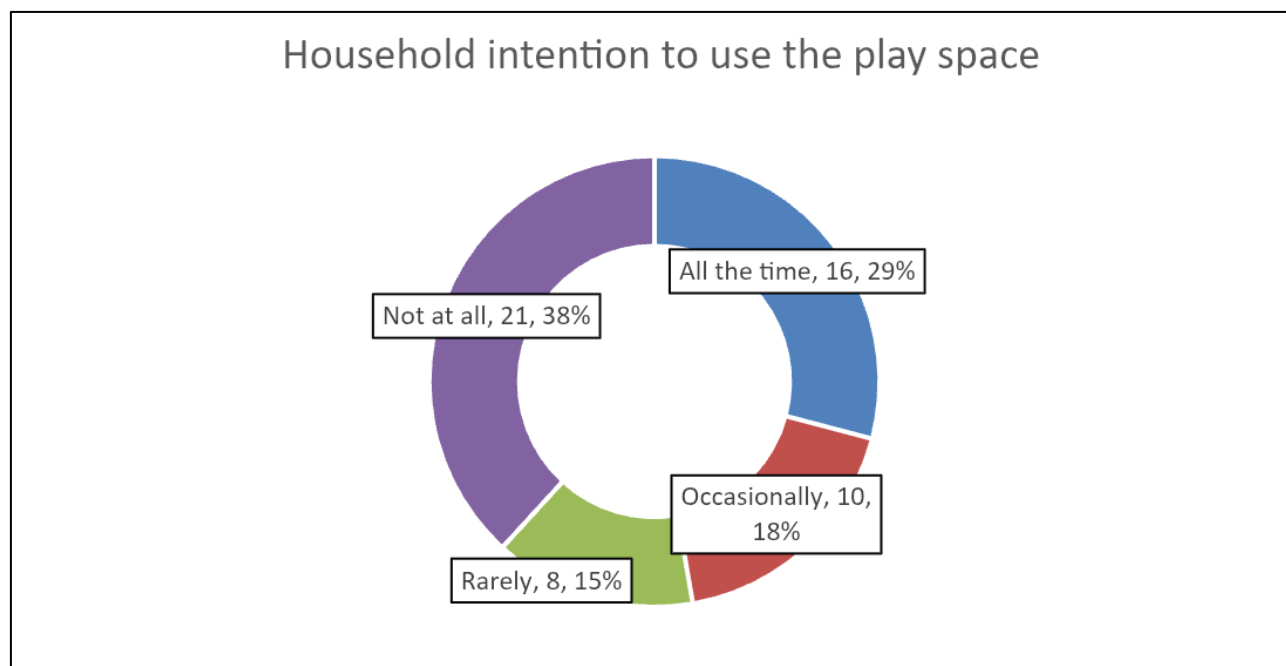


Figure 10: Would you or your household use the proposed equipment in the play space? (n=55)

EASE OF ACCESS AND MOVEMENT IN THE DESIGN

92% of respondents said they find the access and movement in the design either very easy or quite easy.

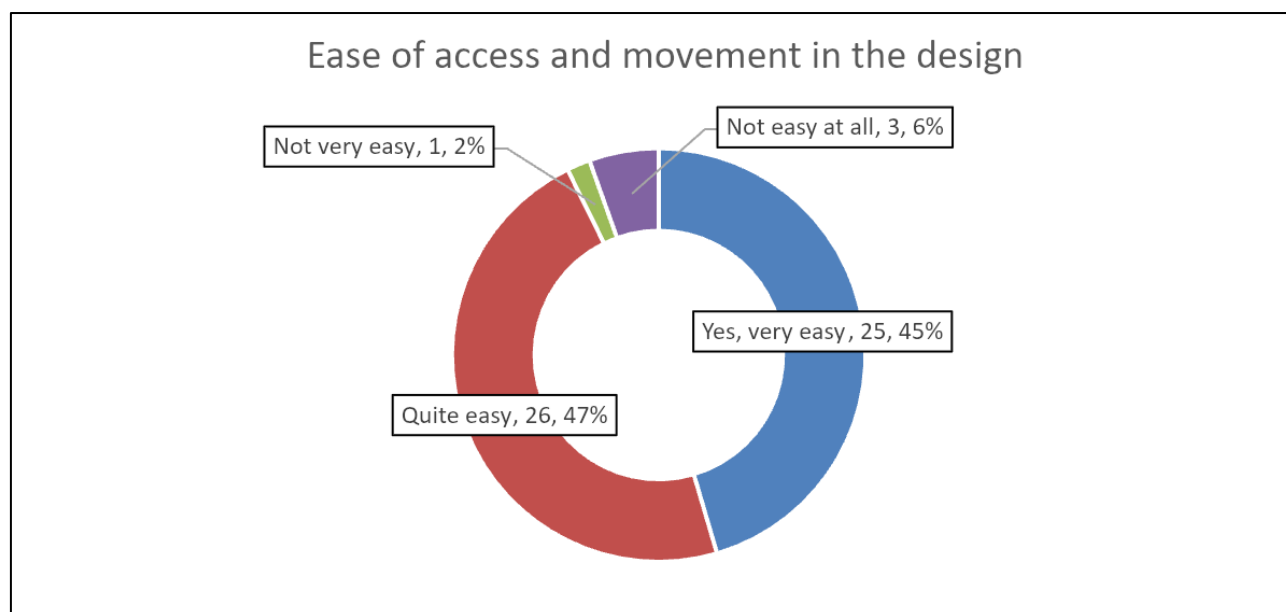


Figure 11: Does the design feel easy to access and move through? (n=55)

HOUSEHOLD INTENTION TO USE THE EXPANDED COMMUNITY GARDEN

When asked whether they would use the expanded community garden, 30% of respondents said they would occasionally. 9% of respondents said they use the community garden “All the time” which reflects the quantity of community garden members who attended on site.

Community garden members met at the onsite pop-up with City of Port Phillip’s Community Greening Officer and Project Manager to discuss the needs of the garden plots and the proposal to re-position them. The community garden members expressed their preference to retain the planter boxes in their current location, to remain close to the water supply and storage unit.

Community garden members enquired whether protection from the path would be considered to deter vandalism and theft of the plants. They also raised that the current boxes were not originally installed correctly and were upside down. They requested whether the project could provide new planter boxes that could be installed correctly as well as upgraded, with a more secure garden tool container with a locking mechanism that is not as prone to vandalism/break-ins.

Household intention to use the expanded community garden

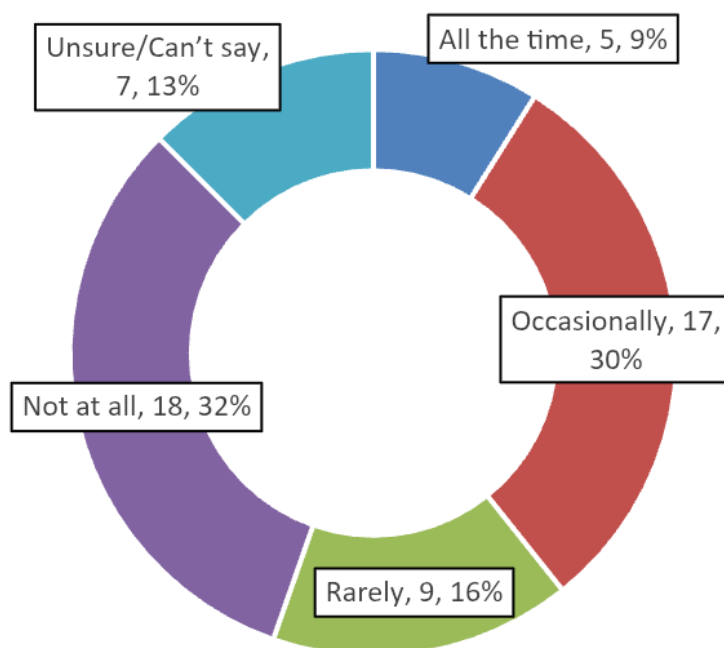


Figure 12: Would you or your household use the expanded community garden? (n=56)

FURTHER COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

When asked for any other feedback on the design, a range of ideas and priorities were shared, ranging from general support for the Reserve expansion, to a desire that the expanded reserve be designed as a destination not simply an improved thoroughfare, through to signage explaining the significance of the area, a perceived need for increased lighting, and acknowledgement of the competing demands on the space from different users. A community member expressed concern that the proposed entrance along the 51 Pakington Street frontage may result in the creation of an informal pedestrian desire line between the new entrance point and the existing path. It was noted that many park users approach from this direction when accessing the playground or walking through the Reserve towards Lynott Street.

Next steps

The engagement findings from this engagement will now be used to further inform Council decision-making on this project.

We will create a detailed design with the help of your feedback, which will be shared with the community on 31 October 2026.

Construction is scheduled to commence on 30 June 2027 and is scheduled to be completed by 29 October 2027.

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback on this project.