



Carlisle Street Carparks and Laneways

Engagement Summary Report

June 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

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 future.

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Executive Summary

In total, 325 community members shared their opinions on the proposed sale of land in the Carlisle Street area via surveys, a Balaclava community forum, submissions, and online Q&A. The key insights are summarised below:

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE SURVEY AND BALACLAVA COMMUNITY FORUM (251)

- Of the 251 responses that were received, opinions were fairly evenly split regarding the sale of land and laneways. When posed with the question, 'Do you support Council's proposed plan to sell laneways and land?' 39% said 'Yes' to the sale, 33.1% said 'No', and 27.9% chose 'Yes, with changes'.
- When sharing their thoughts, many people who said "yes" (20 comments) also mentioned they support the sale only if certain changes are made. For example, if Council is to supply social housing, restrict the building heights and there are independent shops cafes and/or restaurants maintained on site. The feedback shows that even those who support the sale often want adjustments to the condition of the sale.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE SUBMISSIONS (50)

- Most submissions are against selling the land in its current form but identified that they would support developing the area if clearer controls and protections are put in place. Submitters want Council to make sure that the development benefits the community, keeps the neighbourhood's character, and supports local shops.
- Most submitters are concerned about Coles dominating the area and impacting small business (20 comments), as well as does not including enough conditions to protect the community's interests (15 comments).

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE Q&A (24)

- People want to make sure that any new development on Carlisle Street keeps the area friendly and open, with parks and community spaces, instead of turning it into a big shopping centre. They are worried about big companies taking over, losing

small shops, and the environment. They want to be involved in the plans and make sure the community benefits, with things like affordable housing and good roads. Overall, they want the area to stay a nice place where people feel welcome.

Introduction

Project background

Council is proposing to sell some land and laneways in the Carlisle Street area of Balaclava. The land is part of the carpark behind Carlisle Street, next to Coles. The goal is to sell these parcels of land to Coles with the plan to develop a mixed-used space, which will include a larger supermarket, shops, parking and public open space (see figure 1 below).

This project is important because it aims to improve the Carlisle Street area. By ensuring the land is developed effectively, Council aims to renew and upgrade the neighbourhood, making it a more attractive and functional place for people to enjoy. It aligns with the plan made back in 2009 to enhance this area for the community.



Figure 1: Land parcels discussed for sale

If Coles buys the land and laneways from Council, these are the main conditions, according to the Section 173.

- **Price:** Coles will pay at least market value for the land, which will be higher because it is now part of a bigger area. The price will also include any extra costs Coles needs to pay as part of the deal.
- **Supermarket:** Coles will build a brand new, full-size supermarket to replace the smaller one that is there now.
- **Car Parking:** Coles will build a new underground car park. All the current parking spaces on the surface will be moved underground. Parking will still be free and you won't have to shop at Coles to use it.
- **Residential Area:** The new development will include new homes or apartments.
- **Public Toilets:** Coles will provide new, accessible toilets (male, female, and unisex) to replace the current public toilets on the site.
- **Public Open Space:** Coles will create a new public open area at the northeast corner of the development

What we set out to achieve

During this engagement, we sought to gain an understanding from our community about their view of the sale of land, to help inform future decision-making around the sale. This was carried out using a mix of online and face-to-face engagement methods.

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 information in this report is based on qualitative research and does not necessarily reflect the views of a statistically representative sample of the community.
- City of Port Phillip strives to include diverse voices in our engagement activities. We acknowledge, however, that some people are likely to have experienced barriers to participation in the activities that are outlined in this report – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, multicultural communities, older people, and others.
- The information and views presented in this report are a summary of the opinions and feedback heard from across the engagement activities. The feedback has not been independently validated. As such, some information may be factually incorrect, unfeasible or outside of the scope of this project.
- This report summarises key feedback from participants and does not preclude the project team from considering community feedback in its original format.

Acknowledgement and thanks

We would like to acknowledge and thank the community members who contributed feedback on this project.

What we did

Between 8 May and 15 June 2025, a range of communications and engagement activities were carried out to inform the community about this project and to seek their feedback.

Communications & engagement activities



Have Your Say website and survey

A project page on Council's *Have Your Say* engagement website provided information on the process, background information about the proposal, a timeline, contact details, a survey, opportunities to ask questions about the proposal, and an option to upload a submission



Information flyers x 9,800

Flyers notifying the community about the project and the opportunity to attend the Balaclava Community Forum . Flyers were sent to owners, occupiers and traders of Balaclava.



Newsletter x 2

Information about the project and the opportunity to engage was included in the *Have Your Say* newsletter in May and June 2025, delivered to 4,161 subscribers.



Social media posts x 4

Social media posts were used to promote engagement via the City of Port Phillip's social media accounts:

- Instagram post (8 May, 20 May, 26 May and 30 May) reach 6,593; 290 reactions, 13 comments, 54 share.
- Facebook post (8 May, 20 May, 26 May and 30 May) reach 7,876; 32 reactions, 25 comments, 13 share.

- Instagram story (21 May and 29 May) 623 views.
- Facebook story (21 May and 29 May) 757 views.



Face-to-face activities x 1 One face-to-face activity was held that aimed to provide participants with information to so that they could provide informed feedback.

- 2-hour Balaclava community forum at St Kilda Townhall, Balaclava, Thursday 29 May 2025, 6–8pm.
- 122 people attended the forum, with approximately 100 people taking part in facilitated table conversations about the proposal.
- 45 participants provided feedback on this project at the event.

Participation by engagement activity

In total, 327 community members participated in this engagement process. This was spread across the engagement activities below:

Activity	Number of participants	Insights
Survey	206	This online survey collected demographic details about participants and asked for feedback on Smith Street.
Submissions	50	Submissions on this project were collected via email and Councils Have Your Say website.

Balaclava community forum	45	100 Participants joined one of four 20-minute workshops with our expert team to ask questions and share their thoughts on the proposal. 45 of those provided written feedback on the night.
Q&A	24	Q&A is a tool on Have Your Say that allows users to ask detailed questions and receive official answers. It empowers users to reach out and engage with the project and allows Council to answer.

Project reach and participation

More than 1,200 people heard about this project during the engagement period, via the Have Your Say newsletter and Council's social media. Figure 2 shows an overview of interactions with the *Have Your Say* project page to 15 June 2025, where 1,204 unique visitors visited the project page. We heard from 327 participants throughout this engagement process, with 206 participants via the survey 52 submissions, 24 via the online Q&A and a further 45 participants at face-to-face activities.

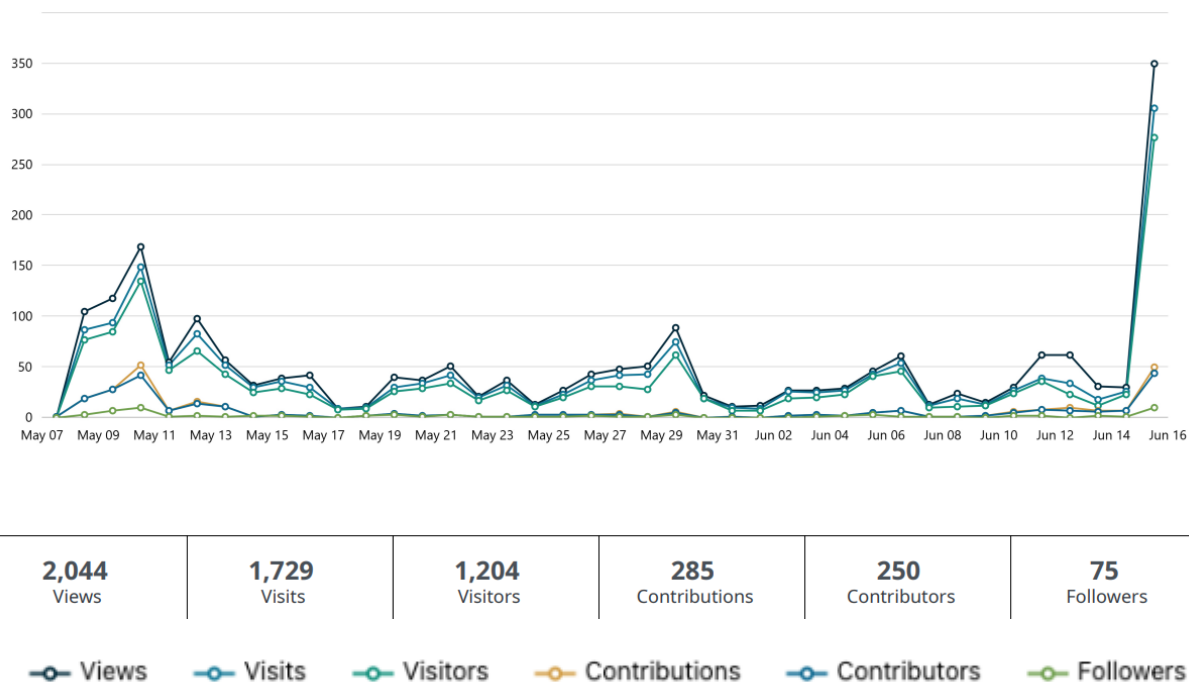


Figure 2 Project page overview, "Carlisle Street Carparks and Laneways" (Have Your Say, 15 June 2025)

Who we heard from

Participant demographics

Gender

Participants were asked to provide some demographic information when filling out the survey, and this information was also gathered at the Balaclava Community Forum where people completed a feedback form. As shown in Figure 3, 120 participants (48.8%) identified as female (woman or girl) 115 participants (46.7%) identified as male (man or boy), 2 participants (0.8%) identified as non-binary and a further 3 participants (3.7%) said they preferred not to say. Information about gender identity was not obtained by those who provided submissions and some Balaclava Community Forum participants did not answer this question.

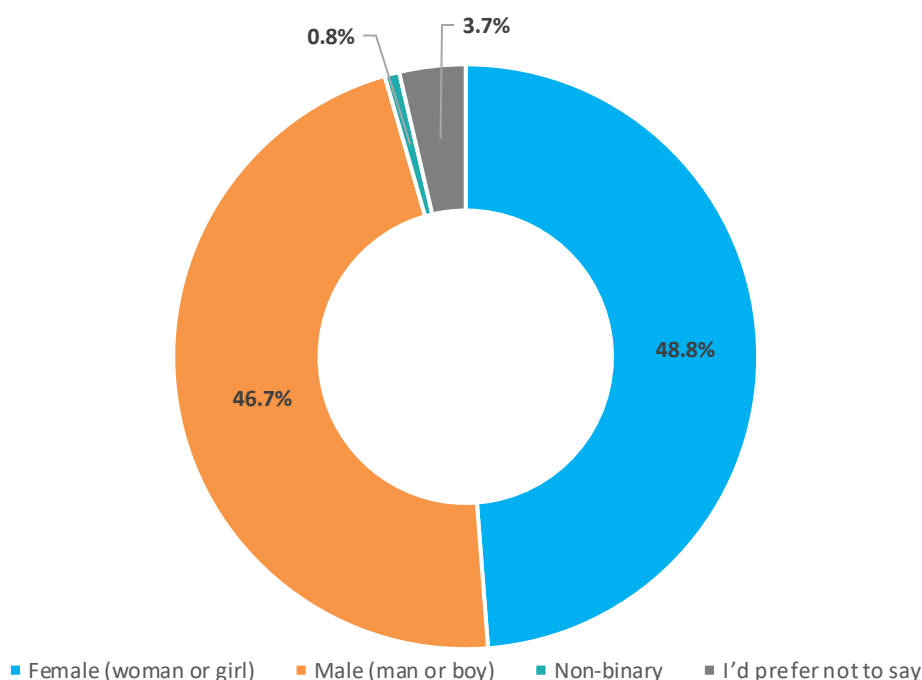


Figure 3 Participation by gender – survey and Balaclava community forum participants

Age

Participants who completed the survey or provided feedback at the Balaclava Community Forum were asked to provide their age. The age bracket that participants were most likely to select was 35–49 years old, with 88 responses (36.8% of participants). The second most likely age bracket for participants to choose was 50–59 years (47 responses, 19.7% of participants).

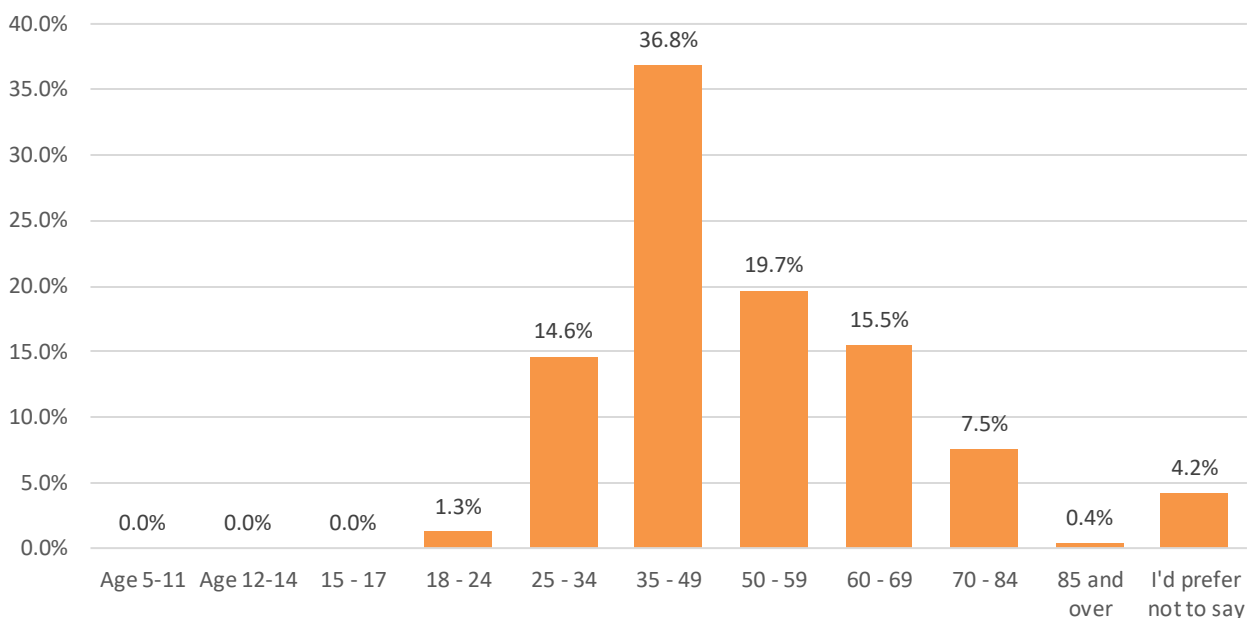


Figure 4 Participation by age – survey and Balaclava community forum workshop participants

Diversity statements

Survey and Balaclava Community Forum respondents were asked to indicate if they identified with a series of statements to understand participant diversity and were able to select as many statements as applied to them. Information about diversity was not obtained by those who provided submissions, and some Balaclava community forum participants did not answer this question. From most to least common, these were:

- “None of these apply to me” (150 responses, 57.5%)
- “I identify as LGBTIQ+” (48 responses, 18.4%)
- “I speak a language other than English at home” (24 responses, 9.2%)

- “I’d prefer not to say” (23 responses, 8.8%)
- “I am a person with disability” (12 responses, 4.6%)
- “I am from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background” (4 response, 1.5%).

Suburb of residence

Survey and Balacclava community forum respondents were asked to provide their suburb of residence, with 113 participants (46.3%) saying they live in Balacclava. Participation from other suburbs can be seen in Figure 5. Information about suburb was not obtained by those who provided submissions and some Balacclava community forum participants did not answer this question.

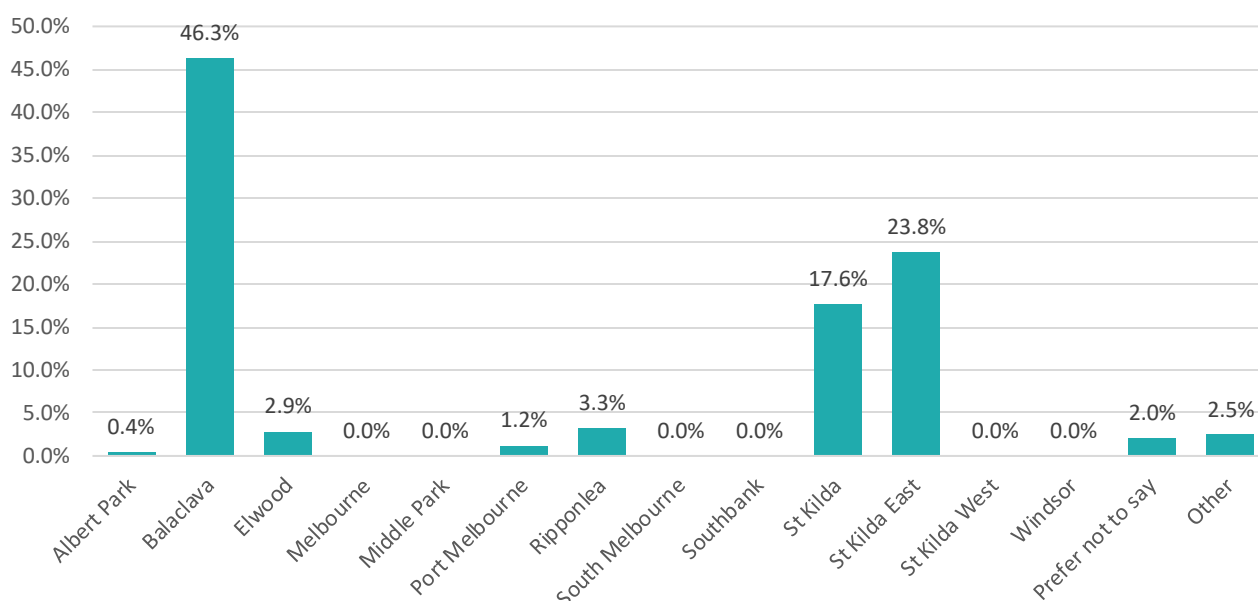


Figure 5 Participation by place of residence – survey and Balacclava community forum workshop participants

Prior feedback on Council projects

Survey and Balaclava community forum respondents were also asked whether they had provided feedback on any other City of Port Phillip projects in the past 12 months. 114 participants (46.3%) said 'yes', 105 (42.7%) said 'no', and 27 (11%) were unsure, as shown in Figure 6. Information about prior feedback was not obtained by those who provided submissions and some Balaclava community forum participants did not answer this question.

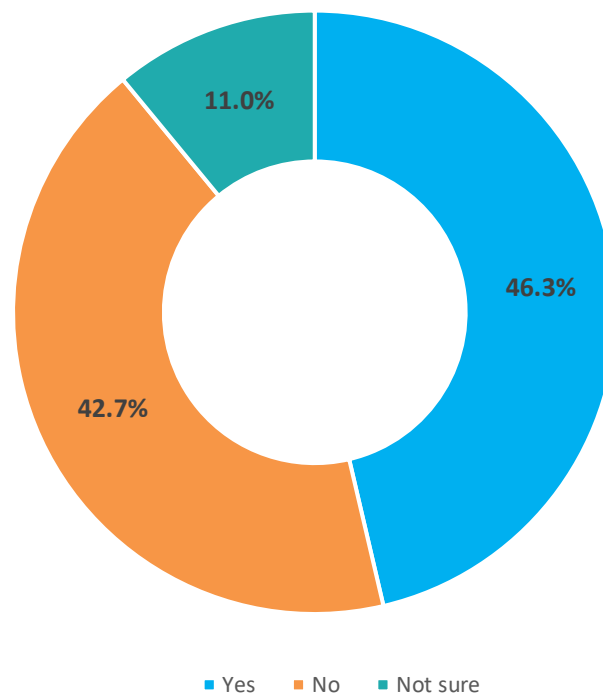


Figure 6 Participant prior feedback on other City of Port Phillip projects in the past 12 months – survey and Balaclava community forum workshop participants

What we heard

Do you support Council's proposed plan to sell laneways and land?

Those that provided feedback via the survey and at the Balacalava community forum were ask whether they support the Council's proposed plan to sell laneways and land in and around Coles carpark.

251 responses were received, with opinions fairly evenly split: 39% said 'Yes' to the sale, 33.1% said 'No', and 27.9% chose 'Yes, with changes' (see Figure 8).

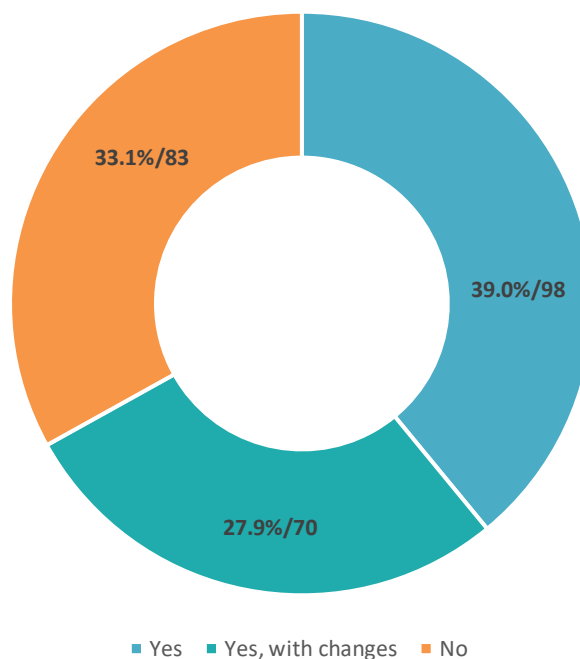


Figure 8. Do you support Council's proposed plan to sell laneways and land? – survey and Balacalava community forum workshop participants

Support responses broken down by suburb

When the votes were broken down by participants' suburb of residence, sentiment was again fairly evenly split. Most people in Balaclava (43), St Kilda East (26) and St Kilda (19) supported the sale, however the margins were very close in all three suburbs. Lower response rates were received from residents of other suburbs, with opinions of those participants were more mixed. See Figure 9 below.

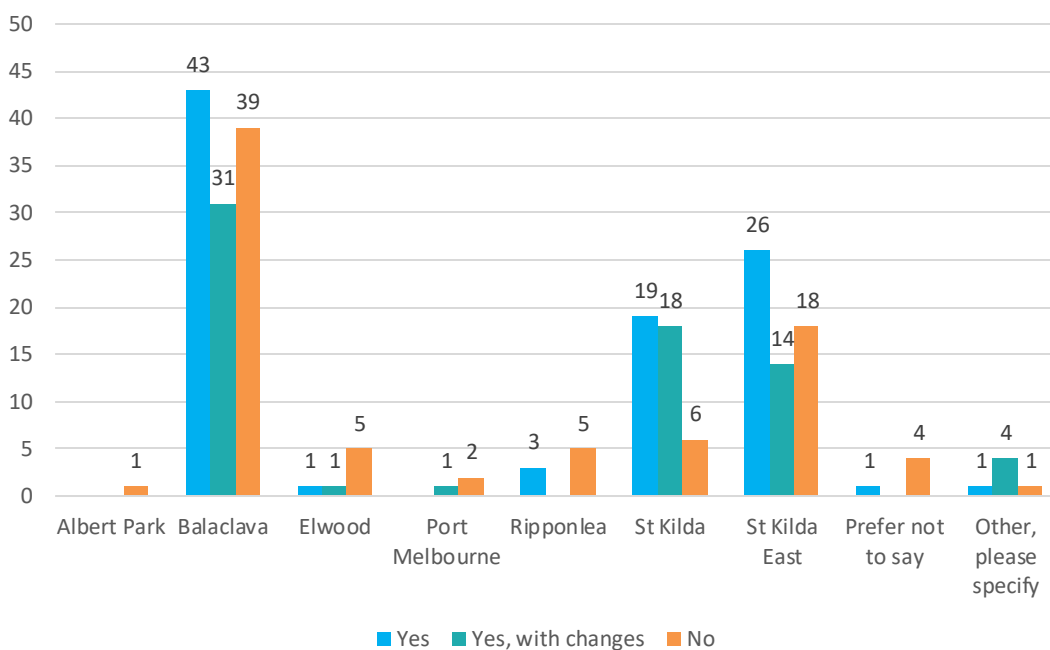


Figure 9 Do you support Council's proposed plan to sell laneways and land? (By suburb)- survey and Balaclava community forum participants

What comments would you like to share with us about the proposed sale?

Survey and Balaclava community forum participants were asked what comments they would like to share with us about the proposed sale; 234 responses were received. These responses have been grouped into 'Yes', 'Yes with changes' and 'No' with themes as seen in figures 10, 11 and 12.

'YES' COMMENTS:

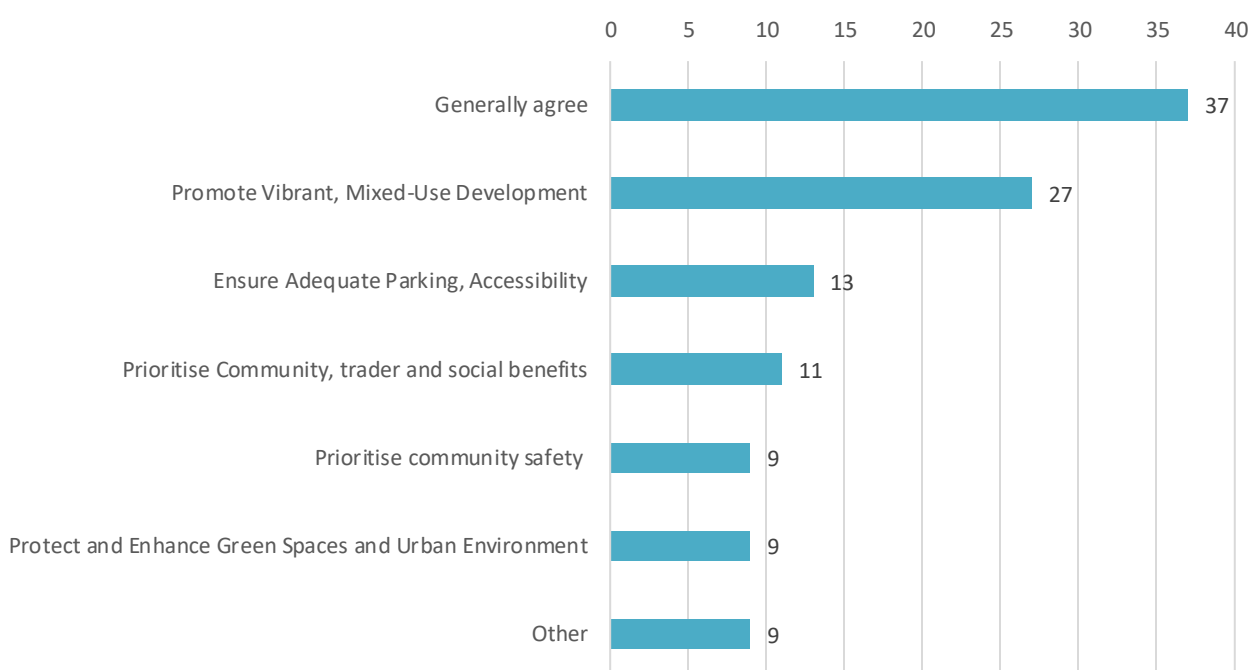


Figure 10. What comments would you like to share with us about the proposed sale? - (Yes comments themes) survey and Balaclava community forum workshop participants

Of the 83 'Yes' received the '**Generally agree**' theme made up the most comments (37 comments), with comments largely agreed with the proposal, many indicating that they wanted the development to happen quickly.

'I agree with the proposed sale. The area needs a bigger supermarket than the small Coles and Woolworths than are currently there.' (Balaclava resident)

'Please do it quickly. The delay in Coles and the impacts to traders is significant and uncertain. It's extremely detrimental to Carlisle St.' (St Kilda resident)

'Promote Vibrant, Mixed-Use Development' was the second most common theme (27 comments). Comments largely related to the condition to the sale having multiple uses like open space, bar and restaurant, housing and parking etc.

'Please sell and redevelop the Coles and Woolworths precinct asap. Undercover carparking, green spaces, non-vacant shops, indoor children's play equipment.' (Balaclava resident)

'Consideration of multiple storey development with basement car park in Coles development to maximise land use (St Kilda East resident).'

'Ensure Adequate Parking, Accessibility' ranked third with 13 comments. Most comments focused on maintaining at least the current number of carparking spaces, as well as preserving access via the laneway behind the shops along Carlisle Street.

'I support sale providing that ample car parking spaces are created. There would need to be more car parking spaces than current as parking is a big issue in the area.' (St Kilda resident)

'Providing Coles commit to a substantial redevelopment and providing more car parks for locals to use.' (Balaclava resident)

'Prioritise community, trader and social benefits' had 11 comments, mostly referring to the condition of the sale, providing housing, social housing and opportunities for small traders with street frontage.

'With the way the housing crisis is. this will be perfect for more housing in the area.' (Balaclava resident)

'As long as you can keep the street front with a variety of businesses it just needs to be done.' (Ripponlea resident)

‘Prioritise community safety’ and ‘protect and enhance green spaces and urban environment’ were the fifth equal most common themes (9 comments).

‘Carlisle Street is currently unsafe, uninviting and becoming more vacant by the day’. (Balaclava resident)

‘The Coles carpark and public toilets are a disgrace. I’ve had to carefully walk past drug addicts, or try to push past vagrants and drug dealers to use the bathroom’. (St Kilda resident)

‘If there are plans for green spaces’. (St Kilda East resident)

‘Development is long overdue. The s173 should ensure a publicly accessible open space at the grade level’. (Balaclava resident)

‘YES, WITH CHANGES’ COMMENTS:



Figure 11 What comments would you like to share with us about the proposed sale?– (Yes, with changes, comments themes) survey and Balaclava community forum workshop participants

23 comments were received from the 70 participants that voted ‘Yes, with changes’. The primary concern of this cohort was concerning the desire to **‘Regulate the development’**. These comments related to the desire for mixed uses, controls on building height and the need to protect the shops on Carlisle Street.

23 comments related to the desire for **'Secure parking solutions'**, with most advocating for the number of parking spaces to stay the same or for more to be provided.

'Make the sale binding to more specific restrictions, i.e building height, min + max resident & visitor carparks'. (St Kilda resident)

'Should have as many conditions as possible with the sale. Conditions that meet the community's requirements'. (St Kilda East resident)

'I just need to be confident the development will result in more, not fewer, car parking spaces'. (St Kilda East resident)

'Protect and Enhance Green Spaces' was the third most common theme (14 comments). Comments largely related to the condition of the sale, having more open space and retain the trees.

'Increase the size of open/green space Coles requires (double it)'. (Balaclava resident)

'This is an ideal opportunity to upgrade the Coles and put in an underground carpark under the current carpark. Create a village green above it which shops around the edge look onto.'. (St Kilda resident)

'More information about what will be developed and clear timeline's was next, with 12 comments. Most comments were related to more information about what will be developed on site if it's sold to Coles.

'Please explain exactly what Coles have planned for the land they would like to purchase and how that plan will benefit the community and community use of the space? (St Kilda East resident)'. (St Kilda East resident)'

'How are we meant to judge the sale of this public asset without any clear plans for development being given? (St Kilda resident)'. (St Kilda resident)'

'Collaborate with the community and community benefits' had 12 comments, mostly talking about making space for the community and providing social housing.

'Make sure that the proposed land for sale is a space for the community, not just for Coles (St Kilda resident)'. (St Kilda resident)'

'The sale should be subject to requirements for public open space to be provided and for the inclusion of social housing in the redevelopment (Balaclava resident)'.

The **'Ensure Community & Social Wellbeing'** and **'Add Green Spaces & Environment'** themes made up the rest of the comments (9 comments), with comments such as:

'The proposed sale does not need to be with Coles and the Council alone. As per similar projects for other Councils, Council can involve other partners to form a consortium to ensure best practice community outcomes (Balaclava resident)'.

'We should only agree to a sale once we have a legally binding agreement to tightly bind reasonable community outcomes, in terms of improved public amenity and a reasonable project completion timeline (Balaclava resident)'.

'NO' COMMENTS:

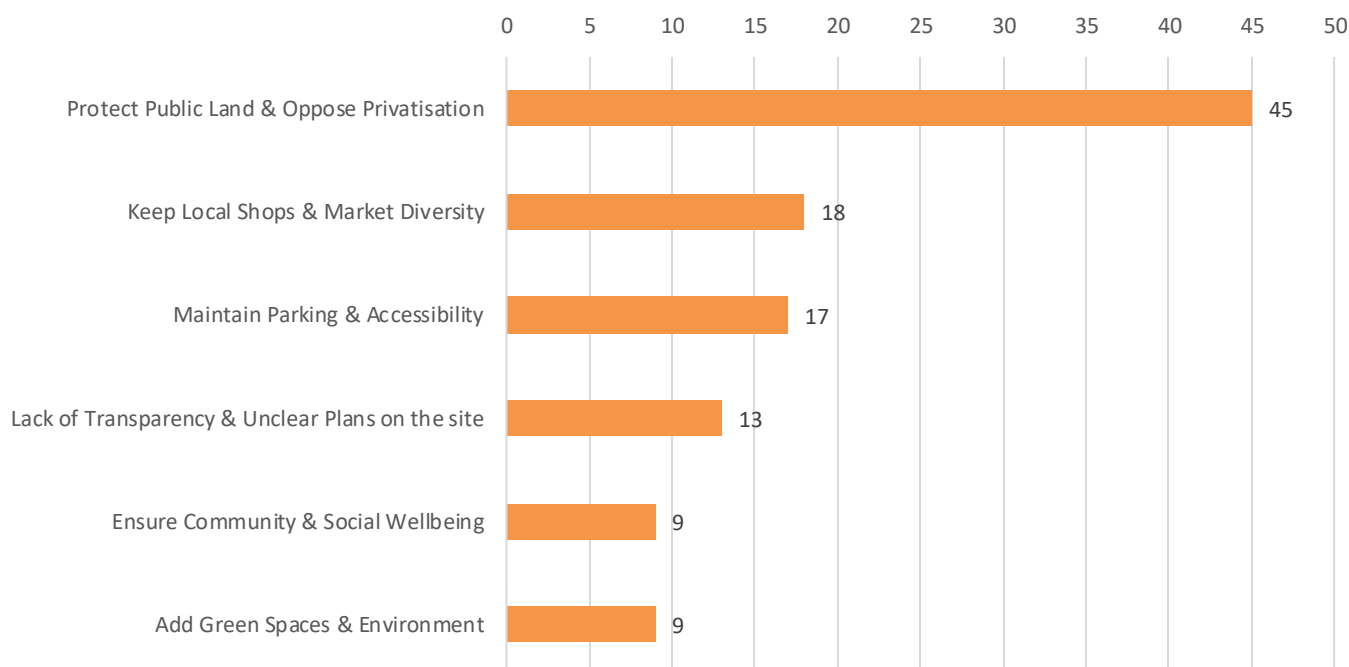


Figure 12 What comments would you like to share with us about the proposed sale? – (No, comments themes) survey and Balaclava community forum workshop participants

Of the 83 'No' votes opposing the sale of land, most comments could be categorised under the theme of **'Protect Public Land & Oppose Privatisation'** (45 comments), with comments largely saying Council land should be kept with the community.

'I do not think council assets should be sold. They belong to the community (Balaclava resident).'

'Public land should not be privatised as it will then go towards increasing income for the buyer rather than caring for our community and its users (Balaclava resident).'

'Keep Local Shops & Market Diversity' was the second most common theme (18 comments). Comments largely related to respondents worrying that Carlisle Street precinct small business will suffer and not wanting private ownership of the land.

'We don't want any more larger corporations buying land. We want thriving small business, safer and cleaner streets and less plaza shopping centre. (St Kilda resident).'

'I'm not in favour of Coles having ownership of so much land. Their presence on Carlisle street has already driven away several small businesses, making it too difficult for them to afford rent (Balaclava resident).'

'Maintain Parking & Accessibility' came third with 17 comments. Comments, mostly talking about the fear of loss of parking making sure it has accessible parking or not wanting the parking to be private.

'There are already insufficient car parking spaces for residents, and removing more and putting parking in the hands of a private enterprise will mean even less free and available parking for residents (Balaclava resident).'

'Land in this area is a premium and many car parks and access will be lost forever (Participant preferred not to say suburb of residence).'

‘Lack of Transparency & Unclear Plans on the site’ was next, with 12 comments, mostly reporting that they can’t make a decision on the sale of the land until they have more understanding about the controls listed within the Section 173, believing that what is currently being presented is insufficient, or until they know what will be exactly developed.

‘The information provided regarding the sale of this land is insufficient. The Council’s flyer mentions creating a “more vibrant, functional space for the community” but fails to explain how privatizing this land will achieve that goal or what Coles plans are for the land (Balaclava resident)’.

‘Without knowing the scale, scope and design of the proposed development it is impossible to make an informed decision regarding the land sale (St Kilda East resident)’.

Submissions

We received 50 submissions via Have Your Say and email. Below is a summary of all submissions received.

Submissions summary:

Most comments are against selling the land in the proposal’s current form, but most people support developing the area if certain controls and protections are put in place. They want Council to make sure that the development benefits the community, keeps the neighbourhood’s character, and supports local shops. People are worried that if the land is sold without proper planning, it might turn into a boring, corporate space and hurt the local shops and the feel of Balaclava. Overall, the majority want to see changes that make sure the development helps everyone and keeps the neighbourhood special.

Concerns about Coles and Commercial Development (20 comments)

Many submissions focus on fears that Coles will dominate the site, reduce competition, and turn Carlisle Street into a bland, corporate area. Community members are worried about losing the neighbourhood’s charm, the impact on small local shops, and the quality of street life. They also raise issues about Coles’ ownership of the land, unclear

intentions, and the risk of poor development that doesn't reflect community character.

Concerns about Safeguards and Community Benefits (15 comments)

Many residents feel that the current proposal doesn't include enough conditions to protect the community's interests. They want clear agreements that guarantee local shops, active street fronts, public spaces, and Balaclava's character before any sale is approved.

Planning and Development Process (12 comments)

Submitters suggest establishing a transparent, collaborative planning process involving Council, landowners, and residents. They want to set clear rules for future development, including affordable housing, good design, and preserving trees. Many are worried that if the land is sold without a proper process, the development might not align with local needs and could harm the neighbourhood's identity.

Protection of Local Character and Streetscape (10 comments)

Many submitters want to keep Balaclava's unique feel and prevent the area from becoming overly commercial or uniform. They call for preserving shopfronts and maintaining public spaces. The importance of lively, interactive streets during the day is also emphasized.

Transparency and Sale Conditions (8 comments)

Submitters are concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the sale process, including the sale price, more specific details of the Section 173 and Coles' future plans. They want the Council to include strict conditions in the sale agreement to prevent excessive building heights, and ensure the development aligns with community needs.

Opposition to Private Treaty Sale (4 comments)

Some submitters oppose the sale altogether, arguing it might lead to a domination by Coles and damage the local economy. They believe the sale process should be more open and competitive to ensure the land is sold at fair value and benefits the community rather than just a large corporation.

Have your say Question & Answer (Q&A)

We received 24 questions during the engagement period via *Have Your Say*. The Q&A tool allows users to ask detailed questions and receive official answers publicly via the website. It empowers users to reach out and engage more deeply with the project. Questions and answers are displayed as a list on *Have Your Say* for everyone to see. Below is a summary of all questions received.

Questions summary:

Many people who asked questions were concerned about what the future development of Carlisle Street will look like and how it will affect the community. They want to see plans for open spaces and community areas, and they're worried that big businesses like Coles might take over too much of the land, turning the area into a large shopping centre instead of a friendly, local village. Residents also want to know how much land Coles owns, what parts of it might be developed, and whether there will be housing included in the new buildings. Some people are worried that the sale of land will benefit big companies more than the local community, especially since many small shops and grocers have already closed. They want to make sure that any new development keeps the local character, preserves trees, and includes open spaces and community-focused features.

Others asked about the details of the sale process and what rules will be in place to protect the community's interests. They wanted to know if the land will be sold through a fair process, how the community can be involved in planning, and what restrictions Council might put on the development. Many are also concerned about parking, traffic, and the environmental impact, like the loss of trees and open space. There's interest in making sure that new buildings include affordable housing and that the community benefits from the sale, with some suggesting that the money from selling the land should be used for local improvements. Overall, people want to see a balanced approach that revitalises the area while keeping its friendly, community feel.

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback on the Carlisle Street Carparks and Laneways. The engagement findings from this engagement will now be used to further inform Council decision-making on this project.

We will continue to keep the community updated on the progress of the project via the dedicated project page:

<https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/laneways-balaclava>.