#### Smith Street Port Melbourne Upgrade

Engagement Summary Report

January 2025

### Acknowledgement of Country

**Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the people of the Kulin Nations. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.**

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# Introduction

## Project background

In May 2024, the Victorian Government announced that a new primary school will be built at 299 Williamstown Road in Port Melbourne, opening in time for the 2026 school year. This school is being created to help meet the needs of the growing number of families in Port Melbourne and the nearby Wirraway Precinct. It's important to note that the location of the school is already decided, and our main goal with this project is to ensure the safety of all students and families.

To make sure kids can get to the new school safely, the City of Port Phillip is working with the Department of Transport and Planning and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) to improve local streets. One of the key upgrades will be a new Pedestrian Operated Signal (POS) Crossing on Williamstown Road, which will help students cross the road safely and connect them to nearby homes and shops.

The plans also include a proposal of making Smith Street one-way, adding a linear park, upgrading footpaths, planting more trees, creating dedicated bike lanes, increasing lighting, and reducing speed limits. These changes are designed to make the area safer and more welcoming for families, especially those walking or biking, helping to turn the Wirraway Precinct into a great place to live.

These projects fit into a larger plan called the Fishermans Bend Framework, which the Victorian Government approved in 2018. This plan outlines how parks, schools, public transport, roads, and community services will be developed to make the area liveable as it grows over the next 30 years, aiming to accommodate around 80,000 residents and jobs.

This report represents the first stage of the Smith Street project and will inform the next steps as we move forward with these safety improvements.

## What we set out to achieve

The purpose of the engagement process was to:

* Share the draft Concept Plan with community and stakeholders.
* Collect general feedback on the plan.

## About this report

This report outlines how Council engagement the community on this project, and summaries the feedback collected.

### 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 people with disability, multicultural communities, older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others.
* The word ‘**participants’** is used to describe the total group of community members and stakeholders who contributed to this engagement process. The terms ‘**respondents’** is used to talk about the sub-group of total participants who responded to a specific question or engagement activity.
* The information and views presented in this report are a summary of the opinions, perceptions and feedback heard from across all the engagement activities. The feedback has not been independently validated. As such, some information maybe 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.
* The report summarises the feedback from engagement activities. While every effort is made to include the full breadth of feedback provided, not all comments, views or advice are shown in the findings of this report. Where appropriate, a mix of quotes, themes and metrics are used to convey community feedback.

# What we did

Between 18 November and 15 December 2024, we asked for feedback on the Smith St Concept Design. We delivered a range of communications activities to let the community know about the draft Concept Plan for the southern section of Smith Street and invited people to complete a survey. Allowance was made for some local property owners to submit feedback via email until 24 January 2025 as they found out about the process later during the consultation period

## Reach and participation

### Reach through communications activities

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Reach | Insights |
| **Social media posts** | **3,690** | * The Instagram post reached 2,896 people with 123 people engaging with the post (liking/sharing/commenting etc). * Facebook post reached 794 people. |
| **Newsletters** | **3,300** | * Information about the project and the opportunity to engage was included in the Have Your Say November 2024 newsletter, delivered to 3,300 subscribers. |
| **Postcards to community** | **1452** | * Postcards were printed and delivered to local area to inform residents and businesses, explaining the engagement process and how to have their say.  Allowance was made for some local property owners to submit feedback via email until 24 January 2025 as they found out about the process later during the consultation period. |
| **‘Have your say’ website** | **904 views** | * Most visitors (45.4%) came to the website directly. * More than a quarter (34.0%) of visitors were referred via social media. * 14 visitors are following the HYS page to receive updates. |

### Participation by engagement activity

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Number of participants | Insights |
| **Survey** | **51** | This online survey collected demographic details about participants and asked for feedback on Smith Street. |
| **Online Meeting and email** | **4** | The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), along with Council, held a meeting for local landowners to find out more about the proposal. Four participants attended the meeting, three of whom subsequently provided an email with their feedback on the proposal. |

# Who we heard from

## Demographics

The following explores those demographics of the participants that completed the survey, a total of 51 people. Demographic information is not known for those that provided feedback via email or at the meeting.

### Age

In total, 50 participants provided their age through surveys. Just over 50 per cent of respondents were aged 35-49. The next highest represented cohort were those aged 50-59 (16 per cent), then 60- 69 (12 per cent).

### Gender

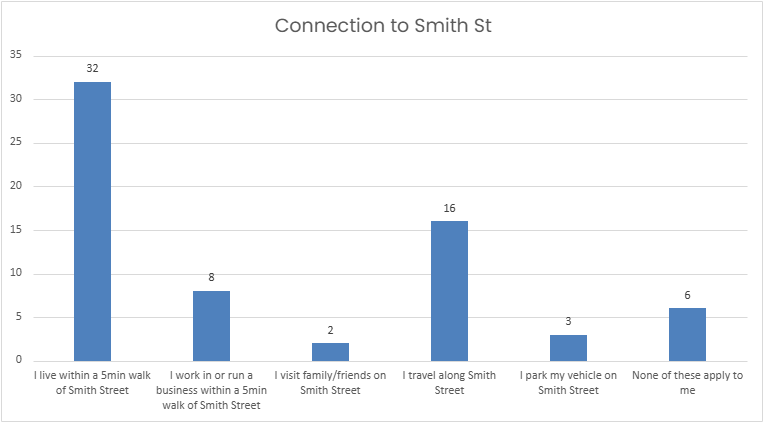
In total, 51 participants provided their gender. Half of respondents (50 per cent) identified as male (man or boy), just under half (46 per cent) as female (woman or girl), and four per cent preferred not to say.

### Residential Suburb

In total, 49 participants told us their residential suburb. **Most respondents (77 per cent) were from Port Melbourne area**.

Connection to the site

We asked participants about their connection to Smith Street, participants were able to select multiple responses. A total of 51 people responded to this question. Most respondents (32) live within a five-minute walk of Smith Street. There were eight respondents (that reported working in or running a nearby business).



### Diversity

Survey respondents were asked to tick a box corresponding to a range of diversity statements. Of the 51 participants:

* One participant identifies as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background
* Four participants speak a language other than English at home
* One participant identifies as have a disability
* Four participants identify as LGBTIQA+.

### Previous participation

We asked participants if they have provided feedback on City of Port Phillip projects in the past 12 months. Of the 51 responses received to this question, a total of 30 (59 per cent) noted that they had not provided to Council in the past year.

# What we heard

## About the draft Concept Plan

We asked participants what feedback they would like to provide on the draft Concept Plan. In total, 51 participants responded to this question via the online survey and an additional three people via email.Because respondents often commented on multiple elements of the draft Plan, comments have been split up to allow for thematic analysis.

### Feedback themes

#### Traffic Flow and Access Concerns (20 comments)

Comments relating to traffic flow and access concerns made up the largest proportion of comments. Respondents discussed the implications of a one-way street design and access challenges for residents and visitors to businesses.

“Access to Tarver Street between Smith and Prohasky Streets will be severely impacted by the one-way direction ‘(Port Melbourne resident).”

“The one-way street will create chaos to the surrounding streets. It’s already very congested especially during peak hour and now making it one-way will make it a nightmare heading west’ (Port Melbourne resident).”

#### Traffic Safety (17 comments)

Respondents expressed significant concern about traffic safety, particularly the need for safe pedestrian crossings on Williamstown Road, the dangers posed by speeding vehicles, and the overall impact of increased traffic from the new school on local streets.

“Disappointed to see that it will create more traffic onto Williamstown Rd which is already an unsafe and over busy road with vehicles speeding all times of the day (Port Melbourne resident)”

“The proposal for Smith Street looks good - but what will happen at the Williamstown Road intersection? Will there be a new crossing for pedestrians and bikes?’ (Port Melbourne resident)”.

#### Impact on Local residents (11 comments)

Respondents highlighted concerns about the impact on local residents, emphasising issues related to restricted access due to proposed traffic changes, increased congestion on surrounding streets, and the potential for greater difficulty in navigating the area, particularly during peak school hours.

“The one-way on Smith Street should be the other direction. This will affect many residents trying to get home in the area” (Port Melbourne resident).

“Making Smith st south bound will highly affect residents of the area as there is no right turn access from Williamstown to Prohasky.”(Port Melbourne resident).

**Doesn’t like Proposed Changes (11 comments)**

* Respondents opposing the proposed changes cited potential negative impacts on the community, majority due to changes in traffic conditions or loss of parking.

“The new proposal would be a significant deterement to residents and business owners like myself in the area.”

#### Support for bike lane (11 comments)

* General support for a bike lane.
* Desire for improved bike connections, including along Williamstown Rd.

“Love the dedicated bike lane, would need crossings/extensions onto Williamstown road to make them really useable.” (Visitor to the area)

#### Impact on local businesses (10 comments)

* Approximately 10 comments identified negative impacts the proposed design might have on local businesses. Respondents cited reduction in car parking, traffic implications, truck delivery/access and congestion as the main causes for concern.

“These properties rely on warehousing and truck deliveries. How is this going to interact with the proposed plan?”

#### Community Infrastructure Enhancements (9 comments)

* Respondents suggesting the need for parks, playgrounds, and better bike paths.

“I currently ride my bike along this street to get to the rock climbing gym, I support the bike lane, it would make the street much safer for bikes.”

**Concerns About School Impact (9 comments), and Support for New School and Developments (8 comments)**

* Concerns About School Impact –Respondents raising issues about how the new school will affect the community and existing infrastructure.

‘Lack of planning that went into the secondary school this does not address the access issue.’

* Support for New School and Developments - Respondents expressing support for the new primary school and associated developments.

‘We welcome the new school and believe it'll greatly enhance the quality of living on the area.’

#### Parking issues (7 comments).

* Respondents raised significant concerns about parking issues, reduction in available street parking due to new development.

‘I absolutely object to this proposition, there has been increasingly less and less parking in this pocket of port Melbourne, and with this proposition, and the new development on smith street, this will leave us with little to no parking in this whole area.’

# Next steps

## How this report will be used

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback. This report, and the underlying feedback will be used by the project team and the designers to inform the changes to design and delivery of southern section of Smith Street. The report will also be used to share with Council how the engagement process went, and what changes (if any) have been made because of the engagement process.