Planning Scheme Review Community Engagement Report

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City of
STONNINGTON

Community
Refers to the people who have a stake and interest in the City of Stonnington and includes people who:

- Live, work, study or conduct business or are involved in local community groups or organisations in the municipality.

- Visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places located within the municipality.

Community engagement
Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with individuals and groups to encourage active involvement in decisions that affect them or are of interest to them.

Contents

Executive summary

All Victorian local governments must undertake a Planning Scheme Review within 12 months of adopting a new four-year Council Plan. Stonnington City Council has commenced its Planning Scheme Review, which will be finalised late 2022.

Stonnington's Planning Scheme sets out the direction for using, developing, and protecting land within the municipality. Stonnington City Council's (Council) Planning Scheme Review will ensure it aligns with current state and local policy, remains relevant, and meets community need.

Council has identified eight themes for this Planning Scheme Review:

1. Residential development and housing
2. Open space
3. Heritage
4. Neighbourhood character
5. Activity centre planning and growing jobs
6. Trees
7. Environment, sustainability, and climate
8. Transport

Under each of these themes, the Review will consider what is working well and areas for improvement.

Over July and August 2022 Council invited the community to share their feedback and ideas under each of the eight themes. A total of 214 participated in the engagement by completing a survey, attending an event or making a submission.

The following key findings emerged from the feedback:

» The rate and scale of development occurring in the city is a significant concern, and respondents see it impacting Council's planning efforts in each of the eight themes.

» Respondents want Council to ensure new developments benefit the local area, are located appropriately and seek to minimise impacts on the community.

» Respondents want greater recognition of what is considered 'heritage' in Stonnington and strengthened planning controls to protect it.

» The design of new developments needs to better reflect the neighbourhood character and local context.

» Respondents want Council to use every opportunity to increase and protect greenery. They want a greater focus on using native vegetation, promoting biodiversity and improving the maintenance and safety of trees.

» Respondents want more innovative programs and initiatives to boost the city's environmental sustainability and response to the climate emergency, such as the increased use of renewables, increased tree canopies, support for electric vehicle use and improved waste management.

» Respondents want fewer cars and traffic on local streets. Increasing access to public transport options and improving cycling and pedestrian networks are key opportunities to reduce car dependency.

Council will consider the engagement findings in preparing the Planning Scheme Review Report. The report will include recommendations ranging from updates to objectives and strategies in the scheme, to recommendations for additional strategic work to inform future policy development.

The final Review report will be presented to Council for endorsement and then reported to the Minister for Planning. Following endorsement, Council will begin to implement the recommendations. The timeframes for implementing the recommendations will vary and depend on the work associated with delivering each recommendation.

1. Introduction

In October 2021 Stonnington City Council adopted its current four-year Council Plan. Under Section 12B of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, all Victorian local governments must undertake a Planning Scheme Review within 12 months of adopting a new Council Plan.

A Planning Scheme sets out the direction for using, developing, and protecting land within the municipality. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) defines the purpose of a Planning Scheme Review in its Review of Planning Schemes – Planning Practice Note 32 (2015). The Planning Practice Note describes how a Planning Scheme Review needs to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the current Planning Scheme and identify improvement opportunities.

DELWP identifies in the Planning Practice Note the following questions for Councils to address in a Planning Scheme Review:

» What has been achieved since the last Review?

» Where are we now (i.e., how is the current Planning Scheme performing)?

» Where to from here (i.e., what changes or additional strategic work could improve the performance of the Planning Scheme)?

In line with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, Council is reviewing its Planning Scheme. The Review will ensure Stonnington's Planning Scheme remains relevant, meets community needs, and aligns with State and local policy.

Council will document the Review in a report detailing how the scheme aligns with current State and local policy directions, the adopted Council Plan 2021-2025, and Stonnington Community Vision 2040. Council officers will provide recommended actions for Council's consideration.

Council has identified eight themes for the Planning Scheme Review informed by initial research and work undertaken as part of the Council Plan. The eight themes are:

1. Residential development and housing
2. Open space
3. Heritage
4. Neighbourhood character
5. Activity centre planning and growing jobs
6. Trees
7. Environment, sustainability, and climate
8. Transport

Community engagement is an essential step in the Review process. It helps Council understand if the Planning Scheme is meeting the community's expectations. The community can help identify what is working well and areas for improvement. Over July and August 2022 Council invited the community to share their feedback and ideas under each of the themes.

This report details the engagement approach and summarises the findings. Capire Consulting Group (Capire) has analysed the engagement findings and prepared this report on behalf of Council.

2. Engagement approach

The objectives of the engagement were to:

» Inform the community that Council is reviewing Stonnington's Planning Scheme.

» Educate the community about the key themes under review within the Planning Scheme.

» Encourage feedback from the community about the Planning Scheme and its review.

This section details the engagement approach Council undertook to deliver on the above objectives, the supporting communication and promotion activities, and the engagement limitations.

2.1 Engagement activities

Engagement activities ran for four weeks, between 22 July and 21 August 2022. Council designed the activities to give interested community members a range of opportunities to learn about the Planning Scheme Review and provide feedback.

In-person activities
» Two 'intercept' engagement sessions:

– Prahran Market: 4 August 2022

– Central Park, East Malvern: 10 August 2022

» A pop-up engagement session at Toorak/South Yarra Library: 5 August 2022

Survey
Council hosted an online survey on a dedicated project page on Council's Connect Stonnington website www.connectstonnington.vic.gov.au/planning

Council designed the survey around the eight themes of the Planning Scheme Review.

Community members could also request a hard copy of the survey to complete.

Appendix A includes a copy of the survey.

2.2 Communications and promotion activities

Council developed and delivered a range of communications and promotion tools and activities to help build informed participation and promote the project and engagement opportunities.

Activities included:

» A mailout to approximately 60,000 residents and businesses across the municipality.

» Displays within Council's libraries and customer service centres.

» A bulk email to community group contacts, planning permit applicants and other known community stakeholders.

» A social media post shared via Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

All activities directed interested community members to the designated page on Council's Connect Stonnington website that included background information and fact sheets for each of the eight themes. During the engagement period, the website attracted 1,113 visits (the number of times an individual visitor accessed the webpage) and 924 unique visitors (the total number of individuals that visited the page). The social media posts reached 1,700 people.

2.3 Engagement limitations

All engagement processes have limitations. The following limitations should be acknowledged when reading this report.

» The views captured in this report are from those who volunteered to participate in the engagement by completing a survey, attending a face-to-face event or providing a submission. As such this report does not represent the views of the entire community.

» In some instances, respondents did not answer all survey questions. Some questions received fewer responses than others.

» Respondents sometimes provided feedback unrelated to the Planning Scheme. This feedback is not in this report. However, Council has reviewed all the data and is committed to sharing the feedback with the relevant departments.

» Respondents sometimes identified feedback that is outside of Council's direct control. This feedback will support Council's strategic planning work with other government departments and authorities.

» Capire has made every effort to summarise feedback accurately and comprehensively. Many responses were open-ended and required Capire to interpret and make assumptions in the analysis.

2.4 Analysis approach

Capire has prepared this report using the following method.

Survey analysis
1. All survey data was collated into one spreadsheet for analysis.
2. Quantitative data was combined to prepare supporting graphs.
3. Qualitative data was coded to identify topics within themes to guide the analysis.
4. The topics identified from the coding were used to structure the analysis findings in this report.
5. Consideration was given to the relationship between topics discussed by respondents and certain demographic data such as age, suburb and whether respondents own a home or rent. Significant trends identified have been included in the relevant sections of this report. For the suburb analysis, suburbs were grouped into west, central and east regions (see Figure 1).

Intercept and pop-up data
1. Quantitative data was combined with the survey data to prepare supporting graphs.
2. Qualitative data was reviewed to identify consistencies, variances, and additional insights to support analysis under each topic heading.

Submission data
Submissions were reviewed to identify consistencies, variances, and additional insights to support analysis under each topic heading.
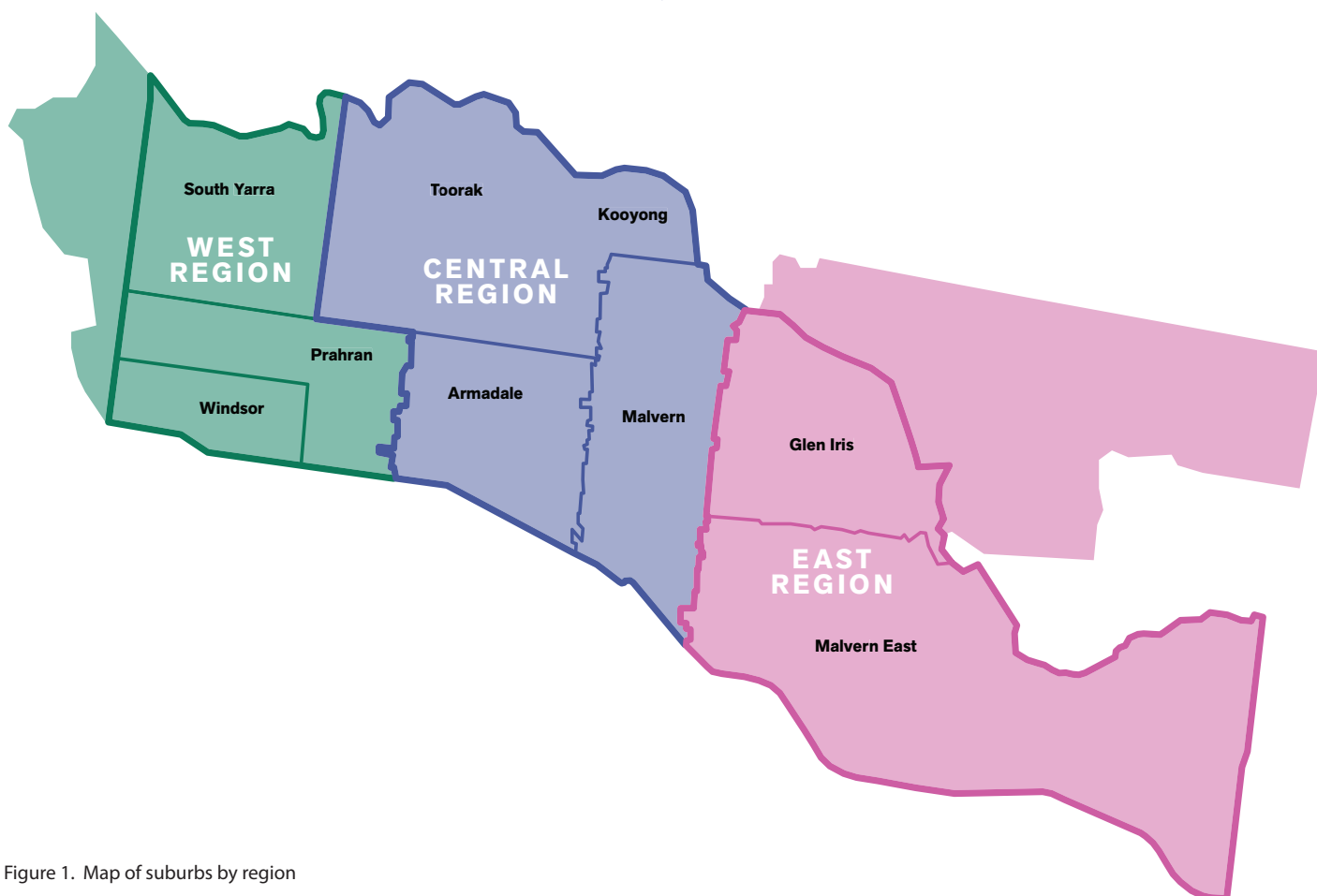

Figure 1. Map of suburbs by region

3. Who participated

A total of 214 responses were received across the engagement activities. Figure 2 details how people participated.

32
Intercept/pop-up session participants
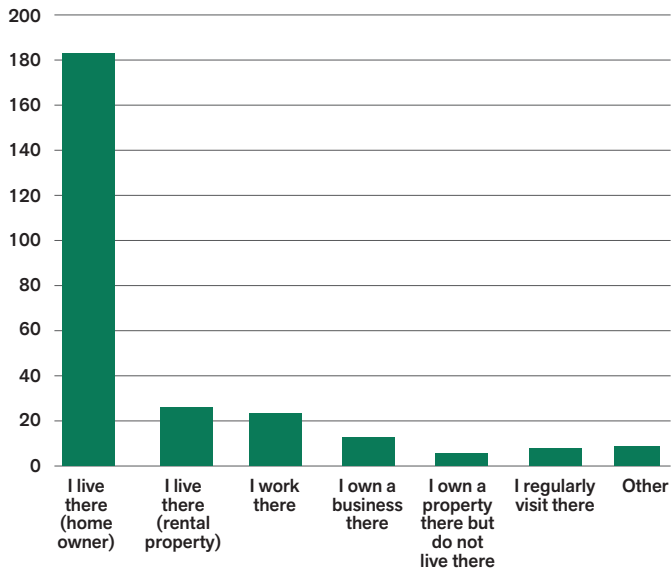
180
Survey responses

2
Written submissions

Figure 2. How people participated in the engagement

The following graphs summarise the demographic data collected from participants, noting that some respondents chose not to provide demographic information.

CONNECTION TO THE CITY OF STONNINGTON

Category	Value
I live there (home owner)	~183
I live there (rental property)	~26
I work there	~23
I own a business there	~13
I own a property there but do not live there	~6
I regularly visit there	~8
Other	~9

PREVIOUS INTERACTIONS WITH PLANNING IN STONNINGTON

Category	Value
Yes, I have applied for a planning permit	~57
Yes, I have objected to a planning permit	~87
No	~81
Other	~18
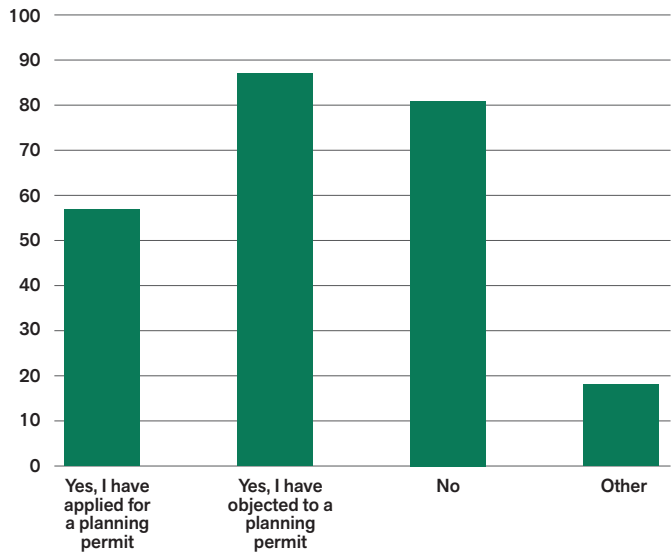
GENDER
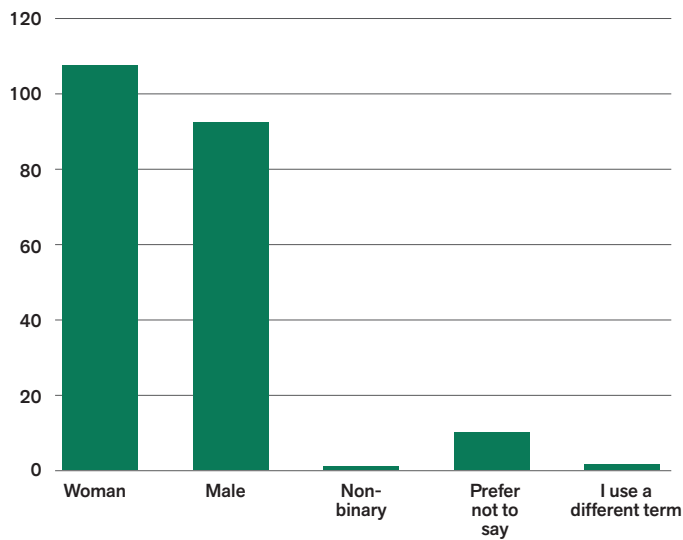
AGE

SUBURB

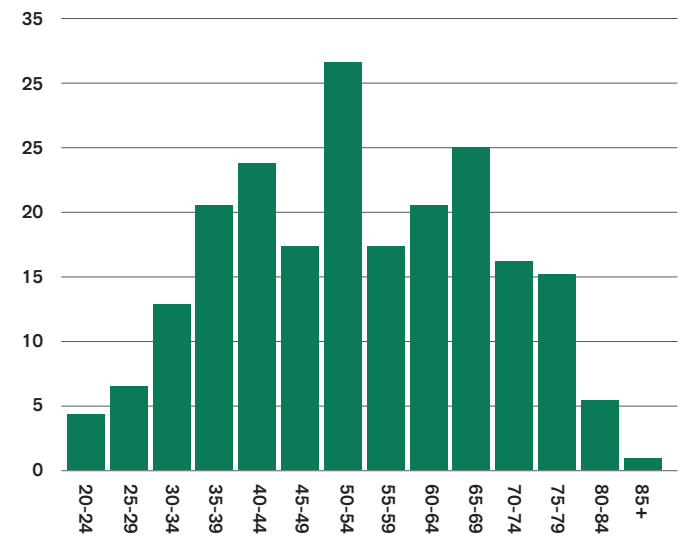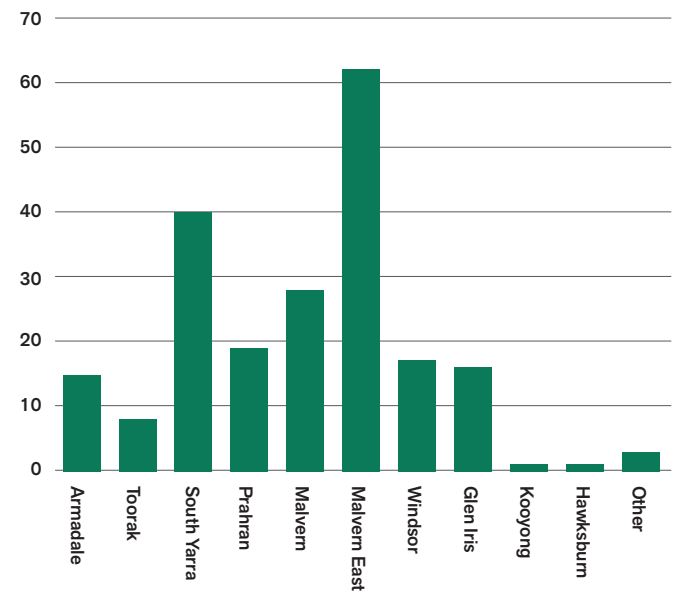# 4 Engagement findings by theme

The following chapters summarise the findings from the engagement under each of the eight themes. For each theme, Council asked respondents to consider what Council is doing well and where Council can improve. Under each theme is a series of topics that emerged through the analysis. Some of these topics are relevant to other main themes. Where duplication of topics has occurred, the topic has been discussed in detail under one theme but referenced in all relevant themes.

4.1 Residential development and housing

This theme considers how the Planning Scheme addresses:

» appropriate and responsible development;

» affordable and diverse housing;

» development density and heights;

» locations for growth; and

» access to open space.

The survey asked respondents the following question: 'Thinking about planning for residential development and housing within Stonnington, what is Council doing well, and where can Council improve planning in this area?'

A total of 149 respondents answered this question in the survey.

As illustrated in Figure 3, many of the respondents (42%) discussed their desire to see building heights and density reduced. Approximately 33% discussed how new developments could be better designed.

The following paragraphs further discuss the topics raised under this theme.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ENGAGEMENT TOPICS
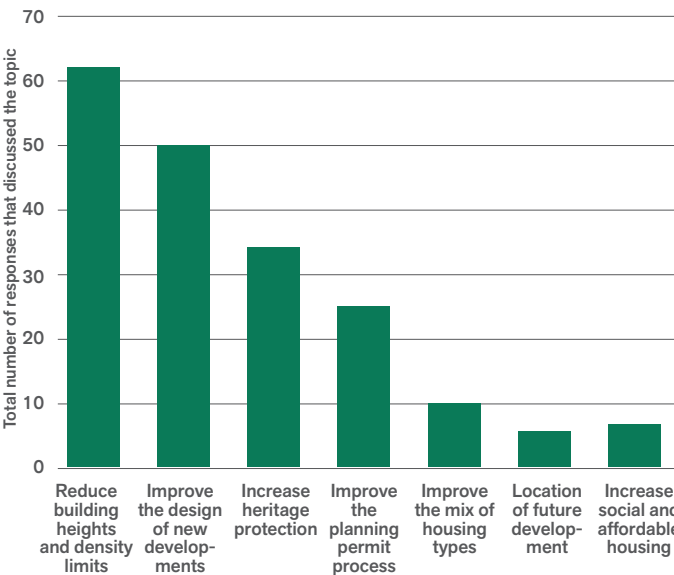

Figure 3. Topics that emerged under the 'Residential development and housing' engagement theme

Reduce building heights and density
A total of 62 respondents discussed building heights and density.

Concern about building heights and density was the most common topic discussed in this theme.

Respondents want reduced building heights and density, along with less apartment construction. These desires are linked to their concerns around how increased density impacts the community. These impacts included traffic congestion, noise, loss of mature trees, wind tunnels, inadequate parking provisions, climate change, privacy, overshadowing, and neighbourhood look and feel. Responses also described the rate of development as a concern and the lack of infrastructure to support growth (e.g., green spaces, water, and sewerage infrastructure). There was also concern that there is not enough demand for apartment living.

Respondents expressed views relating to Council's perceived leniency on developers. Some respondents described how single-dwelling homeowners looking to renovate their homes seem to have to respond to stricter planning requirements when compared to large-scale developments. Others described concern around developers using poor past planning decisions as precedence. Respondents want Council to provide more direction around height and density to avoid too much interpretation by developers and give more certainty to residents.

> "The number of units and apartments being developed is overwhelming, and traffic is increasing at an unacceptable level."

> "I am happy to see height restrictions in place for most new developments. However, the increase in density of housing is leading to a large increase of cars on the streets and the feeling of living in a concrete jungle."

Improve the design of new developments
A total of 50 respondents discussed the design of new developments.

Overall respondents want to see the design of new developments improved to better reflect the neighbourhood context and to minimise impacts on the local community and surrounding residents. Comments included concern around the design of newer developments, particularly high-density developments, and included opportunities to improve the design of these developments.

Concerns shared around the design of new developments included:

» Multi-storey buildings negatively impacting streetscapes by creating shadows, blocking the sky and creating wind tunnels.
» Design of buildings not respecting the urban context and character, particularly in relation to heritage, architectural styles and provision of trees and green spaces.
» Overlooking and overshadowing restrictions not being adequate and leaving residents feeling like their privacy and access to sunlight is impacted.
» Environmental impacts of basement construction.

Opportunities to improve the design of new developments included:

» Ensuring walking paths and spaces between buildings are well-lit and accessible.
» Providing greater setbacks and reduced overall building site coverage to allow more green spaces and vegetation to be provided within developments.
» Greater protection of local landscapes and the environment.
» Ensuring apartments have adequate direct sunlight.
» Providing electric vehicle infrastructure.
» Providing adequate off-street parking.
» More incentives for developers to improve the sustainability of new developments such as green energy initiatives, green star ratings, community gardens, water tanks, use of renewables and increasing green spaces.
» Having a mix of building heights within larger-scale developments.

> "There needs to be more protection for the residential hinterland. Overlooking restrictions for large developments is limited to only 9m which is ridiculous - everyone can see further than 9m. Overshadowing restrictions are vague and only take into account the solstice and not the winter daylight hours which are highly valued in Melbourne. More protection is required for privacy of residents."

> "In all developments but particularly multi-level developments we need to ensure adequate real open space is provided and the units themselves have adequate direct light. Also, every off-street car space in a development should provide provision for installation of electric car chargers."

Increase heritage protection
A total of 34 respondents discussed the need for stronger heritage protection.

Heritage was commonly referenced in responses relating to 'Residential development and housing'. Heritage is discussed further in section 4.3 of this report.

The Stonnington community strongly values heritage. Some respondents described that it is not enough to protect the heritage of individual properties but to consider how new developments impact the heritage character of the neighbourhood. Council received positive comments from respondents concerning the existing controls, including the Heritage Overlay. Other respondents want more proactive protection of heritages houses, including identification of more properties for protection and requiring facades to be restored.

Of survey respondents that discussed this topic, 97% (33) were home owners.

> "Council is not nearly proactive enough with preserving the heritage of some of Stonnington's substantial older buildings, particularly in the 30s and mid century but also Victorian and Edwardian buildings."
>
> "I think the Council is doing a good job in protecting most heritage buildings - but sometimes is lacking a nuanced approach. There are numerous restrictions on what owners of heritage homes can do to their home but not enough protection of these areas from over-development which detracts from a heritage area."

Summary of other topics
The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Improve the planning permit process (25 comments): Respondents shared the following feedback on the planning permit process.
  – The process is lengthy, time-consuming and complicated.
  – The effort required by an applicant does not always reflect the extent of change being proposed on a property.
  – Greater community education is needed on planning requirements, the planning permit process and how you can find information about planning applications.

There is also a perception shared by some respondents that Council leaving too many decisions to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

» Improve the mix of housing types (10 comments): Respondents emphasised the importance of planning for the growing population and ensuring an appropriate mix of housing types to support a diverse community. Examples included:
  – Having more housing types that are suitable for families (including apartments).
  – Having options for residents who want to downsize that are not just limited to apartments.
  – Increasing the provision of mixed-use developments with access to public transport and open space (public or private).

» Direct development to suitable areas (six comments): Some respondents expressed support for higher-density residential developments around specific locations. The most noted location for higher-density developments was along main roads. Some respondents also noted support for development to be directed along public transport networks.

» Increase social and affordable housing (seven comments): Respondents want to see improved planning that supports the supply of social and affordable housing. This includes supporting infrastructure, such as public transport, and ensuring new developments include social and affordable housing provisions.

The majority of respondents who want to see an increase in social and affordable housing along with a greater mix of housing types were aged between 35 and 49 years.

> "Greater policy support should be given to facilitating housing outcomes, diversity in housing, housing affordability and housing growth in designated and identified areas where growth is to be encouraged."
>
> "Ensuring that all areas are fit for purpose with the right mix of residential, commercial and other uses. In our area of Windsor there is a big issue with limited housing available to suit families, which is negatively affecting enrolments in the local primary school and thus affecting the diversity of the local community."

4.2 Open space

This theme considers how the Planning Scheme can support and guide the provision of open spaces including pocket parks, open spaces for activities, accessibility to open spaces, green roofs, community gardens and gardening.

The survey asked respondents the following question: 'Thinking about planning for open space within Stonnington, what is Council doing well, and where can Council improve planning in this area?'.

A total of 138 respondents answered this question in the survey.

As illustrated in Figure 4, there was a relatively even mix of respondents that were generally supportive of the current provision and maintenance of open spaces in Stonnington (34%) and those that felt that the maintenance of open spaces and the provision of facilities in open spaces need improvement (33%). Many responses (20%) referenced specific open space sites, while others discussed the need for, and ideas on increasing open space provision (20%).

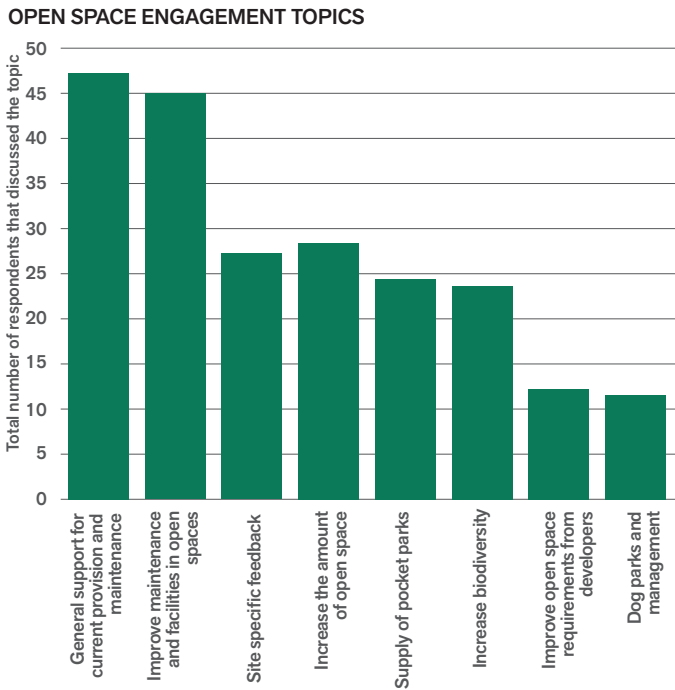The following paragraphs further discuss these topics.

OPEN SPACE ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

Figure 4. Topics that emerged under the 'Open space' engagement theme

General support for current provision and maintenance of open spaces
Many respondents (47) believe Council is doing a good job with open space and are keen to see this continued. Comments expressing support and satisfaction with open space provision were broad. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the following:

» the overall amount of open space;
» the mix of open space to accommodate different uses and activities;
» the provision and maintenance of vegetation in green spaces; and
» community events provided in open spaces.

Three respondents indicated that they do not want Council to plan for any additional open spaces due to the amount of Council funds it would need to divert and its impact on housing prices.

54% (22) of the survey respondents who shared support for Council's current approach to open space planning live in the city's eastern suburbs.

"The council is doing an amazing job with the open spaces and parkland available to all within Stonnington. This is a great area to raise children with many open spaces to enjoy."

"Stonnington is a green haven with walks and parks that interconnect along the old river courses. Please don't lose these for the generations to come."

Improve maintenance and facilities in open spaces
A total of 45 respondents discussed the need for improved maintenance and provision of facilities in open spaces. Many respondents focused on the general need for improved maintenance, while others identified specific improvement ideas.

Improvement ideas included:

» More modern play equipment and equipment for all ages, including gym equipment.

» Better maintenance of large trees, particularly those located on property boundaries and along streets.

» More and better maintained public toilets.

» More bins and improved rubbish management.

» More native species and revegetation to support biodiversity and mitigate climate impacts.

» Improving lighting to support night-time use.

» Improving maintenance of ovals for organised sports.

» More active recreation facilities for informal community use, such as tennis courts and basketball hoops.

It is important to note that a Planning Scheme does not provide guidance on maintenance practices. The extent to which maintenance is considered within the Planning Scheme is that Council will consider maintenance requirements or impacts when considering a planning application.

In broad terms the maintenance and management of open spaces will be given consideration and direction through Council's new Open Space Strategy (currently in development).

"There needs to be more bins in the open spaces. People leave heaps of rubbish. Also, in the open areas you need to plant more native species. These foreign plants do not help possums and other animals with their food sources."

"Multitude of parks and spaces. Perhaps the little parks could have some open air gym equipment and more benches. In the same squares there could be thick forest or 'urban forest' patches to increase biodiversity and absorb noise."

Site-specific feedback
A total of 28 respondents discussed specific open space sites in their responses.

Of those 28, 10 mentioned Prahran Square with mixed sentiment. Some participants commented on the development of Prahran Square and cited it as an example of how Council can increase open space provision. Others criticised the space due to its controversial history, expense and design.

Other sites mentioned by several respondents as valued open spaces include:

» Central Park (however, some respondents also noted that this park would benefit from increased maintenance and did not support the dog park);

» Como Park; and

» Gardiners Creek.

Increase the amount of open space

A total of 28 respondents discussed the need to increase the amount of open space.

Many of the comments were general. Some comments described why additional open spaces were needed, including for recreation, health, and wellbeing, and to lessen the urban heat island effects and climate change impacts. Respondents also want to see an increase in open space to respond to increasing development and ensure development does not negatively impact open spaces, such as creating shadows.

Some respondents (12) shared ideas for the types of additional open spaces they would like to see in Stonnington. These ideas included:

» Additional playgrounds.
» More grassy areas for picnics.
» Pocket parks (however, this idea received criticism from some respondents – further information on this below).
» Dog parks (again, this idea received criticism from some respondents – further information below).
» Community gardens.
» Green roofs.

> "I believe that Stonnington is one of the worst councils for provision of open space, so we need to improve in that area. I like the pocket parks and think it would be good to do more of this. However this lack of open space is why we need to ensure property developments provide adequate open space on private property."

> "There is a major dearth of public park space between High Street and Princes highway, west of the Frankston Railway line. The one reserve we do have there doesn't get enough sun because of the multi-storied development north of it."

Summary of other topics

The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Supply of pocket parks (24 comments): 17 of the 24 respondents support the provision of pocket parks to increase open space provision. Comments included support for Council continuing with the strategy of buying back residential land to provide pocket parks. Other respondents raised concerns that this approach was not the best use of money and shouldn't replace the need for larger open spaces.

» Increase biodiversity (23 comments): These comments included a desire to see greater revegetation of open spaces and tree planting. Respondents want to see more native plants used and an increased tree canopy (discussed further in section 4.6).

» Improve open space requirements for developers (12 comments): Respondents want to see more developers required to provide open space within their developments rather than just focusing on developer contributions to fund open space improvements elsewhere.

» Dog parks and management (11 comments): Comments regarding off-leash dog areas were mixed. Some respondents want more off-leash dog areas, while others raised concerns about the poor maintenance of existing dog areas and the impact dog use has on public open spaces, e.g., owners not picking up after their dogs and safety concerns.

> "I'm enjoying the growing amount of pocket parks throughout the neighbourhood. It's fantastic to see open air spaces being created so that residents who otherwise may not have easy access to the outdoors from their homes, can now have more choices."

> "New and better open space areas within Stonnington are desperately needed. Existing open space areas such as Central Park and Gardiners Creek Trail could be upgraded to higher standards including greater emphasis on native tree planting and re-vegetation as well as more inviting open green spaces for picnics etc. With such limited open green space around Central Park, it is disappointing that it gets taken over by dog owners who don't always clean up after their dogs leaving less space for families and older kids to play soccer, have picnics etc."

4.3 Heritage

This theme discusses how cultural heritage in Stonnington is protected and managed through the Planning Scheme. This includes the identification of heritage places and policies, and planning tools such as heritage design guidelines to manage heritage places.

The survey asked respondents the following question: 'Thinking about heritage within Stonnington, what is council doing well, and where can council improve planning?'.

A total of 180 respondents answered this question in the survey.

As illustrated in Figure 5, many respondents (43%) wanted stronger planning controls to protect heritage. There was also support from respondents (29%) to retain streetscapes in activity centres and preserve prominent heritage buildings. 12% of respondents provided further feedback stating the need to clarify existing heritage guidelines and planning controls.

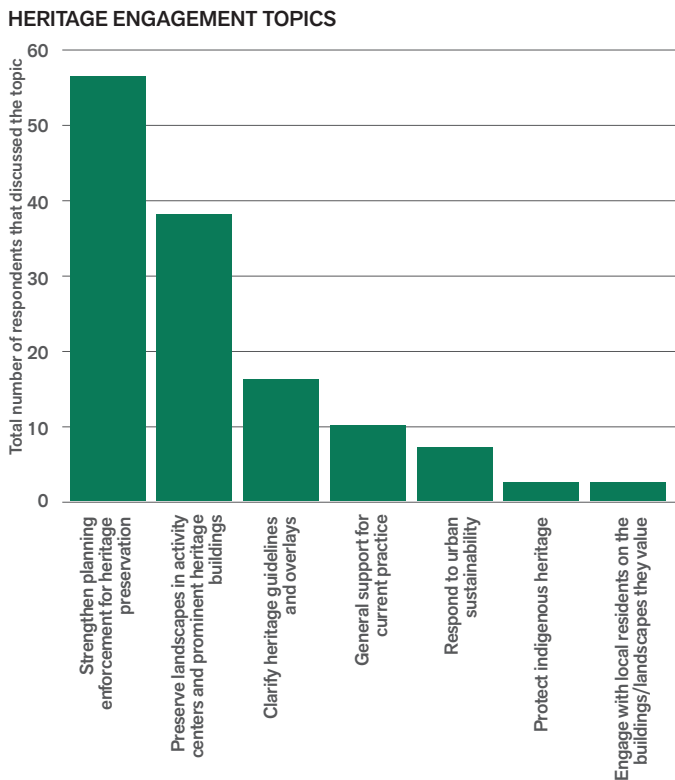The following paragraphs further discuss these topics.

HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

Figure 5. Topics that emerged under the 'Heritage' engagement theme

Strengthen planning controls to protect heritage
Many respondents (56) felt that Council should strengthen planning controls designed to protect heritage in Stonnington. Their feedback on planning controls indicates that respondents would like to see additional planning permit requirements before development or changes to a building occur. Comments included requests for the expansion of the Heritage Overlay to protect both individual properties and the overall streetscape. Other suggestions expressed a desire for planning controls to provide more detailed design requirements for new developments to integrate with existing heritage thoughtfully.

This topic was more commonly discussed by respondents that live in the west and east regions of the city. 37% of survey respondents that live in the west region discussed this topic and 34% of survey respondents that live in the east region discussed this topic.

"While I think the historic look and feel of our community is quite well preserved, I believe that more should be done to ensure new buildings, especially multi-story apartment blocks, blend in with the surrounding architecture and do not detract from the aesthetic of our beautiful community."

"Maintaining and expanding heritage protection of private and public buildings must be stringently adhered to and enforced."

"We feel there should be more overlays to protect our history and character across residential and commercial areas."

Retain streetscapes in activity centres and protect prominent heritage buildings

Respondents (38) expressed the desire to maintain the overall heritage appearance and retain the unique streetscapes in Stonnington. Respondents perceive heritage as important for ensuring Stonnington remains an attractive, liveable place. Some respondents were disappointed to see older buildings with heritage value demolished and replaced by new residential and commercial development.

Respondents stated that Council should be planning to retain a variety of architectural styles from different periods. Examples included Victorian, Edwardian, and Art Deco. Specific locations mentioned by respondents that require additional heritage protection efforts were High Street, Chapel Street, and Davis Avenue.

> "Maintaining prominent individual buildings such as the town hall. Improvements are required to maintain the overall heritage appearance and retain the uniqueness of streetscapes such as High Street Armadale. Don't allow large building developments to overshadow and change the characteristics of the street."

> "Keep protecting our neighbourhood zones so they retain their character. Once these homes and buildings are gone, they cannot be replaced."

> "Our neighbourhoods are some of the best and most liveable in the state because of the diversity in style and heritage values."

Summary of other topics

The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Clarify heritage guidelines and overlays (16 comments): Respondents found the Heritage Overlay confusing when they wanted to make changes to their property. Others have observed a lack of consistency in planning decisions made by the Council. Respondents suggested that heritage guidelines should be refined and communicated within the Council and the broader community to inform fair and objective assessment and planning decisions.

» General support for current practice (10 comments): Respondents expressed support for Council's current approach to protecting heritage. Some respondents were also satisfied with the design and build of new developments reflecting existing heritage streetscapes.

» Respond to urban sustainability (seven comments): Respondents expressed that while heritage protection is important, this should be balanced with other urban sustainability concerns such as housing affordability and environmental issues. Council should prioritise the community's long-term benefit to allow for new residential and commercial development where necessary.

» Protect Indigenous heritage (two comments): Respondents mentioned that the Planning Scheme should provide equal acknowledgment and protection for landscapes and sites with Aboriginal cultural significance. More research and education are required to understand native vegetation and significant Indigenous cultural sites in Stonnington.

» Engage with residents on the buildings and landscapes they value (two comments): Respondents would like more opportunities to share their lived experience with Council to help identify sites that the community value to inform better planning outcomes.

> "Heritage is done well. Buildings generally fit a theme together within a neighbourhood."

> "Stonnington needs to allow solar panels on all buildings, even if they are heritage. Climate comes first. Especially as panels should not affect any integrity of the buildings."

> "There is sufficient protection on colonial period architectural and landscape heritage. It would be great if Council provided equal protection for Aboriginal cultural significance in the Planning Scheme."

> "Council needs to provide more opportunities for residents to have their say regarding buildings and structures of local significance."

4.4 Neighbourhood character

This theme considers how the Planning Scheme can address the protection and conservation of distinctive characters important to the community and how new developments can respect the local context. This includes creating more room for landscaping and tree planting and directing growth to areas most suitable to service a growing population.

The survey asked respondents the following questions: 'Thinking about neighbourhood character within Stonnington, what is Council doing well, and where can Council improve planning in this area?'.

A total of 133 responses answered this question in the survey.

As illustrated in Figure 6, many respondents (33%) described the rate and scale of development as negatively impacting neighbourhood character. Respondents (21%) commonly mentioned desires for stronger planning controls. Many (17%) also highlighted the protection of the neighbourhood character elements they value most.

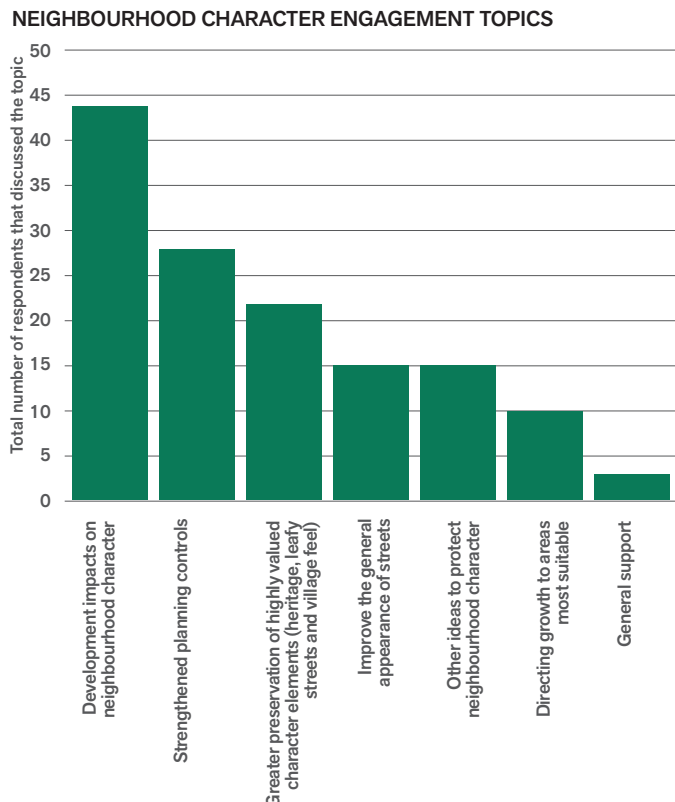The following paragraphs describe these topics further.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

Figure 6. Topics that emerged under the 'Neighbourhood Character' engagement theme

Reduce impacts of development on neighbourhood character

A total of 44 respondents discussed the impact of development on neighbourhood character.

Many of these respondents described the bulk and scale of development that is occurring in Stonnington as inappropriate and having a significant impact on neighbourhood character. Respondents noted that while some areas are being protected from development, this was happening at the expense of others where large-scale residential development is occurring. More specific impacts have been summarised below.

» The design of multi-storey developments is not reflective of the local character including:
  – the use of materials;
  – the scale of development;
  – the lack of acknowledgement to the area's history;
  – facades or heritage elements of buildings being demolished are not being retained as part of redevelopments; and
  – inadequate open space and vegetation.
» Multi-story developments are resulting in increased traffic and parking issues which impact the character of residential streets.
» Character homes are being demolished and replaced by buildings that do not reflect the character of the original home or the street.

"In some areas the character has been preserved but there are many areas that have lost their character due to over development."

"Stop enabling the erosion of character, history, community and lifestyle of our neighbourhood by continuing to allow development of apartments and particularly in the residential-only streets. It's a shame to see period houses destroyed to make way for more concrete, traffic jams and angst."

Strengthen planning controls
A total of 28 respondents discussed the need for additional or improved planning controls to protect neighbourhood character. Some respondents provided specific suggestions for improvement. Suggestions included:

» Reducing building heights and increase setbacks to minimise the visual bulk of new developments and overlooking and overshadowing neighbouring properties.

» Ensuring new development reflects in their design the character of the original property or reflect the character of the street.

» Having defined architectural features that guide developments to reflect the character of the area.

» Reducing height limits in the areas abutting Heritage Overlays, which can then gradually increase in the areas further away.

» Reducing an applicant's ability to use other poor planning decisions as precedence.

» Requiring developers to provide more green spaces and vegetation in side and front stebacks.

» Expanding the use of the Heritage and Neighbourhood Character overlays.

Of survey respondents that discussed the need to strengthen planning controls, 59% (16) live in the east region of the city and 100% are home owners.

"If an area was predominantly Edwardian, new builds should have been required to follow that style as with Victorian, Californian Bungalow, typical 1920/30 Grand Mansion Style, Art Deco, Georgian etc."

"I would like to see more leafy streets. It not only adds to the character of Stonnington, but it also helps to reduce the effects of urban heat islands. I think new builds should have a requirement to be set back from the road and provide green spaces on the street level within the building envelope, say 10-15% of the land area."

Greater preservation of highly valued neighbourhood character elements
A total of 22 respondents highlighted in their comments particular elements of neighbourhood character that are highly valued and need further protection. Comments demonstrate that respondents intrinsically link heritage to neighbourhood character in Stonnington. Respondents also highly value leafy green streets and the village feel of activity centres. Respondents want to see these elements protected but also enhanced through new developments.

"This [neighbourhood character] interacts with heritage buildings. What is happening is that incrementally buildings of 'low heritage value' are being knocked down and in the end the whole neighbourhood character is replaced by concrete bunkers. Value must be placed on the prevailing neighbourhood architectural style and streetscape so that this is preserved instead of considering one building at a time and allowing demolition as each building has 'limited value.' All the parts make a whole, and all parts must be considered, not just discarded one at a time."

Summary of other topics
The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Improve the general appearance of streets (15 comments): Comments included the desire to see streets improved through increased and better management of street trees, increased setbacks with vegetation, improved waste management, revitalised shop fronts, reduced signage and advertising in commercial areas, and more street art.

» Other ideas for protecting neighbourhood character (15 comments): These ideas included addressing shop vacancies, improving walkability, restricting operating hours of businesses located in residential areas, activating the ground levels in high-density developments and consideration for how new developments and renovations can restore diminished neighbourhood character.

» Direct growth to more suitable areas (10 comments): Respondents want the residential hinterlands and low scale neighbourhood streets to be protected and development directed to more suitable areas. Areas identified as more suitable for development included Forest Hill and along major roads.

» General support for current approach (three comments): Comments included general statements illustrating support for how Council is currently planning for neighbourhood character.

> "Corralling the skyscrapers in the Forrest Hill area between the South Yarra Station and Chapel Street was a good idea."
>
> "The shops up and down Toorak Road in South Yarra are very unsightly, there appears to be no regulation as to shop signage which really should be coordinated so that each premises had to conform with a certain standard. In other cities overseas central city shopping areas have strict regulations as to what signage is appropriate."

4.5 Activity centre planning and growing jobs

This theme incorporates elements of the Planning Scheme related to activity centres continuing to meet the community's needs in terms of their commercial and residential offerings. It focuses on activity centres having a mix of uses to support local job growth, providing high quality amenity and landscaping, ensuring the public realm is well-maintained and easy to access.

The survey asked respondents the following question: 'Thinking about activity centre planning within Stonnington, what is council doing well, and where can council improve planning in this area?'.

A total of 87 respondents answered this question in the survey.

Figure 7 illustrates that many respondents (24%) commented on the activities and services that occur or they would like to see in activity centres. 20% commented on the need to improve the open spaces and landscaping of activity centres. Also mentioned was the mix of commercial offerings, and transport and access (both discussed by 15% of respondents).

The following paragraphs further discuss the topics raised under this theme.

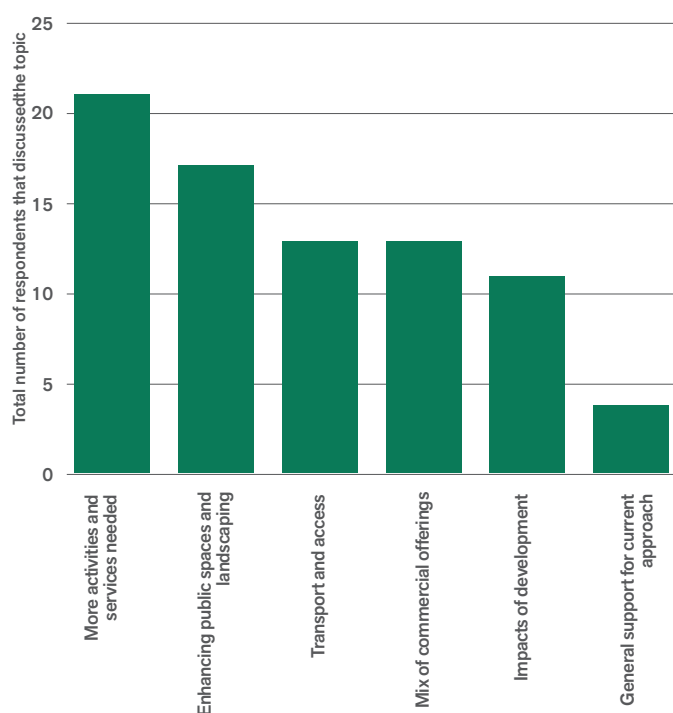**ACTIVITY CENTRE PLANNING AND GROWING JOBS ENGAGEMENT TOPICS**

Figure 7. Topics that emerged under the 'activity centre planning and growing jobs' engagement theme

More activities and services in activity centres

Respondents (21) discussed the provision of activities and community services within activity centres. Comments included the need for more community centres and programs for older adults and improved distribution of community services and activities across different suburbs.

Respondents also want to see improved activation of streets with more community activities that cater to a broader demographic and bring the community together. Some respondents identified the Chapel Street precinct as an example of a centre that needs more diverse activities and improved safety.

Respondents provided various suggestions to activate activity centres, including basketball, ice skating, 'shop local' campaigns and night-time events.

57% (12) of the respondents that discussed this topic live in the west region of the municipality.

"More shop local campaigns and activations in the activity centres."

"I would like more art events like the successful Prahran Square installations."

"Support community organisations and hubs. Phoenix Park Hub is a good example, however there are always ways to improve the amenities focusing on sustainability and the environment rather than just having policies with little implementation."

Enhance public spaces and landscaping

Respondents (17) discussed the importance of, and need to, further enhance the public spaces and landscaping within activity centres. Respondents suggested that the visual appeal of activity centres could be enhanced by improving the design of buildings and streetscapes to reflect the neighbourhood's heritage and character and better maintenance of public spaces.

Respondents also want to see the vibrancy of activity centres enhanced. Suggestions included more day and night-time use of public spaces such as street dining and increased landscaping.

"Parts of Chapel Street have a large number of empty shops affecting the attractiveness of the street for visiting. Proper investment is needed to ensure the street is vibrant, used day and night by different audiences and is visually appealing. On street dining was fantastic and should be retained but with much improved and more permanent barriers."

Summary of other topics

The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Greater mix of commercial offerings (13 comments): Comments referred to the number of vacant shops in activity centres, particularly along Chapel Street. Respondents felt this reduced the vibrancy of the centres. They shared ideas to address the issue, including a program like 'Renew Newcastle' and for residents to shop local to encourage businesses back and improve neighbourhood character.

» Improve transport and access (13 comments): Comments focused on how transport and access to and within activity centres could be improved. Comments (eight) highlighted traffic congestion and parking as issues impacting access. Other comments (eight) suggested the need for improved walking and cycling connections and public transport access. They highlighted the need for safer streets for people who walk and cycle, including improved and well-maintained footpaths and reducing car access.

» Reduce impacts of development (11 comments): Respondents raised concerns about the impact of multi-storey developments on activity centres. Comments expressed the desire to protect the village feel of centres. Suggestions included limiting development to avoid activity centres extending into surrounding residential areas and ensure development in activity centres complement the existing area's character.

» General support for current approach (four comments): Respondents supported Council's current approach to activity centre planning.

> "I've often wondered whether Stonnington should implement some sort of Renew Newcastle program to encourage business back to Chapel Street… If artists, small businesses, galleries, pop-up shops, etc. were given heavily subsidised rent, it would bring more people to the area and improve neighbourhood character."
>
> "I think more focus could be on smaller retail strips to bring more new and fresh shops to activate older and abandoned looking shop strips."
>
> "Ensure good walkability from the surrounding area, and public improvements such as uneven footpaths."

4.6 Trees

This theme incorporates elements of the Planning Scheme that relate to retaining existing and established on-site and on-street vegetation, incentivising private planting, vertical gardens, ensuring more green space in developments and reducing building footprints.

The survey asked respondents the following question: 'Thinking about trees within Stonnington, what is council doing well, and where can council improve planning in this area?'.

A total of 129 respondents answered this question in the survey.

As illustrated in Figure 8, many of the respondents (34%) discussed protecting and enhancing tree-lined streets, 25% discussed the need to improve the maintenance and safety of trees, while 21% provided high-level comments supporting more trees.

The following paragraphs further discuss the topics raised under this theme.
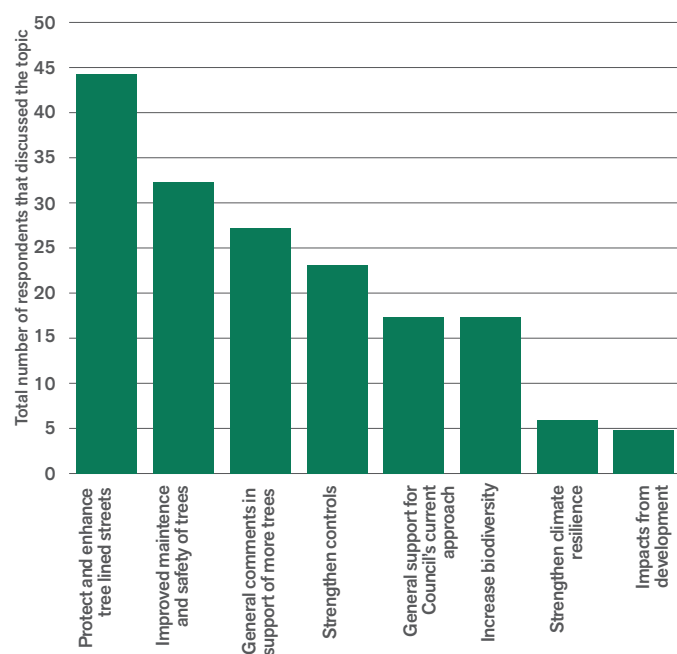
TREES ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

Figure 8. Topics that emerged under the 'Trees' engagement theme

Protect and enhance tree-lined streets
Respondents (44) discussed the need to protect and enhance tree-lined streets. Respondents appreciate the neighbourhood character of tree-lined streets. Respondents expressed preferences for uniformity and more mature trees on as many streets as possible. Some shared their preference for particular tree species, for example, evergreen trees over deciduous trees that make streets look bare in winter. Other comments raised concerns about the pruning of trees to accommodate power lines and suggested that alternative species are needed to be used to reduce the need for such pruning.

> "Protect our leafy streets and encourage more of them. They are aesthetically pleasing and help reduce the effects of the urban heat island."

Improve maintenance and safety of trees
Respondents (32) discussed the need for improved tree maintenance and greater safety consideration. Comments noted the need for improving tree health and consistent maintenance of trees, particularly the aging plane trees lining many Stonnington streets. Respondents expressed the need to consider issues relating to street safety and damage to property when trees are not well maintained. Concerns included drainage, footpath damage, cleaning from deciduous trees, and respiratory-related issues.

> "Council should be more proactive in monitoring the health of trees and their suitability with a focus on indigenous trees and reduce trees with heavy pollen; this latter aspect would benefit allergy sufferers (hay fever, asthma)."

> "Trees are vital to the quality of life, but poor choice of native trees is a real safety problem due to large branches falling during high winds. Melaleuca trees are not suitable for the aggressive pruning required under power lines and are a constant danger."

General comments in support of more trees
Respondents (27) expressed broad support for more trees and green areas in private and public spaces.

58% (15) of the survey respondents that discussed this topic live in the west region of the city.

> "Plant more trees. Lots more trees. They are our lungs."

> "We need to save our trees, plant more and ensure trees in public areas are safe."

Summary of other topics
The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Strengthen controls (23 comments): Respondents called for tighter planning controls to reduce tree removal. They also encouraged measures such as incentives, deterrents and more education for developers and landowners around protecting, maintaining, and planting trees.

  61% (14) of the survey respondents that discussed this topic live in the east region of the city.

» General support for Council's current approach (17 comments): Comments included support and appreciation for Council's approach.

  100% of the survey respondents that discussed this topic were home owners.

» Increased biodiversity (17 comments): Comments focused on increasing biodiversity through tree planting and having more native trees.

» Strengthen climate resilience (six comments): Calls to strengthen climate resilience noted the relationship between trees and reducing ecological footprints, reducing the heat island effect, and increasing the environmental credentials and sustainability of Stonnington.

» Reduce impacts from development (five comments): Comments criticised the loss of mature trees due to the redevelopment of sites and civic works.

> "Encourage residents to plant natives so native birds and insects can return to the ecosystem."

> "Council has done a lot of work on public land to improve tree canopy coverage. There should be more incentives to work with the private sector to protect and improve trees on private land."

4.7 Environment, sustainability, and climate

This theme incorporates the Planning Scheme elements related to climate change and sustainable initiatives, environmental protection, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.

The survey asked respondents the following question: "Thinking about the environment, sustainability and the climate emergency within Stonnington, what is council doing well, and where can council improve planning in this area?"

A total of 124 respondents answered this question in the survey.

As illustrated in Figure 9, many respondents (28%) discussed the need for improved waste management and increasing the tree canopy (25%) to improve planning for the environment, sustainability and the climate.

The following paragraphs further discuss the topics raised under this theme.
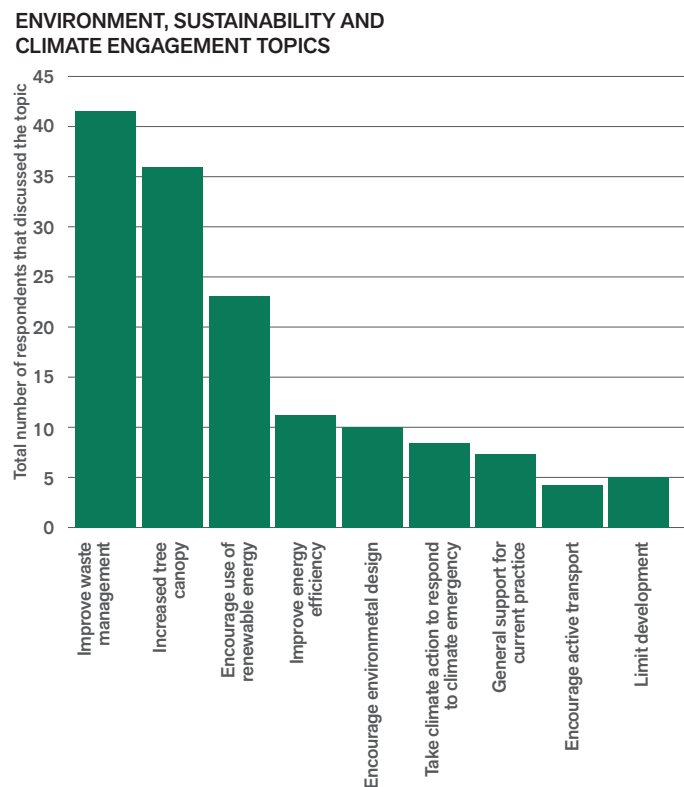
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

Figure 9. Topics that emerged under the 'Environment, sustainability and climate' engagement theme

Improve waste management
Respondents (41) discussed waste management. Feedback under this theme focused on recycling, management of commercial waste, construction waste, green waste, food waste, and electronic waste. Comments included the need for more education and information on recycling and handling domestic waste. There is confusion around the function of different bins and the waste collection frequency. There was mention of the need for more public recycling bins for electronic waste. Some respondents also suggested locating recycling stations where community members can drop off building supplies for others to pick up or purchase at a low price.

Some respondents noted that waste from shops and restaurants is not managed well and there is a lack of enforcement.

> "We all need better education regarding recycling - what you can and can't. The recycle bins attract all sorts of rubbish which should be sent directly to the landfill."

> "More drop-off points for unusual recycling products, e.g., batteries, printing cartridges etc."

> "With all the renovations that seem to go on continually, why don't we put in a recycle station where people can take recycled good condition building supplies that can be dropped off for no charge, inspected by a person working there so as to avoid unsalable items being dumped then sold for minimal prices."

Increase the tree canopy cover
Respondents (36) discussed the need to retain and increase the tree canopy in Stonnington.

Respondents emphasised that increasing the tree canopy cover is crucial to help protect urban ecology and regulate heat in the urban environment during hotter days. More trees should be planted along main streets, residential areas, and open spaces. Comments regarding the types of trees and the need for improved management of street trees were consistent with the comments discussed in section 4.6.

> "Streets need canopy trees to help cool in summer."

Encourage increased energy efficiency and renewable energy use

Respondents (26) discussed the need to increase the energy efficiency of buildings and the use of renewable energy in Stonnington.

Respondents were supportive of Council's initiatives to increase the use of renewable energy, especially solar energy. Respondents stated that Council should be more proactive in educating and encouraging renewable energy use by various means. Suggestions included launching renewable energy rebates and simplifying the permit application process to install solar panels to encourage greater use. Comments also suggested promoting other renewable energy sources, such as community batteries and wind energy.

Respondents want to see more charging stations for electric vehicles in public spaces and as a requirement for new developments.

Respondents suggested that Council should continue introducing means to improve energy efficiency in public and private realms. Suggestions included installing energy efficient street lighting and improved energy efficiency guidelines and standards for new developments.

> "The council is doing well in moving to renewable power. The council needs to do more to support residents and businesses in doing the same via ideas like community batteries, solar panels for apartments, solar/batteries for retail and commercial properties."

> "Only building permits should be issued if the multi-storey buildings have low e-glass, double glazed and appropriately insulated. Every person I speak to who lives on the top floor of a multi-storey building talks about the heat in summer. Their remedy is to install air-conditioners. Standards should be created that won't allow this to happen."

Summary of other topics

The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Encourage environmental design (10 comments): Respondents put forward a range of environmental design elements they would like to see across Stonnington. These included green walls, temperature regulating materials in buildings, and improved air ventilation design.

» Take action on climate to respond to the climate emergency (eight comments): Respondents would like to see Council take more climate actions responding to the climate emergency. Some respondents were unaware that Council had declared a climate emergency. Others were dissatisfied by the Council's limited communication on the initiatives taken and the results of climate action in Stonnington.

» General support for current practice (seven comments): Respondents were satisfied with current Council initiatives on recycling and the use of renewable energy.

» Limit development (five comments): Respondents expressed their view that large-scale urban development in Stonnington contradicts its sustainability goals. Respondents sought more consideration of liveability and population density before approving new development projects.

» Encourage active transport (four comments): Respondents stated that increased active transport, such as walking, and cycling, would contribute to the environment and sustainability in Stonnington. Section 4.8 of this report discusses this topic in further detail.

> "Provide charging stations for electric vehicles, more solar panels for council assets. Ensure new developments are 6-star energy rated and that they must provide battery charging capacity for electric cars."

> "Only cool roofs allowed for new houses and increase energy efficiency requirements where feasible."

4.8 Transport

This theme incorporates elements of the Planning Scheme that relate to traffic management, cycling infrastructure, pedestrian paths, public transport network and services, and parking.

The survey asked respondents the following question: "Thinking about transport within Stonnington, what is council doing well, and where can council improve planning in this area?"

A total of 100 respondents answered this question in the survey.

As illustrated in Figure 10, many respondents who answered this question (25%) discussed the need for improved public transport networks and services. Tackling traffic was also often mentioned (22%). Some respondents (19%) expressed satisfaction with Council's current approach to transport planning, while another 18% of respondents discussed the need for an improved cycling network and supporting amenities.

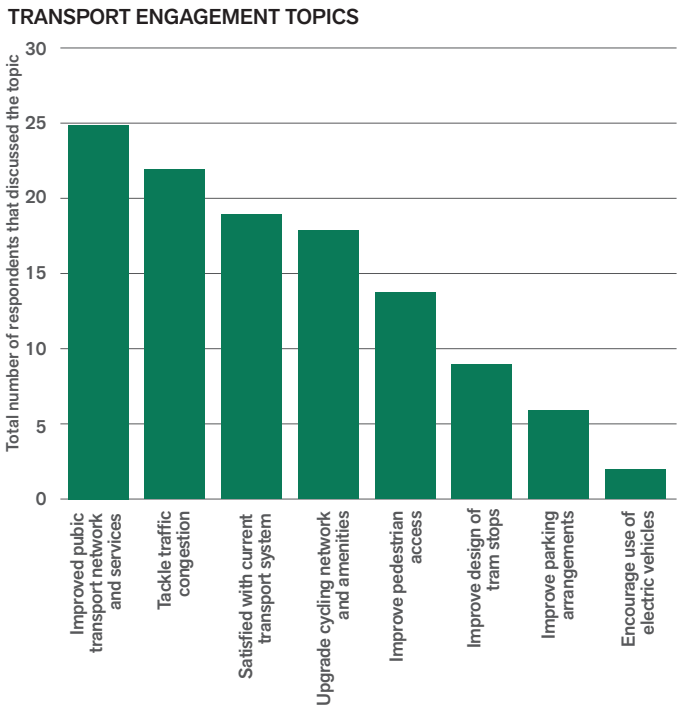The following paragraphs further discuss the topics raised under this theme.

TRANSPORT ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

Figure 10. Topics that emerged under the 'Transport' engagement theme

Improve public transport network and services
Respondents (25) stated they would like improvements in public transport networks and services in Stonnington.

Respondents felt that improvements in public transport and reducing reliance on private vehicles will be necessary to maintain and enhance liveability in Stonnington with the growing and aging population. There was a range of suggestions raised by respondents. These included having more punctual and regular bus services, introducing booking systems for bus services, and increasing public transport network coverage.

Comments included the desire to see train stations upgraded and better maintained. Some respondents also expressed support for level crossing removals. Specific locations included Caulfield, South Yarra, Windsor, and Prahran.

Survey respondents that discussed this topic were predominantly from the west (43%) and east regions (52%) of the city.

"I would think the bus service needs to be a bit more regular and weatherproof bus shelters erected."

"Not enough public transport funding/ infrastructure to support the high-density living."

Tackle traffic congestion
Respondents (22) discussed traffic congestion as an issue in Stonnington. Many comments highlighted congestion as a general concern, while others suggested potential solutions to help tackle congestion. Ideas included:

» Introducing 'no right turn' signals and rules to restrict the use of residential streets.

» Reducing free parking in residential streets.

» Larger scale developments to be accessed and serviced via major roads.

» Additional one-way streets.

» Additional clear-way zones.

100% of survey respondents that discussed this topic were home owners.

"More focus on improving car flows during peak hours. Waverley Road is a major thorough fair, and you shouldn't be allowed to park on it."

"Osborne Street South Yarra is too narrow to have two-way traffic. It needs to be one-way through with a bike lane for the hundreds of bicycles that go up the street from South Yarra station. It is already one way at each end, and the two-way traffic in the middle does not fit."

Satisfied with the current transport system
Respondents (19) were satisfied with the current transport system in Stonnington.

Respondents noted Stonnington is generally well-serviced by public transport and has a well-established road network. Respondents noted some minor improvements were needed but felt Council is putting sufficient effort into transport planning and management. One respondent shared that they moved to Stonnington for the public transport network.

"We are well serviced with trams, busses, and trains."

"Stonnington has a great transportation system. It's getting people to use it that should be your challenge."

Upgrade cycling infrastructure
Respondents (18) discussed expanding cycling networks and installing cycling amenities.

Respondents stated that there should be an ongoing effort by Council to improve and expand the cycling network in Stonnington. Cycling paths should also support other forms of transportation, including scooters. Cycling routes should be separate from roads and pedestrian traffic to protect transport safety for all users. Supporting infrastructure is also needed, such as bike lock hoops and electric bike charging stations.

55% (12) of the survey respondents that discussed this topic live in the east region of the city.

"Better bike paths – on and off roads, more of them, paved better, well maintained, better signage. Far more bike parking in public locations, e.g., Chapel Street has hardly any places to lock bikes other than poles. Should be removing on-street parking for bike parking etc., to make it easy and attractive to cycle."

Summary of other topics

The following points summarise other topics that emerged under this theme during the analysis.

» Improve pedestrian accessibility (14 comments): Respondents want pedestrian safety and access prioritised. Suggestions included having more pedestrian-only areas such as Chapel Street, wider footpaths, and sufficient lighting at night to protect pedestrian safety.

» Improve design of tram stops (nine comments): Respondents identified that the design and location of several tram stops are unsafe for passengers and block road traffic. There should be wheelchair-accessible platforms with shelters. Specific locations mentioned included Toorak Road South, High Street, and Chapel Street.

» Improve parking arrangements (six comments): Respondents would like to see more parking spaces around train stations and main shopping strips. Council should also provide clearer instructions on parking restrictions to avoid confusion.

Survey respondents that discussed the active transport topics (upgrading cycling infrastructure and improved pedestrian accessibility) were predominantly from the west region.

"I would like to see more car-free streets, areas where pedestrians have priority." "Make it more pedestrian friendly, it can be dangerous to cross Chapel Street, so more zebra or light crossings. They are currently too far apart so people just cross whenever they want."

"Would love trams to be disability accessible, particularly no. 3 and no.5 tram. No. 5 tram needs raised access, no. 3 everything. Think speed of trams could be improved by limiting car access on tram routes, which would make them better time wise."

4.9 Other

Council also invited survey respondents to provide any other comments they might have concerning the Planning Scheme. A total of 67 respondents provided additional comments. Many respondents (27) used the opportunity to reiterate points made earlier in the survey around the protection of heritage, reducing development and improved maintenance of green spaces and trees. Other topics captured in this question have been summarised below.

» Feedback on the engagement process (8 comments): Comments included scepticism on how the engagement will inform change and a desire to see greater ongoing consultation around planning issues.

» General feedback on the Planning Scheme (13 comments): Respondents provided high-level feedback on the Planning Scheme. This feedback was diverse. Some respondents used the opportunity to provide general dissatisfaction with the Planning Scheme. Others used the opportunity to provide general support for the Planning Scheme. More nuanced feedback included a desire for more evidenced longer-term planning and more detail on desired outcomes to limit interpretation.

» Responding to State Government direction around population growth (five comments): Comments included concern about Stonnington accommodating population growth. Others acknowledged the need to accommodate increasing populations while balancing this need with community needs.

» Improved planning application process (five comments): Comments focused on improving the process. Suggestions included removing red tape, reducing the time it takes to review an application, and addressing perceived loopholes e.g., land less then 500sqm not being subject to planning requirements.

5. Key findings and observations

Capire observed a series of key messages that crossed many of the eight themes that guided the engagement. The dot points below detail these key messages.

The rate and scale of development occurring in the city is a significant concern.
Respondents see development impacting Council's planning efforts in each of the eight themes. Respondents want to see improvements in how Council plans for and manages the impacts of development on the community, the environment and neighbourhood character. Respondents want Council to have greater consideration for the cumulative impacts of development.

Maximise the benefits and minimise the impacts of new development in Stonnington.
Respondents want Council to ensure new developments benefit the local area, are located appropriately and seek to minimise the impacts on the community.
Where respondents recognise growth and development are needed or inevitable, they want Council to ensure development is directed to appropriate locations with appropriate supporting infrastructure. Respondents also want Council to consider how new developments or redevelopments can help to enhance or restore key neighbourhood character elements, particularly heritage.

There is a desire for greater recognition of what is considered heritage and strengthened planning controls to protect it.
Respondents value the heritage character of Stonnington beyond what might be covered by a heritage overlay. Respondents intrinsically link heritage values to neighbourhood character, and respondents want greater protection and enhancement of heritage character in both residential areas and activity centres.

Improve the design of new developments to better reflect the local context.
The design of new developments is not meeting the community's expectations or desires. Respondents want to see designs that lead to improved environmental outcomes, better mitigate impacts on surrounding neighbours (such as overlooking, overshadowing and congestion) and help enhance the area's character through architecture, use of materials and greenery.

Use every opportunity to increase and protect greenery.
Respondents want Council to make the most of all opportunities to increase greenery, focusing on using native vegetation and promoting biodiversity. Leafy green streets and spaces are highly valued neighbourhood character elements.
While much support was expressed about Council's current approach to planning open spaces, respondents want an improved focus on maintenance, use of safer and Indigenous varieties of street trees, more trees and more open spaces. There was debate around different types of open spaces and what respondents preferred. These discussions demonstrate the importance of providing a variety of sizes, designs and uses when planning for open spaces.

Boost the city's environmental sustainability and response to the climate emergency.
Respondents want more innovative programs and initiatives to boost the city's environmental sustainability and response to the climate emergency, such as the increased use of renewables, increased tree canopy coverage, support for electric vehicle use and improved waste management.

Reduce the number of cars and traffic on local streets.
Increasing access to public transport options and improving cycling and pedestrian networks are key opportunities to reduce car dependency. Providing adequate parking provisions and additional traffic controls were seen as opportunities to reduce cars in local streets also.

Observations

Some observations captured by council officers in the delivery of the engagement activities highlighted the complexity of the topic. Many people have limited knowledge of the Planning Scheme and the Review. This meant that some respondents were providing responses outside the scope of the Planning Scheme. Some respondents also found the planning terminology confusing.

6. Next steps

Preparing the Review Report (Oct 2022)

The engagement findings detailed in this report will be considered in preparing the Planning Scheme Review Report. The report will include a series of recommendations, which may include updates to the Planning Scheme or additional tools to support Planning Scheme implementation. It may also include recommendations for additional strategic work to support future policy development.

Council endorsement (November 2022)

Council officers will present the Planning Scheme Review Report to Council for endorsement. Following Council endorsement, the report will be published and reported to the Minister for Planning.

Implementation of recommendations

Following endorsement, Council will begin to implement the recommendations. For some recommendations, this may mean preparing a Planning Scheme Amendment; for others, it might mean undertaking further strategic work or data collection. The timeframes for implementing the recommendations will be varied.

Appendix A: Survey

1. Have you had any interactions with planning in Stonnington? Required	☐ Yes, I've applied for a planning permit ☐ Yes, I've objected to a planning permit ☐ No ☐ Other (please specify)
2. Thinking about planning for residential development and housing within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
3. Thinking about open space within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
4. Thinking about heritage within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
5. Thinking about neighbourhood character within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
6. Thinking about activity centre planning within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
7. Thinking about trees within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
8. Thinking about environment, sustainability, and the climate emergency within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
9. Thinking about transport within Stonnington, what is council doing well and where can council improve planning in this area?	[Open answer]
10. Do you have any other comments in relation to Stonnington's Planning Scheme?	[Open answer]
Tell us a bit about your self 11. What connects you to the City of Stonnington	☐ I live there (home owner) ☐ I live there (rental property) ☐ I work there ☐ I own a business there ☐ I own a property there but do not live there ☐ I regularly visit there ☐ None of these (please specify)
12. How do you describe your gender	☐ Woman ☐ Man ☐ Non-binary ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ I use a different term
13. Age group	[drop-down list]
14. Which suburb do you live in?	[drop-down list]