



Engagement report

South Melbourne Structure Plan
- Phase One 2021





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Executive summary

City of Port Phillip are starting work on a new structure plan for South Melbourne to manage change and guide how the area looks, feels, and functions over the next 15 years.

This report contains analysis of the first phase of community engagement, which aimed to understand what the South Melbourne community thinks about South Melbourne now and what it should be like in the future. The responses from this phase will help create a vision and establish key directions for South Melbourne.

The consultation period ran from 11 March 2021 to 24 April 2021, and included an online and hard-copy survey, community conversations, sessions with public housing residents and targeted stakeholder workshops.

Key findings

Several themes emerged consistently across the four questions asked in the survey, community conversations and targeted stakeholder workshops. These primarily centred on liveability and concerns that future changes would alter the ability of residents to enjoy living, working, and moving about their community.

- Elements that people valued most about South Melbourne were its closeness to central Melbourne and the beach, and the easy access to green and open spaces. Following that, people expressed appreciation for the strong sense of community in the area, which they felt was diverse and friendly, and for the South Melbourne Market.
- When asked what they wanted to hold onto, people described their love of the character of South Melbourne, particularly the heritage façades, architecture, and low-rise streetscapes, as well as the strip shopping with its array of distinctive retail offerings. The green areas and the South Melbourne Market were also highlighted as elements that should be retained into the future.
- Transport was the most prominent area that people felt needed change, with people calling for easy parking and lower levels of traffic and congestion. Community aspects were another key area for change, with respondents describing concerns around safety and security. Lastly, people highlighted their desire for high-rise development to be controlled to maintain low-density living.
- A crucial future challenge was felt to be the possibility that population increases and (over) development would irrevocably change the look and feel of South Melbourne. It is important to residents and users of the area that they are provisioned with adequate services, facilities and infrastructure to ensure liveability, and that people feel safe in the area. Transport issues were also felt to pose a challenge, with respondents expressing concern that increased traffic would make it harder to move around the area.



Project background

Introduction

City of Port Phillip (CoPP) are starting work on a new structure plan for South Melbourne to manage change and guide how the area looks, feels, and functions over the next 15 years. This long-term plan will help prepare South Melbourne for the future and how the area responds to challenges such as climate change, population growth, and COVID-19.

There are three phases of community engaged proposed as part of the development of the South Melbourne Structure Plan over the next three years, called *Future South Melbourne*. This report contains analysis of the first phase of community engagement, which asked the community for feedback on life in South Melbourne by asking the following four open-ended questions:

1. What do you most value about living, working, or playing in South Melbourne?
2. If you could hold onto three things about South Melbourne to take into the future, what would they be?
3. If you could change three things about South Melbourne, what would they be?
4. What are the three most important challenges you think South Melbourne will face in the future?



Engagement Overview

An extensive community engagement campaign was conducted from 11 March 2021 to 24 April 2021 with online and hard-copy surveys, four community conversation pop-up sessions, meetings with targeted stakeholders, and two sessions at local public housing residences. All four questions were used across all engagement activities to give consistent data.

The only exception was the two sessions conducted at the public housing residences. Pre-determined responses presented with words and visuals were included based on the top eight responses provided by respondents from other activities. They also only had one question to answer, which was “what do you like about the area where you live?”. Results from this question are discussed on page 15.

Community pop-up events:

Below are the locations of four community pop-up events. These can also be viewed on the map on page 5.

- Pop-up event 19 March 2021 (South Melbourne Market, Cecil Street)
- Pop-up event 27 March 2021 (corner Clarendon and Coventry streets)
- Pop-up event 15 April 2021 (Corner Clarendon and Market streets)
- Pop-up event 17 April 2021 (Market Street entrance, South Melbourne Central)

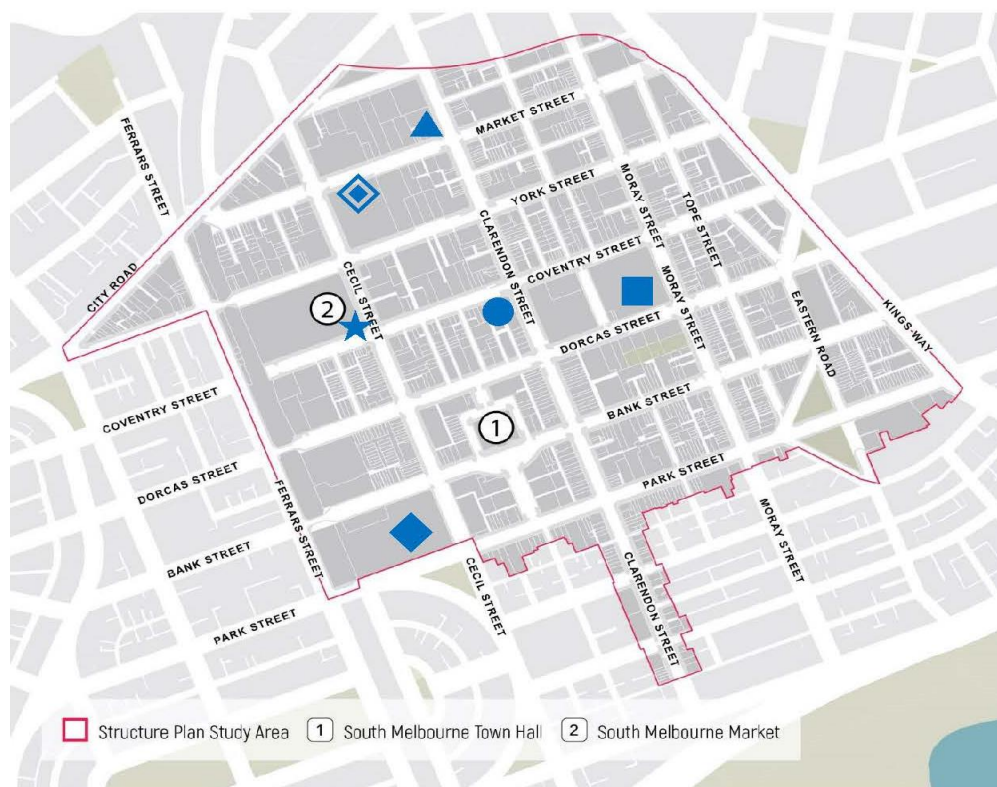
Targeted stakeholder conversations:

In addition to the above pop-up sessions, CoPP also spoke to the following groups:

- Residents of Park Towers Estate
- Residents of Emerald Hill Court Estate
- CoPP Youth Advisory Committee
- CoPP Multicultural Advisory Committee
- CoPP Multifaith Network
- CoPP Older Person Advisory Committee
- South Melbourne Place Reference Group
- Greek Seniors Group
- Russian Seniors Group

The locations of the pop-up sessions and other community conversations are marked on the map below:

South Melbourne Structure Plan – Phase 1 Community Conversation Events



Legend

- ★ South Melbourne Market, Cecil Street, 19 March 2021
- corner Clarendon and Coventry streets, 27 March 2021
- ◆ Park Towers, 8 April 2021
- ▲ corner Clarendon and Market streets, 15 April 2021
- ◊ Market Street entrance, South Melbourne Central, 17 April 2021
- Emerald Hill Court, 24 April 2021

Figure 1: Map of pop up and community conversation locations

In total, the engagement received:

- **1709** comments from **989** post-it notes from targeted stakeholder meetings and activities conducted at the pop-up sessions.
- **241** surveys were completed, with the majority online through CoPP's Have Your Say platform.
- Overall, CoPP engaged with around **550** individuals during this engagement.



Analysis and reporting overview

Qualitative analysis description

Four questions were asked of survey respondents, community conversation pop-up participants and targeted stakeholder groups. In addition, a different question was asked at two sessions held at public housing estates in South Melbourne – one at Park Towers on 8 April 2021, and one at Emerald Hill on 24 April 2021. These results are found on page 15. Global Research analysts read each comment received from the community and coded them into themes and topics. These are presented below for topics that received 25 or more comments.

Direct quotes from respondents' comments are indented within the discussion.

To give a clear and consistent indication of the number of comments received on each topic, the following key was used to describe the relative number of comments on each topic:

Number of comments	Written as:
3 comments	a few
4—7 comments	a small number
8—14 comments	several
15—24 comments	a moderate number
25—49 comments	a considerable number
50—74 comments	a substantial number
75—99 comments	a sizeable number
100—149 comments	a large number
150+ comments	a very large number

Comments from respondents have been included in this report verbatim. However, obvious spelling or grammatical errors have been amended for clarity.

Quantitative analysis description

Respondent characteristics and demographic information are presented in charts after the discussion section of this report. This data was collected only from those who completed the survey, either online or in paper format. Demographic questions were not asked of participants at pop-up sessions or targeted stakeholder conversations.

Frequency analysis has been completed and percentages are shown, as well as the actual number of those who selected each option. Note that these charts represent only those who responded to the survey as these were the only respondents who were asked to provide demographic information.

Who we engaged

Respondents who filled out the online or handwritten survey were asked demographic questions regarding where they live, connection to Port Phillip, age, and gender. No demographic data was collected from those who participated in the community pop-up sessions or targeted stakeholder conversations.

Those who participated in the four community pop-up sessions were mostly residents of South Melbourne, with some visitors to the area. However, because this data was not formally collected at pop-up sessions, the results below only represent survey respondents.

Summary of survey respondent characteristics:

- > Substantially more survey respondents lived in South Melbourne than any other location.
- > The most common connection that survey respondents had to South Melbourne was 'resident'.
- > The 50-59 age group was the most well-represented group among survey respondents.
- > More survey respondents were women (59%) than any other gender.

Where respondents live

Respondents were asked about where they live. South Melbourne was the most common suburb of residence for survey respondents, with over half of respondents residing here (59%). The second most common suburb of residence for survey respondents was Port Melbourne (10%), while all other suburbs were home to 6% of survey respondents or less.

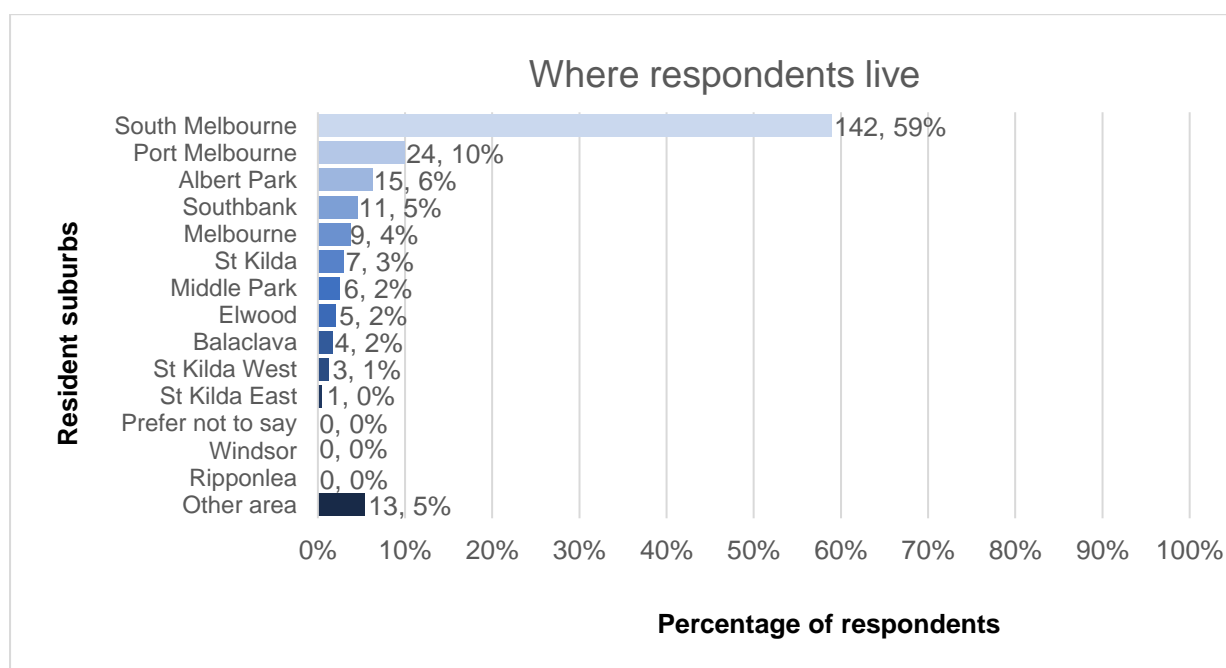


Figure 2: Chart reporting where respondents live

Respondent connections to Port Phillip

Respondents were asked about their connection to Port Phillip. The most common connection that survey respondents had to Port Phillip was 'resident' (66%), followed by 'rate payer' (17%). All other connection options were selected by under 10% of respondents.

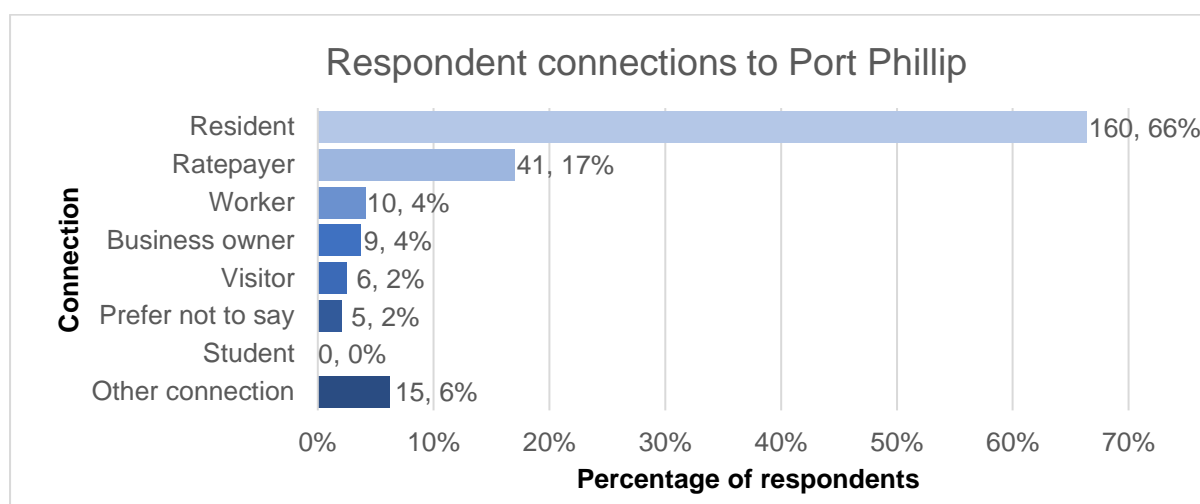


Figure 3: Chart reporting respondents' connections to Port Phillip

Respondent age

Respondents were asked for their age. The 50-59 age group was the most well-represented group among survey respondents (22%), followed by the 60-69 age group (19%). The 25-34 and 70-84 age groups made up 10% and 9% of survey respondents respectively.

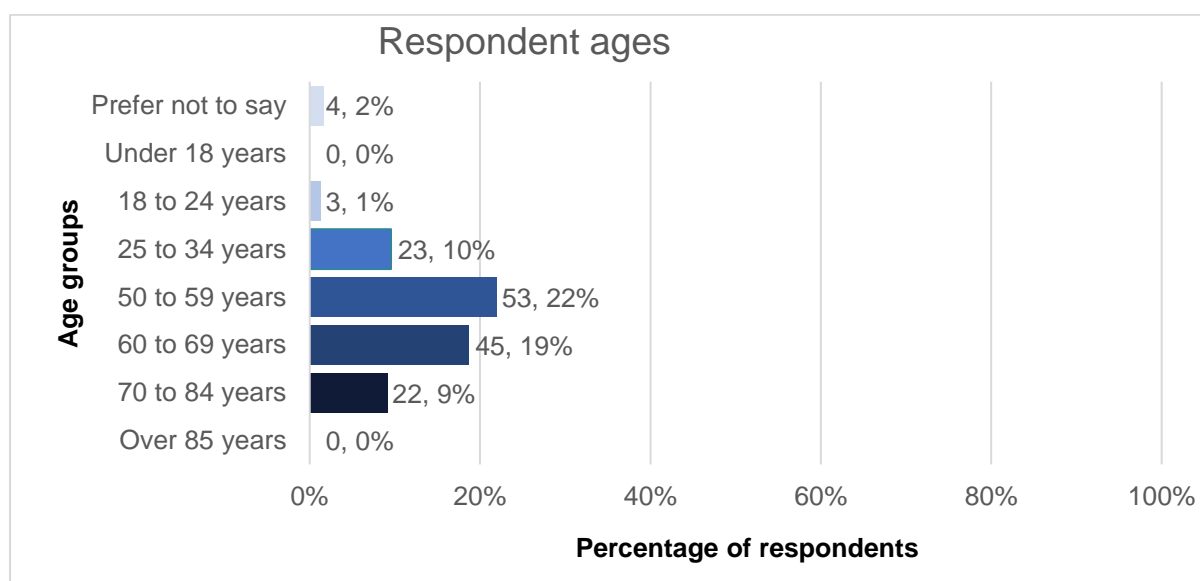


Figure 4: Chart reporting respondents' ages

Respondent gender

Respondents were asked what gender they identify with. Over half of survey respondents were women (59%), while men made up 38% of survey respondents. The remaining 3% of survey respondent either preferred not to say or selected to self-identify.

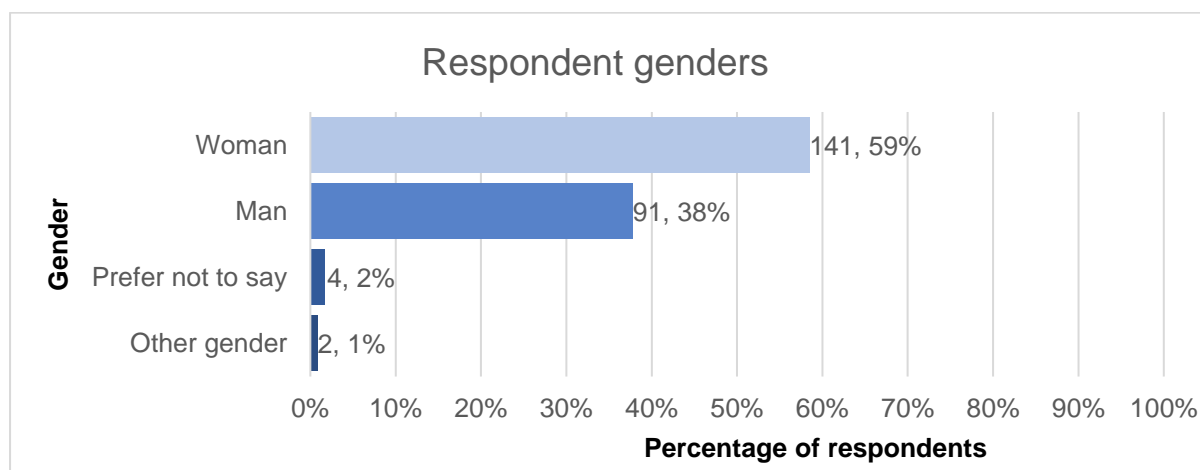


Figure 5: Chart reporting respondents' genders

In addition to the demographic information above, through targeted conversations, City of Port Phillip also spoke with the following groups, who are not included in the above:

- City of Port Phillip Youth Advisory Committee
- South Melbourne Place Reference Group
- Greek Seniors
- City of Port Phillip Older Person Consultative Committee
- City of Port Phillip Multifaith Network
- Russian Seniors
- City of Port Phillip Multicultural Advisory Committee



Engagement findings

Question 1 - What do you most value about living, working or playing in South Melbourne?

This section contains commentary on the feedback received from survey respondents, pop-up participants and other stakeholders, as well as information collected at two sessions with public housing residents at Park Towers and Emerald Hill Court. During these two sessions, residents were asked to select the top three elements that they like about where they live, from a list of eight elements. These results are discussed on page 17.

Summary

- > The suburb's **proximity to many different attractions**, like the city, parks and green spaces, the beach, shops and other amenities, was highly valued by respondents who appreciated living, working, or playing in South Melbourne while having easy access to everything they need.
- > The **sense of community and the general atmosphere** in South Melbourne were also highly valued. The friendliness and diversity of the people, along with the village feel of the area, all contribute to the sense of community that respondents felt is a treasured part of living there.
- > The third main theme that arose in comments about what respondents value most was **retail and shopping**. In particular, **South Melbourne Market** was mentioned in a very large number of comments, with respondents describing it as an attraction that adds value to life in South Melbourne, and one that is of great utility to residents and visitors alike.
- > Public housing residents highlighted that they particularly value **access to public transport, access to local shops and fresh produce, the location near both the city and beach**, and the **sense of community**.
- > Comments from key **stakeholder groups** reflected similar views to general survey respondents and pop-up participants for this question.



Location and physical access

406 comments in total

Proximity to the city (108)

South Melbourne's proximity to the city was one of its most highly valued attributes among respondents. The majority of these comments were simple, making statements such as "close to the city", while a small number of others elaborated on *why* they valued this aspect. These respondents valued the convenience that came with living so close to the city, as well as the lifestyle mix that this brings. A couple of respondents noted that South Melbourne has the benefit of being so close to the CBD yet retains more of a close-knit community feeling due to its smaller scale buildings and slightly quieter pace.

"Quiet living near the city, proximity to shopping and the city for work."

"We can walk to the city."

Access to parks, green spaces, nature, playgrounds, open space (82)

A sizeable number of people valued the parks, open spaces and green space close by. These comments generally expressed an appreciation among respondents for green, open spaces that everyone can enjoy, whether they are passing by, or stopping to enjoy the outdoors or play on a playground. A few examples of respondent comments include:

"Having beautiful green spaces and parks"

"There are also plenty of "pocket parks" and green spaces where people can meet up with their kids or pets."

"Its parks - all within walking distance of its main streets are places to take a rest and a quiet moment."

Close to a variety of local shops (62)

South Melbourne's proximity to supermarkets and retail shops was an attribute valued by substantial number of respondents. Again, comments tended to be general in nature, but where respondents elaborated on their answers, it became apparent that the variety of shops nearby and Clarendon Street in particular were valued.

"South Melbourne is a vibrant area for shopping where every product can be easily found."

Proximity to beach (58)

A substantial number of respondents valued South Melbourne's close proximity to the beach, with a small number of comments noting that this is even better when you consider how close the area is to the city as well.

"Living in a central area that is both close to the beach and the inner city."



Convenience and closeness to amenities (39)

The general convenience of the suburb's location was valued by a considerable number of respondents who made comments such as, "Close proximity to many things" or "Convenience". Several comments noted that South Melbourne is close to everything that one needs, with a few examples below:

"Living in South Melbourne is just so attractive and convenient because of all the local amenities."

"Able to do everything locally. Walk /ride."

"Everything you need in walking distance - no cars required."

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Accessible (16); Access to facilities (13); Close to Botanic Gardens (11); Access to work (8); and Other (9)

Community, atmosphere, and people 218 comments in total

Sense of community and friendly people (79)

A sizeable number of respondents noted that the sense of community in South Melbourne was what they valued most. These comments tended to be quite similar in nature, describing the neighbourhood and its people as "friendly". A few comments that shared more detail include:

"Because the residents of South Melbourne still mostly live-in single households or smaller apartment blocks/townhouse dwellings, you are able to know your neighbours and also the local business owners."

"Formed quite a nice community with fellow parents."

"Feels like a tight-knit community."

Diversity and culture (51)

The diversity and culture found in South Melbourne was a highly valued element for a substantial number of respondents. These comments noted the mix of different people living in the area, including people from a range of cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

"South Melbourne is eclectic - diverse socio-economic demographics."

"Diverse community - love it!"

"Diverse and multicultural communities add to overall community."

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Village feel (20); Safe (19); Atmosphere and vibrancy (19); Quiet and relaxing (11); Attachment and connection to place (9); General praise (6); and Dog-friendly areas (4)



Retail and shopping

200 comments in total

South Melbourne Market (160)

By far the most frequently commented on topic within retail and shopping was the South Melbourne Market, which was highly valued by a very large number of respondents. The majority of these comments were general in nature, with “South Melbourne Market” and “the market” being the most common statements. Comments that included more detail praised the overall atmosphere of the markets, with one respondent stating that they would like the “vibe” of the market to spill out to the rest of South Melbourne. More detailed responses included:

“What I value most about South Melbourne is the market, which is such a major benefit as few municipalities have markets nowadays.”

“The market brings a lot of atmosphere to the area. Having a central almost meeting spot that brings locals and people from other areas is great.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Food and produce (18); Unique and local businesses (17); and Other shops (5)

Urban design and amenity

186 comments in total

Heritage, character and architecture (70)

South Melbourne’s heritage and character architecture were highly valued by a substantial number of respondents. These suggested that the area’s history and the number of heritage buildings that remain give South Melbourne a unique character that is not found in many parts of the city. Comments praised the old architecture and heritage buildings found around the suburb, and highlighted the old shop fronts and verandahs, the Victorian terrace houses, and buildings like the Town Hall and the Gothic Bank.

One respondent commented on the importance of preserving this aspect of South Melbourne’s character:

“There is a historic feel to many of the streetscapes because of the preserved heritage buildings, and these historic buildings are both grand mansions/halls and tiny Victorian cottages. The other historic feature is the many local small laneways and streets used almost exclusively by the local residents. These historic features give it a unique feel - one that is very unusual in Australia and that the council should be very mindful of given the pressure to build modern high-rise office spaces and flats close to the city.”

Low-rise, open skyline (25)

A moderate number of respondents noted that what they valued about South Melbourne was its predominantly low-rise built environment. Respondents reported enjoying having views of the sky and access to sunlight, unobstructed by tall buildings.

“Low-rise buildings that let you see the sky.”

“Seeing the city at night from Clarendon St.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Variety (22); Tree-lined streets (21); Space and low density (20); Wide streets (13); Clean (7); Laneways (5); and Other (3)



Transport

135 comments in total

Public transport (54)

Access to public transport in South Melbourne was valued by a substantial number of respondents, who made general comments such as “public transport” or “access to public transport”. A couple of more detailed comments about what respondents liked about the area’s public transport included:

“Its tram services reach to the CBD, to the lake, to all of our beaches and to other suburbs as well as the neighbouring areas of St Kilda, Albert & Middle Park areas.”

“There is adequate infrastructure and public transport (although transport and traffic is becoming increasingly difficult as the suburb becomes over-developed).”

Walking and walkability (39)

A considerable number of respondents valued the walkability of the area, noting that most of what people need can be found within walking distance.

“The often walking availability of services closeness to many Melbourne facilities such as hospitals, theatres and sporting arenas.”

“Geographical position - everything within half hour walk.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Cycling (15); Transport (13); Parking (7); and Traffic (7)

Hospitality and entertainment

86 comments in total

Cafés and restaurants (60)

A substantial number of respondents stated that they valued South Melbourne’s cafés and restaurants. These comments stated that people value the number and variety of cafés and eateries, as well as the high quality of some of these establishments, and the general café and dining culture of the area.

“Its cosmopolitan food shopping is well covered by the many shops, cafés and eating places.”

“Variety of food outlets and coffee shops.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Pubs and bars (17); Outdoor dining and the Cecil Street temporary closure (6); and Entertainment (3)



Outdoor activities and recreation 46 comments in total

Albert Park Lake (29)

Although located in neighbouring Albert Park, a considerable number of respondents stated that Albert Park Lake was a valued aspect of life in South Melbourne. These comments were not generally detailed, with statements like “lake”, or “Albert Park Lake” being common among this group of comments. A couple of more detailed comments included:

“MSAC and Albert Lake Park are great facilities - it's like having a backyard.”

“The proximity to large parks/green spaces such as Albert Park Lake and the Botanic Gardens.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Community Gardens (7); MSAC - Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (7); and Outdoor recreation (3)

Facilities 46 comments

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Arts (13); Services and social aspects (11); Schools and education (8); Town Hall, town hall precinct (7); Library (5); and Other (2).

Environment and sustainability 4 comments

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Flora and fauna (2); and Climate change and sustainability (2).

Other 6 comments in total

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Other (6).

What residents of South Melbourne's public housing estates like about where they live

Two engagement sessions were held at South Melbourne public housing estates – one at Park Towers on 8 April 2021, and one at Emerald Hill Court on 24 April 2021.

During these sessions, participants were asked, “what do you like about where you live?”. For this activity, participants were given three sticky dots and presented with eight elements about life in South Melbourne (listed below). Respondents were asked to put a sticky dot on each of the top three elements that they liked the most. These eight elements were:

- Access to local shops and fresh produce
- Access to public transport
- Location near city and beach
- Access to parks and open space
- Heritage and neighbourhood character
- Ability to walk
- Ability to cycle
- Sense of community / community feel

Below are two charts presenting the total number of sticky dots allocated to each option during each session (Park Towers and Emerald Hill Court). The elements are ordered from most to least frequently selected.

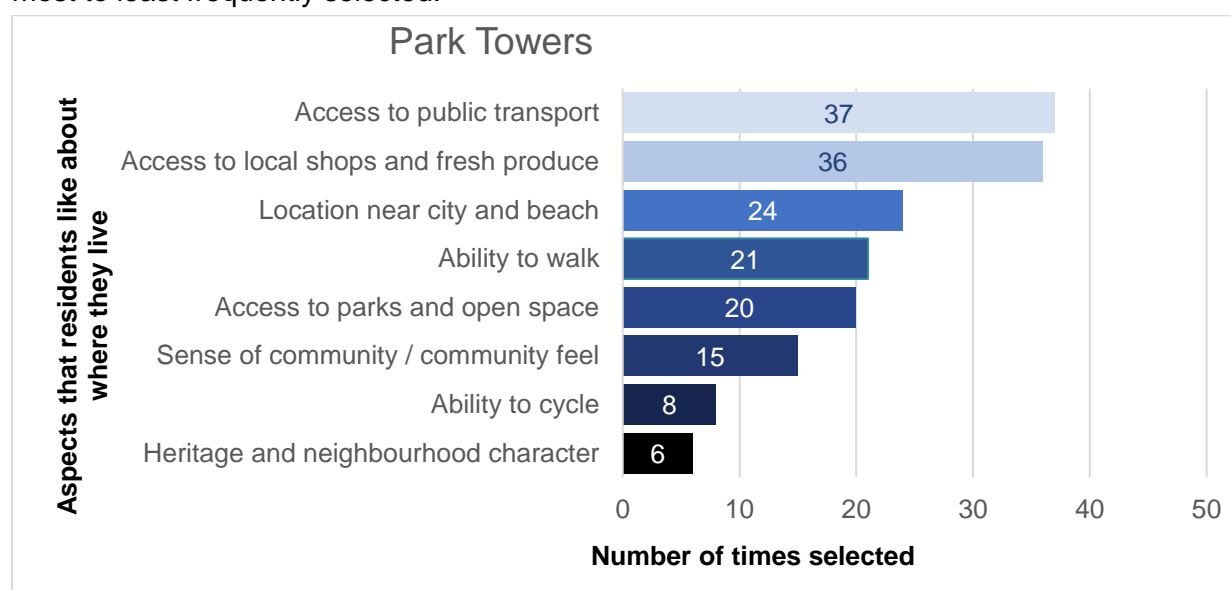


Figure 6: Chart reporting the number of times each local aspect was selected by Park Tower residents as one of the top three things they like about where they live

- ‘Access to public transport’ was most frequently selected as one of the top three most liked elements (selected 37 times) among residents of Park Towers.
- This was closely followed by ‘access to local shops and fresh produce’ (selected 36 times).

- 'Location near city and beach' was the third most popular option among residents of Park Towers (selected 24 times).

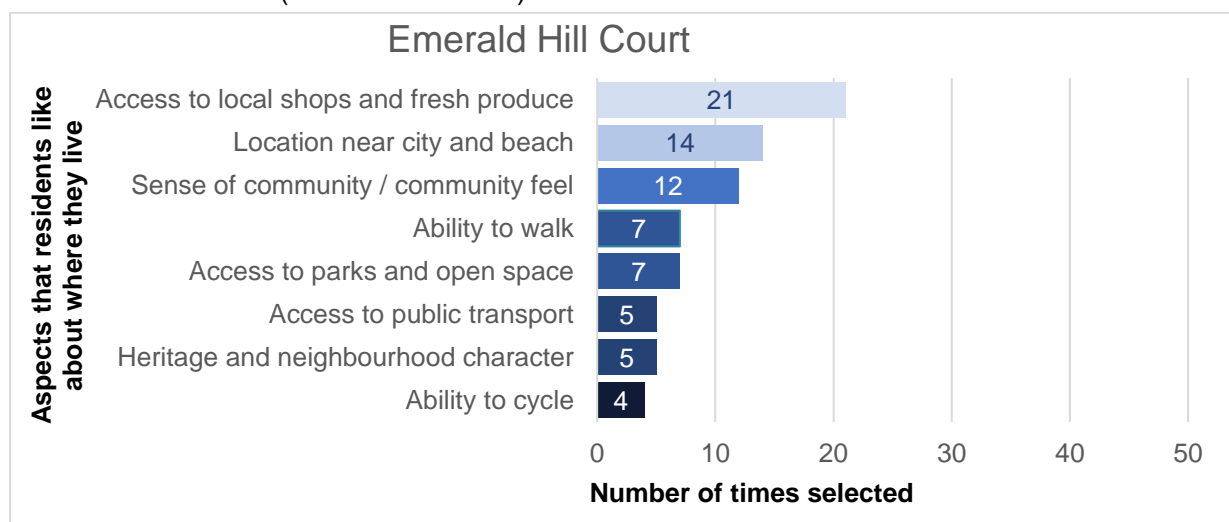


Figure 7: Chart showing the number of times each local aspect was selected by Emerald Hill Court residents as one of the top three things they like about where they live

- 'Access to local shops and fresh produce' was most frequently selected as one of respondents' top three most liked elements (Selected 21 times) among residents of Emerald Hill Court Estate.
- This was followed by 'location near city and beach' (selected 14 times), and 'sense of community / community feel' (selected 12 times).

When the **total** number of sticky dots allocated to each element is combined across both sessions, the final ranking of these elements was:

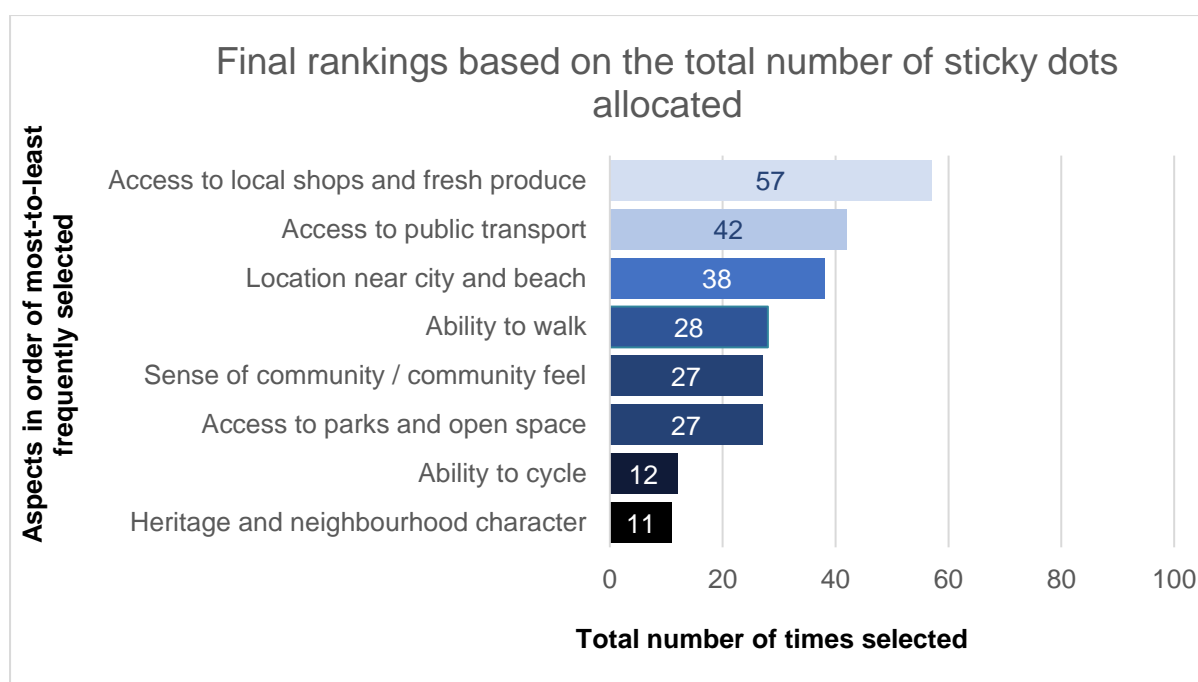


Figure 8: Chart showing the final ranking of the eight aspects, based on the total number of sticky dots allocated to each one.



Question 2 - If you could hold onto three things about South Melbourne to take into the future, what would they be?

Summary

- > The area's **urban design and amenity** was the most frequently highlighted aspect that the South Melbourne community wanted to hold onto. The suburb's **heritage and character** was highly valued, with a large number of respondents noting the importance of this aspect of life in South Melbourne. Keeping the **low-rise, low-density** feel of the area was also important to respondents, who feel that this contributes to the atmosphere and helps create the community they love.
- > Again, **retail and shopping** in the area was also treasured by respondents, particularly the South Melbourne Market, which was prized as an attraction and local asset by a very large number of respondents.
- > **Outdoor activities and recreation** was the third most prominent theme, with respondents describing their love for the abundant parks, open spaces and playgrounds in the area.
- > Comments from key **stakeholder groups** raised similar points to those from survey respondents and pop-up participants, though the comments made by members of the Older Persons Consultative Committee were particularly concerned with protecting the area's historic elements and the general aesthetic of the built environment in South Melbourne, and comments from the Greek Seniors group also called for South Melbourne to stay as it is now.



Urban design and amenity

290 comments in total

Heritage, character, and architecture (138)

Almost half of the comments on the topic of urban design and amenity expressed support for retaining heritage in South Melbourne. Comments were rarely descriptive but convey by volume the importance of this aspect to residents.

Respondents most often simply stated “heritage” or “character” as one of the three things they would hold on to into the future. When other or more detailed responses were given, these included: heritage/period architecture, older buildings, Victorian buildings, beautiful houses, historic houses, and awnings /facades/verandahs.

“Scale of built form and building character.”

“Heritage is very important (historic old buildings).”

“Keep the beautiful houses.”

Low-rise and low-density (86)

A sizeable number of respondents wanted to see low-rise buildings and low-density remain a prominent feature of the South Melbourne urban landscape. This was variously phrased as “low-rise” and “no high-rise”. In addition, “low-density housing” was called for.

High rise developments, and simply “developers/development” were also warned against.

A small number of these respondents noted that it was important to them that sunlight be maintained at a street level, or that they ought to be able to “see the sky”.

“Low density dwellings not high-rise apartment towers.”

“Not too many high-rise developments.”

“Small residential streets so it doesn't become a vertical silo of high-density housing.”

“Limiting building heights.”

Trees and planting in towns (26)

Trees were important to a considerable number of respondents. While several simply noted “trees” amongst the three things they would like to hold on to into the future, almost half used the phrase “tree-lined streets” to convey their admiration for this aspect of South Melbourne.

“The older buildings & trees that line the streets.”

“Tree-lined streets and parks.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Laneways (14); Wide streets (12); Mixed-use, mixed-density (12); and Pop-ups (2)



Retail and shopping

261 comments in total

South Melbourne Market (188)

The South Melbourne Market, or “the market”, was noted by a very large number of people as a feature of South Melbourne respondents wanted to hold on to. In the majority of cases this was stated in simple terms, with little or no description provided. A small number wanted to see it retained in its current form (such as not developed or commercialised).

Those who did provide commentary around their support for the South Melbourne Market noted admiration for it on the following bases: affordable, a social event, not too yuppie, sustainable, a drawcard, and not too commercial.

“The South Melbourne Market as it is!”

“Quaintness of the market.”

“Local amenities such as the South Melbourne market.”

Businesses, shops, and retail (56)

The shops and shopping available in South Melbourne were noted as something to hold on to by a substantial number of respondents. Clarendon Street was also cited in this context – however, in some cases it was not clear whether it was the shopping or the streetscape that was the basis of these comments.

Within these comments, several highlighted that it was the small, local, unique, or independent shops that were appealing. The phrase “strip shopping” was also used frequently to convey admiration for this style of retail offering.

Several comments specifically noted it was the variety, or mix, of retail offerings that was appealing.

“The number of independent shops and restaurants.”

“Ensure the shopping precincts remain active.”

“Retaining Clarendon Street as an “old school” high street.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Food culture and fresh produce (17)

Outdoor activities and recreation

176 comments in total

Parks, open and green spaces, nature, and playgrounds (143)

A large number of respondents wanted to hold on to green spaces such as parks and nature reserves when commenting on what they wanted to see for South Melbourne in the future. People most often simply noted parks, local parks, greenery/green space, open spaces, parkland, gardens, and playgrounds.

While people frequently noted one of these in combination with another, the most common response was “parks”.

“Green space parks and playgrounds for children.”

“Parks - we have so many and it is literally everyone's backyard.”

“The small, important green spaces.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Albert Park Lake (16), Community gardens (10); and Sports and recreation (7)



Community, atmosphere, and people

146 comments in total

Sense of community (39)

A considerable number of respondents valued the sense of community they feel exists in South Melbourne and want to see this retained into the future. This was conveyed in a number of ways, including references to the people, the friendly/kind people, good neighbours, as well as community, community spirit/feel and the sense of community.

“Neighbourhood feel/community.”

“Community - love the vibe.”

Diversity and culture (25)

A moderate number of respondents cited community diversity and the diverse mix of residents as a feature to hold on to into the future. The following aspects of diversity were admired: the interesting demographic mix, migrant population, social mix of residents, and its vibrant and diverse culture.

“Its diversity of population, ages, and ethnicities.”

“The diversity of culture reflected by the residents, business operators and artists.”

Atmosphere and vibrancy (25)

The general atmosphere was praised as a feature to hold on to by a considerable number of respondents. Vibrancy was cited, as well as the uniqueness, the atmosphere generally, and the “chill feeling” and “street life”.

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Village feel (20); Quiet, relaxing atmosphere (12); Safety and security (10); Social and affordable housing (8); and Other (7)

Transport

98 comments in total

Public transport (48)

Public transport was cited by a considerable number of respondents as something to hold onto into the future. Just over half the public transport comments were about the use of this mode in general terms. People advocated for continued public transport services which, when expanded on, were described as accessible, excellent, great, and “needed”.

Just under half of the public transport comments were about rail transportation, that is, trams, trains, or light rail. Respondents wanted to see continued use of trams and light rail into the future.

“Easy access to public transport.”

“Trams/great public transport.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Parking (19); Traffic management and transport links (18); and Active transport (13)



Hospitality and entertainment

74 comments in total

Cafés and restaurants (31)

South Melbourne's range, variety and types of eateries and cafés were praised by a considerable number of respondents, who most frequently stated in simple terms things such as "the cafés", "variety of restaurants", and "café and bar culture". There was also reference to coffee shops, food and beverage and dining in comments.

Pubs and bars (26)

A considerable number of respondents expressed admiration for the pubs in the area, describing them in a few instances as "old school", and appealing for their heritage value. Comments were almost all succinct, and included reference to "pub culture", the buildings themselves, and the "bar scene".

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Entertainment, events, arts, and music (10); and Outdoor dining, including Cecil Street temporary closure (8)

Facilities and services

50 comments in total

Public services, amenities and planning (30)

A considerable number of respondents cited council-affiliated services or other public services as one aspect to hold on to into the future.

This mostly included community spaces/hubs/centres, or places for the community to be. There were several comments in which a non-specified amenity or service was called for, and specific comments were made in support of recycling services, mental health services, a post office, "good" council services", and "sensible" development (such as development that is subject to design outcomes).

Additionally, rates were noted by one respondent as best kept low.

"Spaces for communities to gather."

"Improving the ability of people to use council recycling services such as a shop selling reusable "thrown away items" at the recycle centre."

"Having access to face-to-face interaction with customer service staff at Council offices."

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Town Hall and surrounding precinct (11); Library (7); Education (2)

Location and physical access

36 comments in total

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Walkability (13); Access to beach (11); Convenience and closeness (6); Proximity to CBD (4); and Accessibility (2).



Environment and sustainability **11 comments in total**

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Climate change and sustainability (11).

Other **9 comments in total**

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Other (9).



Question 3 - If you could change three things about South Melbourne, what would they be?

Summary

- > The most commonly identified aspect of South Melbourne that respondents wanted to change was its **transport network**. Problems with **parking** and **congestion** were the main issues raised, as people stated they do not want to compete with other drivers for parking spaces or wait in traffic.
- > Changes to the **community and atmosphere** in South Melbourne were also desired. A substantial number of respondents reported wanting to see changes to reduce incidences of crime and antisocial behaviour. **Community safety** was the primary goal of those comments.
- > A considerable number of respondents wanted to see **changes to public housing** to ensure better support for residents and an increased supply of well-maintained and lower-density housing. The need for more affordable housing generally was also acknowledged.
- > The **urban design and amenity** of South Melbourne was another aspect that was frequently raised in comments about what respondents would change. A substantial number of respondents wanted to see a halt to the influx of **high-density and high-rise** developments in South Melbourne which were viewed as diminishing the liveability of the area.
- > Again, comments made at **stakeholder meetings** did not differ significantly from survey or pop-up comments. Members of the Older Persons Consultative Committee focused their comments on accessibility, noting a need to ensure that older people and those with mobility issues can easily access public transport and navigate public spaces. Conversations with the Multifaith Network raised the need for more community spaces, particularly spaces where people from different faiths and cultures could gather to worship or simply spend time.

Transport

276 comments in total

Parking (102)

A large number of comments were made about desired changes to parking in South Melbourne. The changes that these respondents wished to see included more free parking options in the area, particularly for residents; reducing the cost of resident parking permits; re-evaluating the parking requirements for new apartment buildings to ensure that the influx of new residents will not place undue pressure on existing public parking; increasing the amount of car parking spaces; changing parking restrictions on Clarendon Street; and stopping the free parking at the South Melbourne Market as it “causes traffic chaos” for locals.

A few examples of the comments made by this group include:

“Force new office and apartment buildings to include adequate off-street car parking.”

“Reduce (car parking) rates after 9pm.”

“Not enough (2 hour or more) long term parking - makes it difficult to socialise.”

“Fix resident parking permits - there are more permits than parking spots.”

Traffic management and pedestrian access (84)

A moderate number of traffic management comments related to changes that would improve pedestrian access around the South Melbourne area. This includes comments calling for better use of traffic lights and pedestrian crossings to ensure that pedestrians are able to safely cross streets; calls to pedestrianise more areas around South Melbourne, closing them off to cars; and having more crossing supervisors to ensure that pedestrians are safe.

“Improve traffic for pedestrians with more pedestrian crossings and increased safety at tram stops along Clarendon and Park Streets.”

“Pedestrianise streets near/around South Melbourne Town Hall and library to create a park.”

“Install pedestrian crossing on Market Street outside post office.”

Other comments about traffic management changes that respondents wanted to see mostly related to traffic flow and congestion, with respondents indicating frustration with the number of cars on the road.

A couple of other more detailed or specific comments about traffic were:

“Clarendon Street is congested with traffic – consider a safer set up/configuration with less traffic. There’s lots happening on Clarendon Street, however it’s hard to see what’s happening. Consider only allowing the tram to travel along Clarendon Street, no need to worry about cars. Could be like Bourke Street Mall.”

“Lower speed limit along Ferrars St/Canterbury Road to 40/50km.”

Cycling and cycling infrastructure (40)

A considerable number of comments were made detailing changes to cycling and cycling infrastructure that respondents wanted to see.



These comments included general calls to make the area more cycle-friendly and easier to get around on a bike, as well as calls to improve links and build cycle paths and bike lanes in areas that currently lack them.

“More protected bike lanes - what's been done on Moray Street is terrific. I have also noticed that certain streets (such as Park St) seem to be started to get more traffic as some sort of a cut-through coming off Kings Way, which is not ideal.”

“Better cycle links to CBD and docklands along Clarendon/Spencer streets and Montague St to Docklands.”

“More cycling infrastructure - doesn't connect well into the city from past City Road.”

A couple of comments were made about cyclists riding dangerously, including food delivery riders.

Public transport (33)

Almost half of these comments called for improvements to the tram network, including more trams; larger trams; safer speeds for trams; and improved connectivity on the tram network. Remaining public transport comments suggested that public transport should be prioritised over cars, and that changes should be made to make public transport a more efficient transport option, particularly as the population in South Melbourne grows. Below are a couple of examples of comments made by this group:

“Bus/tram stops should have better shelters/greater shelter - make PT safe and attractive.”

“More public transport options, not just tram.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Other (17)
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Community, atmosphere, people 230 comments in total

Safety, security, crime, graffiti (81)

A substantial number of comments were made by respondents who wanted to see changes to safety and the rate of crime in the area, suggesting better lighting throughout the precinct, more policing, or security cameras as measures to increase people's safety.

A moderate number of these comments discussed feeling unsafe with the number of drug-affected people in the area, particularly on Clarendon Street. These comments about drug use in South Melbourne generally came from the perspective of those who feel unsafe in the streets because of this, though a few comments addressed this as a health issue facing South Melbourne.

Similarly, several comments were made regarding people asking for money on the street. These comments were generally made by respondents who felt unsafe being approached on the street and wanted measures in place to prevent this. Comments made by respondents who wanted more support for vulnerable members of the community and those sleeping rough are discussed in a separate section below.

Some examples of comments made by these respondents include:

“Safety and crime - agencies and authorities should work together to address issues.”



“Monitor and deter anti-social behaviours of problematic individuals in and around Clarendon St.”

“Public drug and alcohol consumption makes area uncomfortable and unsafe.”

“More / better street lighting at night.”

Other criminal and antisocial behaviours were discussed by several respondents, who wished to see lower rates of crime such as cars and homes being robbed, less graffiti, and fewer incidents of street harassment.

Public housing (50)

Of the comments discussing public housing, the majority felt that public housing should be improved to support more people in having better living conditions, while a moderate number wanted public housing in the area limited.

Respondents tended to call for changes to the way that public housing is managed currently, including increased safety measures for residents and those in the areas around public housing estates; better maintenance and upgrades to public housing buildings; lower-density and more attractive public housing; better integration of public housing with other developments, and increased support for those living in public housing. Examples of comments made by this group include:

“Public housing better managed, so it's better for the residents and safer for everyone.”

“Improve/replace the housing commission towers with better social housing.”

“Clean up the public housing - don't let them get run down.”

Those who wanted public housing to be limited cited concerns around anti-social behaviour or felt that public housing buildings, particularly Park Towers, were aesthetically unappealing.

Support for homeless and people in need (29)

A substantial number of comments suggested a desire for more support for South Melbourne's most vulnerable community members, including those sleeping rough or having difficulty finding housing. These comments were mostly similar in nature, making statements such as:

“More affordable housing and social support to END homelessness for good.”

“Provide homeless and disadvantaged people with better housing options.”

One respondent also suggested using existing vacant buildings to create more low-rise public housing to help homeless people in the Clarendon Street area.

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Diversity and culture (13); Community and social events (11); Dog management (11); Affordable housing and living (10); Atmosphere and vibrancy (7); Social equity (4); Village feel (1); and Other (13)



Urban design and amenity

207 comments in total

Maintain low-rise and control development (56)

Changing the approach to new high-rise developments was suggested by a substantial number of respondents who wished to see South Melbourne retain its low-rise, lower-density character. These comments suggested that high-rise developments would have a negative impact on the overall feel and liveability of South Melbourne.

“No more high rises - 8 in area around Coventry Street - causes traffic congestion, parking issues, wind tunnel effect, shadows, and blocks sun.”

“Eliminate high rise residential development, develop people friendly streetscapes and environments.”

“No more high rises, they are okay, but there is enough now and any more would make it more of a dark wind tunnel.”

Several comments specifically discussed apartments, calling for the development of apartment blocks to slow down. One comment, however, suggested that building high-rise buildings in ex-industrial areas as opposed to existing residential areas would be acceptable.

Greenery and planting in towns (52)

A substantial number of comments indicated a desire to change the amount of greenery in South Melbourne, adding more trees, landscaping nature strips, and general green space. These comments suggested that adding more greenery and shade to South Melbourne would improve the streetscape and make it a more pleasant place to be.

“Increase the greenery in the streets which are 90% asphalt. I'd love to see more nature strips and trees added.”

“Plant more trees, especially near South Melbourne Town Hall.”

“Encourage more street gardens, more greenery, don't stifle life using the tag “trip hazard” to justify barren places.”

A few comments also noted the need for this greenery to be properly maintained, including pruning large trees and generally looking after nature strips and other plantings.

Waste management, litter, and cleanliness (41)

A considerable number of comments noted that changes to South Melbourne's waste management, litter and cleanliness could improve the suburb. Around half of these comments noted that respondents saw a problem with litter and dirty streets, which they wish to see cleaned up. Providing more rubbish bins in public places was offered as one suggestion to this problem, as well as Council putting more resources towards keeping the streets clean and well maintained generally.

“South Melbourne could do with an overall clean up. Parts look great & inviting, others look dirty, industrial & shabby. Need a higher emphasis on the presentation of our streets and neighbourhood.”

A small number of comments also suggested that South Melbourne's recycling facilities should be improved, and that more composting stations should be provided in the area. Examples of a couple of issues raised by respondents were:

“The lack of support for people living in mid-high rises that want to compost but can't.”

“Replace public bins with version that birds can't access (we are constantly picking up rubbish in streets as a consequence of birds rifling through rubbish).”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Streetscape amenity (21); Maintain heritage and character (13); Overdevelopment (9); Laneways (5); High density and mixed-use (4); Maintenance (4); and Other (2)

Retail and shopping

121 comments in total

Revitalise Clarendon Street (35)

Revitalising Clarendon Street was a priority for a considerable number of respondents, who called for the restoration of old shop awnings to their “original grandeur” and general beautification of or improvements to the street.

The quality of retail stores and business on Clarendon Street was also raised, with a small number of respondents suggesting that the “calibre” of store offerings and restaurants should be improved. Some examples of comments made by these respondents include:

“A busier Clarendon Street, some more terraces and outdoor dining areas for cafés and restaurants, more social activities.”

“I would like to see a beautification of Clarendon Street to improve the calibre of the businesses and offering. Some design ideas may be needed.”

“Less personal service stores like hairdresser, nail salons and increase the number of quality restaurants on Clarendon.”

South Melbourne Market (32)

Comments about South Melbourne Market were varied, ranging from calls for improved access to the market, including better traffic management in the surrounding area; to concerns that it has become too “touristy”; calls for longer opening hours; and calls for more seating and spaces to enjoy the food purchased at the market. A few other comments made about the market include:

“The market is becoming discretionary hipster, need to ensure meat and veg don't get pushed out for smoothies.”

“Maintain South Melbourne Market as an old style market and reduce food shops.”

“Less gentrification. Changes at South Melbourne market not always for the better.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Vacant shops (23) Increase mix of retail (8); Support for small businesses (6); and Other (17)



Outdoor activities and recreation 71 comments in total

Parks, green spaces, nature, playgrounds, open space (54)

A desire for more public green, open space, playgrounds and parks was expressed in a substantial number of comments. These comments called for more free outdoor spaces for all to enjoy, including well-maintained, sun-safe play equipment and facilities, and more natural green areas. Some of these comments were:

“Need more recreational space, existing parks very heavily used, higher density development will increase demand for open space.”

“Lack of urban forest initiatives, in particular in the east west streets.”

“More parklets and outdoor dining.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Community gardens (9); MSAC-Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (4); Outdoor recreation (3); and Other (1)

Hospitality and entertainment 67 comments in total

Entertainment, events, arts, music (27)

A considerable number of respondents noted that they want to see more arts-related events, activities and installations around South Melbourne. This included suggestions for more art galleries; theatres; cinemas; social events and activities; and interactive public art works. Below are a few examples of the comments made by this group:

“More music venues needed, outdoor eating, multicultural events.”

“South Melbourne is a blank canvas - could establish creative hubs and reflect diverse and multicultural community.”

“Have a rooftop outdoor cinema on market.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Cafés and restaurants (17); Outdoor dining and the Cecil Street closure (14); Pubs and bars (8); and Other (1)

Facilities 52 comments in total

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Services and amenities (16); Community spaces (11); Town Hall and precinct (8); Schools and education (7); Library (7); and Other (3).

Location and access 39 comments in total

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Better pedestrian access (20); Footpaths (12); and Accessibility (7).

Environment and sustainability 12 comments in total

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Climate change and sustainability (10); Pollution (1); and Other (1).



Other

64 comments in total

Council and planning (27)

Council and planning comments were made by several respondents. Several respondents stated that they wanted rates to be reduced, or for the increase of rates to slow, noting that the “sky high” rates are pushing out long-term residents. Remaining comments were varied, ranging from calls for more community engagement opportunities, to suggestions on how effective town planning could resolve issues like businesses moving out of South Melbourne or inappropriate development occurring in the area. A few examples of the comments made by this group include:

“Assist council to develop more responsible, sustainable budgeting practices which demonstrate realistic targets which benefit and value the constituents whom council represents.”

“Many businesses have moved out of South Melbourne as the value of real-estate is more attractive to multistorey offices/housing developments. Planning could encourage businesses to remain and provide employment.”

“Absence of ambition for how major initiatives such as Sturt Street Creative Arts Spine, Domain Metro & Albert Road/Kerferd Road spine Shrine to Bay Trail might both be advocated for and supported to diminish the dividing impact of Kings Way.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Would not change or keep it as it is (15); Grand Prix (8); Other (14)
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Question 4 - What are the three most important challenges you think South Melbourne will face in the future?

Summary

- > Changes to community and atmosphere due to **population growth** were the most frequently discussed challenges that respondents saw facing South Melbourne in the future. People were concerned that **overcrowding** and **high-density developments** will change the character and lifestyle of the area.
- > **Crime and safety** were also considered one of the most important challenges for a substantial number of respondents.
- > **Traffic management and transport** was raised as a concern, with respondents anticipating that increasing traffic would make it more difficult to get around and park cars.
- > Some stronger themes emerged in **stakeholder conversations** around this question. Comments from members of the Youth Advisory Committee, the Older Persons Consultative Committee and the Greek Seniors group all indicated concerns about sustainable development and ensuring that population growth and development do not impact upon the liveability of South Melbourne. The Youth Advisory Committee were particularly concerned with the risks and challenges posed by climate change and highlighted the importance of ensuring development responds to these risks. Other comments from the Older Persons Consultative Committee noted the challenges associated with an ageing population, calling for more aged-care facilities and measures to be implemented to allow older persons to age in place.

Community, atmosphere, and people

360 comments in total

Population growth and overcrowding (82)

Population growth and overcrowding were a concern for a sizeable number of respondents, who saw this as one of the most important challenges facing South Melbourne in the future. Over half of these comments were simple in nature, with statements such as “overpopulation” or “population growth” common.

More detailed comments indicated a general concern that the current lifestyle that residents of South Melbourne enjoy may be at risk due to increasing population figures and the need to shift to higher density living in order to accommodate new residents.

Several of these comments also noted that it is important for resources, services, and facilities to keep up with population growth to ensure that South Melbourne can continue to function as its population grows.

“Taller buildings will result in overpopulation. The increase in density and people will result in additional cars on the road, in turn making it less safe for pedestrians.”

“Increased population. Crowding needs to be managed, adequate resources need to be provided.”

“Encouraging growth, without material impact on existing residents (encourage mid-density residential projects like those around South Melbourne Central).”

“Too many high-rises - too much population growth will cause amenity, traffic, etcetera issues.”

Safety, anti-social behaviour, and crime (61)

Issues relating to safety, crime or anti-social behaviour were raised by a substantial number of respondents. A moderate number of comments mentioned crime, though these were usually general in nature and did not go into much detail beyond “crime” or “increased crime”. Comments about drug issues were similar, of which there were several. The majority of these simply stated “drugs” or “drug use in the area”. More policing or security cameras were suggested as necessary measures to increase safety.

A few examples of more detailed comments about drug, crime and anti-social behaviour related comments include:

“Crime. This has increased over time in cars as these tend to be prime targets at night.”

“Police presence (Palmerston Crescent and Kings Way are particularly dangerous).”

“Empty shopping areas which could lead to derelict areas with an increase in violence/crime.”

Affordability, housing, property (40)

The affordability of living was seen as an important challenge facing South Melbourne in the future by a considerable number of respondents. These respondents expressed concerns about rising property prices, the lack of affordable housing options, and concerns about long-term residents and those with less money being priced out of the South Melbourne market.



“Housing affordability and housing inequality associated with that.”

“High housing prices pushing out long time community members.”

“Providing affordable housing, especially at Fishermans Bend - 50% of housing should be low-cost housing at Fishermans Bend.”

“Better affordable housing options for families.”

Homelessness (19)

Homelessness and the number of people sleeping rough were raised by a moderate number of respondents, who made general comments such as “increased homelessness” or simply, “homelessness”.

A small number of respondents offered slightly more detailed comments, such as:

“House the homeless and encourage purposeful support and inclusiveness.”

“Supporting lower socio economic/homeless population is critical, increased funding for crisis accommodation is required.”

Public housing (19)

Comments about public housing varied, ranging from calls for increased support for those living in public housing, to concerns about the quality of public housing, or social problems or noise issues that were felt to be associated with public housing complexes. Some of the comments received about public housing include:

“Better public housing (fewer rooming houses) so people have a decent place [to live].”

“Balancing public housing and a safe family friendly atmosphere.”

“If people in public housing had to move elsewhere it would affect their mental health and wellbeing. This is why we need to keep public housing in South Melbourne.”

Other topics, fewer than 19 comments: Inclusiveness and diversity (18); Education (17); Sense of community (16); Social equity (16); Affordable living (13); Health services (12); Gentrification (11); Identity and atmosphere (10); Elderly (9); Wellbeing (3); Arts and culture (3); Children and families (3), and Other (13)

Urban design and amenity

291 comments in total

Overdevelopment, high-rises, density (141)

A large number of respondents felt that issues relating to overdevelopment, high-rise developments and housing density would be one of the most important challenge facing South Melbourne in the future.

A considerable number of comments discussed high-rise buildings specifically, while a similar number of comments mentioned housing density. These comments, whether discussing building heights or housing density, generally suggested that respondents did not want South Melbourne's housing density to increase or for more high-rise buildings to be developed in the area due to fears that this would impact the suburb's character and the current lifestyle that South Melbourne's residents enjoy.

"Pressure for density due to proximity to CBD, therefore hard to maintain heritage character."

"Too much high-rise development of chicken boxes."

"Apartments with no street appeal creating dead zones at street level."

A moderate number of other comments raised concerns about the potential overdevelopment of South Melbourne. These comments were similar to those about building height and density and indicated that respondents are wary of developers and their intentions.

"Overdevelopment/unsustainable development."

"Keeping unscrupulous developers away from making South Melbourne an appendix of City Rd and Southbank."

"Imposed destruction of amenities and light by developers who don't live with what they construct."

Loss of heritage and character (59)

A substantial number of respondents commented that maintaining the character of South Melbourne's built environment would be one of the most important challenges for the suburb in the future. These comments suggested that efforts should be made to ensure that renovations and new developments are done in a way that is sympathetic to the suburb's heritage buildings.

"Continuing loss of heritage shop fronts in shopping precinct."

"Degradation of some historic buildings due to lack of funds for restoration."

"Pressure from private homeowners to demolish heritage homes to build ultra-modern blockhouses."

Lack of green space or open space (40)

A lack of green or open space was something that a considerable number of respondents felt would be one of the most important challenges for South Melbourne in the future. This is particularly important as the suburb's population grows, as having green space available is important for quality of life, community feel and community wellbeing. A few comments that discussed the need to ensure there is adequate green space in South Melbourne moving forward read:

"Keeping the green open spaces - safe and enjoyable and healthy."



“Maintaining the greenness (gardens) in the face of housing crunch.”

“Green spaces given the increase in future population. Open spaces for government schools given the current situation and trying to promote vertical schools but have issues using public spaces close by...this will continue to be a problem until the majority of residents and council understand the reality for many local school children who do not have backyards, have no play areas at school and have restricted access in public spaces (during recess and lunchtime).”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Planning and placemaking (17); Developer pressure (4); Mix of housing types (4); Light, views, and skyline (3); Urban design (3); and Other (20)

Transport

196 comments

Traffic management and congestion (90)

Traffic management and congestion concerns were seen as one of the most important challenges facing South Melbourne in the future by a sizeable number of respondents. The comments made by this group were generally simple in nature, with comments like “traffic congestion” or simply “traffic” being common.

Those comments that were more detailed indicated concerns that in the future, a growing population and increased housing density would result in more cars on the road, and therefore more traffic issues.

“Traffic already a problem and will get worse with more high rises.”

“Traffic management in area hasn't adapted to increasing development.”

Parking (48)

A considerable number of respondents raised car parking issues as one of the most important challenges facing South Melbourne in the future. These comments tended to simply state “parking” or “parking issues”. Those that did expand on this noted current difficulties that people experience when trying to find a car park in South Melbourne and argued that these problems will only be exacerbated as the population grows, and as new apartment buildings without off-street car parking provisions are built. A couple of comments that represent the sentiment of this group include:

“Clarendon St traders will suffer due to lack of parking and street traffic.”

“Access to affordable car parking.”

One respondent specifically called for a reduction in the number of car parking spaces, noting that people should be encouraged to use alternative modes of transport. Meanwhile, another respondent called for adequate parking for bikes, scooters, and motorbikes.

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Cycling (17); Public transport (13); Walking (9); Roads and roading (7); EVs and non-carbonised transport (5); and Other (7)



Business and the economy

97 comments in total

Support for local and unique retail businesses (33)

The survival of retail businesses and maintaining a unique retail identity in South Melbourne was seen as one of the biggest challenges facing South Melbourne moving forward. The comments on this topic varied, ranging from suggestions that the lack of variety on main shopping streets is leading to less foot traffic and fewer people shopping, to comments that retail rents are too high in South Melbourne which is why there are so many vacant retail spaces. Increased commercialisation and larger businesses or chains were also seen as contributing to the difficult retail climate.

“Expensive commercial rents push independent retailers out.”

“Viability of the main street retailing.”

“Clarendon St losing relevance as shopping moves online.”

A small number of respondents made general comments calling for support for local businesses, in some cases so that they might survive into the future.

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: South Melbourne Market (20); Mix of retail offering (10); Strip shopping (8); Covid-19 and changed work habits (7); Employment (4); Restaurants, bars, dining (3); Other business and economy (12)

Infrastructure and amenities

53 comments in total

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Waste, cleanliness, and litter (16); General infrastructure (12); General services (9); Council and public facilities (8); Public or community spaces (8).



Environment and risk

49 comments in total

Climate change (30)

A considerable number of respondents highlighted climate change as one of the most important challenges facing South Melbourne. This primarily included reference to climate change generally, but also included a small number of comments about the risks of sea-level rise and, in a few comments, the need for carbon reduction measures. The Youth Advisory Committee were particularly concerned with the risks and challenges posed by climate change and highlighted the importance of ensuring development is responsive to these risks. The effects of climate change were cited in a small number of comments as well, including flooding, heat waves, and severe weather events, and the need to mitigate these.

“Improve sustainability of buildings, decrease energy use (greater population will result in greater energy use), etcetera..., double glazing in new buildings, could there be opportunities for a program to fund the replacement of single glazed windows with double glazed windows, fund renovations?”

“Climate change - achieving net zero emissions by 2050, given federal govt inaction.”

“A response to increased severe weather events caused by climate change is required, for example responses to flooding, increasing amount of permeable surfaces, less concrete, less asphalt, more plane trees, responses to heat waves.”

Other topics, fewer than 25 comments: Sustainability (14); Pollution and the environment (5)

Other

45 comments in total

All topics in this theme received fewer than 25 comments: Council comments (16); Remaining distinct from the Melbourne CBD (11); Other (18).