

# Expanding Cambridge Street Reserve

Stage 2 consultation report  
December 2020





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Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

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# Introduction

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The Victorian Government (Local Parks Program) announced in May that the City of Yarra was successful in obtaining funding for two new pocket parks in Collingwood.

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The expansion of Cambridge Street Reserve to the intersection of Peel Street is one of these projects, allowing an increase in the amount of green space available in Collingwood and improving the solar amenity and functionality of the existing reserve.

The improvement of this space aligns with the recently adopted Yarra Open Space Strategy.

## Community engagement overview

A key aspect of the project is consulting with local residents to obtain feedback to help shape the design of the future space.

In August 2020, Yarra's community were invited to share their views on the opportunity for a park expansion, with a thorough survey. In May, when the funding was first announced, we also invited the community to provide initial ideas and feedback.

When the funding was first announced in May, we informed the community through letter-boxed flyers and fact sheets, letters to property owners, on-site corflute signage, and updates on our social media channels and through e-newsletters.

Community engagement commenced in early August and concluded on 18 September. The objectives were to:

- Raise awareness, among residents, property owners and other stakeholders of the opportunity for Cambridge Street to be expanded.
- Understand the level of community support for an expansion of the reserve and generate ideas on what the City of Yarra could do to improve the site for community use.
- Identify any issues/concerns that needed to be considered/addressed as part of the design.
- To build stronger relationships with local residents and ensure the design reflects their values and priorities.

Because of COVID-19, community engagement took place on the Your Say Yarra webpage, which had both an on-line online survey and discussion forum to inform the community about the project and allow broad community participation.

Approximately 2000 residents and stakeholders were informed about the online consultation by way of a flyer which outlined ways to obtain more information and provide feedback. Signs were also placed on-site informing people about the project and how to get involved.

Sixty-five people completed the online survey, over 13 people participated in the online discussion forum and we received direct feedback from 5 people via emails and phone calls.

# Engagement findings

A summary of the feedback received from the community during the consultation process is provided below. The feedback is structured around the five key questions posed to participants:

- How do you currently use Cambridge Street Reserve?
- If Cambridge Street Reserve were expanded, what would you like to be able to do there?
- What should we consider in the design?
- What are your ideas for this space?
- What else should we consider?

We have analysed the comments to generate themes and prioritise ideas that were presented by the highest number of respondents. We will use this to shape the design, and consider the themes against the existing site conditions, opportunities and constraints.

## Overall feedback

You like Cambridge Street because of the trees and plants in it, as a place to rest and as a space to gather. If you had more space there, you would like to lie on the grass in the sun, enjoy nature, escape the urban environment and have more interactions with your neighbours. You've encouraged us to think big, be forward thinking and provide bold design solutions that will create quality environments for generations to come.

Many respondents supported the development of more open space in Collingwood given the lack of existing green space and the levels of development occurring there, bringing more residents and workers into the area. The majority of respondents supported taking over roadway and parking to expand Cambridge Street Reserve. A smaller number of respondents expressed concerns over the loss of parking spaces and the potential for increased congestion in the surrounding road network if Cambridge Street was closed to expand the park.

### **Q1. How do you use Cambridge Street Reserve?**

A majority of respondents told us they use Cambridge Street to relax, rest and read. In fact many people actually don't use it at all and just walk past it. In spite of the existing playground taking up a large proportion of the park, play was ranked as the second lowest reason respondents use the park.

### **Q2. What should we consider in the design?**

The top themes that emerged were:

- Create a park with a natural feel
- Provide plenty of green space through trees and planting more grassed space
- Link the park to the other two pocket parks and broader area
- Improve the functionality of the park
- Prioritise people, not cars or parking

### **Q3. What are your ideas for the space?**

The top themes that emerged were:

- Diversify the facilities in the park, suggestions included dog friendly spaces, exercise equipment, nature play opportunities and others
- Provide more trees and open grass space
- Improve the solar amenity of the reserve

### **Q4. What else should we consider?**

The top themes that emerged were:

- Close Cambridge Street to traffic so we have a safe space that prioritised people, not cars and parking
- Create more parks in Collingwood instead of more developments
- Consider accessibility and Universal Design principles in the design

# Next steps

## What are we doing with your ideas?

Thank you for taking the time to share your ideas with us. We received intelligent considered responses which show an understanding of the urban fabric of Collingwood. We had a mix of big ideas and principles to develop the space as well as detailed facilities many would like included. We will be using your ideas and feedback to shape the design, function and layout of the expanded park.

The main theme that emerged was the park should be developed as a natural feeling green space with lots of trees, planting and grass. This is to balance the urban surrounds and the quality of the other two parks, Peel Street and Oxford Street Reserve close by.

We will be considering the following as we develop your ideas into a concept plan

- Develop a sympathetic design which reflects the identity and diversity of Collingwood. This includes the Aboriginal history of the area, the industrial character, the LGBTQI+ community.
- Balance the urban character of the area and the other two nearby parks with a more naturalistic feeling park.
- Expand the functionality of the park but consider it against the other pocket parks in the area so they work as a network of spaces.
- Provide more trees and planting, prioritising a native palette.
- Improving the solar amenity of the existing reserve and orientate seating and facilities to make the space more inviting to use across the year.

## What are the next steps?

We will come back to you with a draft Concept Plan that you can comment on in March 2021. There will be further opportunities for you to provide feedback on this plan and shape the final space.

We will also be undertaking further traffic analysis over the coming months. In February 2021 we plan on collecting traffic data and developing more detailed recommendations in relation to traffic and parking. This may depend on the extent to which traffic conditions have stabilised during the COVID recovery.

## What level of influence will you have?

Your feedback will shape the space and any decisions around the final design.