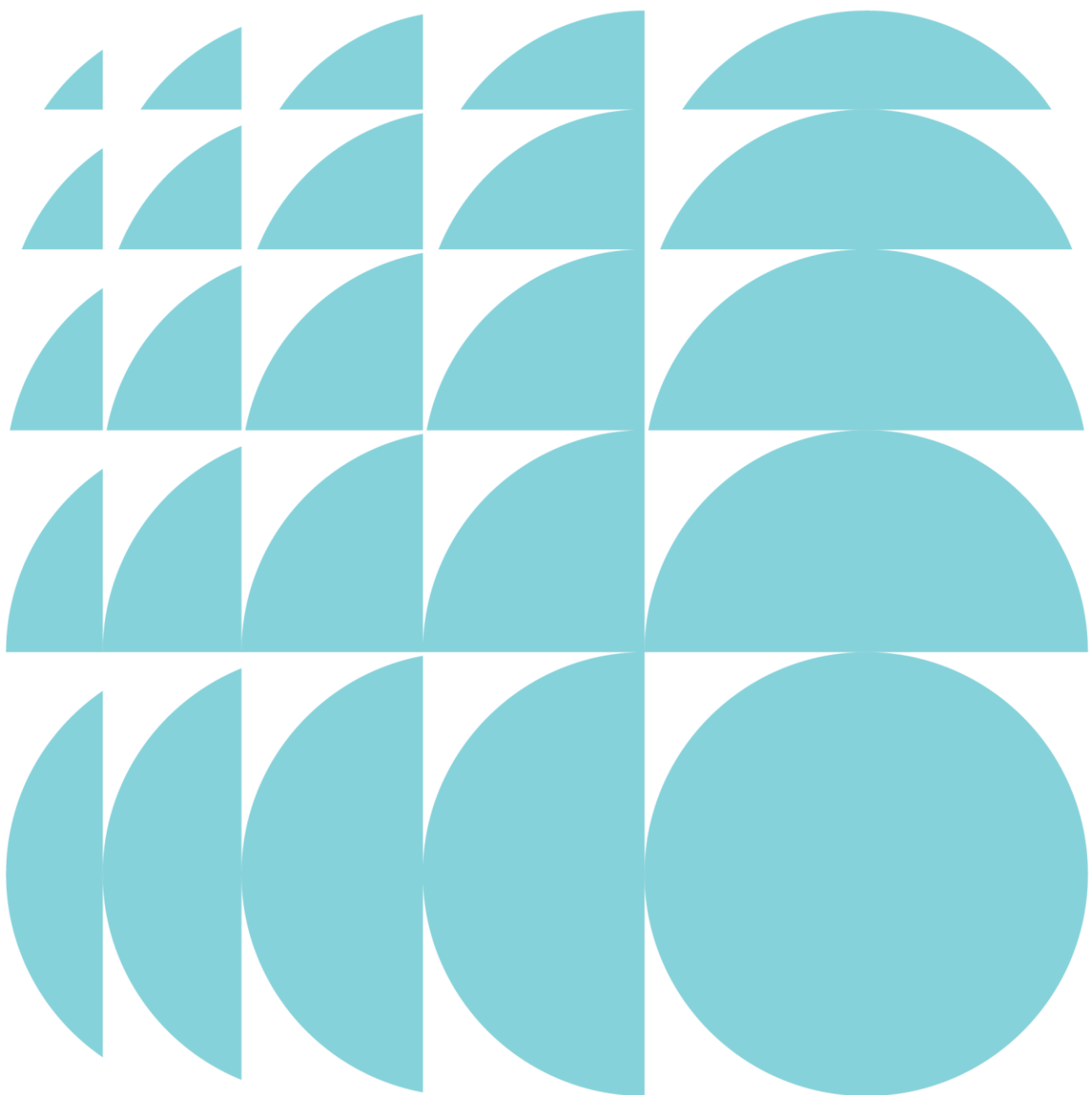


Engagement Summary

Submitted to Darebin City Council

October 2021 | [3210054](#)



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1. Executive Summary

Darebin City Council engaged Ethos Urban to lead the engagement component of the Heidelberg Road Corridor Planning project, for the areas of the Corridor that fall within their municipality (Darebin side). The municipality on the south-eastern side of Heidelberg Road is the City of Yarra. The Darebin side of the road was the focus of this engagement.

This document reports on the promotional and engagement activities undertaken between May – August 2021 in relation to the future of the Heidelberg Road Corridor (Darebin side), including proposed planning changes and the vision set out in the Draft Local Area Plan (LAP).

1.1 Summary of Engagement

A range of promotional activities were undertaken to promote the project and the opportunity for community to have a say, including:

- A dedicated “Your Say” project page on Council’s website
- Information posters displayed locally in the Preston Library
- Five social media posts, which reached 29,132 people
- A letterbox drop to 1,500 properties and the 140 landowners/occupiers that were identified as being directly impacted by the proposed planning control changes.

Ethos Urban delivered the following engagement activities:

- Online survey: Ethos Urban prepared an online survey that was finalised and released by Council on its *Have Your Say* website.
- Two online information sessions: participants could hear information about the project and ask questions.
- A pop-up session: to promote the project and the opportunity to participate in the survey.

There were a total of 300 participants in the engagement activities, which includes:

- A total of 246 respondents (including full or partial completion) of the online survey:
 - of the respondents, 99 people identified as living in the Heidelberg Road Corridor
 - 14 people identified as business owners within the Heidelberg Road Corridor
 - 29 people identified as a visitor to the Heidelberg Road Corridor.
- A total of 47 people registered and 42 people participated in the online information sessions:
 - of the 47 people who registered for the online information sessions, 47 people identified as local residents, while 11 people identified as a visitor and 9 people identified as a local business owner.
- A total of 42 people participated in the pop-up session.

1.2 Key Findings Snapshot

Overall, engagement for this project highlighted a diverse range of opinions and questions participants had regarding the proposed planning control changes to the Heidelberg Road Corridor. Participants provided input on the proposed planning control changes, and the potential impact on the Heidelberg Road Corridor and the surrounding community.

The key issues raised by participants included:

- **Built form controls:**
 - Some participants expressed support for development along Heidelberg Road that was appropriately scaled, sustainable and of a high quality - provided that traffic congestion, parking and safe active transport could be managed.

- Many participants raised concern that the proposed planning controls that allowed for increased building height and form would negatively impact the amenity of the surrounding area, with overshadowing and ‘wind tunnels’.
- Of the options proposed, the most supported height limits were 4 and 5 storeys, rather than heights between 6 and 8 storeys.
- Current residents questioned how increased building height would impact amenity and their enjoyment of living in the area – of concern was overshadowing, impacts to public open space and privacy.
- Some participants were concerned that this would result in a scale of development which they considered inappropriate for the area. Participants believed that this would influence the character of the Heidelberg Road Corridor and negatively impact their wellbeing.
- Participants overall strongly supported mandatory height limits rather than discretionary height limits, as it was thought developers would ‘take advantage’ of discretionary heights.
- **Zoning changes:**
 - Over a third of respondents support or strongly support changing the industrial zoning to Commercial 2.
 - Over a third of respondents supported or strongly supported re-zoning Fort Knox to Commercial 3.
 - Generally, the majority preferred a mix of uses (commercial that allowed for some residential development and the continuation of industrial uses that currently exist), to allow for a diversity of activities, providing the character of the area wasn’t significantly changed.
 - Some respondents thought the proposed zoning changes would result in negative impacts to their properties and the character of the Heidelberg Road Corridor area.
 - Respondents who were against the proposed Commercial 2 Zone thought it could result in an oversupply of office spaces (regarded as unnecessary due to changed ways of working due to the pandemic) or price small businesses and creatives out of the area.
- **Traffic and parking congestion:**
 - Participants were concerned that the increased density of development would result in increased traffic congestion within the Heidelberg Road Corridor.
 - Participants said there was a need for new developments to provide for all the parking needs of their residents to ensure that the surrounding residential streets would not be responsible for providing space for car parking.
- **Heritage Overlay:**
 - Overall, there was support for the proposed Heritage Overlay on the identified significant sites.
 - Some participants were displeased that the proposed Heritage Overlay would impact their property. These participants expressed a concern that this would cause them financial loss due to the potential devaluing of their property.

2. Introduction

Darebin City Council engaged Ethos Urban to lead the engagement component of the Heidelberg Road Corridor Planning project, for the areas of the Corridor that fall within their municipality (Darebin side).

The engagement aimed to provide opportunities for community and stakeholders to contribute to the overarching vision and directions for the future of the Heidelberg Road Corridor (Darebin side) and the proposed planning response, articulated within the Draft Local Area Plan (LAP) and proposed planning controls.

Purpose of this Report

This document reports on the engagement undertaken between May 2021 – August 2021 to support the Heidelberg Road Corridor planning project. Its purpose is to provide a summary of key feedback and insights received throughout this engagement period.

2.1 Project Context

The Heidelberg Road Corridor Planning project seeks to develop planning controls to strategically manage growth and development change for land currently zoned for Industrial or Commercial uses along Heidelberg Road (the Corridor) in the City of Darebin and the City of Yarra.

The project in part responds to new development on the former Amcor Alphington Paper Mill (APM) site, located in the Corridor (Yarra side). A Development Plan to transform the APM site to a mixed-use Precinct was approved in 2015, and number of other major redevelopment proposals have been lodged with Yarra and Darebin Councils since, and there has been community concerns about the scale of development applications.

A significant amount of strategic work has been undertaken over the past 16 months by Yarra and Darebin City Councils to understand the existing context of Heidelberg Road in terms of planning controls, development applications, built form and existing street conditions. This work identified key issues and opportunities and informed the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan. This Local Area Plan sets a common vision with strategic planning objections and actions, providing the shared strategic framework for subsequent work.

Darebin City Council undertook strategic investigations including a Built Form Framework, an Economics and Land Use Study, and a Heritage Study and consulted with the community on its proposed vision for the Corridor to attain a better understanding of their aspirations for the Corridor and the appropriate planning response.

3. Engagement Overview

3.1 Engagement Objectives

Engagement with the community took place between May and August 2021 to inform a planning scheme amendment later in the year.

The following objectives guided the community engagement process:

- to convey the vision for the future of the Corridor (Darebin side), as proposed in the LAP
- to propose options for and seek feedback on the scale and form of buildings that would be facilitated by the proposed design controls, and the reasoning for them
- to seek feedback on mandatory and discretionary building heights
- to communicate the proposed heritage controls and where they would apply and seek feedback on these controls
- to propose options for and seek feedback on the proposed land use zone change, along with the implications and reasoning.

3.2 Scope of Engagement

The scope of engagement was guided by the Heidelberg Road Corridor Planning project's Engagement Strategy, with communications focused on the key issues for which Council was seeking community and stakeholder feedback. For example, the website material clearly articulated that planning controls on the City of Yarra side of the Corridor are a non-negotiable in the consultation on the Darebin controls.

The following table outlines the items that were considered within and outside the project's scope of engagement:

- **Negotiables:** Negotiable items are those that are not bound by legislative or statutory requirements and can be influenced, or changed, as a result of feedback and ideas explored throughout the engagement process.
- **Non-negotiables:** Non-negotiable items are the elements of a project, or externalities, that cannot be changed or where Council has no ability to change/influence.

Table 1 Negotiables and Non-negotiables

Negotiables	Non-negotiables
Vision for the Corridor The LAP will establish an overall Vision for the Corridor and strategic directions.	Development pressures The presence of development pressures resulting from population growth and change and economic activity in the Corridor and broader region.
Economic Development Initiatives The LAP will consider how to attract business to the corridor and generate employment opportunities.	Proposed controls for Yarra side of the Corridor City of Yarra will undertake a separate engagement process
Traffic and parking The LAP will consider parking needs and ways to improve vehicular movements and minimise conflicts.	Residential land uses No changes are proposed for the residential sites within and abutting the Corridor.
Pedestrian and cyclist movements The LAP will consider how to improve accessibility for active transport modes and connections to nearby residential uses and parklands/	Fairfield Rail Spur Planning for the Fairfield Rail Spur will be undertaken through a separate process.
Heritage interpretation Some sites have been earmarked for Heritage designation; however, the nature and extent of these controls is subject to stakeholder feedback.	Development of an LAP Darebin and Yarra Councils have determined this strategic document is necessary. Its content is subject to stakeholder feedback; however, the project will ultimately deliver an LAP.

Negotiables	Non-negotiables
Public Transport The LAP will consider how services may be improved in the Corridor.	Planning response and built form controls Darebin have determined that a planning response and design controls are necessary for the Heidelberg Road Corridor, however the detail (such as proposed building heights) will be subject to stakeholder feedback.
Commercial and industrial land uses The LAP (and proposed zoning changes) will consider whether to rezone land currently zoned for industrial and commercial uses or to retain the existing industrial 3 zoning.	
Preferred built form and design The LAP will consider preferred built form and design for buildings in the Corridor and potential planning controls to achieve this.	
Preferred building siting and setbacks The LAP will consider preferred siting and setbacks for buildings in the Corridor and potential planning controls to achieve this. Consultation will also include seeking community preferences for building and street wall heights and mandatory vs discretionary provisions.	

3.3 Engagement Timeline

The engagement process occurred from May 2021 until September 2021. Table 2 summarises the achieved timeline of engagement.

Table 2 Project Timeline

Project Stage	Timing
1. Advertising and Promotion	May 2021
2. Engagement Activities	May – August 2021
3. Reporting	August – September 2021

3.4 Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in changes to components of some engagement activities - they moved to occur in an online forum rather than face to face. This allowed engagement activities to be delivered safely whilst still ensuring the project progressed with community input.

4. Summary of Engagement Activities

4.1 Summary of Approach

The community engagement approach, including activities, timing, and collateral were designed in collaboration with Darebin City Council.

4.2 Participation in engagement activities

This section reports on rates of participation, respondent demographics and other observations from the engagement activities undertaken. A total of approximately 300 participants contributed to the engagement activities. Participation is summarised below in Table 3.

Table 3 Participation in engagement activities

Activity	Participants	Timing and location
Online survey	246 participants ¹	Open online between May and August.
Online information sessions	Session on the 6 July: 9 participants Session on the 13 July: 33 participants	Occurred between 6pm and 8pm via Zoom on both dates
Pop-up session	42 participants	Occurred at Fossette Café (737 Heidelberg Road, Alphington) on the 29 th of June between 8:30am and 2pm.
		Total: 300

In addition to the planned engagement activities, thirteen email submissions were received. A summary of the issues raised is included in the Appendix. Where these submissions contained clear indications about matters addressed in the online survey, this feedback was incorporated into the survey analysis findings to ensure the breadth of views submitted was represented in this report.

Participant Demographics

Participants from across the three engagement activity types had the following characteristics:

- The majority of participants' relationship to Heidelberg Road was as resident
- The most common age bracket for participants was 50 and 59 years
- More than half of participants were women.
- Over 83% did not speak a language other than English at home
- Over 89% did not report having a disability
- No one identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Refer to the Appendix for further detail on participants' demographics.

4.3 Promotion of engagement

Advertising and promotional activities were launched in May 2021. Details regarding the reach of promotional activities and number of participants in engagement activities are provided in the following sections.

summarises the reach of each component of promotional activities.

¹ Of the 246 surveys collected, 143 were fully completed, whilst 73 were only partially completed. The request for respondents to provide identifying information at the start of the survey meant the bulk of the survey drop offs were near the start of the survey.

Table 4 Promotional Activities

Promotion Activity	Reach
Social Media (Facebook posts)	Five posts (22 nd of June, 2 nd of July, 12 th of July, 22 nd of July and the 2 nd of August) with <u>29,132 total views</u> . 1,218 total post engagements ²
Letter drop	1,500 letters distributed to properties within approximately 200m of Heidelberg Road on the Darebin side 140 affected landowner/occupiers received a personalised letter
Poster and factsheet display	Displayed in Preston Library
Project website	Provides links to information sheets, the online survey and a Council contact

Social Media

From June to August, five posts were made on the City of Darebin's Facebook page. The posts asked for input from the community on the Heidelberg Road Corridor project and provided a link to the survey page.

Table 4 provides an overview of the social media activity on the City of Darebin's Facebook page. Figure 7 in the Appendix depicts the Facebook web page which can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/cityofdarebin>.

Letter Drops

Tailored letters were sent directly to approximately 140 landowners and occupiers who were identified as being potentially affected by the Heidelberg Road Corridor project. They also received a document summarising the project (shown in Figure 2) and a translated document. A letterbox drop was undertaken to 1,500 properties living within 200m from Heidelberg Road on the Darebin side. Each letter contained a factsheet (shown in Figure 2) and a translated document.

Poster and Factsheet Displays

Factsheets were displayed at Preston Library between 27 of July and 5 August. The physical distribution of factsheets was limited by various lockdown measures due to the COVID-19. Figure 9 in the Appendix depicts the factsheet distributed by Darebin City Council. The factsheets can be accessed at:

<https://www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/heidelbergroadcorridor>

Website

A webpage was created on the Darebin City Council website that provided details of the Heidelberg Road Corridor project. The webpage provided access to technical and other documents to assist in the community understanding the project, and how they could be involved in engagement activities. The webpage offered project information, an indicative timeline, answers to FAQs, details on opportunities to become involved, a link to the factsheet developed for the project, and the link to complete the online survey. Figure 8 in the Appendix depicts the webpages that can be accessed at <https://www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/heidelbergroadcorridor>.

² A post engagement is any interaction with the Facebook post, including likes, comments, reactions, and link clicks.

5. Key Findings

This section summarises the key findings from the engagement. Further data is provided in the Appendix. The key findings were:

1. Built form controls

- Some participants expressed support for development along Heidelberg Road that was appropriately scaled, sustainable and of a high quality, provided traffic congestion, parking and safe active transport could be managed.
- Many participants raised concern that the proposed planning controls that allowed for increased building height and form would negatively impact the amenity of the surrounding area, with overshadowing and ‘wind tunnels’.

2. Zoning changes

- Over a third of survey respondents supported or strongly supported changing the industrial zoning to Commercial 2.
- Over a third of respondents supported or strongly supported re-zoning Fort Knox to Commercial 3.

3. Traffic and parking congestion

- Participants were concerned that the increased density of development would result in increased traffic congestion within the Heidelberg Road Corridor.
- Participants said there was a need for any new developments to provide for all the parking needs of their residents to ensure that the surrounding residential streets would not be responsible for providing space for car parking.

4. Heritage Overlay

- Overall, there was support for the proposed Heritage Overlay on the identified significant sites.
- Some participants were displeased that the proposed Heritage Overlay would impact their property and were therefore against it.

The following sections provide an overview of the findings from each engagement activity.

5.1 Online Survey

The following section summarises the results from the online survey.

Support for key outcomes and objectives

Overall, the majority of participants generally supported the key outcomes and objectives for the proposed planning control changes for the Heidelberg Road Corridor in the Local Area Plan, as shown in Figure 1. The most common response to all outcomes was support or strong support, with only small number not supporting the outcomes.

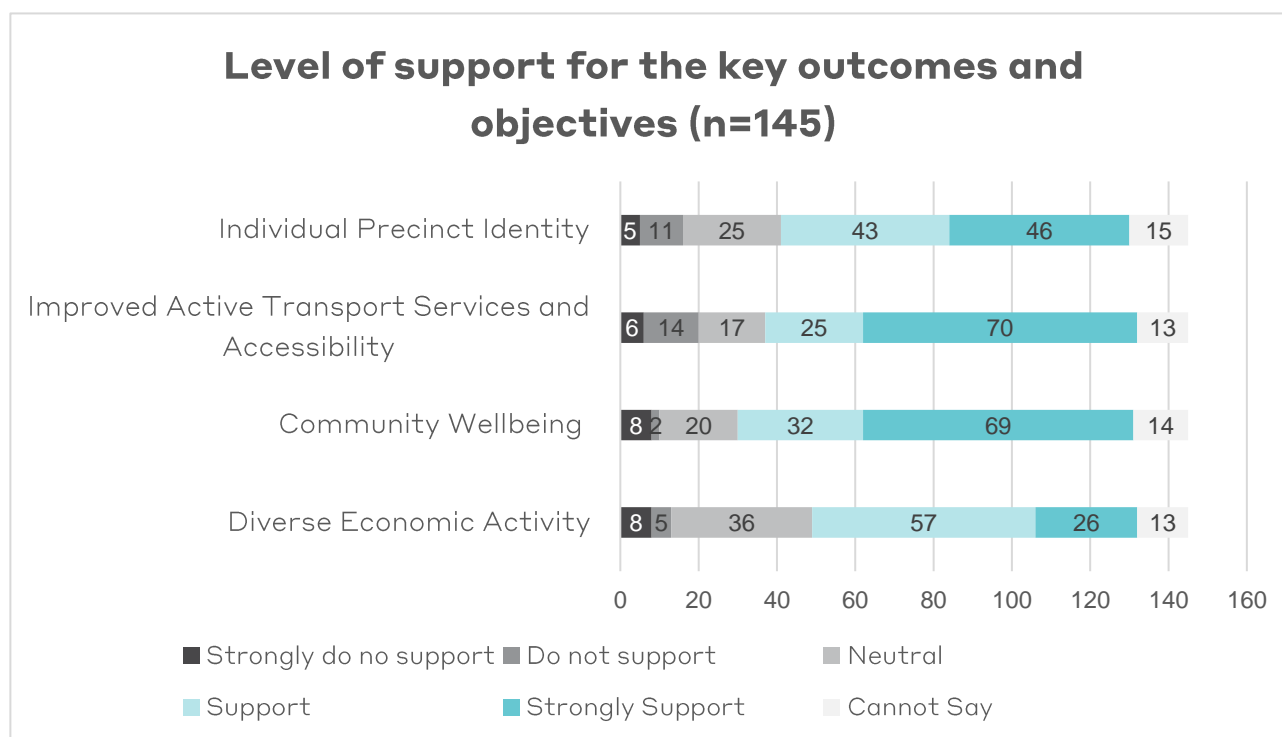


Figure 1 Level of support for the key outcomes and objectives

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about the vision, objectives and outcomes. The analysis of these responses is available in the Appendix.

Support for re-zoning industrial land to other employment zones

The majority of respondents supported changing some of the zoning within the Heidelberg Road Corridor, as shown in Figure 2. Of the 145 respondents, over a third supported rezoning all existing Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z) sites to Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z). Of the 145 respondents, about a third were supportive of the rezoning of the Fort Knox Storage site to Commercial 3 Zone (C3Z).

However, equally there was some ambivalence or opposition to this, as almost another third opposed or were neutral on the zoning changes. The most common response to retaining the industrial zone was 'neutral', suggesting the majority don't have a strong connection to the current uses.

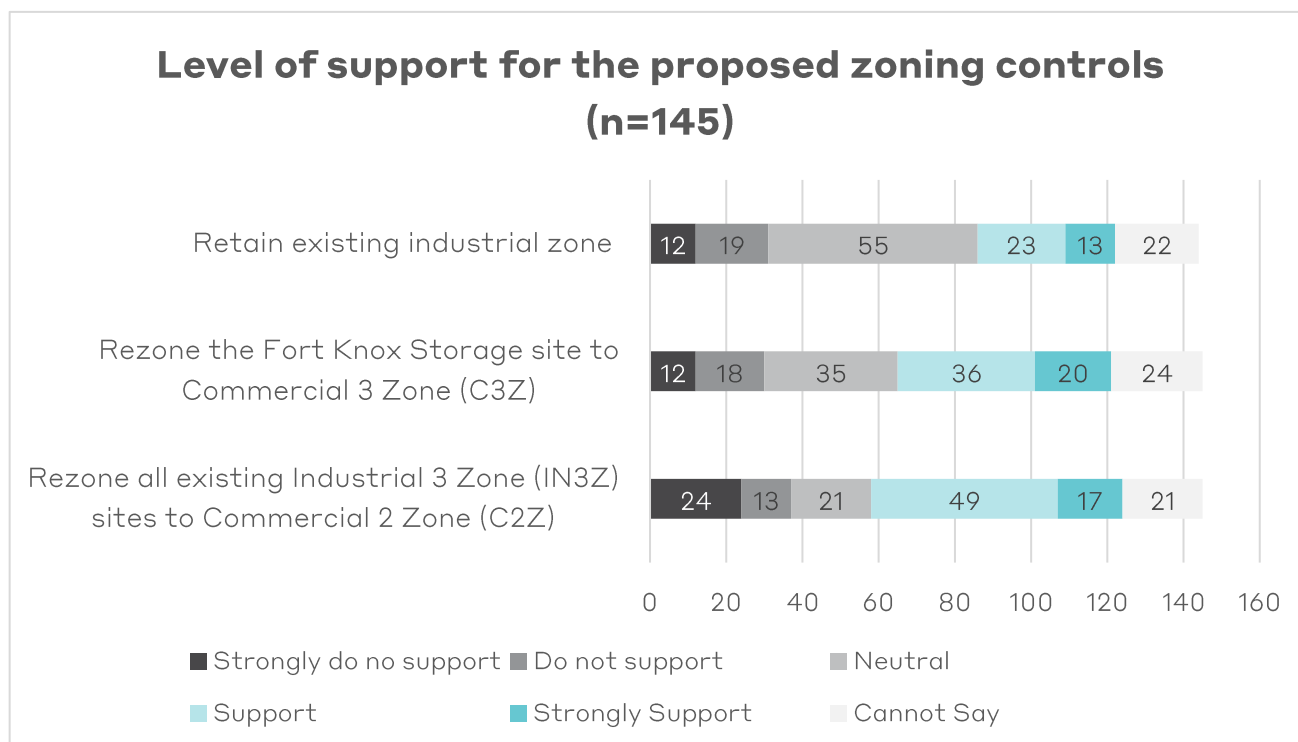


Figure 2 Level of support for re-zoning industrial land to other employment zones

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about the proposed zoning changes – the analysis of these responses is shown in the Appendix.

Support for building height controls

Of the 145 respondents, the majority displayed a preference for a proposed height limit of at least 4 or 5 storeys, as shown in Figure 3. Of the 145 respondents, 63 people strongly did not support a proposed 8 storey height limit, 60 people strongly did not support a proposed 7 storey height limit and 52 people strongly did not support a proposed 6 storey height limit. In comparison, 23 people did not support a 4-storey height limit and 33 people did not support a proposed 5 storey height limit.

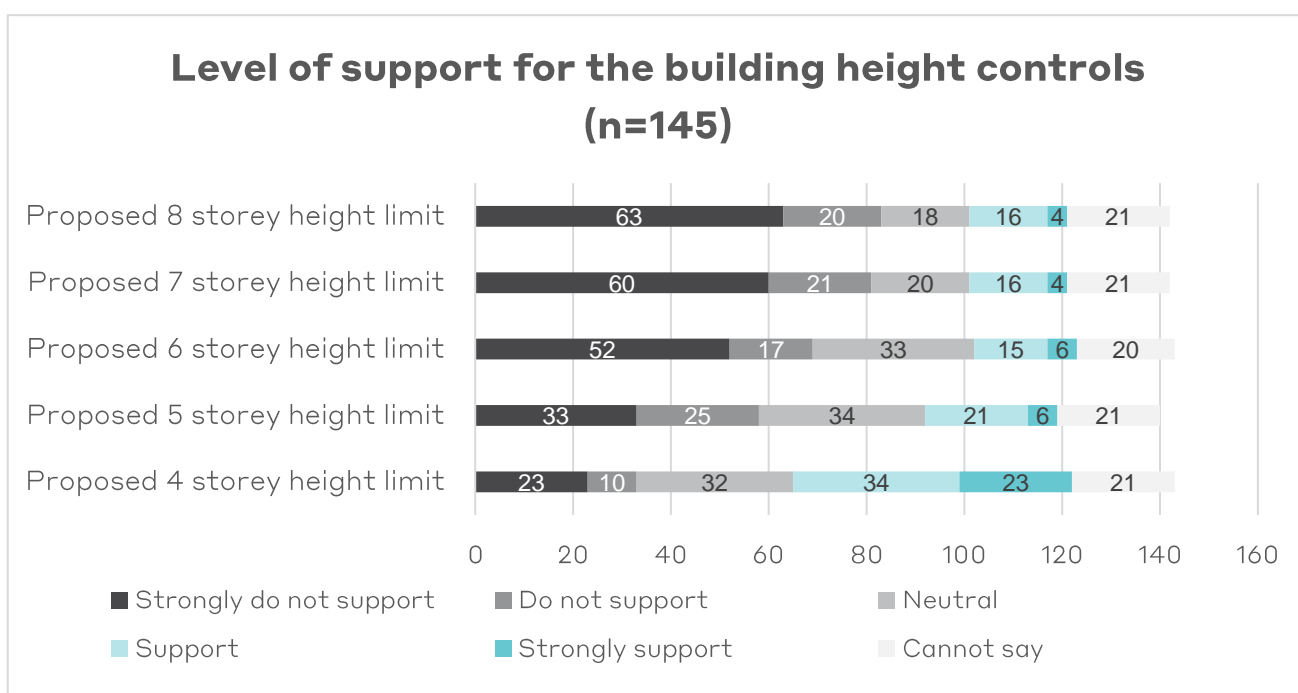


Figure 3 Level of support for height controls

Respondents expressed support for mandatory height controls (compared to discretionary heights) and the proposed front, side, and rear setback controls. Of the 145 respondents, 64 people supported that the proposed building height controls are mandatory, and 63 people supported the proposed front, side, and rear setback controls.

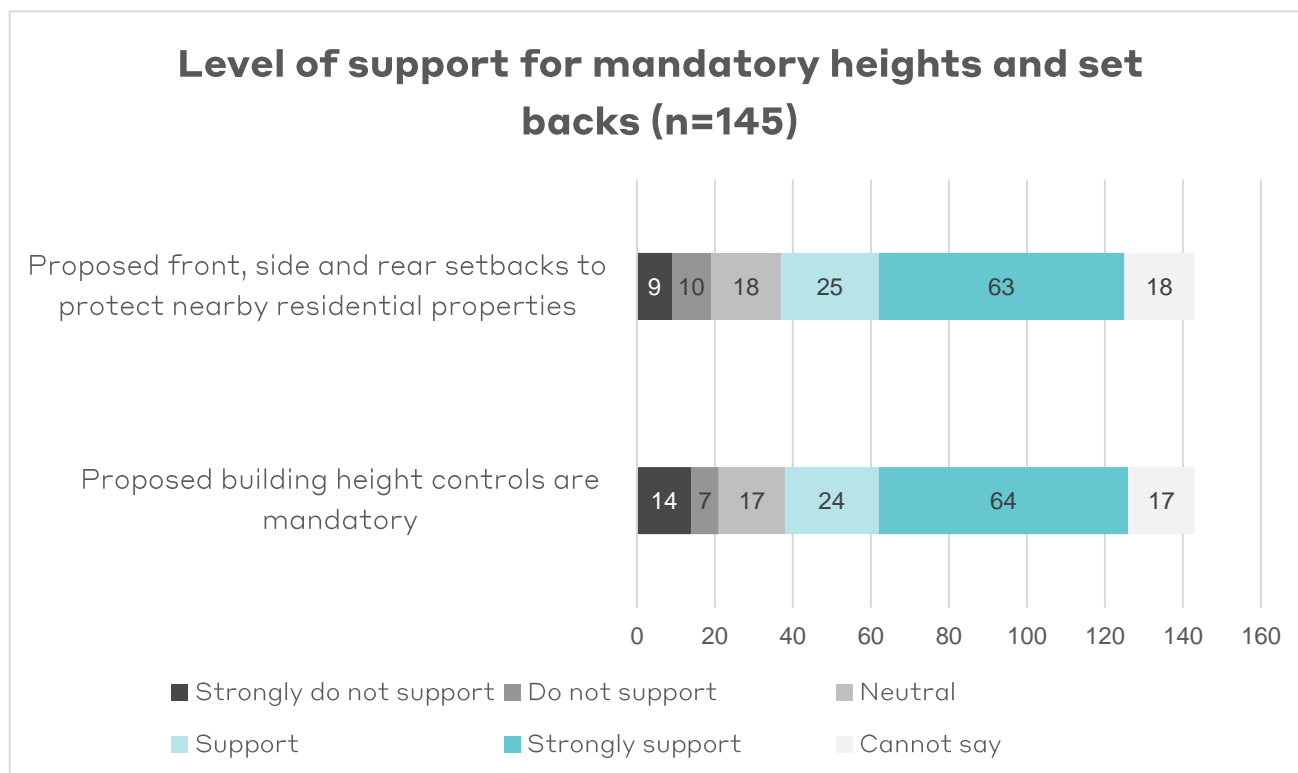


Figure 4 Level of support for mandatory heights and setbacks

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about height controls - the analysis of these responses is shown in the Appendix.

Support for Heritage Overlay

Of the 145 respondents, 54 people strongly supported applying a Heritage Overlay to identified significant sites. However, 20 people strongly did not support the proposed Heritage Overlay, as shown in Figure 5.

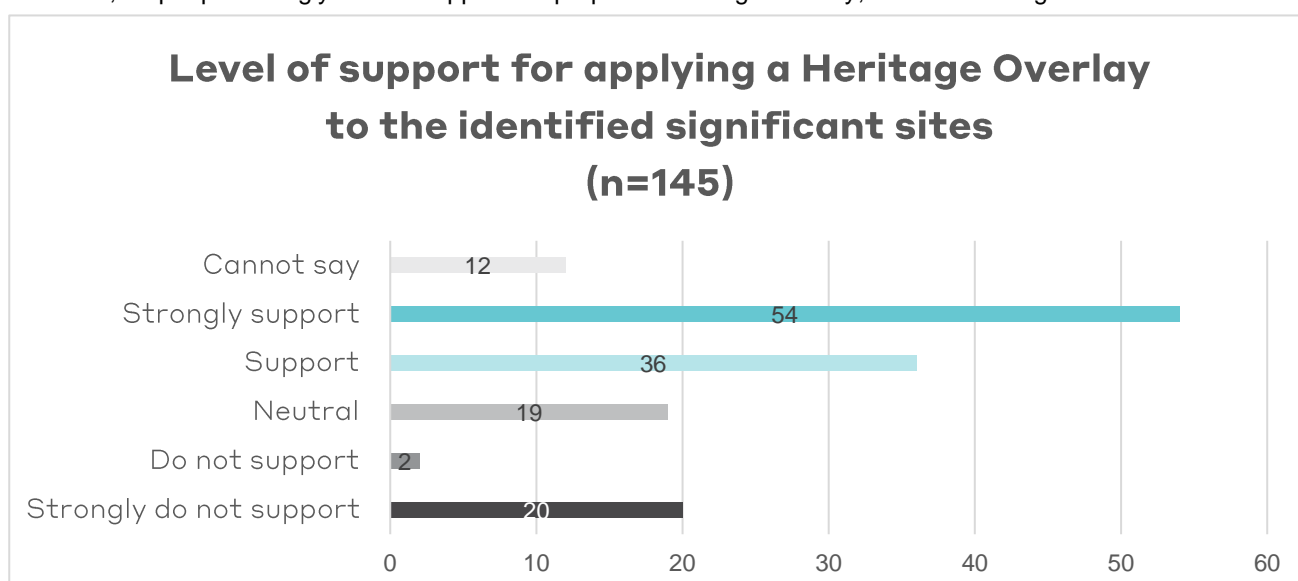


Figure 5 Support for heritage overlay

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about the heritage overlay – the analysis of these responses is in the Appendix.

5.2 Pop-up Session

The primary purpose of the pop-up session was to generate interest in the project and assist in directing people to the online survey and the information session. A summary of the pop-up session is provided in the Appendix.



Figure 6 Pop up session

5.3 Online Information Sessions

The online information sessions aimed to provide detailed project information and allow one-on-one conversations with the project team in a forum that allowed attendees to ask questions and gain a better understanding of the different components of the project. A summary of the discussions in the online information sessions is included in the Appendix.

5.4 Email submissions

As a result of the engagement and communications activities, Council officers received 13 email submissions. The issues raised in these submissions have been summarised in the Appendix.

6. Next Steps

The next steps include:

- Present the Engagement Summary to Council and consider how community and stakeholder feedback will shape the Heidelberg Road Corridor project
- Incorporate community feedback into the Draft Local Area Plan document for the Heidelberg Road Corridor.

7. Appendix

7.1 Project collateral

This section shows all the project communications collateral.

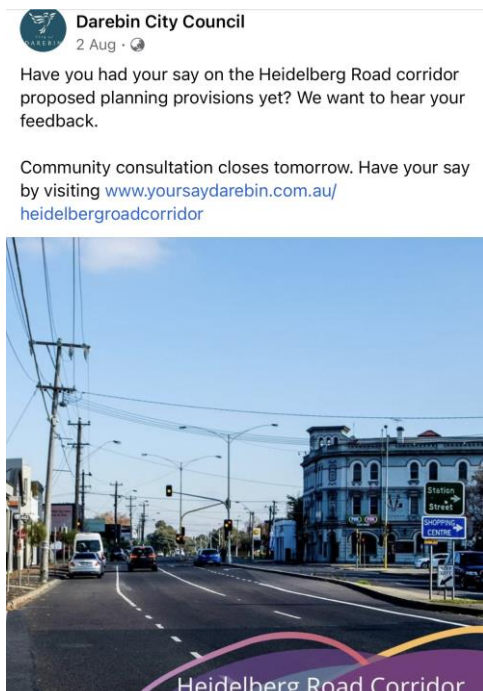


Figure 7 Example of Facebook post

Heidelberg Road Corridor - Local Area Plan and Built Form Framework

Heidelberg Road forms the boundary between the City of Darebin (north side) and the City of Yarra (south side). To protect the local amenity, Darebin City Council and Yarra City Council have developed the overarching draft Heidelberg Road Corridor Local Area Plan which sets strategic direction for the future of the corridor.

Presently there are no particular design controls or height limits for new development on Heidelberg Road. This project seeks to implement planning provisions to guide future development and provide more certainty for the community and landowners.

Council is now seeking your feedback on planning options for Heidelberg Road to help shape future building design and land use controls (on the Darebin side only).

What has happened so far

Heidelberg Road is an established employment precinct. The project includes the review of industrial land and the suitability of the zone when considering how to best support future jobs within the corridor.

Darebin Council has assessed the land currently zoned for industrial and commercial uses on the north side of Heidelberg Road and is considering planning options informed by these assessments.

The technical studies used to inform Council's options and the Local Area Plan are available to read in the document section to the right of this page:

- [Draft Heidelberg Road Corridor Local Area Plan](#)
- [Heidelberg Road Economics Report](#)
- [Heidelberg Road Corridor Built Form Framework](#)
- [Heidelberg Road Heritage Assessment](#)

What is happening now

Proposed Planning Considerations

Project timeline

- December 2019**
Preparation of Local Area Plan
- February – June 2020**
Develop Built Form Framework and review industrial land use
- April 26 2021** - Council resolved to seek community views
- June 2021** – Undertake community engagement
- August - September 2021** – Consider the findings of engagement, and potential adjustments to the proposed planning approach
- Late 2021** – Council Briefing to communicate the findings of engagement, and the recommended planning approach
- Late 2021 - Early 2022** – Commence preparation for a planning scheme amendment

Who's listening

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Acting Senior Strategic Planner
Darebin City Council

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Translation and National Relay Service

Please note, automatic translations are provided as a guide only and may not be accurate.

Select Language ▼

Figure 8 Project webpage

Proposed Planning Approach

SUPPORT MORE LOCAL JOBS

We are considering rezoning the existing industrial land to the Commercial 2 Zone and Commercial 3 Zone (one site only) to attract a wider range of jobs, while still restricting residential uses.

Alternatively, we could retain the current zoning. This still allows jobs to grow, but new office developments must seek permission for the change of use, as well as the building design.

We want feedback on whether you support the rezoning being considered or prefer to retain the current industrial zone.

INTRODUCE BUILDING CONTROLS AND GUIDANCE

We are considering introducing building height limits, setbacks on commercial land and heritage overlays for some properties in the corridor.

Building, street wall heights and overshadowing controls that are being considered, as shown on the map below. Side and rear setbacks will minimise visual bulk and protect neighboring dwellings.

Council is considering whether building heights should be discretionary or mandatory building height limits (mandatory controls cannot be varied).

We are seeking your feedback on the proposed design controls, particularly around preferred maximum building heights.

PROTECT LOCAL HERITAGE

Seven properties were identified as having local heritage significance, and a Heritage Overlay is being considered.

We want your feedback on whether you support protecting the local heritage.

LEGEND

- CONSIDER CHANGE TO COMMERCIAL ZONE 2
- CONSIDER CHANGE TO COMMERCIAL ZONE 3
- HERITAGE OVERLAY

BUILDING HEIGHT

- 8 STOREYS
- 7 STOREYS
- 6 STOREYS
- 5 STOREYS
- 4 STOREYS

The Heidelberg Road Corridor Project

Heidelberg Road forms the boundary between the City of Darebin (north side) and the City of Yarra (south side).

Redevelopment of the former Alphington Paper Mill site (APM) will transform the Heidelberg Road Corridor and the type of business and development it attracts.

Currently there is no maximum building height or design guidance for either side of the road, which could see tall buildings approved.

To protect local amenity, Darebin City Council and Yarra City Council have worked together to create an overarching vision for the Heidelberg Road Corridor to guide future development. Each Council is also separately pursuing building design controls in their planning schemes. Darebin Council has now assessed the land currently zoned for industrial and commercial uses on the north side of Heidelberg Road and is considering planning options.

The technical studies used to inform Council's options are available to read online at: www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/heidelbergroadcorridor

We are seeking your feedback. Have your say on the planning options for Heidelberg Road to help shape future building design and land use controls (on the Darebin side only). Council will consider your feedback and prepare a summary to be reported back to Council later in the year. A future Planning Scheme Amendment will provide a further opportunity for consultation.

Timeline

- 2018- Redevelopment of APM site
- 2019- Darebin and Yarra analysis of Heidelberg Road, prepare Local Area Plan (LAP)
- 2020- Darebin undertakes technical studies for north side of Heidelberg Road
- May- July 2021 Darebin seeking community feedback on planning approach (north side only)
- Late 2021 Darebin considers community feedback
- Early 2022 Darebin prepares planning scheme amendment
- Mid 2022 Darebin consults (exhibition) on proposed planning scheme amendment

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waters.

Council respects and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' values, living culture and practices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have had and continue to play a unique role in the life of the Darebin municipality. Council recognises and values this ongoing contribution and its significant value.

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Speak your language
T 8470 8470

العربية	Italiano	Soomali
ગુજરાતી	Македонски	Español
हिन्दी	नेपाली	اردو
	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	Tiếng Việt

Have your say

- Attend a Drop-in Sessions to be held at Fairfield Community Room, located at 121 Station Street Fairfield on: Saturday 19th June, 1pm to 3pm and Monday 22nd June, 6pm to 8pm or a
- Pop-in session in front of Fossette Café, located at 737 Heidelberg Rd, Alphington on Wednesday 23rd June between 8.30am to 10.30am and 11.30 to 1.30pm
- Provide a response via our Survey by visiting our [yoursay page](http://yoursaypage). Submissions close on June 25th at 5pm.
- Visit our website at www.yoursaydarebin.com.au/heidelbergroadcorridor
- Email us at planningservices@darebin.vic.gov.au
- Call Council's Strategic Planning Unit on 9 470 XXX.

Timeline

- 2018- Redevelopment of APM site
- 2019- Darebin and Yarra analysis of Heidelberg Road, prepare Local Area Plan
- 2020- Darebin undertakes technical studies for north side of Heidelberg Road
- May- July 2021 Darebin seeking community feedback on the Planning (north side only)
- Late 2021 Darebin considers community feedback
- Early 2022 Darebin prepares planning scheme amendment
- Late 2022 Darebin consults on proposed planning scheme amendment (exhibition)

Figure 9 Factsheet and summary sheet

7.2 Participant Demographics

Relationship to Heidelberg Road

Of the 219 participants who provided this information, the most common connection or relationship to the Heidelberg Road Corridor was as a local resident.

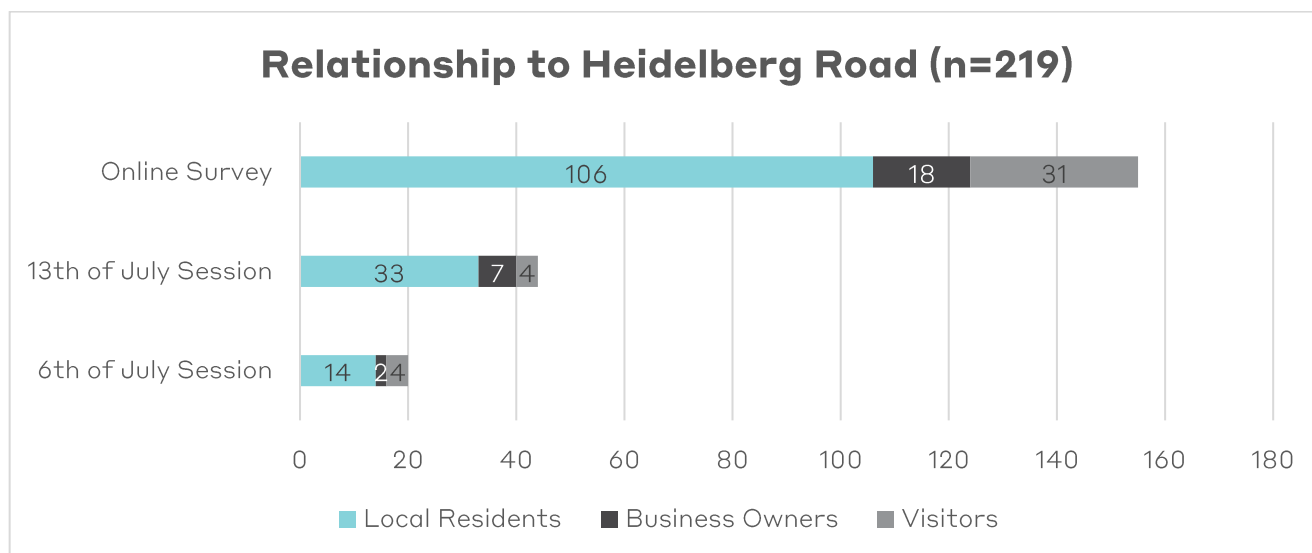


Figure 10 Relationship to Heidelberg Road

Age of participants

Of the 181 participants who provided this information, the most common ages were between 30 and 59 years.

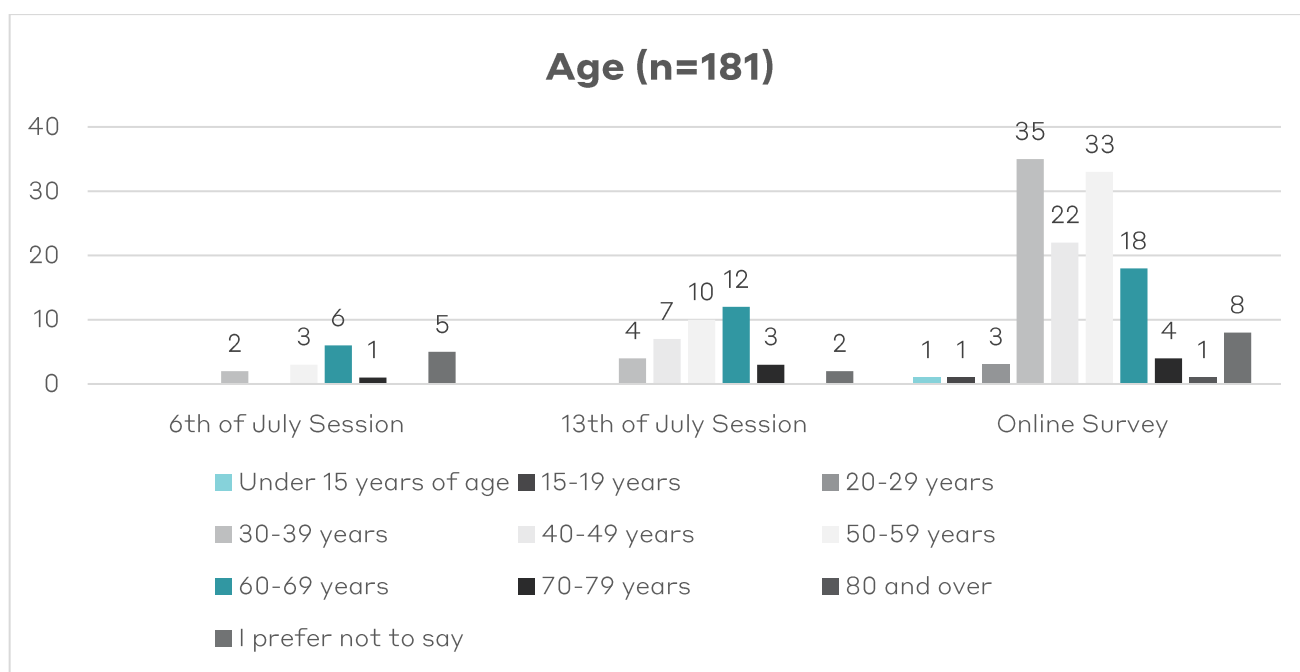


Figure 11 Participants' age

Gender

Females are over-represented among participants, as shown in Figure 12.

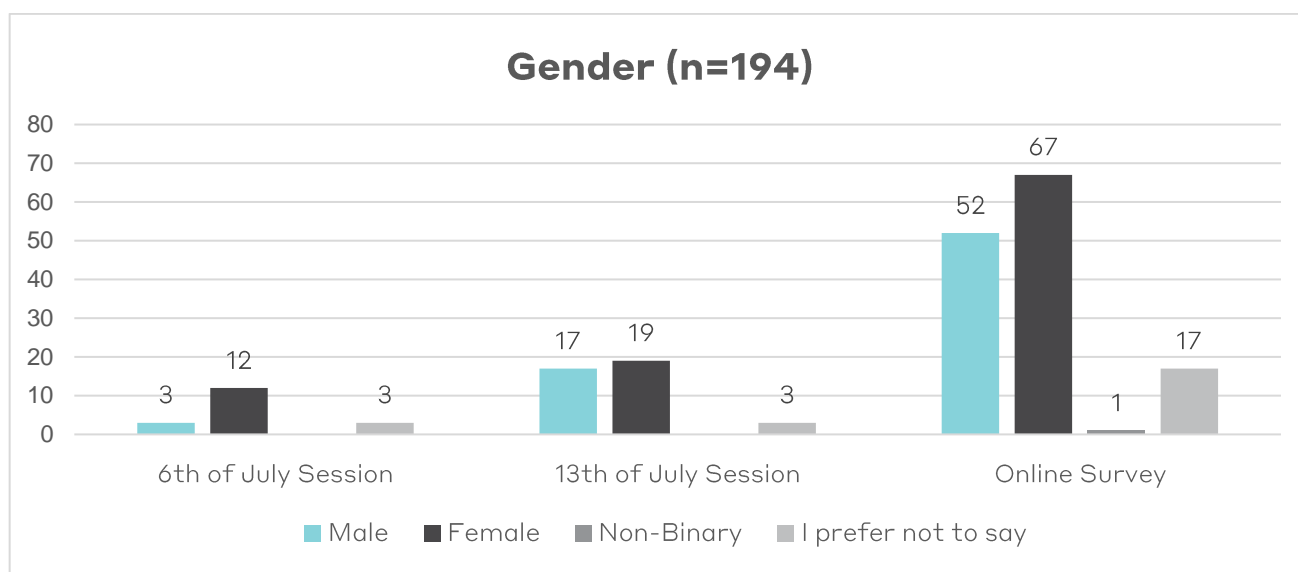


Figure 12 Participants' gender

Disability

As shown in Figure 13, over 83% did not speak another language other than English at home. The most common response to the language spoken at home other than English was Italian (5 responses).

Speaking a language other than English

As shown in Figure 14, over 89% of respondents did not identify as having a disability. The most common language spoken other than English was Italian (5 respondents).

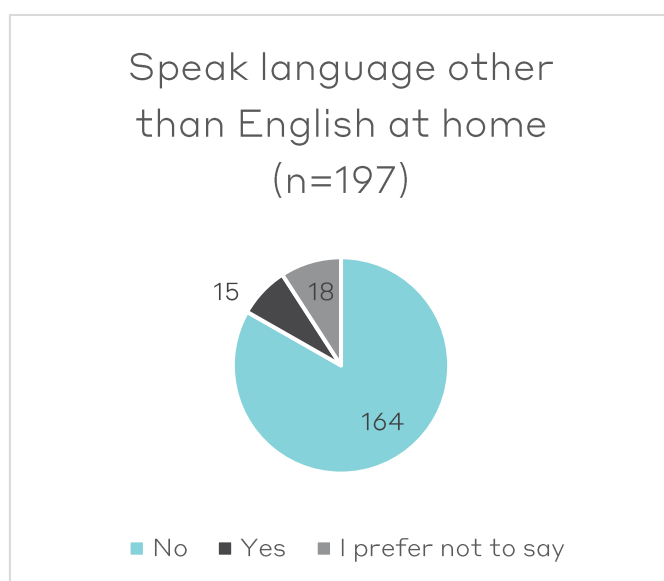


Figure 13 Survey respondents who speak a language other than English at home

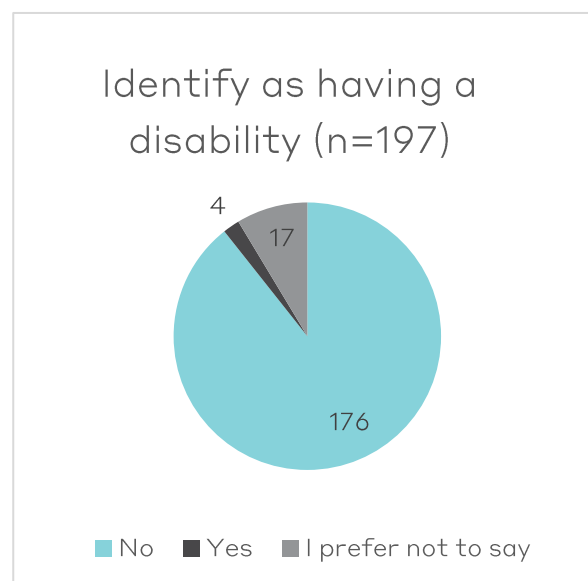


Figure 14 Survey respondents who identify as having a disability

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Of the 164 responses over the survey and information session, over 96% (159) of respondents did not identify as an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander, and the rest preferred not to say.

Online survey

In addition to the demographic data detailed above across all engagement activities, additional data was available from survey participants.

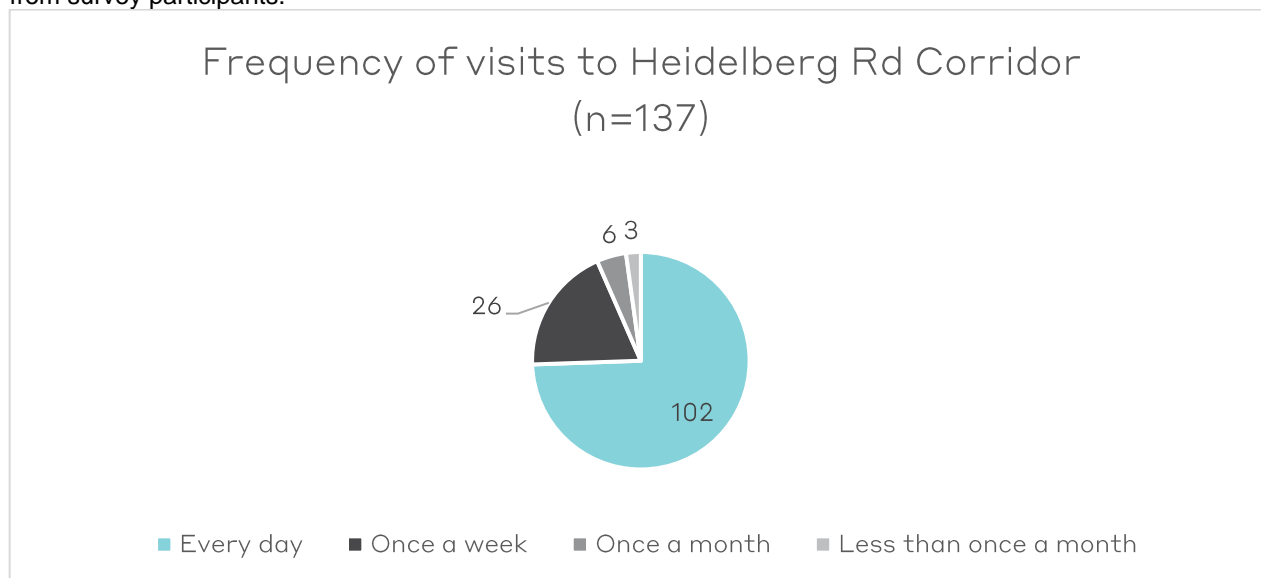


Figure 15 Survey respondents' frequency of visiting the Heidelberg Road Corridor

As depicted in Figure 15, of the 155 respondents of the online survey, 75% visit the Heidelberg Road Corridor every day, while 19% visit once a week, 4% once a month and 2% less than a month.

Pop-Up Sessions

A pop-up session was conducted by Ethos Urban at Fossette Café (737 Heidelberg Road, Alphington) on 29 June between 8:30am and 2pm. Two consultation team members, in addition to Council staff, attended the session, in which passers-by received colour-coded stickers corresponding to if they were either a City of Darebin resident, a City of Yarra resident or a resident of another Council and asked to identify how often they visited the Heidelberg Road Corridor, their connection to the Heidelberg Road Corridor and what aspect of the Heidelberg Road Corridor was of most interest to them by placing their stickers in the corresponding box.

There were 42 people who participated in the pop-up session. Within the pop-up session, 39 factsheet, 26 surveys and 9 summary documents were distributed.

Online Information Sessions

Two online information sessions were conducted by Darebin City Council and the consulting team on 6 and 13 of July 2021. Each session went for an hour and was held on the video communication platform Zoom. There were 18 people who registered for the session and 9 participants at the session on the 6th of July and 42 people who registered and 33 participants at the session held on the 13th of July.

The online information sessions were facilitated by Ethos Urban, while Darebin City Council presented information on the Heidelberg Road Corridor project. Participants were also provided with an opportunity to ask questions and discuss components of the project.

7.3 Online Survey - Engagement Findings

Support for key outcomes and objectives – free text responses

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about the vision, objectives and outcomes after indicating their level of support. The following key themes were identified from the 62 responses:

- Protect the neighbourhood character and keep the area as it is (18 comments)
- Enhance the provision of safe active transport (16 comments)
- Strict height limits and 'appropriate' development only (15 comments)
- Protect and enhance the environment and natural elements of the area (14 comments)
- Traffic congestion on Heidelberg Road means further development can't be supported (13 comments)
- Need more regulation of parking on residential streets and 'rat running' on residential streets to avoid traffic on main road (10 comments)
- The area needs improved public transport frequency and service options (8 comments)
- Less cycling infrastructure (7 comments), of which most related to removing the temporary bike lanes
- Diversify the area and encourage mixed uses (7 comments)
- Disjoint between the vision of plan and the actions proposed (6 comments)
- Protect the heritage in the area (4 comments)
- The plan's outcomes and objectives are vague (4 comments)
- Respect and protect Indigenous cultural heritage (2 comments).

The following quotes from respondents give a sense of the range of comments:

'Inner-city Northcote is a cosmopolitan, vibrant and diverse area of the city that has a rich ethnic history. We want to ensure we preserve what is special and why people want to live, work and play in this area.'

'Stronger active and public transport. Heidelberg Road is currently a traffic nightmare and very difficult and unpleasant to walk or ride and the bus is very bad. Needs better buses and trains and make the bike lanes permanent.'

'The biggest issue is the need to be mindful that this is a low-rise area and that development along the road should be no more than three stories high - full stop. There is enough high rise going up now and we do not want a wind corridor forming.'

'Frequently travelling Heidelberg Road, I realise it is a historic track, not a planned road which connects Heidelberg to the city. The many remaining grand homes and early shops all the way to the original Darebin Bridge Hotel attest to its significance... It also flanks the Yarra River which is a non-replaceable valued asset for residents, wildlife and the environment... Please preserve the green spaces along the Yarra close to the city.'

Support for re-zoning industrial land to other employment zones – free text responses

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about the proposed zoning changes. The following key themes were identified from the 53 responses:

1. High value placed on the current character – with suggestions of protecting the area as it is now (15 comments), and that any development should be in keeping with local character (7 comments):

Respondents referenced both the existing residential character and also the industrial heritage as things they valued, and typically did not want any zoning changes to occur. Some respondents were concerned about changes to the feel of the area and the impact on amenity and property values with zoning changes. Respondents expressed concern about large apartment buildings and overshadowing of existing residences.

'Preserving the Industrial area is paramount in preserving the area's character.'

'Our building and surrounding properties/area already has an amazing artistic culture and community that has been strong for a long time now. My partner is a florist and I am a photographer, and many of the members that live in our building have likeminded areas of expertise... I can't see the logic in having the Fort Knox storage site zoned as commercial 3 to create more of an artistic area when that already exists in our very own building.'

'Suburban areas should not have any buildings higher than 6 floors. When Gov't introduced 'urban activity centres' many years ago, we were told tall buildings would only be in very limited areas. These buildings create shadows everywhere and make suburbs like dark slums.'

2. Mixed opinions about commercial development – concern about commercial development from some (11 comments) versus support for an increase in commercial development from others (11 comments):

Some comments referenced not supporting any increase in commercial operations due to perceived likely amenity impacts, while others did not support a Commercial 3 zoning but would be supportive of a Commercial 2 zoning (noting that only Fort Knox site is proposed to be rezoned to CZ3).

'The reason the current businesses are operating is there is a proven need for them in this area. Creating commercial zones with residential use will put the already busy streets off Heidelberg Road under pressure to be used as car parks for businesses and residences.'

'I believe Council are targeting the wrong area for future commercial growth, you need to reconsider what commercial growth will be expected with the current pandemic and beyond. It is becoming more apparent that more and more people are working from home, the requirement for office block type environment should not be the current plan.'

'A possible change to Commercial 2 in Precinct 1 is preferable as it will have less impact on abutting residents... Any proposal to rezone to C3Z will be vehemently opposed by myself and all other local residents as it will negatively affect our amenity, create unmanageable density, traffic hazards and parking issues.'

However, some respondents did support an increase in commercial development with caveats on what is allowed, while others saw the commercial potential in the area that changes in zoning could create.

'The zoning should encourage more interactive ground floor spaces. I don't think this area is suitable for large office style developments.'

'Fort Knox is a waste of space, and that could be a cool area, there are already good cafes around. Rezoning here aligns well with the strategic direction (Plan Melbourne) for our city, as Alphington Papermill site fills with new residents, it's important to provide work close to home.'

3. Mixed use is supported (6 comments): respondents thought a variety of uses would support positive growth in the area.

'I agree we do need to attract more diversity in employment and business because with the huge growth in population we need to create a strong local community again on the Heidelberg Road corridor which has been stale for many years now. I remember the days of having deli, fruit shop, butcher, chemist, hair dressing etc to keep everything in walking distance as well as having some great eateries.'

4. Reduce or remove industrial use (6 comments): respondents thought commercial uses would be better suited to the area than industrial, as the character of the area had changed over recent years.

'I support rezoning from industrial to commercial where it is clear industrial use is either no longer appropriate, or needed, for the area.'

5. Employ mandatory height controls (5 comments): respondents supported mandatory not discretionary height controls (to be discussed further in the following section).

6. Further residential development is supported (4 comments): some respondents thought the corridor was the appropriate place to allow residential development.

'Residential development along this corridor should be encouraged. There are other more appropriate areas in the municipality where industrial and commercial zones should be located.'

Support for building height controls – free text responses

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about height controls - the analysis of these responses is shown in the Appendix. The following key themes were identified from the 62 responses:

1. **Allowing only lower buildings to be in keeping with the character of the area – either maintaining existing height limits or allowing for only 3 storeys or less (21 comments), or allowing only 4 storeys or less (19 comments):**

Respondents discussed wanting to maintain the amenity and neighbourhood character and their concern about overshadowing and creating wind tunnels.

'Four to eight storeys are NOT appropriate for this corridor. They do not respect the adjacent river environs!'

'I have serious concerns about privacy, overlooking my property, noise, visual impact, creation of a heat island, density, interruption by construction, parking and lack of landscaping. The traffic and demand for parking will be worsened.'

'Mandatory height limit of 4 storeys is essential to prevent Heidelberg Rd from becoming a concrete corridor particularly with AMCOR site development and proposed developments by Yarra Council on the south side of Heidelberg Road.'

2. **Support mandatory height limits and refuse discretionary height limits (19 comments):** respondents thought build height limits must be mandatory or developers would take advantage of discretionary heights.

'Discretionary height controls are misleading at best. Mandatory is the only way to provide certainty.'

'Absolutely support mandatory height restrictions and setbacks that protect existing residential properties. Big development ruins the character of a suburb.'

3. **Consideration of building setbacks and overshadowing is critical for any proposed development (7 comments):** respondents didn't specify any particular heights but thought that the building setbacks must be in keeping with existing stock and sensitive places like public open space, and that overshadowing must be considered in terms of impacts on public and private property.

'The border with Yarra Bend is not respected or valued at all in the plans - it is a valuable bushland park in inner Melbourne and built form should be minimised, not maximised at its borders. The lack of setbacks on Albert St and Holmes St is very poor planning.'

4. **Support sustainable, high-quality higher density development (6 comments):** respondents thought allowing the right development in the right place was necessary for progress but stressed it should be high quality, sustainable and not put further stress on parking in the area.

'Density has to increase, no question. As long as only high-quality places get approved. Please ensure that building code will prevent future slums please - no flammable, damp, crappy design, poor lighting places please.'

'Given a decade of living in large Euro cities, I am generally a big supporter of high density living in inner Melbourne and see it as a functional way to move forward. In saying that, the mindset in Aus/Melb is that people want a car... Compounding this, property developers have been seen to cut corners by building cheap stock, rather than residences that owner-occupiers would be interested in themselves... I support the high density living however we need to ensure that the area can handle the additional people in the future.'

5. **Support discretionary height limits (3 comments):** respondents thought the flexibility of discretionary limits allowed the limit to be set for the specifics of a particular property.

'Discretionary heights are better because they can be judged depending on which building it is and why, not one rule fits all.'

6. **Need uniformity in height limits application (3 comments):** these respondents thought that there were too many different limits, and that limits should be consistent across entire areas.

'I own two properties side by side with different proposed height limits. In this case the proposed higher limit should apply across both properties.'

Support for Heritage Overlay – free text responses

Respondents were asked if they have further comments about the heritage overlay. The following key themes were identified from the 42 responses:

1. **Support the heritage overlay (13 comments):** respondents emphasised the valuable heritage of the area, that needs to be protected, which includes buildings but also character.

'I appreciate the heritage overlay listing and support it, but I feel it's one thing to preserve individual buildings and another to consider preserving the overall character of Heidelberg Road. I feel we need to preserve the organic, frugal and grungy character of parts of Heidelberg Road.'

'We need to hang on to our important heritage buildings and what they represent from each era.'

2. **Do not support heritage overlay (13 comments):** respondents thought that the overlay would negatively impact property values, and believed it contracted the overall vision for the area and the changes in zoning.

'After reading the councils resolve to promoting the area, bring people into the area to live, promote working in the area, they then want to stop people from investing in the area and enforcing economic sanctions on to the owners and residents of all the proposed heritage listed properties, I cannot understand the logic.'

'This is ridiculous. There is no value to any of these properties in declaring them as heritage listings. The value of these properties would be significantly affected. They would in fact be contrary to the look of the area in the future as the likelihood is that apartment buildings will be built right through this area moving forward. You would make it virtually impossible to allow owners to sell these properties.'

3. **Missing a key property from heritage listing (11 comments):** respondents identified other key properties they thought deserved heritage protection, including the Dairy, The Grandview Hotel, the façade of the Fairfield Hat Mills Complex, and the Hells Angel Clubhouse.

'Is there a heritage overlay on the Grandview Hotel on the corner of Station St and Heidelberg Rd? This is a very historic building that must be retained.'

4. **Heritage overlay not appropriate for entire area (5 comments):** respondents supported the idea of a heritage overlay, but thought the area was too far reaching.

'The only site I consider worthy of heritage overlay is the former Fairfield Hat Mills Complex.'

5. **The Plan will negatively impact heritage (1 comment):** the broader plan including zoning changes was thought to lead to negative impacts on heritage across the area.

'The heritage of Alphington as a green peaceful community orientated suburb is likely to be destroyed.'

Further ideas and comments – free text responses

Respondents were asked if they had any further ideas or comments they would like to project team to consider. Forty-nine respondents provided a comment. The following key themes were identified from these 49 responses:

- A sustainable, high quality of life for residents should be high priority (17 comments)
- High-rise apartments and 'over development' are not supported (14 comments)
- Parking impacts of development and zoning changes must be considered (12 comments)
- Appropriate, high quality and sensitive development and change would be good for the area (11 comments)
- Environmental impact and sustainability should be considered prior to any decisions (9 comments)
- Maintain the area as it is (8 comments)
- Consultation and communication with residents is critical (6 comments)

- Community needs and concerns should drive all decisions (4 comments)
- Remove the temporary bike lanes (4 comments)
- Consider future generations in decision-making (3 comments).

The following quotes from respondents give a sense of the range of ideas provided:

'It's an interesting corridor (park, community nearby), with great potential. Maybe sure the greenery is retained - MRPV think tree removal is a necessary part of progress, but during lockdown we cherished every tree in our 5kms, and a lot of those were roadside on Heidelberg Road for me.'

'The area you have identified is a vibrant and culturally diverse community. We would like to keep it this way and encourage you to continue to have dialogue with the owners, residents, small business folks.'

'I'm new to this area but aside from some excellent parkland there's just nothing here! There's a service station, a tile shop, some expensive personal training stuff and that's it. There's a lot of potential here but we need cafes, some kind of supermarket perhaps, and additional public transport options would be great. Currently I don't want to bring my friends here because it's empty - let's fill it with energy!'

'I am concerned that new developments will bring more car traffic in existing residential areas. There is already a lack of parking. I would prefer the areas be promoted as pedestrian and cyclist friendly - not encourage anymore traffic flow in the existing residential areas... I am fully in support of the Council's vision for the area to be a 'greener, better connected, more pedestrian friendly and vibrant'. I do not support tall buildings encroaching on the existing area.'

7.4 Pop-Up – Engagement Findings

Whilst the pop ups provided an opportunity to participate in an engagement activity by outlining their relationship to the Corridor and areas of interest, it is important to note that the responses received during the pop ups were not formal submissions to the project.

Q1. How often do you visit the corridor?

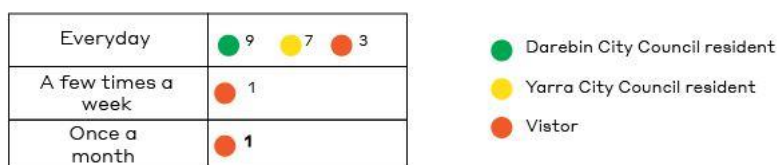


Figure 16 Question 1 results for the pop-up session

Of the 42 attendees of the pop-up session on 29 of June, the majority claim they visit the Heidelberg Road Corridor daily, with only two people visiting the corridor a few times a week or once a month. Of the responses, four of the responses were from business owners located within the Heidelberg Road Corridor, three of these were residents of Darebin City Council and the remaining was a business owner was from Yarra City Council. Two of the responses were from landowners in the corridor within Darebin City Council.

Q2. What is your connection to the Heidelberg Road Corridor?

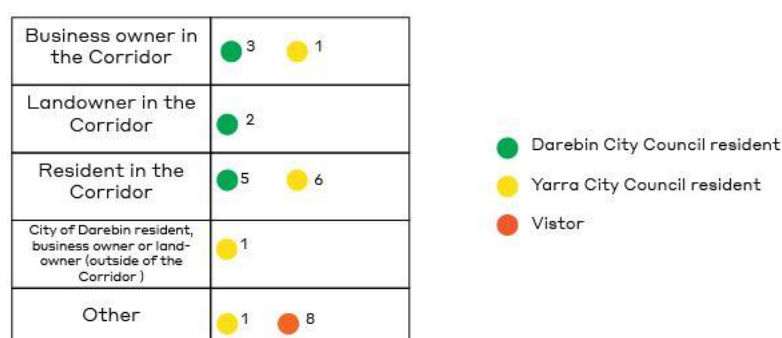


Figure 17 Question 2 results for the pop-up survey

Of the ten respondents who identified themselves as residents of the corridor, five reside in the City of Darebin and five reside in the City of Yarra City. One of the respondents was a City of Darebin business owner or landowner outside of the Heidelberg Road Corridor. Eight people identified themselves as a visitor to the Heidelberg Road Corridor who did not live in either Yarra City Council or Darebin City Council.

Q3. What aspect to the Heidelberg Road Corridor is of most interest to you?



Figure 18 Question 3 results from the pop-up session

The pop-up sessions highlighted the following topics as key areas of interest or concern for participants.

Transport

- Twelve of the responses stated that issues surrounding transport were of the most interest to them. Of these twelve responses, six of these were from Yarra City Council, three were from Darebin City Council and three were visitors to the Corridor.
- A respondent stated that they wanted the bike lane to be made a permanent feature of the Heidelberg Road Corridor.
- One response expressed a concern regarding the amount of traffic on Heidelberg Road.

Built Form

- Ten people responded that they were most interested in the built form and character. Of the ten responses, five of these were from resident of the City of Darebin while five of these were from the City of Yarra.
- One response raised a concern of the quality of future residential development and wanted to ensure that future apartments were of an appropriate size.
- The amenity of future residential development was also raised as a key concern.

Economic Growth

- The economic activity of the Heidelberg Road Corridor was the most important aspect for eight respondents. Of these responses, three were from the City of Yarra, three were from the City of Darebin and two were visitors to the Heidelberg Road Corridor.
- One response highlighted their interest in wanting more places to go out within the area.
- Another response expressed an interest in ensuring existing businesses were adequately protected.

Heritage

- Two people claimed the Heritage aspect of the Heidelberg Road Corridor is of the most interest to them. Both these respondents were from the City of Yarra.
- Two respondents from the City of Darebin discussed other aspects of the Heidelberg Road Corridor which were of the most interest to them, which included housing diversity, biodiversity impacts as well as potential increases of rates and rent.

7.5 Online Information sessions - Engagement Findings

The following topics were raised during the two online information sessions:

Development type and scale

Participants discussed the different considerations that would be needed for development to be appropriate.

Built Form: The proposed density, scale, building heights and setbacks were a key concern for the majority of the participants within the online information sessions. These concerns stemmed from the perception that developments of an increased density, scale and height could negatively impact the amenity of the surrounding area and have ramifications on the quality of their private dwellings and their overall wellbeing.

Height: The majority discussed the proposed building heights, and the potential implications on the surrounding amenity of the area. In particular, participants were concerned that the proposed height would detract from the overall amenity of the area due to overshadowing onto their dwellings and the Fairfield and Yarra Bend Parklands. Some participants were concerned that tall developments could impact their privacy due to overlooking into their dwellings

Density and Scale: There was a strong concern from participants regarding overall built form and the implications these guidelines could have on effecting the amenity and character of the area. While the majority of the participants stated that they supported a higher density of development in the Heidelberg Road Corridor, some participants had concerns that the proposed planning response would allow for development that had an inappropriate height for the area.

Setbacks: To minimise the impact building height could have on overshadowing, some participants identified appropriate setbacks as an important aspect of future development in the Heidelberg Road Corridor. It was also discussed that setbacks could provide an opportunity to improve the streetscape of Heidelberg Road.

Traffic and Parking Issues

Participants frequently discussed the implications increased development in the Heidelberg Road Corridor would have on traffic congestion, car parking and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

Car Parking: Participants identified the need to ensure there was a sufficient car parking supply in the Heidelberg Road Corridor. In particular, participants raised the concern that increased development would bring more people into the area and could result in increased car parking on residential streets. Various participants raised the issue that some residential streets surrounding Heidelberg Road are currently being used for visitor or worker car parking and making it difficult for residents to park near their dwellings. Participants raised issues with the current parking permit strategy as an insufficient response to limited parking as each dwelling receives two parking permits, which residents did not think was enough. As a result, participants discussed the need for parking requirements to be addressed in the planning response for the Heidelberg Road Corridor.

Traffic Congestion: A key concern for participants was that an increased residential and visitor population would result in traffic congestion on Heidelberg Road and adjacent residential streets. There was a concern that some of the surrounding residential streets were not wide enough to cope with increased traffic, such as Albert Street. Also, participants were concerned about traffic congestion during periods of construction.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety: Some participants discussed the need for improved pedestrian crossings on Heidelberg Road, particularly within large intersections. Some participants discussed the need for an improved, permanent bike lane to replace the current bike lane on Heidelberg Road, while others thought the temporary bike lane should be removed. Some participants stated that the safety of pedestrians and cyclists should be a priority for future transport planning and infrastructure in the corridor.

Zoning Concerns

Most participants were concerned about the proposed zoning changes, and the implications these changes would have on their properties and the character of the Heidelberg Road Corridor area. Overall, participants were concerned that commercial zone would result in office space dominating and impact to the character of the area.

Preference for Mixed Use Zone 1 (MUZ1): Participants identified a stronger preference for a mixed-use zone to allow for a combination of industrial, commercial, and residential development and land uses. Some participants

supported the continued use of an industrial zone, as it will continue to support existing businesses in the area such as caretakers and creative industries.

Concerns about Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z): Some participants questioned the appropriateness of a commercial zone due to existing vacant office space in the Heidelberg Road Corridor, arguing that there was an insufficient demand for office space, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic as more people are working from home. The participants raised concerns that the zoning changes would diminish the character of the Heidelberg Road Corridor with a strong creative industry community.

Heritage

Some participants had concerns of the proposed Heritage Overlay would affect their property and potentially result in the devaluing of their home, resulting in financial loss. Participants also discussed the need to effectively protect existing heritage buildings from potential development and associated construction. Whilst the issue with the proposed Heritage Overlay was not a common concern raised in the online information sessions, for some participants it was the primary concern they had with the overall project due to being directly impacted as a property owner.

7.6 Email submissions

Council officers received thirteen email submissions from community and stakeholders. These submissions ranged from providing broad feedback on the LAP vision and the suite of proposed planning controls, to site specific or issue specific matters. In general, there were a mix of supporting and opposing views expressed in relation to building heights, heritage protections and land use change. Some submitters supported a level of mixed use and some emphasised the role housing should play in the area. Others expressed opposition to zoning changes for various reasons, including that they felt it would cause amenity impacts and create additional burden on community and other infrastructure.

Where these submissions contained clear indications about matters addressed in the online survey, this feedback was incorporated into the survey findings to ensure the breadth of views submitted was represented in the body of this report.