

Buninyong Streetscape Concept Plans

Community Engagement Feedback Summary

Thank you to those who shared their thoughts with us on the concept designs for streetscape improvements to Warrenheip Street – Stage One and Stage Two. We'd like to share with you what we heard and answer some of the commonly asked questions.

Several themes emerged from the engagement notably suggestions for additions to the design, positive feedback and comments, areas of concern and questions.

What we heard

Positive Feedback or Comments:

Overwhelmingly, those who provided feedback were in favour of the concept designs with 48% of supportive comments praising the overall design and change proposal for the streetscape. Key items that respondents preferred were extension of the grapevine arbours, increased alfresco areas and pedestrian safety improvements. The most common expressions of concern were around the existing bus stop in its current location and the removal of the existing street trees. Refer discussion on these issues at the end of the report. Refer Figure 1 for a breakdown of positive comments.

Statements of Concern:

The most common expressions of concern were around the existing bus stop in its current location (48%) and the removal of the existing street trees (29%). Refer Figure 2.

Suggestions:

Several respondents included other suggestions including:

- additional on-street car parking
- additional disabled persons parks
- additional places to meet/gather
- cycling path
- increased streetscape greening
- specific pedestrian safety improvements
- changes to pedestrian lights.

Where possible and relevant some of the issues raised will be considered as part of the detailed design phase and/or future possible works.

Positive feedback or comments

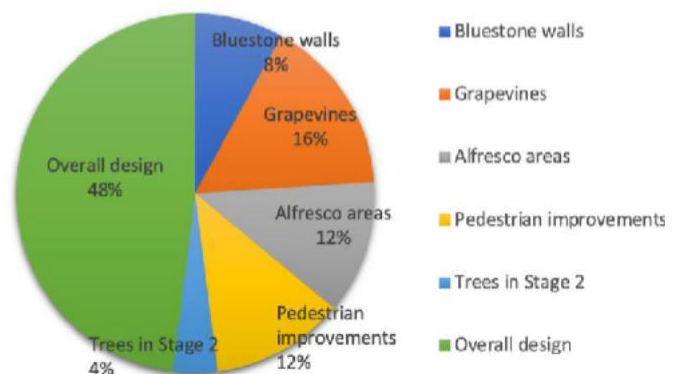


Figure 1: Chart showing themes of positive comments

Statements of concern

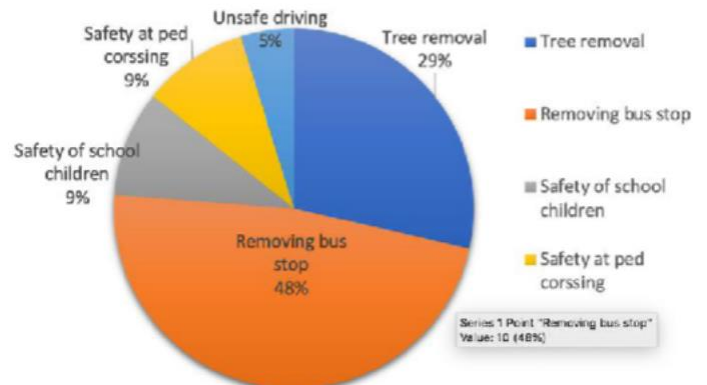


Figure 2: Chart showing themes statements of concern

Suggestions by Theme

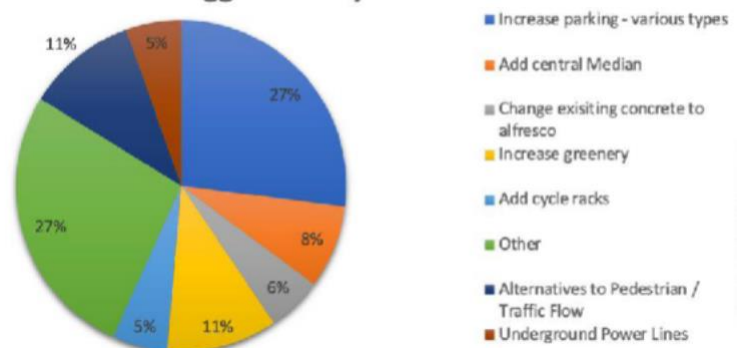


Figure 3: Chart showing thematic breakdown of suggestions

Discussion

The two key topics raised in the engagement were relocation of the bus stop and retention of trees.

Relocation of the bus stop

Options for relocating the bus stop south of Forest Street were considered as part of the design process but were not possible because of impacts on other businesses such as parking loss. Reasons for retention of the bus stop include:

- Public Transport Victoria (PTV) considers the bus stop to be a viable part of the network
- Proximity of the bus stop to the town centre and to the pedestrian crossing
- Stop provides access to public transport for regular users including students, residents and community members who rely on the bus for transport.

Following contact from a group of residents in March 2021, Local Member Michaela Settle undertook community engagement regarding the bus stop. On 6 April 2021, Ms. Settle released a statement that she “will support City of Ballarat plans for Warrenheip Street and not advocate to move the bus stop, due to safety and amenity concerns raised by the community and the fact that many of the reasons as to why the bus stop should be moved were met by Council’s plans”.

Ms. Settle said, “I support Council’s plans for Warrenheip Street as they meet many of the concerns raised including cutting the size of the bus stop and concrete waiting area by half.”

Existing Trees

The existing trees along Warrenheip St between Eyre St and Forest St are predominantly Ash and include an Evergreen Alder. The new species proposed for Warrenheip Street is English Oak to match and compliment the dominant theme tree to match the Oaks in Warrenheip St to the south

It is necessary to remove and replace the trees because:

- The existing Ash trees are approaching the end of their useful life and have been heavily pruned over many years for power line clearance.
- Major excavation and alteration of the natural ground is required to achieve leveling the steep crossfall of the roadway and nature strip for improved pedestrian access. Removal of the trees is required to undertake this excavation.
- The existing Ash trees are medium sized trees that do not give appropriate scale to the upgraded Warrenheip St. Larger trees will provide increased shade as they mature.
- Removal of 6 existing trees will allow planting of up to 10 new trees (subject to final design).
- The new trees will be semi-advanced’ selected for form, function, and reliability and planted into prepared tree pits to maximise growth and vigour.

The project also includes power line bundling - retrofitting the existing low voltage power lines as aerial bundled cable which will enable the new street trees to prosper and grow to full, mature size unencumbered by the existing low voltage powerlines. These works will also allow the existing oaks to the south to establish full canopies without heavy pruning.

Designs for the carpark upgrade along Learmonth Road have considered the Structural Root Zones for the existing trees and construction works will be undertaken with due care as to their protection.

What’s next?

Council is now developing detailed designs for tender and construction. Please visit Council’s MySay page for ongoing updates of the project.