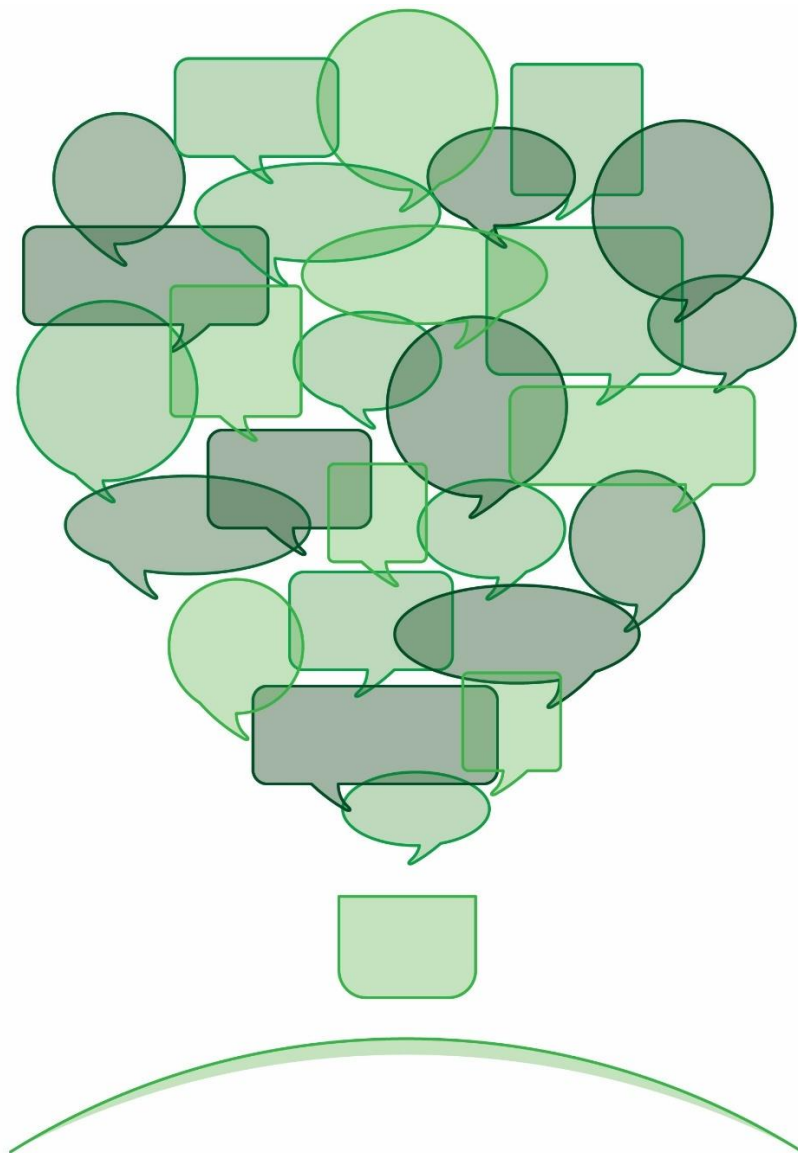


# VIBRANT BRUNSWICK PHASE THREE ENGAGEMENT REPORT

October 2023



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## Executive Summary

The Vibrant Brunswick project looks at ways that the planning scheme can support growth in businesses and employment in the Brunswick Activity Centre so that the community's aspirations for local jobs, services, entertainment and shopping can be met into the future.

Currently, new developments are focusing on apartments and not providing enough quality, usable space for new businesses. Merri-bek City Council wants to encourage business investment and jobs in the Brunswick Activity Centre to ensure the vibrancy of the area does not decline and to ensure that all new developments meet the needs and expectations of the Brunswick community.

Phase three of the Vibrant Brunswick project focused on refining some of the key elements of the drafted Structure Plan for the Brunswick Activity Centre. These changes are based largely on community feedback in the previous phase.

An online project page was developed to provide an opportunity for community members to engage with the project. The page attracted a high number of visitors and time spent on the page suggests an informed community. Participation numbers of 48 survey responses and 15 written submissions are high for this type of engagement, with third round engagement generally having less participants when the engagement questions are focused on the detail of the proposed changes and a further refining of previously asked questions.

There was a good mix of survey participants across age and gender. Most participants live in or close to the Brunswick Activity Centre, and almost 20% are renting. This indicates a community who are engaged and invested in their neighbourhood.

Survey responses were overall strongly supportive of the proposed changes. In particular, there was very strong support for proposed design requirements:

- Including the ESD requirements in the planning scheme
- The additional building design requirements
- All new apartments to be required to include acoustic treatments to keep noise out
- Commercial spaces to have minimum design requirements.

There was strong support for the encouraged and discouraged uses in the precincts. The exception being the discouraged uses in the housing precinct, where views were more mixed, but still with a majority of responses supportive.

There was strong support for additional requirements for new developments, and for the proposed building height criteria and its application in the Brunswick Activity Centre.

Many of the people completing the survey not only indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with what is proposed, but also included thoughtful comments to explain their choices.

The written submissions were also thoughtful pieces that discussed a number of matters, particularly vibrancy of the area and specific parcels of land.

Three new issues emerged through the phase 3 engagement, being:

- Accessible housing for people with disability
- Design detail of onsite bicycle parking to accommodate the growing numbers of electric and cargo bikes

- Self-storage uses which do little to provide employment or add to the vibrancy of the area.

Overall, the community have indicated a love for the Brunswick Activity Centre neighbourhood and a desire for its vibrancy to continue, particularly the creativity, entertainment, shops, services and small businesses. There is support for affordable housing, lower rents for creative and social enterprises and a recognition of how diversity contributes to the appeal of the area. There is support for both car and non-car travel and a need for green spaces in many forms. The drafted Brunswick Activity Centre Structure Plan appears to be very well supported.

## Introduction

Merri-bek City Council wants to encourage business investment and jobs in the Brunswick Activity Centre to ensure the vibrancy of the area does not decline and to assist in delivering the stated community desire to live, work and play locally. Currently job growth is not keeping up with population increases in the area and increasing numbers of residents need to travel outside the area for work. Additionally, new developments are focusing on apartments and not providing enough space for new businesses.

To address these challenges, Council has undertaken considerable work to update and consolidate the Structure Plan and planning controls in the area known as the Brunswick Activity Centre over the past two years. The changes are designed to increase the opportunities for employment in the area and to simplify and improve the current controls which are confusing, with a mixture of zones and overlays affecting properties in multiple combinations.

A three-phase engagement process was delivered to provide community members the opportunity to influence this project. Phase one in late 2021 focused on discovering what the Brunswick Activity Centre needs to enhance employment and vibrancy. Phase two in mid-2022 tested proposed changes to the planning scheme for the Brunswick Activity Centre.

This third phase builds on the previous engagement, testing proposed changes to the drafted Structure Plan for the Brunswick Activity Centre. These changes are based mainly on previous community feedback, further refining the ideas. Elements that are not proposed to change as part of this project are:

- How tall buildings should be, for those properties with existing height guidance
- How far buildings should be from property boundaries
- How much car parking buildings should have
- The opportunity for community to have a say on planning applications
- How road space is used by people in cars and on bikes.

Council is considering reviewing building heights and heritage in a future project, but this is not something that is being proposed at the moment. The state government is responsible for the planning system and processes, including community involvement in some matters. These are things that Council cannot change and are outside the scope of this project.

This engagement is prior to any formal planning scheme amendment process, which is yet to be considered by Council.

## Engagement Approach

This third phase of engagement was conducted from 28 July to 30 September 2023, to test proposed changes to the drafted Structure Plan.

The online Conversations Merri-bek project page was updated for phase 3, providing information about the project and the planning process, previous engagement results and two options for providing input.

- An online survey that presented the proposed changes and asked questions about the level of agreement with the proposed changes and for any comments
- The ability to upload a written submission.

To promote the engagement, a number of actions were taken:

- Delivery of approximately 14,000 flyers to properties in and close to the Brunswick Activity Centre, outlining the project and providing the web address and a QR code for the survey
- An email to a stakeholder list of approximately 300 individuals and groups who had previously engaged with the project or registered their interest
- Short articles in resident and business e-newsletters
- Several posts to Council general and business social media channels.

Phase 3 Engagement	
Online surveys	48
Written submissions	15
Project page views	2,712
Project page unique visitors	1,395
Visitor profile	1st Time: 1,150 - 82.44% Returning: 245 - 17.56%
Total time spent on project page	2 days, 19 hours, 1 minute

## Participants

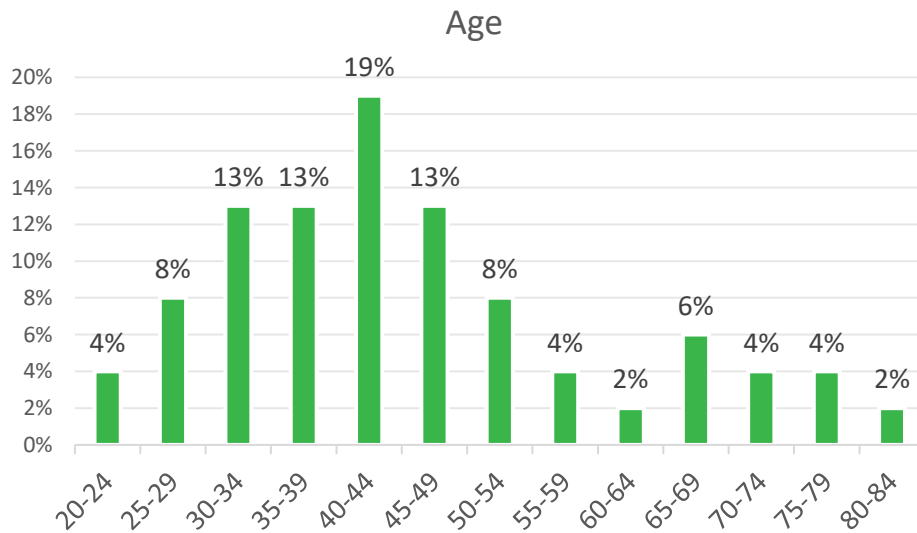
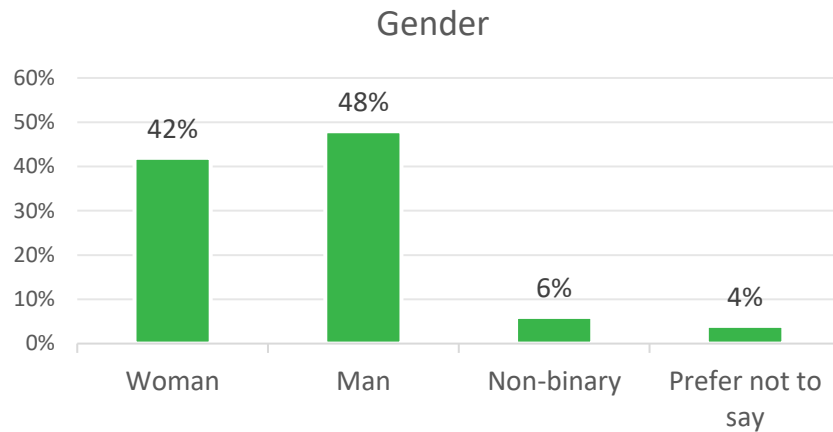
Forty-eight people completed the online survey and were asked their gender and age, where they lived in relation to the Brunswick Activity Centre, their housing tenure and what they thought their likely frequency of working from home would be over the next three years. The results reveal a very even split between the main genders and participants from across most age groups. Thirty seven percent of inputs were received from the growing 'under 35 years' cohort, which mirrors the changing demographic of the area.

Forty eight percent of participants live within the Brunswick Activity Centre, and another 40% live within 500 metres of the Brunswick Activity Centre. The majority of participants are either paying a mortgage or own their home, although almost 20% of participants are renting.

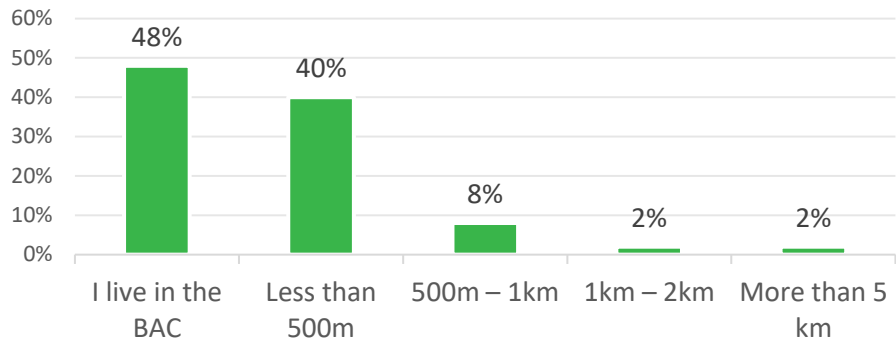
The renters are a large percentage of participants for a strategic planning engagement at phase three stage and suggests the Brunswick community is very engaged with the future of their neighbourhood. Seventy two percent of respondents expected to be working from home at least one day per week in

the short-term (next 3 years). Fifty five percent expected to be working from home for between two and five days per week.

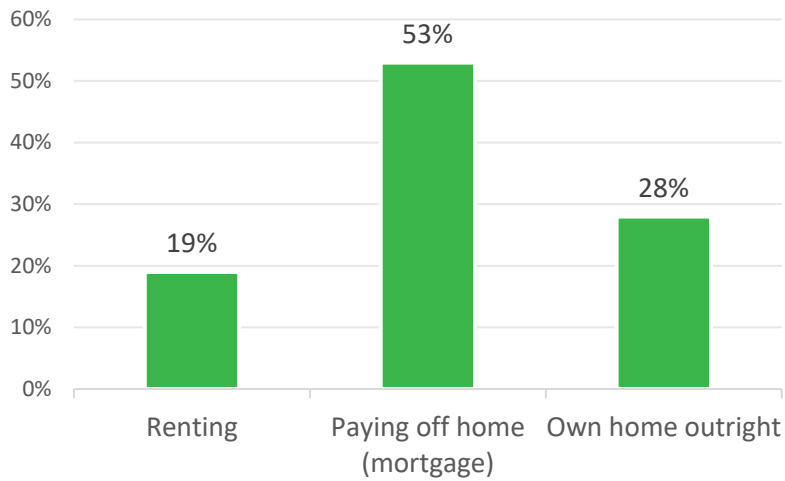
Those who uploaded written submission were not asked for any demographic details. Some submissions self-identified as local businesses, residents or property owners within the Brunswick Activity Centre, or as a community association.



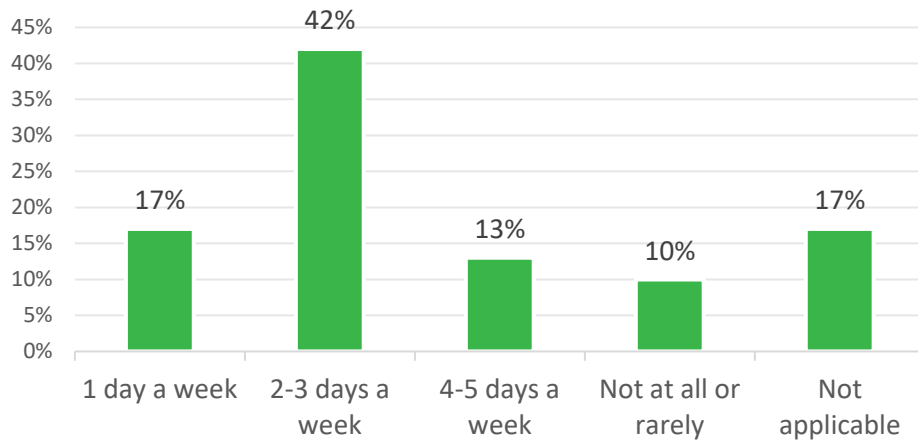
### Distance lived from the Brunswick Activity Centre



### Housing tenure



### Likely frequency of working from home over next 3 years





## Engagement Outcomes

This section presents a summary of the survey results, and then the written submissions. The survey sought community feedback on proposed changes to the Structure Plan and planning scheme for the Brunswick Activity Centre by asking participants for their level of support in a number of key areas and for any other changes that should be considered. Some questions were similar to those asked in phase two but with some refinement based on the feedback received. Other questions were developed in response to suggestions received in phase two, to test the level of community support.

The survey was quite long and only the key demographic questions were mandatory, allowing participants to choose to answer only those that interested them. The survey was broken up into key areas:

- Land use
- Commercial requirements
- Industrial rezoning
- Affordable housing
- Live music
- Design
- Environmentally sustainable design and bicycles
- Building height
- Other feedback

Survey comments have been themed and summarised. The written submissions have also been summarised.

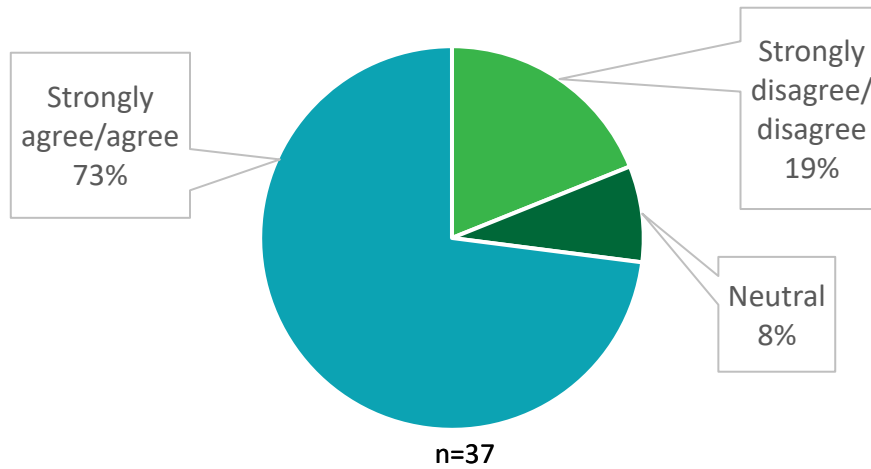
### Land Use

The Brunswick Activity Centre has been divided into three precincts being core employment, multi-use and housing precincts. For each proposed precinct, survey respondents were provided with lists of potential future uses for the land within the precinct, and asked whether the uses should be encouraged or discouraged.

#### Core Employment Precinct

This precinct is proposed to encourage business growth, innovation and the establishment and growth of creative industries, small manufacturers and start-up businesses. In response to community feedback in phase two, businesses such as trade supplies and big box retailers, along with creative, health, medical, small to medium businesses, professional services and internet-based services are proposed to be suitable in this precinct. Housing would remain prohibited in the Core Employment area.

## What do you think about the uses that are proposed to be more strongly encouraged?



There was good support for the refined list of proposed uses that would be more strongly encouraged. Several respondents commented on specific uses that they thought inappropriate for the precinct, as they may conflict with other Council policies (car dependency) or would not contribute to vibrancy:

- Car/boat sale yards
- Trade supplies.

There was mixed support for nightclubs in this area, a query on the suitability of schools being included due to their need for space, and a suggestion that sport and recreation be included.

### Comments

Many of the comments were supportive of the uses, such as:

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*It looks like a great mix of necessary, everyday stuff and fun, entertainment and activity things. I'd love to see cinemas back in Brunswick!*

*The fact that you've included night time hospitality businesses in the initial proposal shows me that you're aware of what makes the area popular to begin with.*

*We live in this area because it is vibrant. Supporting services and creativity will build greater community connections.*

*I would [have] included creative agencies like Advertising, Digital, Marketing agencies as they bring a lot of diversity and money to employment areas.*

*My preference is for the area to encourage hospitality, the arts, boutique shopping, food, wine bars, live music venues.*

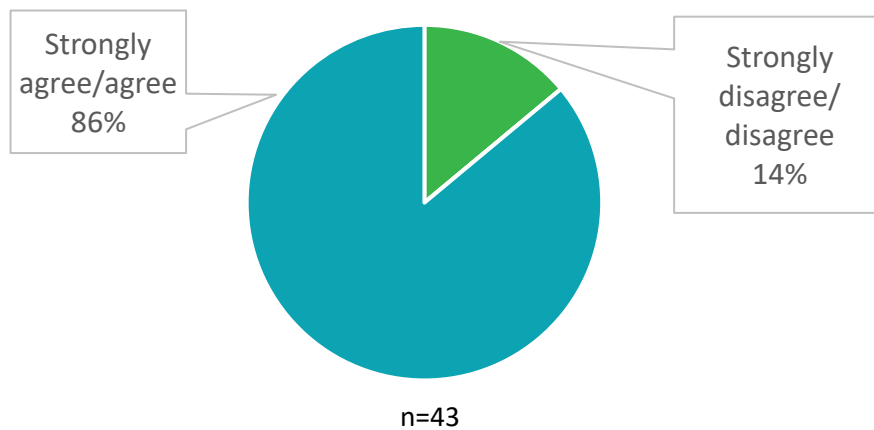
*Industrial uses are no longer characteristic of Brunswick or the inner city. This makes sense.*

*Keep trade supplies out of residential areas and off busy streets like Lygon and Sydney roads.*

*There needs [to be an] inclusion of a working environment. The majority of Victorians are employed in the services sector. Encouragement of office locations providing employment for locals and nearby residents should be included.*

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What do you think about the uses that are proposed to be more strongly discouraged?



Most respondents were supportive of the discouraged uses in the Core Employment precinct and the comments reflect this support. Some comments of those who disagreed suggest that they did support the discouraged uses.

Several participants wrote that they thought sport and recreation should not be on the discouraged list and that several uses should also be discouraged:

- Warehouses
- Car yards
- Big box retailers.

*Comments*

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*Brunswick doesn't have enough space for the above uses, so I agree with this proposal.*

*Polluting industries should be discouraged including noise pollution.*

*These types of industrial uses make the area dirty and not pleasant for nearby residents. Therefore I strongly agree with these and others like them being more strongly discouraged.*

*Any form of goods warehouse or housing storage warehouse should be banned.*

*I agree those activities are not suitable in a high density inner suburb.*

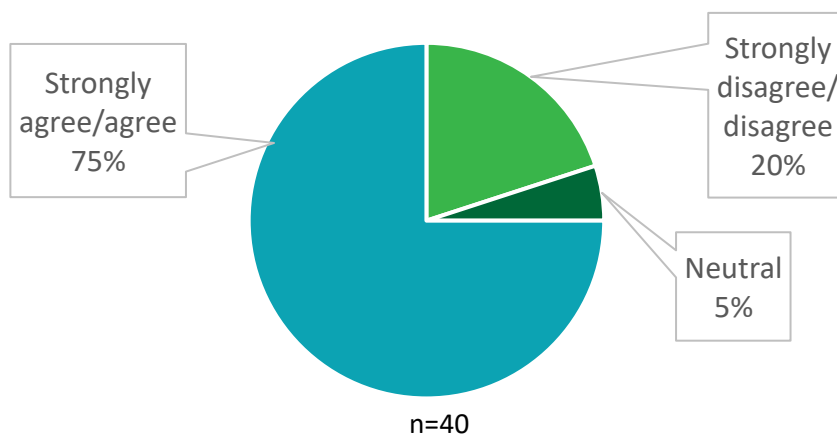
*My preference is for the area to encourage hospitality, the arts, boutique shopping, food, wine bars, live music venues.*

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### Multi Use Precinct

This precinct is proposed to encourage a broad range of employment uses including creative industries, urban manufacturing and start-up businesses mixed with apartments. In response to community feedback in phase two, businesses such as trade supplies and big box retailers are discouraged in this precinct.

What do you think about the uses that are proposed to be more strongly encouraged?



There was strong support for the refined list of proposed uses that would be more strongly encouraged.

#### Comments

Many of the comments were supportive of the uses, such as:

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*Would be useful to consider how office space is included within this. The mixed-use precinct should be trying to drive this outcome as much as possible.*

*All useful community facilities. I'd also like to see more low fee community halls where groups could gather for various social activities - music groups, yoga classes, craft groups.*

*Research and development centres should certainly be strongly encouraged and student-centred industries.*

*These are future oriented, learning or community based type businesses/ activities that value add to society.*

*There needs to be encouragement of service sector workplaces including offices.*

*I think that these are good uses. I would also say that retail would be welcome along with services.*

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There was some concern with the impact some of the uses would have on the vibrancy of the area:

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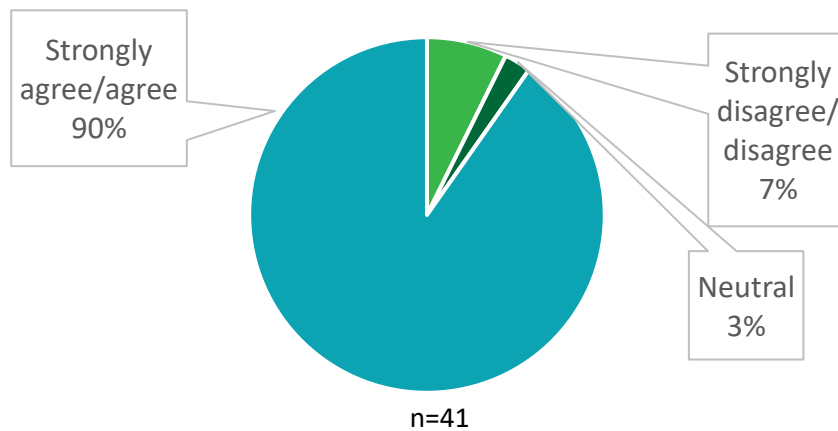
*Conference, reception and function spaces are dead spaces 80% of the time. They also have uses that demand parking and increase traffic. And offer little to the nearby community.*

*Would prefer to see hospitality, food, dining, wine bars and cultural business that will add to the quality of life for residents in the apartments that are in this area. Furthermore, steps must be taken to ensure commercial spaces in apartment buildings do not lie vacant for extended periods of time.*

*... [church] institutions should be forced to upkeep them / put public gardens in instead of leaving the buildings to rot.*

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What do you think about the uses that are proposed to be more strongly discouraged?



There was very strong support for the refined list of proposed uses that would be more strongly discouraged. In particular, many comments supported the discouragement of gambling and betting uses.

*Comments*

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*Great list!*

*These seem appropriate activities to discourage to ensure the liveability of the area.*

*These organisations detract from amenity and create spaces which do not support public amenity. This is especially true of betting and gambling [that] create significant social problems.*

*I definitely don't think that betting agencies, gambling halls, fuel depots or shipping container storage belong in the blue areas on the map. I live in one of them!*

*The industries should be positive to community development and not create negative consequences for the local community.*

*These are either polluting or noisy, old economy or socially destructive e.g. gambling.*

*How about banning big box retail like Bunnings.*

*Any form of goods storage should be banned - take huge space with no activity makes Brunswick unsafe.*

*Does not match the special and delicate fabric of Brunswick and its creative residents. These businesses are not conducive to creative and innovative hubs and would make the area an unattractive and undesirable location.*

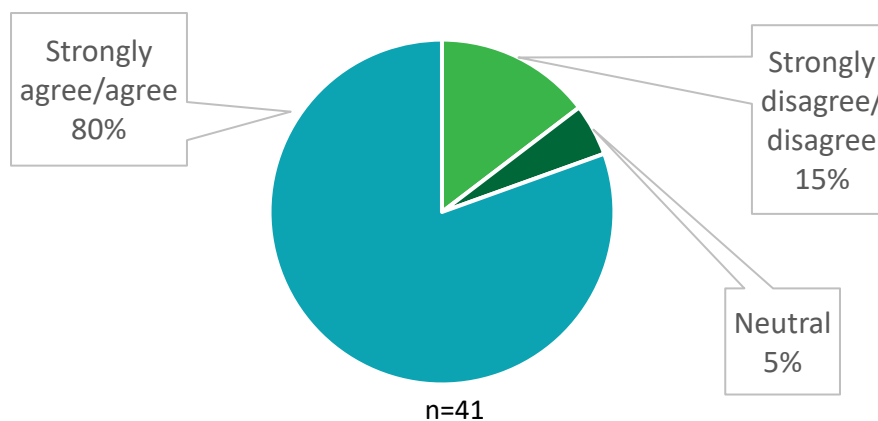
*I do not support the proposal for this area to encourage car sales and industrial activities like that - which do not add to the community vibe of the area and do not serve nearby residents.*

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## Housing Precinct

In the Housing precinct housing is encouraged, along with a limited range of non-residential uses to serve local community needs, such as small shops, medical centres, places of worship and home-based businesses.

What do you think about the uses that are proposed to be more strongly encouraged?



There was strong support for the refined list of proposed uses that would be more strongly encouraged.

### Comments

Many of the comments were supportive of the uses, such as:

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*We need a lot more medium-density housing and even some high-density housing, though. There are too many low-density dwellings around Merri-bek.*

*I support more dwellings as many people cannot afford the existing housing options.*

*Only housing creates social alienation, but the other proposed suggested inclusions are good.*

*... but please don't destroy the unique and desirable heritage homes.*

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There was some concern over key uses that appeared to be missing, such as public and accessible housing, open space and recreation and some food and retail. There were also several comments concerned with the quality of design and construction of new developments.

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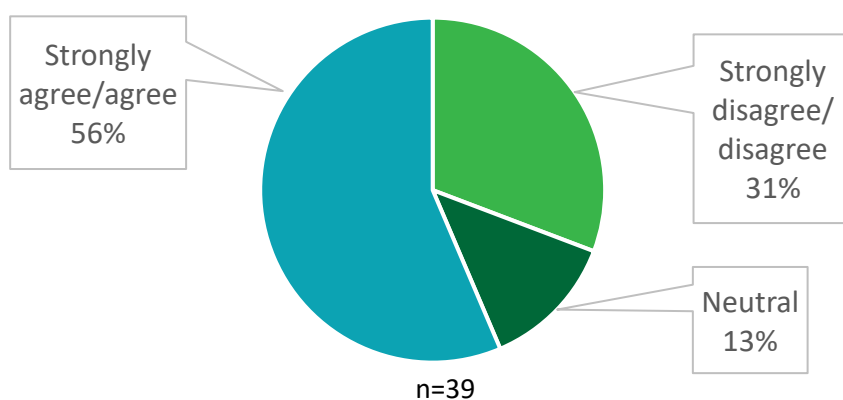
*As a long-term renter with a disability, I am often frustrated by the lack of affordable and public housing in the area. Public housing needs to be encouraged and fostered, not siloed off to the outer rim of the city.*

*Encouraging dwellings in the Housing area? Revolutionary :)*

*In principle it's fine BUT council needs to get stronger on height limits, car parking, overshadowing public spaces and appropriate setbacks.*

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What do you think about the uses that are proposed to be more strongly discouraged?



There were more mixed views for the refined list of proposed uses that would be more strongly discouraged, but still the majority of responses were supportive. Only a third of respondents disagreed.

*Comments*

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*Dwellings ought to be shielded from the hustle and bustle of commercial or non-commercial, community activity, with the exception of schools and public parks.*

*Agree. Residents can access these services in neighbouring multi-use precincts.*



*Many of these activities listed are crucial to an area to encourage business and liveability of residents. For example: restaurants, supermarkets, take away food, hairdressers, postal services, banks. These should all be encouraged.*

*One of the most charming things about Brunswick and the inner north are the small-scale businesses on side streets.*

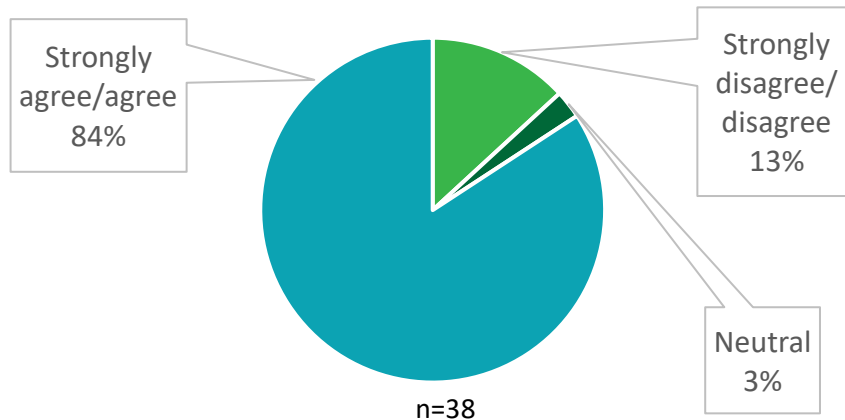
*Yeah, I don't think sawmills and shipping containers and abattoirs should be around people's houses...*

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### Dark Kitchens

A dark kitchen is a take away restaurant that serves customers predominantly by delivery and pick up based on phone and online ordering. Dark kitchens do not currently need a land use planning permit. This means that the community does not get notified or have a say. In response to community feedback in phase two, it was proposed that dark kitchens would need a permit so that nearby residents would be notified and have rights of appeal to VCAT.

The community should have a say if a dark kitchen is proposed near their home



There was strong support for dark kitchens to require a permit. Some of those who disagreed would like the dark kitchens to be banned outright, or only allowed in industrial areas away from residents.

### Comments

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*Yes, the community should be consulted as dark kitchens provide little amenity to those nearby but add disruption at all hours of the day.*

*Dark kitchens cause significant increase in traffic in an area, as well as extra noise pollution and odour pollution.*

*...if there's more smell, noise and scooters coming and going late at night, that actually affects people who live around there.*

*Dark kitchens add nothing to a neighbourhood but traffic.*

*I appreciate that a lot of people are busy and need delivery food, but the number of delivery bikes/scooters on the road is becoming problematic as both a pedestrian and driver.*

*I think that the use of cars for deliveries should be discouraged in favour of bicycles.*

*The delivery/servant economy needs eradication.*

*They add absolutely nothing to the neighbourhood. They are closed to public. They are not social. They create safety issues - no light or ambience meaning dark streets. They are horrific for the environment - takeaway disposable packaging and then the delivery pollution to people's homes - should be banned and not allowed in Moreland at all.*

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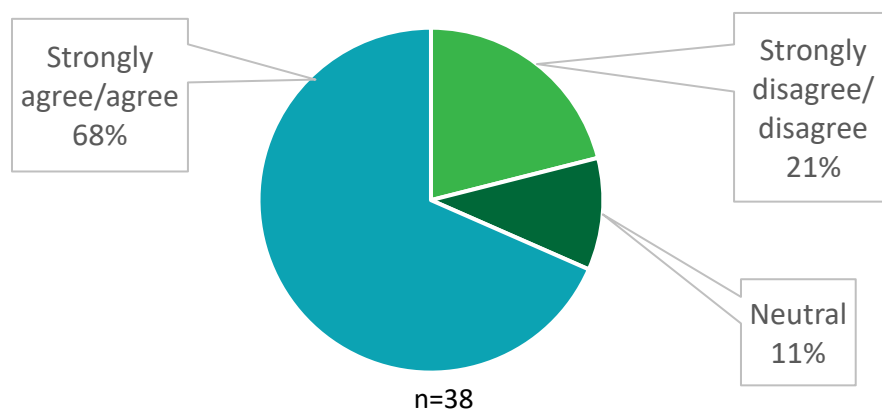
## Commercial requirements

In the commercial areas of the activity centre, Council has proposed several requirements for what new developments should provide. Survey participants were asked for their level of agreement with these requirements.

### Floor space

In the commercial areas of the activity centre, Council has proposed a requirement for developments to provide commercial floor space as part of a redevelopment.

### New developments should provide commercial floor space as part of a redevelopment



There was good support for new developments to be required to provide commercial floor space.

*Comments*

Many of the comments were supportive of the requirements, such as:

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*Once you lose the commercial space you will never get it back. Commercial space is the heart of this area of Brunswick, and we should be adding to it not taking away from it.*

*This is a great initiative as it reduces the need for residents to travel far to meet their daily needs and activates ground floor space instead of having blank car parking walls.*

*Yes, commercial space along with residential helps the street feel more alive and accessible.*

*This will help build local jobs, encourage foot traffic and build a vibrant multidimensional community that does not rely only predominantly one sector e.g. hospitality.*

*Yes, this makes sense... I hope this will encourage positive commercial tenancies.*

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There was also concern for the quality, usefulness and cost of these commercial spaces, and the current vacancy rates:

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*They also don't fit the space or provide capital contributions to make it business ready, for example extraction fans for a cafe.*

*In general, I prefer mixed-use buildings with commercial/retail in the ground floor and residential above, but I also feel like there's a fair bit of currently vacant commercial properties around already, so do we need more empty storefronts to be added.*

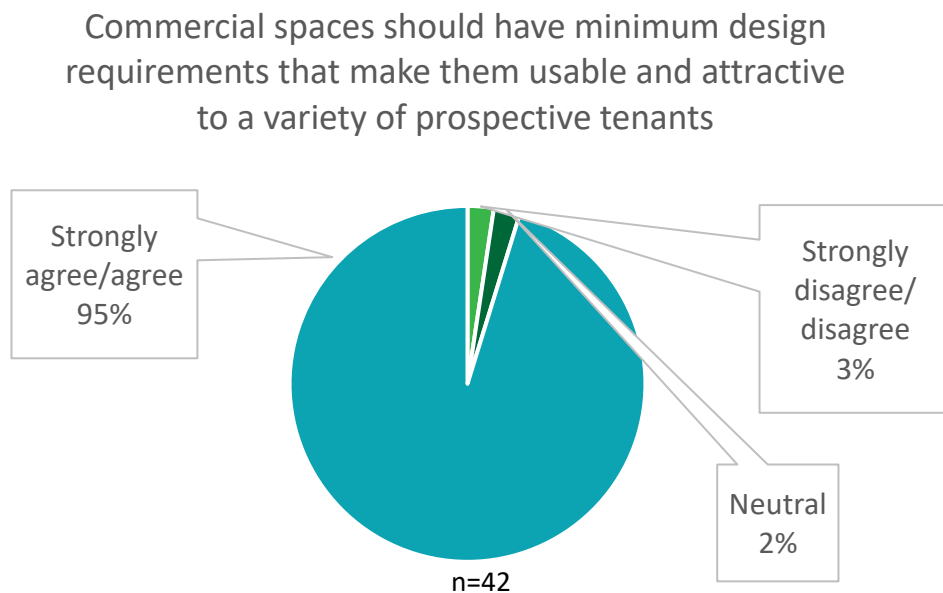
*Often this is installed by apartment developers to comply and then the commercial space lies vacate and deteriorates. This adds to a feeling of decay and does not encourage a vibrant commercial area.*

*We need to have local businesses that people want to tenant, visit, shop and spend. However I note the residential developments on ... Lygon and Brunswick Road have commercial tenancies that are so dark, flat, and uninviting, it's no wonder business are not frequented and just don't do well. That said, do not want to see any electoral offices taking up key new tenancies either. I want vibrancy in my area.*

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## Design Requirements

The planning scheme contains requirements for apartments which have regard to the useability, functionality, amenity, etc. However commercial spaces like shops, cafes and offices are often not designed with the same thought. In response to community feedback, Council proposed requirements about how commercial tenancies are designed.



There was very strong support for commercial spaces to have minimum design requirements, and this may allay some of the concerns raised in the previous question.

### Comments

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*This seems like a good idea.*

*Absolutely. For all the above reasons. If it is not attractive, all business (if you can tenant them) will fail there, and we don't need empty shops. It signals a dying area.*

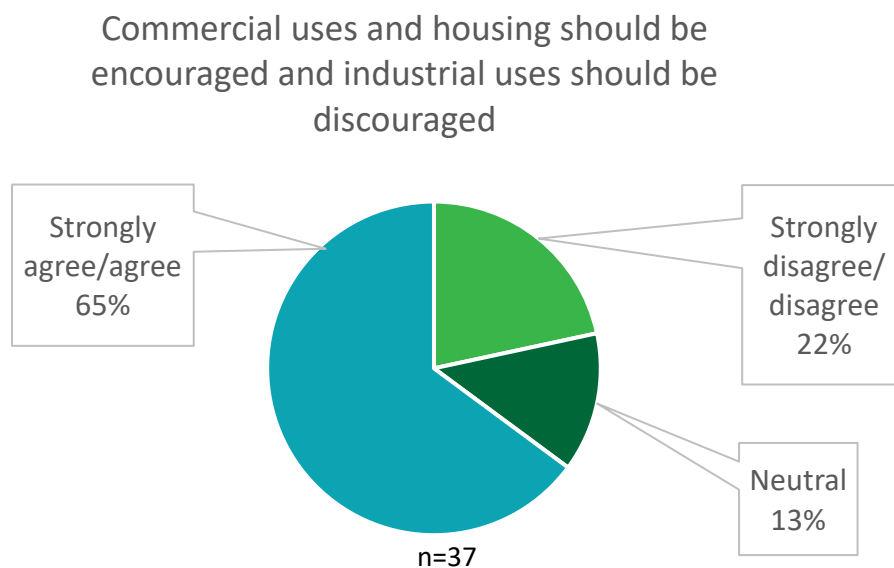
*This may go some way to ensuring some are leased out and filled with interesting businesses.*

*Developers need to be accountable for what they create.*

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## Industrial Rezoning

There are a number of spot remnant industrial sites in the Brunswick Activity Centre very close to housing. The range of uses that are possible in their current industrial zone is causing amenity problems to existing residents. In response to phase two community feedback Council proposed to change the planning scheme requirements for these sites to encourage commercial and residential uses in the future.



There was good support for industrial uses to be discouraged in the future and commercial and residential uses encouraged.

### Comments

Many of the comments were supportive of the change in encouraged uses, such as:

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*Brunswick is not an industrial suburb anymore. It's time to move on. The infrastructure is not suitable anymore to support this.*

*Strongly agree. As housing density increases, human occupation of residential buildings 24/7 is incompatible with nearby industrial use.*

*Industrial use today is all about logistics not metal bashing. Logistics including last mile delivery systems are a feature of requirements. Recognition of this change and change in use of current property does require attention.*

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However, there were also several reasons shared for not supporting the proposition:

- Respecting the history and soul of the area
- Industrial areas did and still can attract creative industries.

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*No I don't agree, there are some worthwhile services provided in these areas. They are mostly service industries that add to the amenity of our lives. Let's face it what makes Brunswick interesting and community is this engagement.*

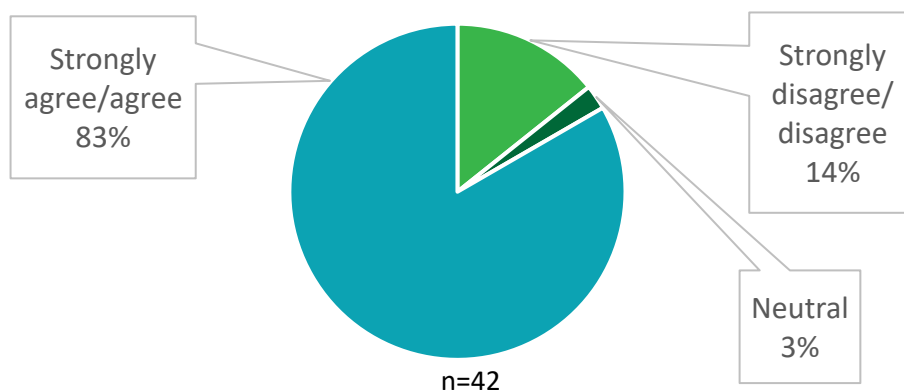
*I want Brunswick to maintain its eclectic flavour.*

*I don't need it to be so eco-friendly that you can't get to it or want to but want to keep artist studios and small start-ups, rather than car mechanics.*

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As Brunswick is becoming more expensive, some of the well-known types of businesses such as artist studios and eco-friendly businesses are being priced out. In response to phase two community feedback, in the employment priority areas Council proposed a requirement that a proportion of the commercial floor space must be space for a creative industry or social enterprise, at discounted rent.

### Some new developments should provide spaces that are affordable for creatives and social enterprises



There was strong support for some new developments to be required to provide spaces for some businesses at a discounted rent. A number of comments included the word “absolutely” and other very strong agreement phrases.

#### *Comments*

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*Absolutely. Every effort should be made to maintain some affordable commercial space for social enterprises and creatives.*

*Yes, it's important to retain Brunswick's unique nature and profile. And human development requires culture and creativity, not just commerce.*

*Absolutely. I would love to work in Brunswick as well as live here, but I don't even bother looking into it because I know the rents would be astronomical!*

*Sounds good too. Make developments give back to the community.*

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Those who disagreed with the proposal were concerned about the role of Council in such matters, the ability to enforce it and unintended consequences if developers tried to avoid it.

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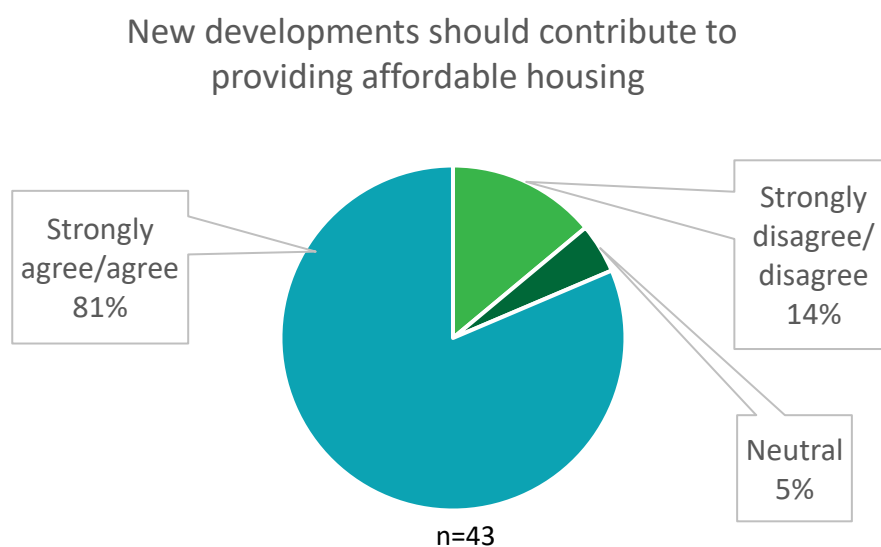
*The unintended consequence of this, is that it will be a disincentive to developers or would lead to cost cutting by developers.*

*Oh yeah, "I'm an artist, give me money". No, create your destiny with self-commitment.*

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### Affordable housing

There is currently a lack of affordable housing in Brunswick. In response to phase two community feedback Council proposed to require new developments to make an affordable housing contribution.



There was strong support for new developments to be required to contribute to providing affordable housing. Both supporters and those who disagreed raised a number of concerns:

- Whose role it is to provide affordable housing
- The quality and look of it
- Impacts of affordable housing on the neighbourhood.

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*It will keep the diversity in the area.*

*Very strongly support this. Unequal communities drive poorer health and social outcomes for all, not just those who are disadvantaged economically.*

*We need to maintain the area's inclusivity. This distinguishes us and helps the community long term.*

*Yes, for equity, social justice and human opportunity reasons.*

*Not only that, but new developments should also include public housing. "Affordable housing" is still unaffordable for those of us who can't afford to buy either way - renters, particularly vulnerable ones, need beautiful homes as well.*

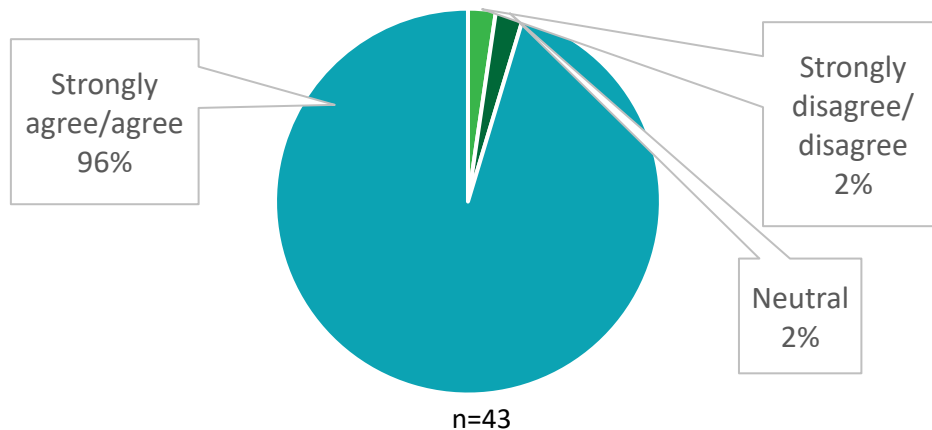
*The council should ensure a % of all new development across the suburb is affordable and this contribution should be outlined as a % of the value of a new development so that the contributions go up in line with increasing property values. Additionally this % should be high to enable the catchup of affordable housing over the next 5 years.*

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### Live music

There are policies in the planning scheme to encourage live music venues in the Brunswick Activity Centre. Previous community engagement has reported on the tension between the needs of residents and the needs of live music venues. In response to phase two community feedback Council proposed to require that all new apartments include acoustic treatments to keep noise from live music venues out, not just apartments very close to existing venues.

All new apartments should be built to keep noise from live music and other noisy activities out





There was very strong support for all new apartments to be required to include acoustic treatments to keep noise out. Participants were keen to also be very supportive of live music venues and did not want to see these venues closed or penalised.

*Comments*

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*You don't come to Brunswick for the peace and quiet, but everyone deserves a rest from it.*

*I like live music and I also like quiet apartments. Sound insulation may also improve thermal performance.*

*This is increasingly important in mixed use developments where there are activities like restaurants and bars combined with residences. For increased density to be liveable, excellent sound proofing is needed for people's peace of mind.*

*Yes. Rather than stopping or restricting music venues.*

*All new apartments should have noise mitigation as standard because features such as double glazing also help keep energy costs down for heating/cooling, and allow residents to host social gatherings, or play music without bothering neighbours. Also, residents should not be able to complain (within reason) about live music and noise if they choose to live within 50 metres of a pre-existing venue.*

*Good noise insulation is a benefit beyond just live music events.*

*Double glazing and adequate cooling and heating throughout the entire apartment will heavily reduce the impact of outside noise. Formerly living in a newish apartment that failed to have the above, we either slept in a very stuffy apartment which still leaked heaps of noise or we opened a window and could not deal with the noise. A lot of these music venues have been around for a lot longer than these multi-storey residential buildings, and they should be built to suit the local area and not require the local area to change to suit them. Similar approaches have been done in St Kilda with new apartments required to be built to a standard to deal with outside noise.*

*Peaceful sleep is a human right.*

*Buildings need to be soundproofed.*

*The onus should be on the developer (and, by extension, the buyer). You can't move into a vibrant community and then complain about the very thing that makes it vibrant in the first place!*

*Completely support this. People are moving to this area to have access to the vibrant creative spaces. The live music venues of Brunswick have been there for longer than the new residents. Requiring high quality sound proofing and insulation will also increase the sustainability of the new developments and should not be optional.*

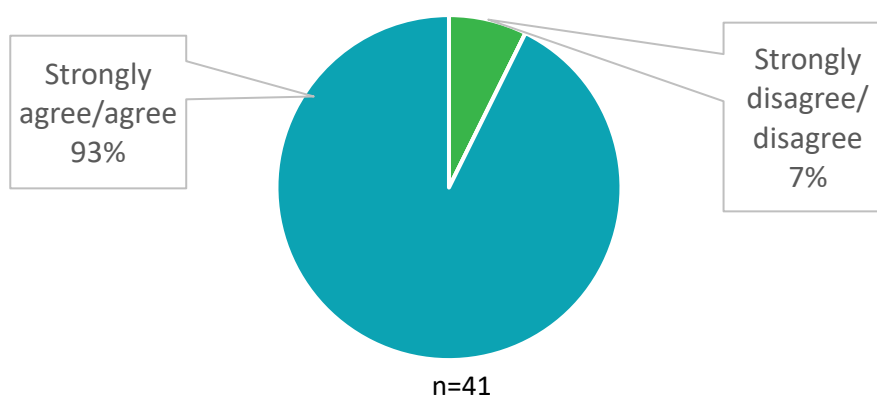
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## Design

The Merri-Bek Planning Scheme currently has a list of design requirements for new buildings. Council proposed a number of additional requirements for the design of any new buildings in the Brunswick Activity Centre.

### Building design

What do you think about the Building design additional requirements outlined?



There was very strong support for the additional building design requirements.

#### Comments

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*This cannot come soon enough.*

*No more "little boxes" on stilts. Agree with above wholeheartedly.*

*Acoustic attenuation measures in particular are desirable.*

*A lot of it sounds good but I don't see anything in there about accessibility for people with disabilities.*

*Considering that we are facing much hotter summers ahead of us with the climate crisis, there should be various heat mitigations built into the designs, e.g.*

*shades/awnings at street level, trees planted on the footpath, rooftop greenery to cut down on temperatures up there, etc.*

*Great ideas.*

*Absolutely agree. These requirements are long overdue. This cannot come soon enough.*

*Moreland has been approving the most hideous visually unappealing concrete towers I've seen in Melbourne. Some developers are just putting up raw concrete and leaving it untreated. Like some of the high rise squats along the railway line now. Such a pity.*

*Very supportive of this.*

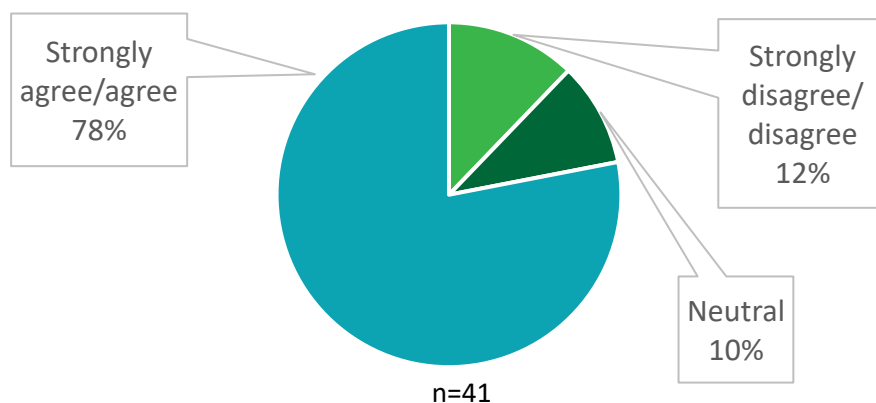
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There was some concern in the comments over the enforcement of these requirements when dealing with big developers and a number of other items that participants would like stronger requirements on:

- Accessibility
- Open space requirements
- Parking spaces
- Clear laneways (rubbish bins etc).

### Overshadowing

Do you agree with the Overshadowing additional requirements?



There was strong support for the additional overshadowing requirements.

### Comments

Many of the comments were supportive of the requirements, such as:

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*...it is important that Brunswick expands to provide housing for a growing population but must not become a shadowy wind tunnel.*

*Yes, the streets need to have light to be liveable.*

*Light is important to well-being.*

*Should be even tougher.*

*I agree with not blocking sun in the winter, but appreciation needs to be given to providing shade in the summer. Our cities will only get hotter, and shade will soon be very appreciated.*

*People need access to sunlight for their health.*

*Agree. As I said, open space soooooo important.*

*And the winter solstice is not enough for parks. It needs to extend beyond those times.*

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There was one comment about the need to balance restrictions with housing supply:

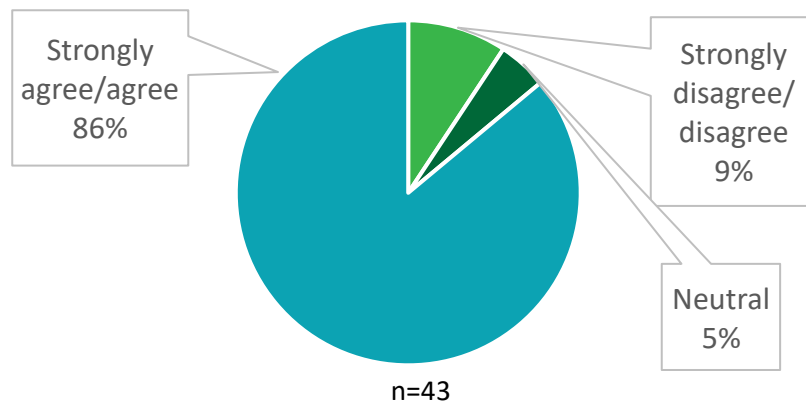
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*We need a balance between liveable spaces, and density. Blanket shade rules might not always be suitable and might reduce the number of available residences.*

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Pedestrian connectivity

What do you think of the Pedestrian connectivity additional requirements?



There was strong support for the additional pedestrian connectivity requirements.

*Comments*

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*Agreed - we need to massively expand green spaces in our streets and buildings.  
Tree-lined streets reduce noise and temperature.*

*OK great, now I'm seeing stuff about mitigating shade and heat, which sounds good. Plus yes, the Upfield Path can feel very isolated so more visibility on it sounds good. And it DEFINITELY needs a lot of space for cyclists going in both directions.*

*Yes, the upfield path is far too narrow in places.*

*Fully agree. Once again lets looks for innovation in design and respect occupants of these developments.*

*As a pedestrian this is very appealing.*

*Excellent. Yes, we need more human amenity in the public realm especially in the newly dense residential precincts.*

*Brunswick desperately needs more trees and vegetation around new developments.*

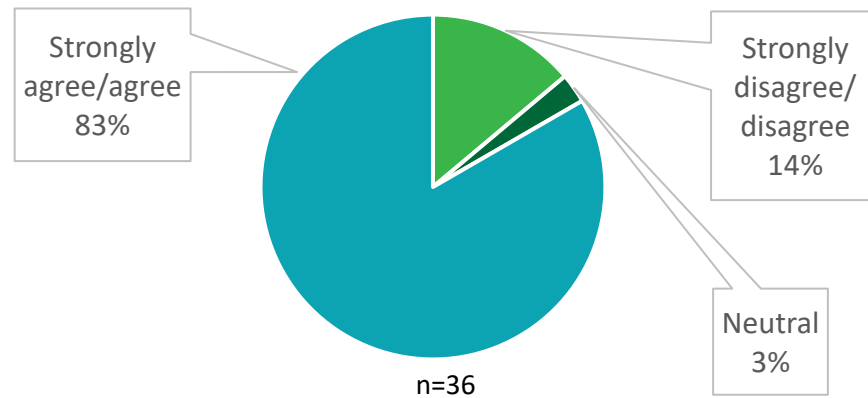
*These are all essential to ensuring that we can walk on hot days (which are becoming much more common) and that we address the urban heat island affect.*

*I do not want retail spaces set back so far from the footpath that they are overshadowed, and you don't know they are there.*

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## Amenity

### What do you think of the Amenity to lower scale residential areas additional requirements?



There was strong support for the additional amenity to lower scale residential areas requirements. A few participants commented that they supported density and wouldn't want this to be reduced.

#### Comments

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*I am personally affected by this, so it is self-interested, I admit. My house is across a right of way from a section of the Activity Centre Zone in which 4 storey development is to be encouraged. This would dramatically overshadow our backyard and make windows into our bathroom, kitchen and living room very public.*

*Yes, so that how a property will interact with its surroundings are taken more into account.*

*We need a bit more height to increase density for living but I agree we don't want skyscrapers in Merri-bek.*

*Yes, so that how a property will interact with its surroundings are taken more into account.*

*Not allowing building that looks into private secluded space should have always been the case.*

*Should be less than 17 metres though! So unfair for residents to lose their quiet enjoyment by being on display.*

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### Other design matters

Survey participants were asked to share any other design issues that they were concerned about. Comments related to:

- Active transport encouragement
- Apartment sizes and diversity
- Civic/community spaces
- Cycling needs
- Façade and rooftop greening
- Heat/shade
- Maintenance
- Open space/green space
- Parking
- Public art/murals and graffiti
- Sustainability.

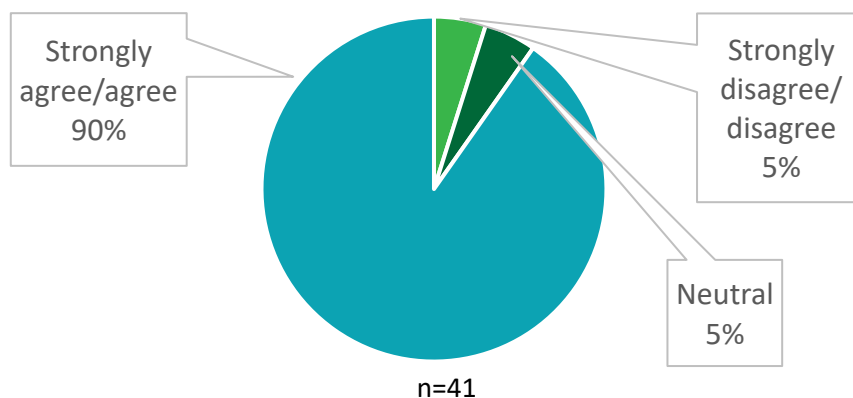
### Environmentally Sustainable Design and Bicycles

The Merri-Bek Planning Scheme currently contains both environmentally sustainable design (ESD) and bicycle-related requirements. In response to community feedback Council proposed additional requirements for the Brunswick Activity Centre.

#### ESD

In response to community feedback Council proposed new ESD requirements relating to sustainable transport, green infrastructure, climate resilience, and waste and resource recovery.

Do you agree that these ESD requirements should be included in the planning scheme?



There was very strong support for including these ESD requirements in the planning scheme.

#### Comments

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*Brunswick desperately needs more green infrastructure and climate resilience - I dread the summer months.*

*Yes, in particular low-carbon design should be mandated. I would like buildings to have to consider heating/cooling and the materials that are used.*

*These are essential to ensure Merri-bek is liveable in future decades. They cannot be optional and targets must increase.*

*Yay, a mention of waste recovery.*

*Totally agree we need free public charging everywhere to get EV use up.*

*It is so important to get these details right in new developments. People moving into a new home massively shakes up their routines and habits, and is a great opportunity to establish new, more sustainable habits like using public transport, walking or riding. I live in a relatively new development that could have done so much more on this front, and it's frustrating trying to retrofit things in.*

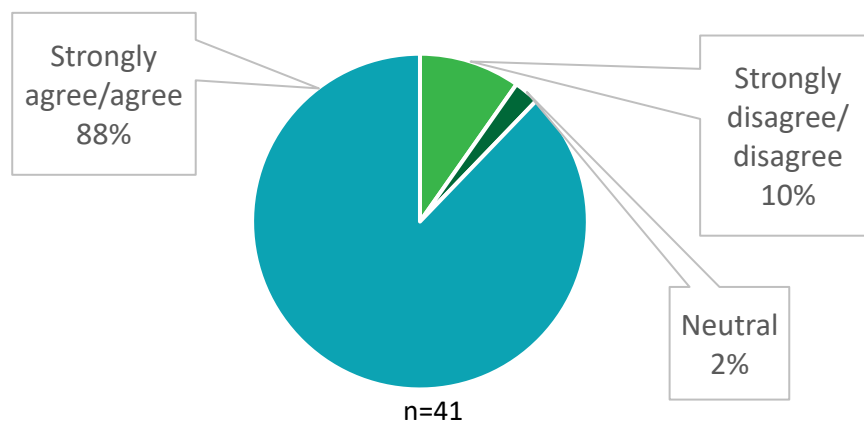
*Yes, but please be aware that EVs are many times heavier than regular vehicles and current multilevel car parks are not built to hold the weight. Very in favour of promoting walkability.*

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## Bicycles

In response to community feedback, Council proposed that access to car parking and waste collection in new development should be located away from main cycling routes wherever possible.

Do you agree that car parking access and waste collection should occur away from main bike routes?





There was strong support for keeping car parking access and waste collection away from main bike routes. There were mixed comments about whether this proposed requirement would mean a loss of car parking along cycling routes such as Sydney Road.

*Comments*

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*Always dicey riding past a roller door.*

*Let's try not to kill or injure cyclists when collecting rubbish.*

*Cycling should be encouraged. My household does not own any cars.*

*Yes, to a degree but I don't want to see car parking removed from Sydney Rd to enable bike paths, as this would destroy Sydney Rd as it has Bridge Rd Richmond. Not everyone is able to walk and ride bikes to go shopping.*

*Yes! Keep cars and drivers (and garbos and their trucks) away from bikes and cyclists! That's how people get hit while riding their bikes. I know someone who got hit by a garbage truck turning and he got dragged a bit and lost half a leg below one knee.*

*We need to close Sydney Road and create a CAR free zone. Close it from Dawson to Barkley Sq. Cars on Sydney Rd is what is killing the atmosphere, it busy, dangerous and you can never get a park anyway. With all the apartments going up it makes sense to have a car free zone. Think Europe! Milan, Spain all these places have amazing car free areas for cafes and shopping.*

*I think we can all agree that Sydney Road doesn't need any more reasons to be jammed with cars!*

*As a bike commuter of course I agree. Again, I don't understand how this was not an aim before.*

*I'm a cyclist!*

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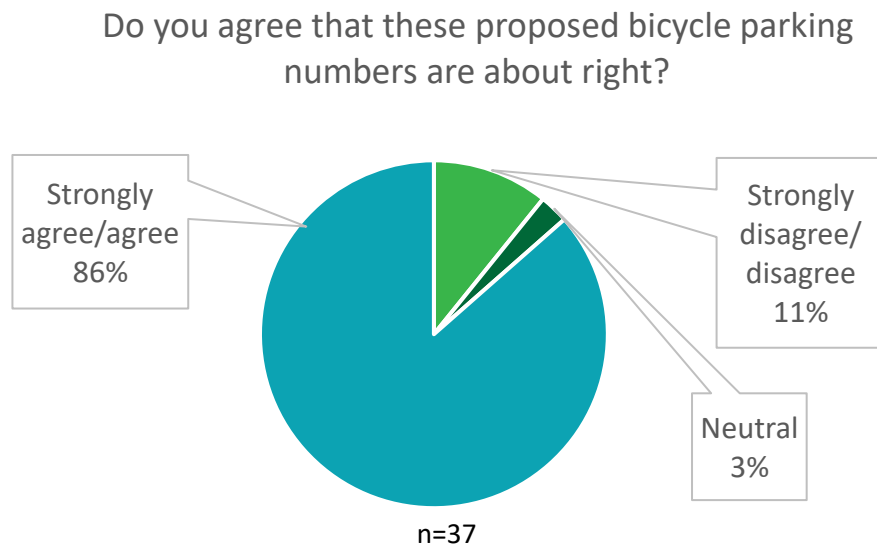
Comments from people who disagreed stated that things need to be practical for rate paying residents and businesses and transport by cars is an amenity expected by residents.

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*No-one seems to have consulted on the main bike routes. The cyclists pay no attention to road rules but expect car owners to pay for the upkeep. What has happened in Richmond since catering for car parking? Businesses die without traffic. Like it or not. I want a vibrant area of all people - cyclists and car owners.*

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In response to community feedback Council proposed to increase the amount of bicycle parking in new developments.



There was strong support for increasing the bicycle parking requirements in new developments. Many of the comments included suggestions on the practicalities required. Most people who disagreed, agree that bicycle parking should be increased but thought it should be increased even more than proposed.

#### *Comments*

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*I welcome any increases in bicycle parking. Keep in mind that some bicycle parking is too cramped to allow handle bars.*

*The definition of 'secure' should be required to be a space behind a locked gate or door, and if in a carpark, out of easy access from the street.*

*While the increased numbers are great, a focus needs to be on properly defining what secure parking involves given that basement carparks are often a common target of bike theft.*

*I agree with the principle of increasing the quantity of bike parking. The next step would be provision for larger bikes such as cargo bikes, getting rid of vertical parking racks, making access easier, etc.*

*There should be allowances for cargo bikes, and an assumption that more families will be living in apartments, so they will need storage for all their bikes.*

*Cycling parking should be at a much higher standard. Existing standards in Australia are far below other jurisdictions, so Merri-bek should set their own standards. This would include 100% horizontal parking (vertical racks are not at*

*all accessible), minimum widths for doorways, automatic doors, etc. London Cycle Parking guidelines are a good basis.*

*...focus on active transport rather than car travel.*

*Be careful about car dependency for residents working out of the area.*

*We absolutely need to improve infrastructure for bicycles and other micro mobility devices (e.g., electric scooters) and to incentivise those manners of transport plus walking and public transport, and to disincentivise car usage.*

*Seems low and not accounting for continuing growth. Maybe four to six times?*

*It should be assumed that every resident will have 1 or 2 bikes and that every visitor will want a bike. Cycling parking needs a massive increase - a simple doubling is nowhere near enough.*

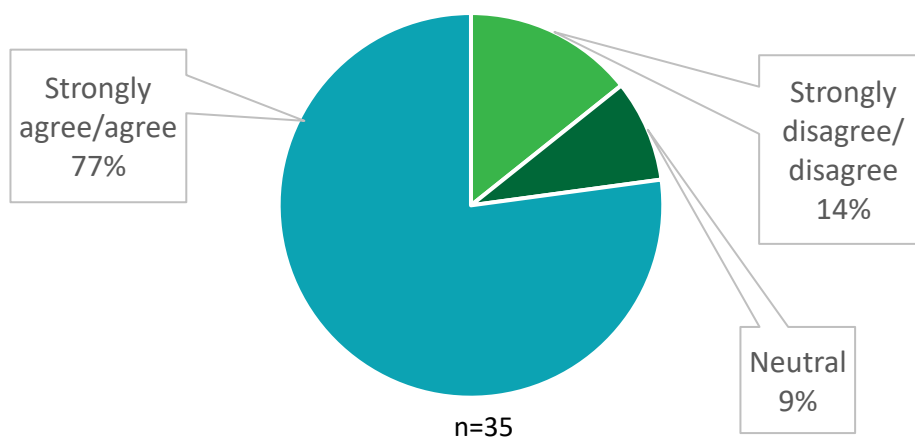
*Yes! I like the fact that we are establishing additional bike parking and showcasing that this is the direction that Merri-bek is moving towards.*

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## Building height

Existing building heights for the Brunswick Activity Centre have not been reviewed as part of this project. However, when a planning application in any part of Merri-bek proposes a building that is higher than the preferred building height, Council uses criteria to help make an assessment. Council requested feedback about these criteria.

### What do you think of these criteria?



There was strong support for the proposed building height criteria. Some of those disagreeing advocated for stricter criteria or were disillusioned by the likelihood of them being upheld in VCAT.

*Comments*

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*I would be more specific about 'negative impact' because some people will complain about any height increase and claim it has a negative impact.*

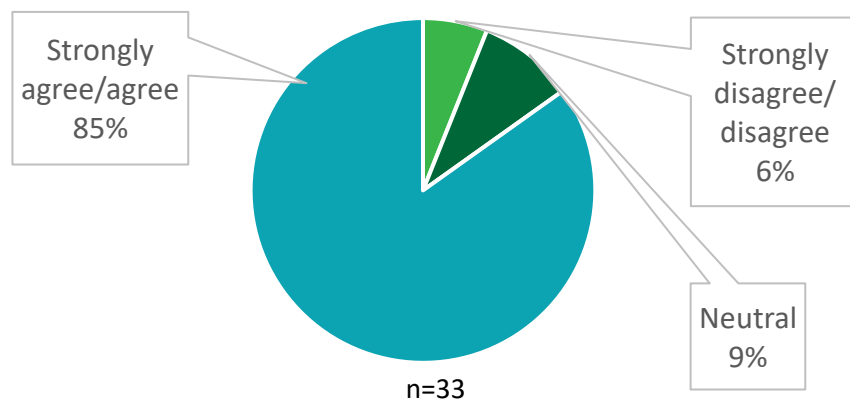
*Great list!*

*It's important that the criteria are able to provide guidance on the relative trade-off between providing housing and height. There seems to be an implicit assumption into the questions that more height is bad - however I think this should be challenged in their drafting.*

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There are some additional building height criteria which are used in the Coburg Activity Centre and the survey asked about support for these criteria to be included for the Brunswick Activity Centre.

Do you think these criteria should be included for the Brunswick Activity Centre?



There was strong support for these additional building height criteria to be included for the Brunswick Activity Centre.

*Comments*

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*This is essential and far more important than the criteria listed above.*

*If we can improve the design and quality of buildings then this can only be a positive step forward for the community.*

*Especially the positive contribution to public open space.*

*Yes, staggered height is justified for the benefit of public open space.*

*I support excellent ESD performance and a positive contribution or upgrading of public open space or the public realm.*

*We need more affordable housing, for sure! And Public Space that's not commercial, too. I was in Berlin this past spring and was struck by how much leafy, pleasant municipal space (small plazas and squares) there was, where people could congregate with their friends, their partners and children, etc and just enjoy being outside together, without having to pay for it.*

*Affordable housing only in conjunction with relevant expertise and funding.*

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## Other Comments

Survey participants were asked “Is there anything else you would like to suggest to ensure the future vibrancy of the Brunswick Activity Centre?” Comments related to:

### Transport

- More public transport services
- Bike paths
- Ease of car movement
- Parking
- Reduction of car use/reliance
- Traffic management.

### Open space

- Footpaths
- Greenery
- Open space management
- Rubbish.

### Buildings

- Accessibility
- Building quality
- Heritage
- Public housing increase
- Reducing vacant shopfronts.

### Other

- Council enforcement
- Safety strategies
- Community connection.

## Written Submissions

Council received 15 written submissions in phase three of the engagement, covering a number of elements that were of interest to the community. They have been summarised below. As part of their submissions, many voiced an overall support for the Brunswick Activity Centre plans.

### Boundaries, zones and overlays

Several submissions discussed the proposed boundaries of the Brunswick Activity Centre or proposed precincts. Comments included:

- Specific properties that should be included in a different precinct to the one proposed or have a different zone applied altogether
- Brunswick Activity Centre should not include some currently included properties and areas
- Need for heritage overlays to be reviewed.

### Vibrancy

Submissions were very supportive of the vision for the Brunswick Activity Centre. Comments included:

- Inclusion of wellbeing principles
- Action beyond planning tools for vibrancy
- Rubbish/litter impacting vibrancy
- Graffiti impacting vibrancy
- Employment – incentives for service industries (key worker industries).

### Commercial

- Commercial floor space requirement objection

### ESD and Bicycles

- Desire for green space requirements
- Need for active transport goals and other transport initiatives to be included in planning scheme
- Support for bicycle inclusions.

### Building heights

- Objection to building heights
- Heights to reflect current buildings
- Height and density increases which would adversely impact on current business operations.

### Other

- Wording changes suggestions to improve clarity
- Fewer setbacks to allow more density
- Council's ability to enforce and ensure the proposals – particularly amenity - in an on-going capacity
- Suggestion of how this review of the planning scheme should be conducted.

## Conclusion

Phase three of the Vibrant Brunswick project focused on refining some of the key elements of the drafted Structure Plan for the Brunswick Activity Centre and corresponding content in the planning scheme. These changes are based largely on community feedback in the previous phase.

Project page visitors and time spent suggest an informed community. The nature of a third round of engagement is likely to have less participants when the engagement questions are focused on the detail of the proposed changes and a further refining of previously asked questions.

There was a good mix of survey participants across age and gender. Most participants live in or close to the Brunswick Activity Centre, and almost 20% are renting. This indicates a community who are engaged and invested in their neighbourhood.

Survey responses were overall strongly supportive of the proposed changes. In particular, there was very strong support for design requirements:

- Including the ESD requirements in the planning scheme
- The additional building design requirements
- All new apartments to be required to include acoustic treatments to keep noise out
- Commercial spaces to have minimum design requirements.

As one participant noted, it is easier to design in now than retrofit later.

There was strong support for the encouraged and discouraged uses in the precincts, with the exception of discouraged uses in the housing precinct where views were mixed. Some participants felt that there needs to be some allowances for small businesses.

There was strong support for additional requirements for new developments, and for the building height criteria and its inclusion in the Brunswick Activity Centre. Unlike previous phases of engagement, the comments here indicate a community with a high understanding of what is possible in a planning scheme in regard to building height.

The written submissions were thoughtful pieces that raised a number of suggestions, particularly vibrancy of the area and many in reference to specific parcels of land.

Three new issues emerged through the phase 3 engagement, being:

- Accessible housing for people with disability
- Design detail of onsite bicycle parking to accommodate the growing numbers of electric and cargo bikes
- Self-storage uses which do little to provide employment or add to the vibrancy of the area.

Overall, the community have indicated a love for the Brunswick Activity Centre neighbourhood and a desire for its vibrancy to continue, particularly the creativity, entertainment, shops, services and small businesses. These participants have indicated a desire for supporting lower socio-economic residents to remain and contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of the area, support for both car and non-car travel and a need for green spaces in many forms. The drafted Brunswick Activity Centre Structure Plan and proposed planning scheme requirements appear to be very well supported.