Myrtle and Macleay Parks Master Plan

Engagement Summary Report

June 2024



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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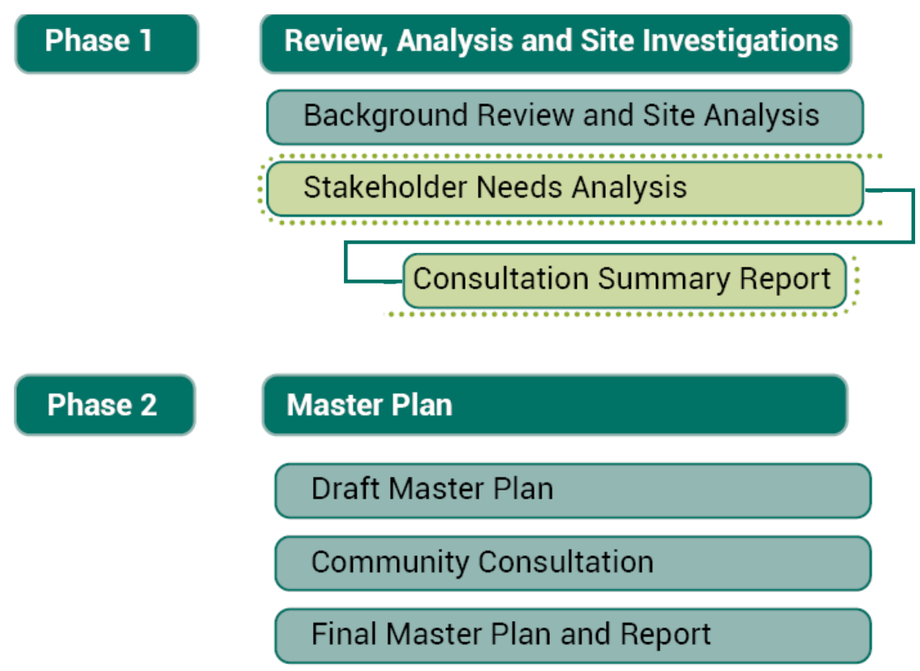
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The following report has been prepared as a supporting document to the Myrtle and Macleay Parks Master Plan .It details part of the Stakeholder Analysis part of Phase 1: Review, Analysis and Site Investigation.



The information from Phase 1 is used to inform the development of the Master Plan.

Introduction

This section details information about the engagement process, participation and approach.

1.0 Engagement Summary

1.1 Approach

The engagement approach for Myrtle and Macleay Parks (MMP) Master Plan has been adopted and delivered in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020. Hansen Partnership worked as an independent facilitator to develop and deliver a fair and equitable consultation process. This includes:

- Online survey and interactive map with multiple choice and open ended feedback seeking demographic profile and extensive feedback from all park users (summarised in this report, refer Section 2.0-4.0).
- A small workshop with representatives of MMP sporting tenant clubs and organisations, including a representative sample of residents who live adjacent to the park and who use the park for a diverse range of uses. This workshop included presentation and group discussions (summarised in this report, refer Section 5.0).
- Ongoing consultation with the The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) *(refer to the MMP Traditional Owners Engagement Summary Report for information)*

1.2 Process

In June and July 2023 the project team undertook extensive consultation with the community to understand key issues about the parks and how the master plan could address these issues.

Events were advertised via:

- A3 Posters at the park entrances and some throughout the park on oval/netball court fencing and at the playground, and at pavilions
- Engage Boroondara member notifications
- Social media posts:
  - Facebook and Instagram post: Tuesday 11 July
  - Facebook and Instagram post: Thursday 20 July
  - Paid ads: Running from Tuesday 11 July to Sunday 23 July
- Cotham Ward newsletter - distributed from Wednesday 5 July
- Boroondara Bulletin July/August edition - distributed from Wednesday 5 July
- Local flyer distribution (distribution area bound by Maud Street in the North, Burke Road in the West, Gordon Street in the South and Balwyn Road in the East) from 27th June to 7th July

1.3 Participation Outcomes

June 26th - July 23rd

865 surveys completed

94 pins dropped online

23 attendees of the workshop

1.4 Competing interests

Differing views on particular topics were noted in the feedback provided through the on-line survey and at the workshop, including:

- **Cycling routes within the park**

A majority of respondents expressed a preference for unsealed gravel paths throughout the parks, particularly the east-west link along the northern boundary of the parks has been highlighted. However, some opinions expressed the need for a robust bicycle path through the parks.

- **National Premier Leagues (NPL) standard ovals/ Hybrid surfacing**

The baseball and soccer clubs prominently advocated for turf enhancements, suggesting the adoption of artificial and hybrid turfs to augment facility usage. Conversely, such modifications could adversely affect the Cricket Club that operates within the parks and passive recreational usage of the space.

Differing viewpoints are representative of the diverse user groups and competing interests at the park. Decision making for complex site conditions and needs is guided by:

- Aligning initiatives with the project objectives
- Recommendations outlined in Council strategies
- Directions in relevant Council policies

Online Engagement

A summary of the findings from on-line engagement via Engage Boroondara

2.0 The On-line Survey: Overview

During the community engagement period, 865 surveys were completed with nearly 965 individual comments. The on-line survey asked a number of questions to understand the profile of respondents representing the park users, the existing site, and what its future needs will be. This report provides analysis and reporting of the results so that the development of the Master Plan can consider the parts of the park that are valued by the community, parts of the park that could be improved, and concerns about any impacts of potential future changes.

Content

The on-line survey contain questions about the respondents, and questions about their experience of Myrtle and Macleay Parks.

The following questions were asked to provide understanding about the demographic profile of the survey respondents, as well as the relationship of the individuals to the park.

1. How often do you visit the parks?
2. How do you get to these parks?
3. How long does it take for you to reach these parks?
4. What do you currently use these parks for?
5. How old are you?
6. What is your gender?
7. What suburb do you live in?
8. What street do you live on?



The following questions were also asked within the survey to understand personal experiences, and potential issues and opportunities when planning for the future:

1. What is your favourite thing about the parks?
2. What is your least favourite thing about the parks?
3. What in the parks do you think could be improved?
4. Is there anything else you'd like us to consider when drafting our Myrtle and Macleay Parks Master Plan?

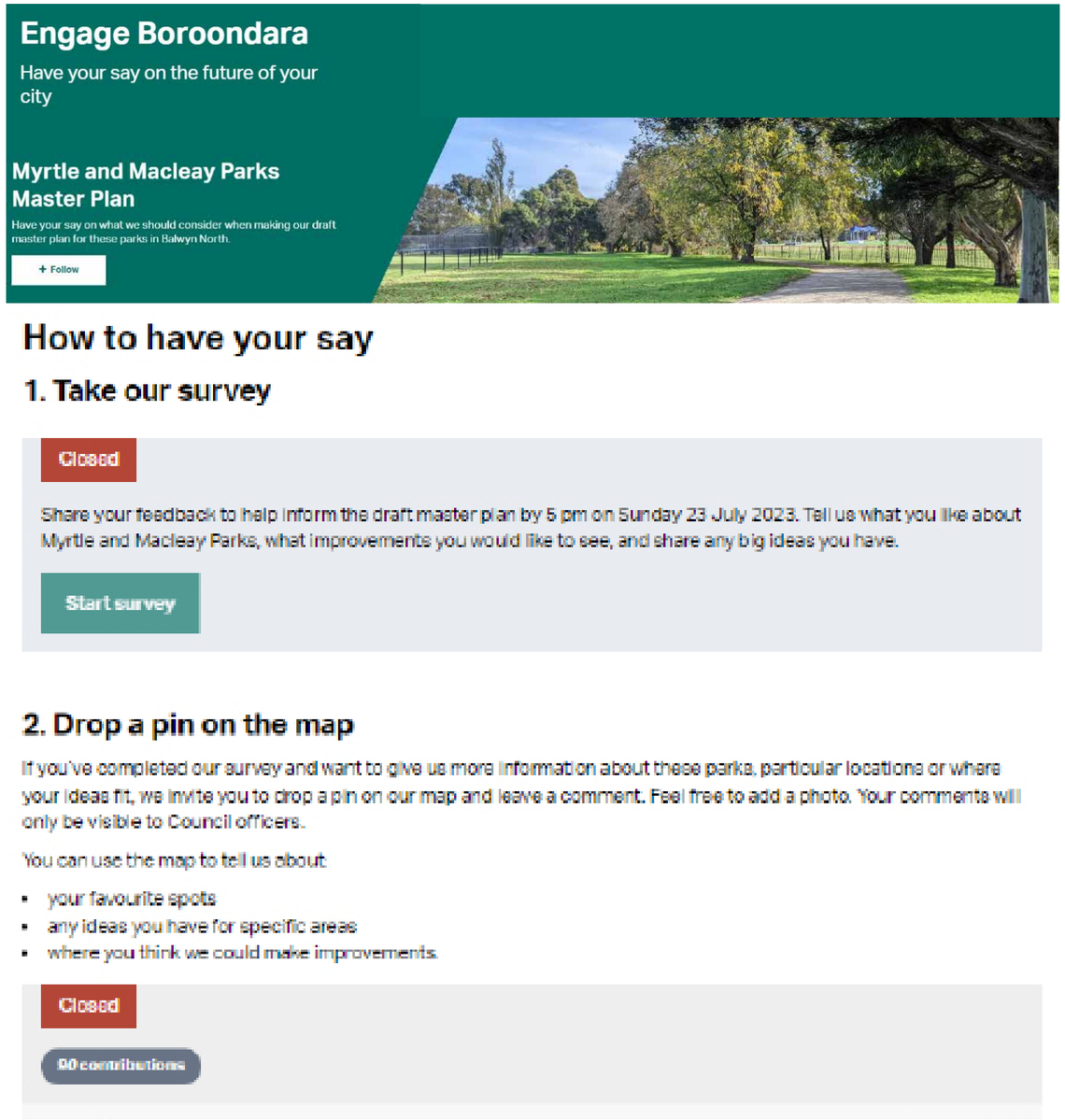


Figure 1: Engage Boroondara website

3.0 Survey Results

3.1 Demographics

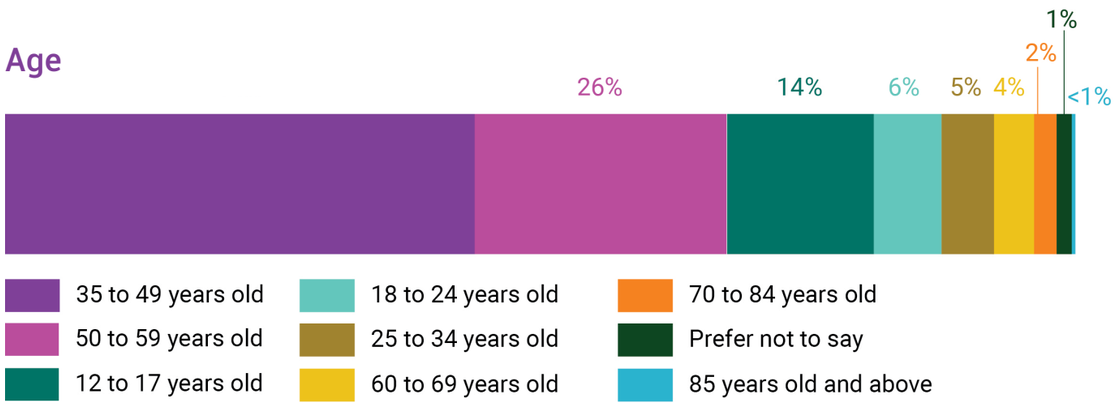
A broad spectrum of people participated in the surveys. There was equal representation of genders, and the most represented age groups were 35 to 49 years old (44%), 50 to 59 years old (26%) and 12 to 17 years old (14%).

The majority of participants were local Balwyn North residents (23%). The remainder were users who came from other suburbs in Boroondara (57%), and from outside of the municipality likely part of a sporting club or living close to the boundary of the City of Boroondara.

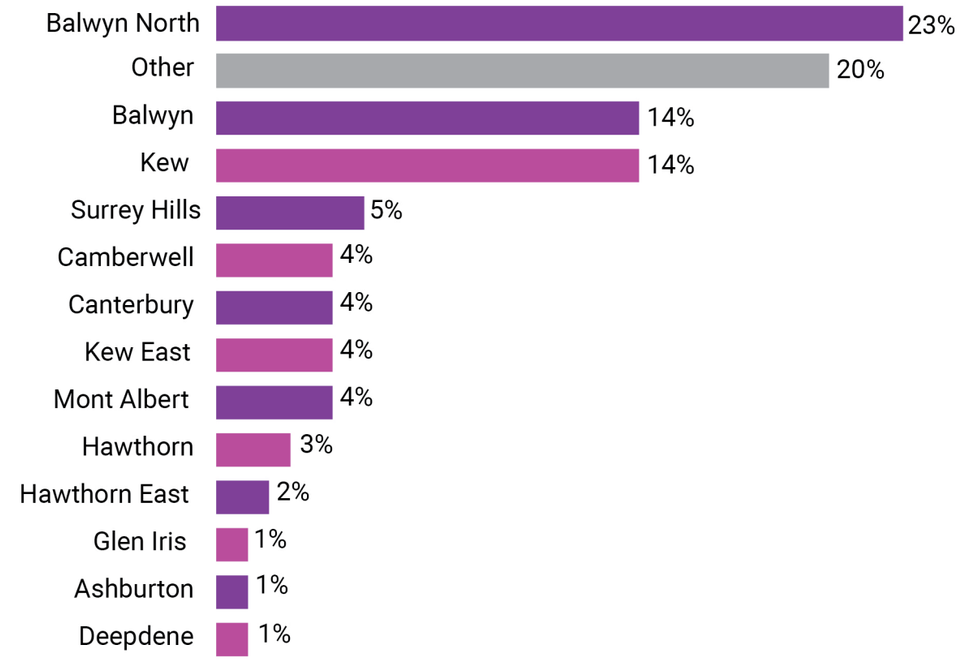
Gender



Age



Residential suburb

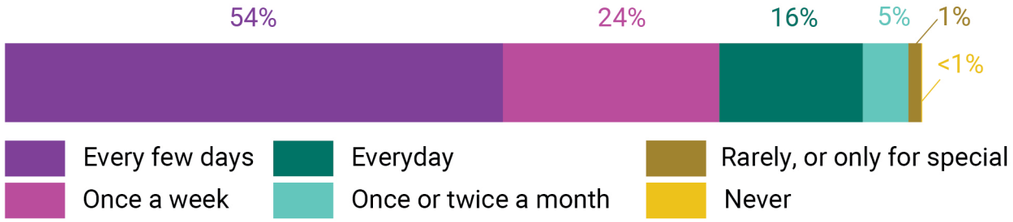


"We feel safe walking in the park and it is safe for our two grandchildren and for older citizens and dog owners."

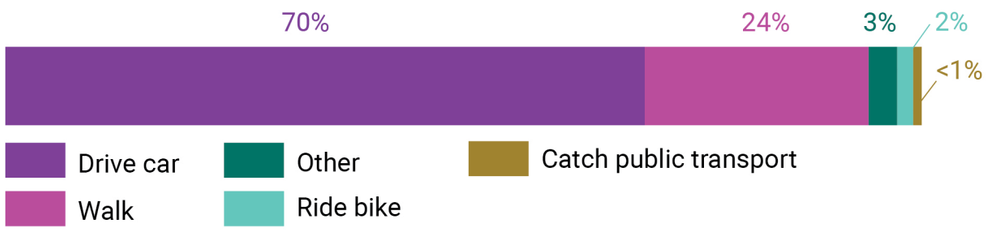
3.2 Travel and frequency

According to the survey results, a significant 70% of the respondents mentioned that they visit the park either daily or every few days. In terms of transportation, a majority, 70%, reported driving to the park, while 24% stated that they prefer walking. Additionally, more than half of the respondents have the convenience of residing close to the park, as they indicated that their journey to the park takes less than 10 minutes.

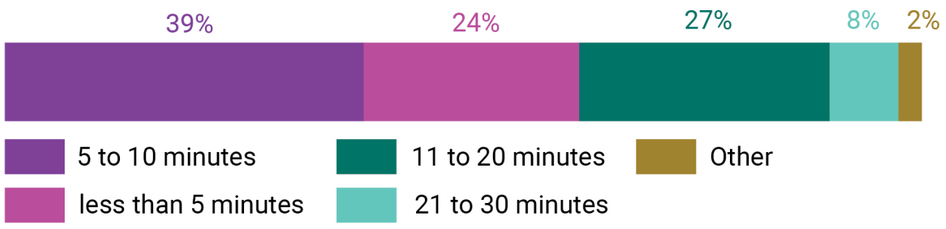
How often do you visit?



How do you travel to the park?



How long does it take to travel?

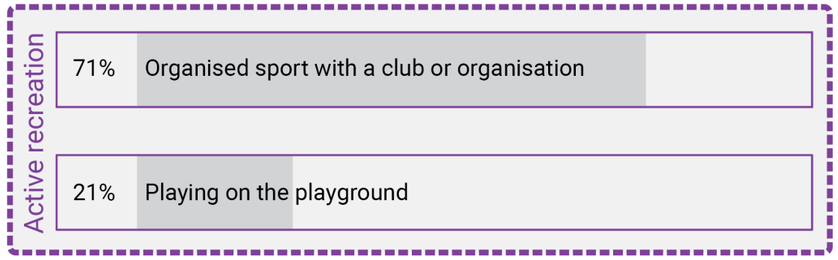


3.3 Reasons for visiting

A high number of respondents use the park for organised sport, but many of them also use the park for its other features with usage such as walking, dog walking, playground and informal sport being very popular.

Overall, while most (71%) respondents use the park for organised sport with a club or organisation, all the other passive are similarly popular.

What do you use the parks for?



*Percentages at or below 5%.
(car parking 5%, scouts 5%, Tai Chi 1% or custom response 4%).

3.4 What we heard

In the open-ended question section, we invited the community to share their thoughts on the park's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as their innovative ideas. While many respondents echoed similar sentiments, there were also distinct differences in perspectives. This section provides a concise summary of the collective feedback we received.

What is your favourite thing about the parks?

Respondents provided positive feedback on the parks for its sport and recreational opportunities, community engagement, and inviting green spaces. The comments can be categorised into the following themes:

- **Diverse recreational and local community building opportunities:**
  - Multi-use spaces for a variety of activities
  - Playground popular among families with children
  - The park as a place for people to come together and bond through recreational activities
  - A place to join a community of dog walkers
  - A sense of community spirit
  - Alternative activities on the netball courts
  - A place for community sports
  - Places to gather and spectate
- **Natural environment and green spaces:**
  - Abundance of trees and greenery contributing to a serene atmosphere
  - Gravel and unpaved walking paths for walking, jogging, and cycling
  - Passive open spaces for relaxation and outdoor enjoyment
- **Safety and accessibility:**
  - Parks perceived as safe environments for families, children, and pets
  - Accessible location appreciated by the community
  - Walking safely and not worrying about fast cyclists/ scooters
  - Family friendly
- **Sporting and exercise:**
  - A place for girls and womens sporting development
  - Well-maintained grounds to support sporting activity
  - The walking/jogging track
  - A place to improve health

A 'word cloud' is a tool which visualises the survey responses and identifies when key words in sentences get used more frequently. The larger and more bold the word is, the more frequent the word has been used by the respondents.

The following word cloud visualises the responses to the question *"What is your favourite thing about the park?"*:



Some responses provided included:

> *"Quiet, leafy, tranquil open spaces. Beautiful trees, soft surface for walking"*

> *"Lots of open spaces and lots of opportunity for community sport"*

> *"They allow for bonding between the community and the ability to play sports"*

> *"It's multi-use features and lovely bush like landscaping."*

What is your least favourite thing about the parks?

The feedback we received can be categorised into four themes. These themes highlight issues around park usability and safety.

There were concerns about park infrastructure, including parking, lighting, and facilities. Safety issues due to overcrowding and off-leash dogs are noted. Respondents desire upgraded sports facilities and more passive amenities like seating and picnic areas.

The responses are represented within the following key themes:

- **Infrastructure And Facility Upgrades:**
  - Insufficient parking
  - Inadequate lighting for evening activities
  - Substandard pavilion and toilet facilities
  - Mud and drainage issues
  - Lack of toilets, particularly near the playground
  - Privacy concerns related to pavilions and toilets
  - Need for upgraded sport facilities
- **Overcrowding And Space Allocation:**
  - Overcrowded due to sporting events
  - Traffic issues during peak use
- **Dog-Related Issues:**
  - Poor control of dogs off leash creating safety concerns for other users
  - No available and adequate spaces to walk dogs off-lead, safely
- **Passive Amenities And Recreational Spaces:**
  - Desire for more passive amenities in open space areas such as picnic tables, seats
  - Lighting limits sporting schedules, and other activities such as walking and dog walking especially in winter
  - Poor drainage along paths

The following word cloud visualises the responses to the question *"What is your least favourite thing about the park?"*:



Some responses provided included:

"Bad Lighting across the park"

"Parking! On a Saturday morning it is very difficult to get a park"

"Toilets lacking. Poor club room facilities."

"Poor lighting, loop doesn't go full way round and inadequate parking"

"Sometimes very muddy and not enough seating when watching sporting games"

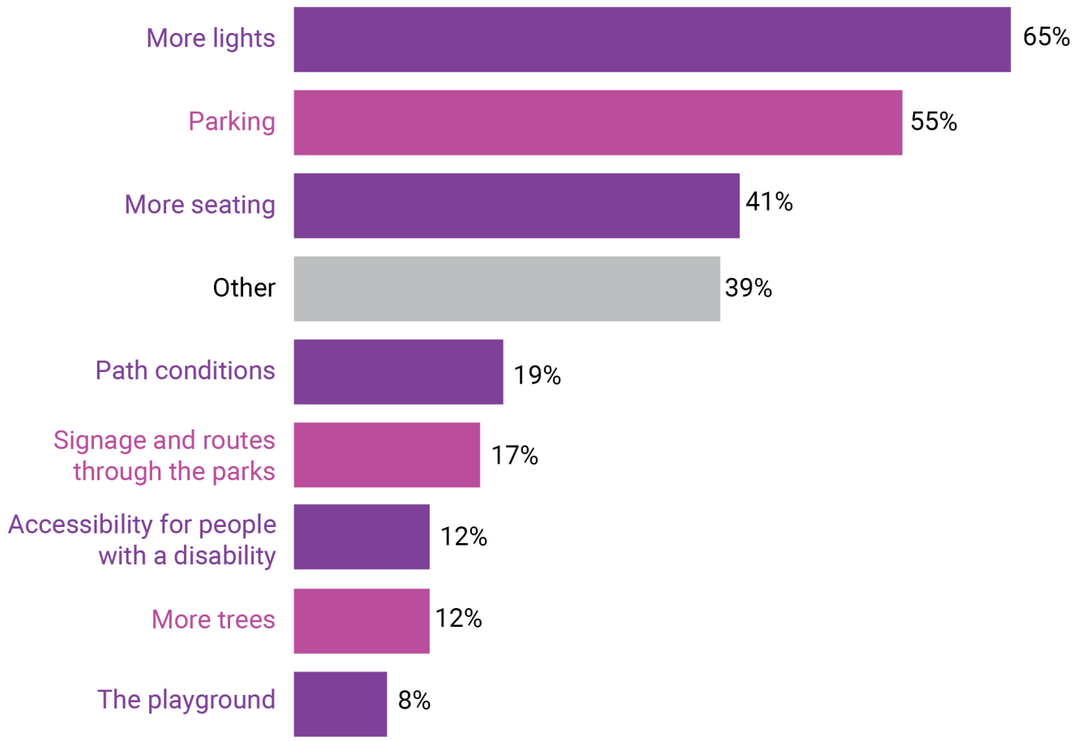
There were many responses specific to sporting club/organisation facility improvements, which closely reflected the focused engagement workshop including tenant representatives (refer to Section 5.0 of this report for details on feedback from the Workshop).

What in the parks do you think could be improved?

Feedback about what could be improved in the park was gathered. Respondents were able to select multiple categories and provide more information about “other” elements that could be improved.

The highest result among the multiple choice answers was improvements to lighting and parking. There were also many responses specific to sporting club/organisation facility improvements, which reflected the focused engagement workshop results undertaken with sporting club/organisation tenants (refer to Section 5.0 of this report for these details).

All suggested improvements will be considered in alignment with the master plan objectives (to best meets everyone's needs) and in accordance with Council policies and guidelines.



39% of respondents suggested improvements in the “other” category, and provided suggestions that were not in the multiple choice options. Among these, the most frequently mentioned suggestions were:

- Improvements to sporting facilities including surface improvements
- Improvements to traffic and pedestrian safety, comfort & flow
- More public toilet facilities
- Increased provision of trees
- Designated dog-friendly areas
- Shelter for viewing areas
- Better waste management

Some responses provided included:

“More facilities needed- tennis wall, basketball hoops, athletic tracks, equipment for older kids”

“Another public toilet, essential when numbers swell for organised sports; better care of established trees and more planting and care of new trees; more fixed bins to deposit refuse and litter.”

“Outdoor gym equipment would be great.”

“(...) Planting grass / artificial turf under the trees around netball courts/in front of water tanks; Solar panels for pavilions; Increased shelter and seating; Safer pedestrian crossing; Additional water fountains”

“Bike parking rails at playground, nets and pavilions to encourage more people to ride to the facilities and reduce demand on car parking”

Is there anything else you'd like us to consider when drafting our Myrtle and Macleay Parks Master Plan?

Responses to this question included suggestions for improving sports facilities, ensuring safety, preserving the current character of the park to protect its environmental values and safe passive recreational uses, and introduction of a broader range of activities.

Suggestions for the park improvements will be considered from multiple park user perspectives to understand the impact to the overall balance of the park.

Some of the general responses provided to this survey question included:

"(...) keeping the space as a green open space. Spaces like this are very rare and once developed will not be returned "

"Traffic in the surrounding streets(...) limits local users from using the park for other recreational purposes."

"please honor the safety of walkers and runners in the plan including the ambiance of the park that is currently so lovely"

"Complete the walking track to make a full circuit(...)'

"We need more spaces for older kids - basketball courts, skate park, bike jumps"

"Replace the dusty car park next to the playground with a proper surface."

"Also facilitate off-lead dog walking - perhaps a designated off-lead dog area"

"The roundabout near the toilets/ canteen is too small(...)"

Suggestions for the sporting facilities will be considered from multiple park user perspectives to understand the impact to the overall balance of the park.

Some of the responses to this question relating to general sporting improvements included:

"Maintaining sports clubs and quality of grounds and clubrooms"

"Better change rooms for girls"

"Encourage more community sport - it is the pulse of the area. Active kids=happy healthy families!!"

"Improve Myrtle pavilion"

"To attract more females to sport"

"More spectator seating around the grounds"

"How to effectively manage multi-sport usage. Cricket and soccer can reasonably be expected to share some facilities, but artificial cricket pitches cause safety risks for soccer."

"Create female friendly changing rooms"

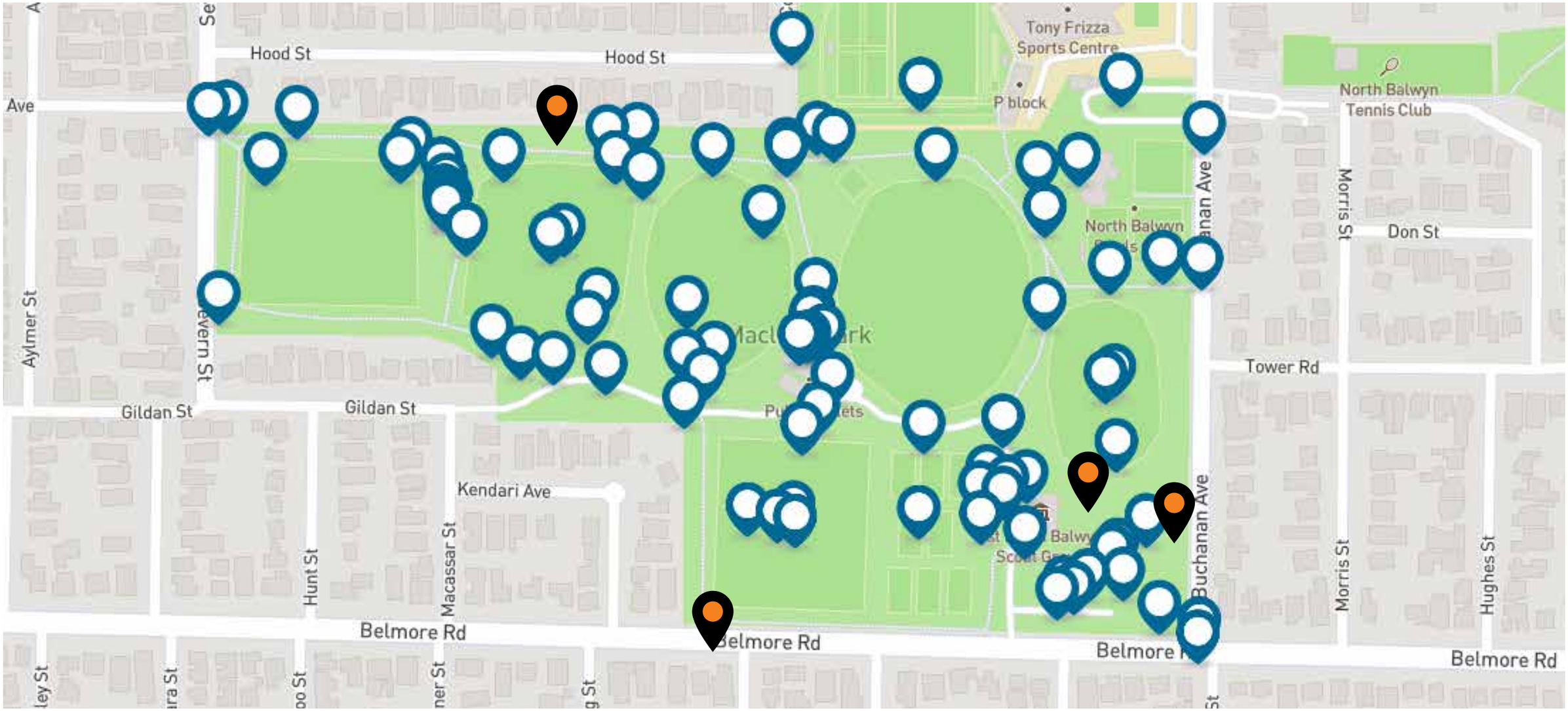
"Please upgrade our soccer playing experience so we have an all year ground for all of our players."

Refer to Section 5.0 for summarised feedback provided by tenant club and organisation representatives.

4.0 Pin Map Results

The Engage Boroondara website included an interactive map that respondents could drop a pin and record location specific comments. A total 94 comments were pinned on the social map. The location markers in black and orange represent feedback received via hard copy submissions to Council. The key themes of these comments are detailed in Section 4.1.

"More trees and seating to create passive area"



4.1 Key themes of Pin Drop Map comments

The key themes of comments pinned to the map of Myrtle and Macleay Park (existing condition) fits into 7 main themes: infrastructure upgrades, gender inclusivity, sports facilities, active transport, safety, community engagement, environmental features, and the need for a balanced approach to park development.



Infrastructure and Facility Upgrades:

The main theme revolves around the need for infrastructure upgrades and improvements across various areas, including: Myrtle Park Pavilion, drainage of ovals, park lighting, toilets, seating, drinking fountains, parking and traffic management, shared paths & safe pedestrian crossings, and bike parking facilities.



Gender-Inclusive Facilities:

Concerns raised about the lack of gender-inclusive facilities, particularly in the Myrtle pavilion, where there is only one women's toilet despite multiple women's teams using the pavilion.



Sports Facilities:

Requests for better sports facilities such as more courts, improved lighting, improvements to sporting surfaces and more specific requests relating to specific organised sport uses.



Connectivity:

There is a call for better design to facilitate connections that encourage active transport, to and from the park, safe pedestrian travel to and within the park, and improvements to the pedestrian journey through the park.

"love walking/jogging along this tree lined pathway"

"Add bike rails to facilitate bike parking for families visiting the park"

"Better water taps for weekend use when netball centre is closed"



Safety and Lighting:

Safety concerns highlighted particularly related to pedestrian movement, poor lighting in pathways and parking areas, and traffic management within the park.



Environmental and Recreational Features:

Some feedback mentions the desire for preserving existing features like the unsealed path and adding environmental features like tree-lined pathways and water features.



Balancing Sports and Non-Sports Facilities:

Some feedback emphasises the need for a balanced approach to park development, not focusing solely on sports facilities but also considering non-sports amenities like BBQ areas and quiet passive spaces.

Workshop

A summary of the findings from a workshop with representatives of the sporting tenant clubs, organisations and residents.

5.0 Community Engagement Workshop Overview

The following section provides a summary of a workshop conducted at Macleay Pavilion on Wednesday 28th June 2023.

Hansen Partnership worked as an independent facilitator to develop and deliver a fair and equitable consultation process. This included on-line engagement which is detailed in Section 2.0 to 4.0 of this report, and a small workshop with representatives of MMP sporting tenant clubs and organisations, including a representative sample of residents who live adjacent to the park and who use the park for a diverse range of uses.

Facilitators and attendees heard a broad range of issues experienced at the park, specific needs for sporting operations to assist with technical design considerations. Attendees also discussed ideas for improvements with others that might have competing needs.

5.1 Attendance

Representatives from the following groups were invited to attend the workshop:

- Miss Spartan Group Fitness
- North Balwyn Baseball Club
- North Balwyn Bowls Club
- Boroondara Cricket Club
- 1st North Balwyn Scout Group
- Balwyn Saints Cricket Club
- North Balwyn CC
- Boroondara Netball Association
- Boroondara Eagles Football Club
- Melbourne Baseball Club
- One FC
- Neighbouring residents of abutting streets

The workshop attendance numbers were limited to enable focused discussions and meet resource limits. Two representatives were invited from each tenant group, and 8 residents selected from and EOI to streets adjacent the park. Limitations to this method are understood and considered in the overall engagement approach, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

Resident selection aimed to create an overall diverse representation of the park community and genders for differing perspectives. The group selected represented a broad range of experience in passive activities at the park.

The selection criteria considered an overall:

- Equal geographic distribution (e.g. 1 representative from the north, 2 from the east, 2 from the south and 3 from the west)
- Diversity in the group's usage of the park and its features
- Balanced numbers where possible of dog off-lead supporters and supporters of on-lead restrictions
- Gender balance (The representatives did not need to have diversity in each geographic area)

Representatives from Miss Spartan Group Fitness, Melbourne Baseball Club and One FC did not attend the in person workshop. Opportunity was provided for these apologies to provide input related to their operations separately and any other more general input about the park through the on-line survey.

5.2 Program

The workshop structure encouraged the representative group of participants to consider the issues and range of opinions about the park together. It provided a platform for understanding the operational conflicts and needs of different tenant sporting groups within the context of other passive usage.

Representatives of sporting clubs, organisations and residents were invited to speak about:

- The main issues and priorities associated with the utilisation of the MMP;
- Suggested improvements that will benefit sporting groups and other passive users; and
- Suggested improvements that will benefit the general community.

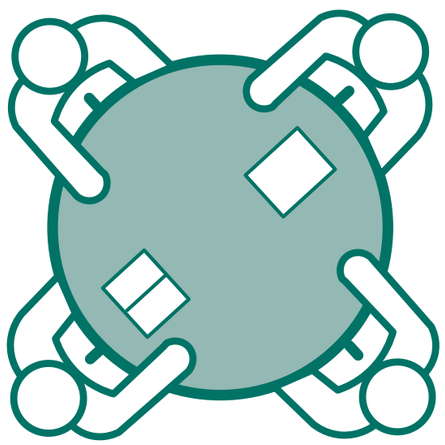
Following the presentation, participants split into smaller groups (ensuring a good mix of representation from sporting clubs, organisations and residents) to share ideas and strategies to improve both formal and informal recreation opportunities at the MMP.

The key discussion points are categorised and summarised in Section 5.3.

5.3 Workshop: Key Priorities

The following priority improvement themes for MMP Master Plan were identified during the workshop. This is a summary of the detailed feedback, and all information gathered during the workshop is considered alongside the on-line engagement results.

- **Upgrade and redevelopment improvements to pavilions and other facilities**
  - Improved pavilions, especially Myrtle Park pavilion toilets, and changing facilities
  - Address issues with women's facilities
  - Introduction of umpires rooms and storage spaces
  - Clubrooms that support female sports and children's safety
- **Improved informal recreation facilities and signage**
  - More well-located seating with shade cover
  - Improved amenities for spectators
  - Spaces for informal gatherings and relaxation
- **Playing field/ court improvements**
  - Introduction of a second infield for baseball has been suggested
  - Requests for upgrades to the netball courts and facilities
  - Consideration for synthetic or hybrid surfaces for more resilience against weather
  - Clear pathways around perimeters of ovals were requested
- **Parking improvements**
  - Address parking issues during games and events
  - Establish parking on one side of certain streets
- **Traffic improvements**
  - Introduce peak time traffic management
  - Safe drop-off zones and traffic flow improvements
- **Lighting improvements**
  - Improved lighting for several courts
  - Introduction of solar lighting and lighting timers
- **Playground improvements**
  - Relocation and expansion of playgrounds
  - Safe spaces away from high traffic areas
  - Public toilet near playground
- **Pathways improvements**
  - Addressing slippery and deteriorating paths
  - Marking paths for better navigation for bikers and walkers
- **Increase passive and environmental role and functions**
  - Reclamation of green space
  - Retention of trees and introduction of biodiversity corridors
  - Signage explaining local flora and fauna
  - Dedicated areas for passive recreation and improved amenities
  - Rubbish minimisation
- **Arts / cultural / interpretive measures**
  - Space for events
  - New signage to educate about the park's environment
  - Introduction of sound shells for performances
- **Upgrades to the scout hall and building interface**



Contact page

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For speech or hearing impaired:
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