

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

MYERS RESERVE MASTER PLAN

FINAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2023

Contents

Executive Summary.....3

Project Overview.....3

Engagement Overview.....3

How We Engaged.....3

Who We Engaged.....3

What We Heard3

What We Will Do.....3

Introduction.....4

Project Background4

Engagement Purpose4

About This Report.....4

How We Engaged.....5

Snapshot5

Engagement Summary5

Who We Engaged.....6

Who We Planned To Engage.....6

Who We Engaged.....6

Participation.....6

Who Actively Engaged.....6

What We Heard7

What We Asked And Why.....7

Key Findings Overview7

Breakdown Of Findings.....7

Key Themes7

How We Are Responding9

Next Steps.....9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of this land.

It also acknowledges all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Greater Geelong community today.

Executive Summary

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Myers Reserve Draft Master Plan provides an informed, consolidated and long-term approach to future infrastructure development across the site.

The need for the plan has arisen from stakeholders identifying specific constraints within the Reserve and the inability to meet their current and future sporting and recreation needs.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The key purpose of this engagement was to gather an understanding of future requirements and community sentiment about the draft master plan.

We also wanted to build community awareness of the project and strengthen relationships with, and between, all key stakeholder groups.

HOW WE ENGAGED

A number of engagement activities were undertaken as part of the consultation process. The primary form of engagement was via the City of Greater Geelong's Have Your Say (HYS) platform, and the engagement period was open for 44 days. In total, there were 903 page views on the HYS platform.

During this time, the HYS page was supported by:

- Survey (online and hardcopy) – 69 responses
- Advertising pamphlets – 303 pamphlets delivered
- Social media – 5,187 impressions
- Face-to-face drop-in sessions – 92 people left feedback

WHO WE ENGAGED

Of the people that responded to the survey, majority are sporting club participants or regular users of the reserve.

- 73% belong to a sporting club that uses the reserve
- 58% are regular users of the reserve
- 28% are nearby residents
- 10% use the reserve occasionally

We also heard from a range of age groups.

- 16% are aged 18-24
- 10% are aged 5-34
- 31% are aged 35-49
- 24% are aged 50-59
- 18% are aged 60 or over

WHAT WE HEARD

Overarching themes from feedback



1. New and Upgraded Sporting Facilities

- Provision of more sporting facilities (pitches, courts and ovals) to cater for the growing community
- Upgraded bowls facilities, netball courts, cricket/football/netball pavilion and soccer pavilion
- Re-purposing the underutilised second AFL/cricket oval



2. Supporting Amenities

- Location of the soccer pavilion is not in the preferred position
- Proximity of second AFL/cricket oval to the pavilion seems further to walk



3. Environmental Protection and Passive Recreation

- Ensuring trees and native vegetation are maintained across the site
- Providing a perimeter walking path
- Option for a nature-themed play space
- Ensuring dogs are allocated to 'passive' areas away from sporting fields

87%

Believe the Master Plan responds to community needs

84%

Support or mostly support the Master Plan

62%

Total satisfaction with the Master Plan

WHAT WE WILL DO

The Master Plan will be reviewed and updated with the feedback from the community in mind.

Theme 1. No updates required to the Master Plan based on the positive feedback from Theme 1.

Theme 2. Moving the soccer pavilion will require the significant removal of trees which is not in alignment with the City's Tree Management Policy. Further engagement will be undertaken with the soccer club.

Theme 3. The master plan will consider enhancing areas for passive recreation and ensuring tree plantings are preserved, protected and enhanced.

Introduction

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Myers Reserve Draft Master Plan provides an informed, consolidated and long-term approach to future infrastructure development across the site.

The need for the plan has arisen from stakeholders identifying specific constraints within the Reserve and the inability to meet their current and future sporting and recreation needs.

Changing population demands, ageing facilities and exponential growth in female sports participation have also highlighted the need to review the 2005 Master Plan which is now more than 15 years old.

The project has involved an assessment of existing conditions, issues and opportunities, stakeholder consultation and broad community consultation to develop an updated master plan for the reserve.

The project has been overseen by a Project Working Group (PWG) containing key officers from the City of Greater Geelong, as well as a Project Reference Group (PRG) made up of key stakeholders and user groups of the reserve (local clubs).

ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

The key purpose of this engagement was to gather an understanding of future requirements and community sentiment about the draft master plan.

We also wanted to build community awareness of the project and strengthen relationships with, and between, all key stakeholder groups.

Before consulting with the community, all sports clubs at Myers Reserve had been engaging with the Project Team discussing their ideas, concerns, and aspirations for the Reserve.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

- The City ran a six-week online engagement activity gather feedback on the draft master plan and identify potential areas for updates/improvement.
- The engagement ran from the 28 October 2022 until 5pm 9 December 2022.
- This report summaries the community engagement process we used to seek feedback on the draft master plan and how that feedback has influenced the development of the final plan.



How We Engaged

SNAPSHOT

A number of engagement activities were undertaken as part of the consultation process.

The primary form of engagement was via the City of Greater Geelong's Have Your Say (HYS) platform, which was supported by online and face-to-face drop-in sessions.

HAVE YOUR SAY (HYS) ONLINE PORTAL

An online HYS project page was designed to share relevant information to encourage community feedback on an updated Master Plan for Myers Reserve.

The project was posted on the City's Have Your Say page for 28 days between 14 February and 13 March.

SURVEY (ONLINE AND HARDCOPY)

The online survey was the core feedback tool provided, taking approximately ten minutes to complete.

The survey sought feedback on the vision, objectives, recommendations, and any issues that the community had with the future use and development of the reserve.

Respondents had the option to complete the survey online or through a hard copy. 69 surveys were completed.

ONLINE INTERACTIVE MAP

The community was invited to interact with an online mapping tool by:

- Dropping a pin on the map to provide an idea or comment.
- Voting on an existing pin.

75 responses were provided using this tool.

DROP-IN SESSION

One morning and an afternoon were set aside for the community to attend a drop-in session with the Project Team.

Large posters were displayed along with copies of the plan. Attendees were encouraged to discuss issues with our team and provide a sticky note comment on the maps about an area of interest.

The engagement was promoted via many channels, including by direct mailout, posters at the reserve, a media release, and the City's Facebook page.

In total, there were 1,126 views on the Have Your Say project page, which resulted in 106 people leaving feedback, and 19 people following the project.

EMAILS AND PHONE CALL

Interested stakeholders and community members were also invited to provide feedback via email. 1,097 direct emails were sent in relation to the project, and the project manager's phone number was provided on all posters and flyers that went out with the mailout.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



44

Days of engagement



5,187

Social media impressions



903

Have Your Say page views



8

People following the project



43

Actions (likes, shares, comments etc.)



303

Advertising pamphlets delivered



126

Total contributions



69

Surveys completed

Who We Engaged

WHO WE PLANNED TO ENGAGE

Myers Reserve is a critical sport and recreation space for the community in the West of Geelong, and primarily services residents in Bell Post Hill and neighbouring suburbs.

It is one of the only open space areas that can be utilised by a wide range of community users for both sport, active recreation and passive recreation.

As a result, the engagement was targeted at the sporting clubs that are based at Myers Reserve and nearby local residents.

WHO WE ENGAGED

People were invited to share some demographic data through the online survey.

Of the people that responded, majority are sporting club participants or regular users of the reserve.



73%

belong to a sporting club that
uses the reserve



58%

are regular users of the
reserve



28%

are nearby residents



10%

use the reserve occasionally

We also heard from a range of age groups.

- 16% are aged 18-24
- 10% are aged 25-34
- 31% are aged 35-49
- 24% are aged 50-59
- 18% are aged 60 or over

Most survey respondents (47%) visited the park at least 2-3 times a week for various reasons.

23% Of the participants who provided suburb data were from Bell post Hill, 11% from Bell Park and others well dispersed.

PARTICIPATION

In total, there were 126 contributions to the engagement. There was broad participation across a range of engagement methods, including:

- Survey (online and hardcopy) – 69 responses
- Have Your Say platform – 903 page views
- Social media – 5,187 impressions
- Face-to-face drop-in sessions – 92 people left feedback
- Advertising pamphlets – 303 pamphlets delivered

WHO ACTIVELY ENGAGED

A high proportion (~55%) of respondents to the survey were from the soccer club. As a result, there are a large number of open-ended comments in relation to the soccer pitches and facilities that have been indicated in the plan. While this feedback is helpful and will be considered in the updated master plan, it indicates that the soccer club's position is over-represented in the sample.

However, the overall level of engagement in the consultation process provides us with a strong understanding of the community's views and aspirations for the reserve and the draft master plan.



What We Heard

WHAT WE ASKED AND WHY

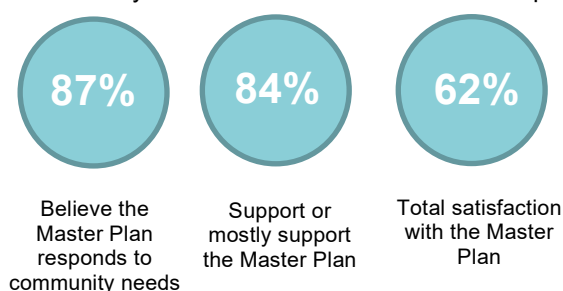
This round of engagement with the community was undertaken to receive feedback on the draft Master Plan and understand if any changes were required to be made for the final plan.

We asked respondents questions about:

- Level of satisfaction with the draft master plan.
- Whether they felt the draft master plan responds to community needs.
- Connection to the area
- Town or suburb where they live
- Age bracket

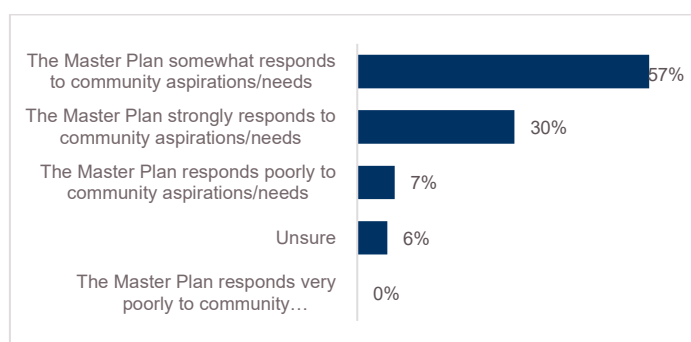
KEY FINDINGS OVERVIEW

Overall there is general satisfaction and positive community sentiment about the draft master plan.

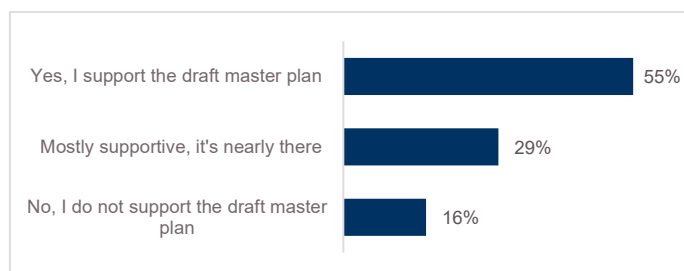


BREAKDOWN OF FINDINGS

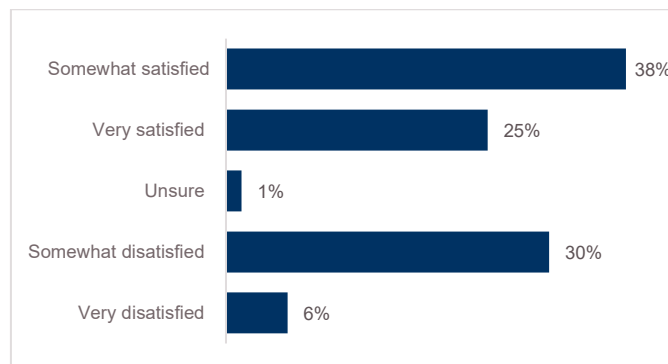
Responds to Community Needs



Support for the Master Plan



Overall Satisfaction with the Draft Master Plan



The engagement also attracted on social media. These broadly reflected the sentiment and themes gathered through the formal engagement process.

KEY THEMES

The feedback was grouped into three key themes that primarily emerged through the open-ended comments provided.



KEY THEME 1

New and Upgraded Sporting Facilities

The feedback provided from the local community and user groups was very positive towards the upgrade, renewal and provision of additional sporting infrastructure.

The whole concept of a rejuvenation and upgrade of the reserve excites the community, particularly the provision of more sporting facilities (pitches, courts and ovals) to cater for the growing community.

Each of the clubs provided positive feedback about the upgraded bowls facilities, netball courts, cricket/football/netball pavilion and soccer pavilion.

Furthermore, the provision of an additional oval (through the extension of the reserve, and the re-purposing of the underutilised second AFL/cricket oval to a soccer field was seen as a good outcome.

"It is great to see the almost redundant AFL pitch is planned to be repurposed to a 4th soccer pitch. Geelong Rangers is growing at a great rate and an additional main pitch would allow us to bring greater equity for our female and junior teams."

"Good to have a master plan for the reserve to move forward into the 21st century."

"That the Bowls club is gaining an extra green and their own club rooms."



KEY THEME 2

Supporting Amenities

There is some concern from the soccer club about the location of the proposed upgraded soccer pavilion. It has been located to the south of the pitches with a north-facing aspect.

The club would prefer it to be placed between the pitches running east-west to enable viewing across all of the fields. However, there is a row of established trees in the preferred location, and there would be considerable financial costs and environmental ramifications if they are to be removed.

In addition, the football club has voiced some concerns about the proximity of the second AFL/cricket oval to the pavilion. It is a further walk than is currently required to reach the existing oval.

It is proposed that the existing oval would be the “number one” ground for training and matches, while the proposed new oval would act as a secondary ground.

“The positioning off the soccer pavilion does not take into account how it would best be used. A side-on positioning, allowing for games to be watched along the side line rather than from behind goals would be much better. This would also better use the new pitch as the pavilion would be well positioned for two pitches.”

“The second football / cricket oval is so far away for junior games etc from the changing rooms.”



KEY THEME 3

Environmental Protection and Passive Recreation

Additional feedback received through the engagement, (particularly from local residents and recreational users of the reserve) identified the need to preserve and improve the tree coverage and vegetation across the site. Reports of some trees being damaged due to vandalism were provided, and respondents would like to see these restored.

In addition, there were a suggestion to provide a perimeter walking path to enable older residents to utilise the reserve for passive recreation.

Numerous comments were provided about the play space, and suggestions to provide a “nature-themed” design could be considered by the City through the detailed design phase.

The reserve is a popular destination for residents walking/exercising dogs. Comments provided through the engagement suggested that it would be beneficial if dogs were allocated to dedicated areas away from sporting field.

“[I would like to see] a rambling perimeter passive walk with trees for the elderly. Trees need to be planted again on the east as hooners in vehicles knocked them down years ago when Darren Lyons was the mayor.”

“Better dog walking facilities would be great. A walking track and an enclosure dedicated to dogs like in south Barwon would be perfect.”

“Dogs should be confined to the passive areas and this area should be fenced. Club members spend much time cleaning off dog droppings from the footy/soccer grounds prior to play as unfortunately owners are not responsible dogs have also run onto grounds and chased kids around - a potential injury/bite risk.”

How We Are Responding

The key purpose of this stage of engagement was to ensure the master plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the community and key user groups.

The feedback and findings that have emerged from this stage of consultation will be considered in the development of the final master plan. As a result, we are considering the following amendments. These will be discussed with the Project reference Group over the coming weeks.



KEY THEME 1

New and Upgraded Sporting Facilities

The feedback that relates to Key Theme 1 was overall very positive. There are no specific updates that need to be made to the master plan as a result.

However, the community would like to ensure that the design of the various sporting pavilions includes areas for food preparation and serving. This feedback will be incorporated when preparing the functional diagrams for each pavilion.



KEY THEME 2

Supporting Amenities

The preparation of the final master plan will reconsider the placement of the soccer pavilion. Their primary concern with moving it to the preferred location of the club (along the west boundary of Pitch 1) is the requirement to remove a number of significant trees. This has both cost and environmental implications for Council and is not in alignment with the City's Tree Management Policy. Further consultation will be undertaken with the soccer club over the coming weeks to address these concerns/issues and come to a resolution.

Some of the additional concerns raised about the supporting amenities referred to the location of the second (new) AFL/cricket oval. This is planned to be delivered as part of the extension of the reserve on the western boundary.

Some respondents provided feedback that the new oval was a long walk away from the clubhouse/pavilion. This is not uncommon at sporting reserves that have more than one ground – generally the primary of “number one” ground is located closer to the amenities and viewing areas, while the secondary ground is a further distance. It is not proposed to make any changes to the site layout in the master plan based on this feedback.



KEY THEME 3

Environmental Protection and Passive Recreation

The master plan will be updated to reflect the feedback received, this will include:

- Signage of off-leash dog exercise areas.
- Inclusion of a perimeter walking path.
- Notation on the master plan to indicate a nature-based play space.
- Preservation and maintenance of existing tree plantings.
- Re-vegetation of identified areas.

NEXT STEPS

The master plan will be amended, updated and finalised over the coming weeks to address the feedback received through the engagement process. It is scheduled to be tabled at the Councillor Meeting on Tuesday 27th June.