

# PRESTON MARKET PRECINCT ENGAGEMENT REPORT

July 2019



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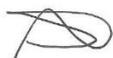
## REPORT

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9 July 2019

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction

RPS was engaged by the Victorian Planning Authority and City of Darebin Council (VPA/CoD) to design, deliver and report on a program of community and stakeholder engagement activities to support the development of a Preston Market Precinct Structure Plan.

The four-week engagement program was undertaken in May and June 2019 and included:

- An online survey, which was accessible via the VPA and CoD websites
- Stakeholder meetings with precinct landowners, community action groups, market stall holders/business owners, local (non-market) business owners/operators and the Level Crossings Removal Project representatives
- Two day-time 'pop-up' displays at the Preston Market, including intercept discussions with stall holders and local businesses along High Street
- One evening community 'display and discuss' session at Preston Town Hall
- Kitchen table discussions held by CoD staff with culturally and linguistically diverse community members
- A deliberative process of three deliberative workshops held with randomly selected, broadly representative cross-section community members.

Following the close of the engagement program, all feedback was collated and analysed to identify key feedback themes and conclusions (see Section 4 Feedback Analysis for more details of how feedback was analysed). This report summarises the outcomes of the engagement and identifies what the analysis of those outcomes indicate are most important to local people and stakeholders when considering the future of the Preston Market Precinct.

## 1.2 Key conclusions

A comparative analysis of the key outcomes from engagement activities has identified a number of consistencies in the feedback provided by the diverse community members attending those activities. The frequency with which these concepts and ideas were raised indicate that they are the matters that are of most importance to participants when considering the future of the Preston Market Precinct.

The key conclusions to be drawn from these consistencies, in order of significance, are:

**Green, open spaces** – feedback most consistently identified the provision of green, open space in the precinct is the most important consideration for participants. Providing a range of attractive and welcoming, multi-use communal spaces in which people can gather, relax and participate in community activities is also important and trees, gardens and water are key components of those spaces.

**Pedestrian-centred** – participant feedback also indicated that having a pedestrian-centred space was strongly preferred and providing the safe separation of pedestrians from other traffic and accessible access across and through the site should be another key consideration in the precinct. Supporting walking throughout the precinct was favoured, as was supporting other forms of sustainable, active transport, in particular bike riding.

**Sustainable** – sustainability was consistently raised in response to a variety of feedback questions, suggesting that participants also see it as a key consideration in the future of the precinct. The concept of sustainability was articulated in a number of ways: in terms of green

building materials, solar access, energy efficiency, and solar power, and in having green-star buildings and a recycling hub in the precinct. Being smoke and plastic-free, and planning for ride-share and a driverless cars future were also mentioned. The desire for lots of green spaces, including trees that provide shade, was another way sustainability was addressed by participants' comments.

**Market character** – feedback also shows that maintaining the intangible essence of the market was an important consideration for participants. For the vast majority of participants, these intangibles create the value of the market – this includes: the range and diversity of offerings, affordability, providing a welcoming and inclusive space that everyone can enjoy, having a range of stallholders, its cultural diversity and its authentic, 'grunge' aesthetic. For this majority the location of the market is not a concern.

The outcomes of the engagement program also demonstrated that there are a number of matters participants expressed a range of different views.

The most significant of these were:

**Community benefit** – participants identified a number of facilities and community assets the development of the precinct could provide. These ranged from childcare centres and CoD service centres, through entertainment options such as art/culture, cinemas and youth-friendly spaces, to providing diverse housing options and community gardens.

**Car parking** – feedback suggests that participants do not share consistent views regarding car parking. For some the planning of the precinct is an opportunity to prepare for a future which is less car dependent and will require less car parking than is currently provided. For others, providing the current level of car parking, or increasing it to ensure the car parking needs of future residents are met, is important.

**Building heights** – participants also share quite diverse views about building heights, some are comfortable with high-rise buildings, others not at all. Of the concerns raised about building heights the most consistently raised were related to overshadowing.

Although feedback questions participants were asked to respond to throughout the engagement program did not allow for the collection of direct quantitative and qualitative feedback about the trade-offs that apply in the precinct, the engagement outcomes do suggest where community preferences lie. The two most significant preferences are: providing a range of open, green spaces is more important than limiting building height; and creating a pedestrian-centred, accessible precinct is more important than creating a car-centred space.

However, there would be value in testing how the Structure Plan resolves these trade-offs with the community prior to the document being put out on public exhibition and formal submissions are called. Consequently, RPS recommends a short, focused engagement program be undertaken once the Structure Plan has been developed to collect community feedback about the detail in the plan.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

RPS was engaged by the Victorian Planning Authority and City of Darebin Council (VPA/CoD) to design, deliver and report on a program of community and stakeholder engagement activities to support the development of a Preston Market Precinct Structure Plan.

### 2.1 Engagement context

The VPA is working in partnership with the CoD to develop the Structure Plan and create new planning controls to provide guidance for the development of the Preston Market Precinct (precinct) into the future.

The precinct is the area located between High Street, Cramer Street, Murray Road and the rail corridor - it does not include the rail corridor. The precinct boundaries are shown in the map below.



The Preston Market Precinct is centrally located in the Preston Major Activity Centre

Like many areas throughout Melbourne, Victoria and Australia, the Darebin Local Government Area is facing significant pressures from population growth. Darebin’s population is growing fast - by 2041, Preston’s population is forecast to almost double in size to 68,000 people.

The precinct, which is within a Major Activity Centre and close to public transport, services and jobs, is highly suitable for accommodating new homes. The Structure Plan and associated Planning Controls will help guide future development to be liveable and sustainable, bringing new amenities, shops, businesses, open space and other elements to benefit both the existing and future communities.

As a privately-owned site, the new planning controls, including the Structure Plan, will shape and guide what the site’s owners can and cannot do as part of any future development.

### 2.2 Engagement overview

To support the current stage of the project, RPS designed a program of community and stakeholder engagement. The purpose of the program was to inform the community about the current stage of the

project, explore different precinct scenarios, and seek feedback about key aspects of the site that are being considered.

This four-week engagement program was undertaken from 20 May until 13 June 2019 and included:

- An online survey, which was accessible via the VPA and CoD websites
- Stakeholder meetings with precinct landowners, community action groups, market stall holders/business owners, local (non-market) business owners/operators and the Level Crossings Removal Project representatives
- Two day-time ‘pop-up’ displays at the Preston Market, and intercepts with stallholders and owners and with High Street businesses
- One evening community ‘display and discuss’ session at Preston Town Hall
- Kitchen table discussions held by CoD staff with culturally and linguistically diverse community members
- A deliberative process of three deliberative workshops held with randomly selected, broadly representative cross-section community members.

Details of each of these activities are provided in Section Three Methodology below.

This report summarises the outcomes of the engagement and identifies what those outcomes indicate are most important to local people and stakeholders when considering the future of the Preston Market Precinct.

## 2.3 Engagement communication and promotion

To support the engagement program a range of communication materials were prepared to:

- Inform community and stakeholders about the status of the project and invite participation in the engagement
- Ensure consistent project messaging and provide balanced details of the precinct and the considerations that will inform the development of the Structure Plan.

These communication materials included: an engagement narrative; webpage content; Frequently Asked Questions; and eleven display boards.

A promotional campaign was also undertaken in support of the engagement program, using both traditional and social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and online platforms.

**Figure 1: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts**



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The promotional campaign ran from 20 May to 13 June 2019 and during that time:

- The VPA's webpage had approximately 294 pageviews and its Twitter posts reached 1,241 people
- The VPA also directly contacted 193 subscribers on their Preston Market database
- The CoD's 'Have Your Say' webpage had approximately 206 pageviews, with 111 people clicking through to the online survey
- CoD's Instagram post reached 24,338 people, 2,994 were reached via Twitter, and 47,714 via Facebook.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

For this project, RPS utilised a number of engagement methodologies to deliver a robust community and stakeholder engagement program in order to achieve specific objectives. These objectives were to:

- Create genuine opportunities for the local community to participate and provide informed and constructive feedback that can meaningfully influence the Structure Plan
- Hear from people who may not usually attend engagement events
- Provide engagement opportunities for all stakeholders to participate, including: site landowners, market operators and stallholders, local (non-market) business owners and operators, market visitors, and the Level Crossing Removal Project
- Gather input from culturally and linguistically diverse community members
- Review and provide comment on a variety of precinct scenarios
- Facilitate a deliberative engagement process that allows a representative group of community members to deeply consider of key elements of the Structure Plan and provide their views.

### 3.1 Online survey

In order to provide an opportunity for the widest reach of local community members to participate in the engagement process, an online survey was developed. The purpose of the survey was to collect primarily quantitative data about community preferences and views relating to the various components the Structure Plan and associated Planning Controls will influence.

The online survey questions involved respondents choosing from a range of pre-selected statements related to precinct themes in order to indicate those that were most important to them. Respondents were also invited to provide additional comments under those themes. Themes were:

- Market identity
- Public spaces
- Getting around
- Built form and scale
- Community benefit

Additionally, respondents were asked four demographic questions about themselves to assist with understanding how representative respondents were of the community within the Darebin Local Government Area. In total, the survey contained 15 questions, including four demographic and six open-ended questions. A copy of survey questions is available at Appendix A.

The online survey was hosted using the VPA's survey platform from Monday 20 May until Thursday 13 June 2019 and a total of 151 surveys were completed.

### 3.2 Stakeholder meetings

A number of stakeholder meetings and discussions were also undertaken during the engagement. The purpose of these was to inform local stakeholders of the current project stage, advise them of the engagement process and the opportunities to be involved, and to take their initial feedback.

Stakeholders meetings were held from 18 April 2019 to 23 May 2019 involved: precinct landowners; community action groups; and the Level Crossing Removal Project. Market stall holders/business owners

and local (non-market) business owners/operators were reached through the market pop-up and intercept activities.

### 3.3 Market pop-ups and community drop-in session

#### 3.3.1 Market pop-ups and intercepts

In order to ensure a wide-range of community views and perspectives were captured during the engagement program, particularly from those who do not usually participate in 'self-selected' engagement events such as culturally and linguistically diverse community members and young people, two pop-up/intercept activities were undertaken. Due to its high footfall, these two activities were held at the Preston Market.

The purpose of the pop-up/intercept activities was to:

- Inform local community members about the project and the current engagement process and invite their participation
- Provide community members with the opportunity to review six potential precinct scenarios being investigated and identify any missing considerations (scenario 'pros' and 'cons')
- Explain the key precinct elements in the Structure Plan community feedback could influence:
  - Market identity and character
  - Getting around (access to and within the precinct)
  - Public spaces
  - Built form and scale
  - Public benefit
- Seek community feedback on those elements.

During the three-hour pop-ups, which were located in the PAM Lane area of the market, participants were invited to:

- Review 11 display boards containing information about the project; the six scenarios being investigated and the five key precinct elements, available at Appendix B.
- Ask project team members questions and share their views
- Complete a feedback form, which was available online via Survey Monkey and in hard copy.



Local community members review display boards and provide feedback during the two market pop-ups

To support the participation of the widest range of market visitors, project team members intercepted visitors throughout the market and invited them to visit the pop-up and provide their feedback.

Additionally, stallholders and owners throughout the market were also visited, advised of the pop-up display and engagement processes, and invited to provide their feedback, which was recorded by project team members.

The pop-up/intercept activities were supported by five translators representing the most common non-English languages spoken in Darebin including Mandarin, Arabic, Greek, Italian and Vietnamese. There were also signs welcoming community members in all five languages.

Approximately 170 people visited the pop-ups over the two events, 37 of which provided formal feedback

### 3.3.2 Community drop-in session

To attract the participation of community members with a particular interest in the Preston Market Precinct, an advertised community ‘drop-in’ session was also held at the Preston City Hall. The session followed the same process as the market pop-ups, without intercepts.

In total, two community members attended this self-selected engagement activity, including one CoD employee.

**Table 1. Program of market pop-up and community drop-in events**

Event	Date	Time	Location
Market pop-up 1	Friday 24 May	11am-2pm	Preston Market
Market pop-up 2	Saturday 1 June	10am-1pm	Preston Market
Drop-in session	Monday 3 June	4.30pm-7.30pm	Preston City Hall

### 3.4 Kitchen table discussions

To encourage the participation of community members who do not normally ‘self-select’ to be involved in community engagement activities, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, RPS developed a kitchen table discussion process. Kitchen table discussions allow informed ‘grass-roots’ conversations to take place and for feedback to be collected by groups of community members. CoD identified that this process would be particularly appropriate for engaging with its network of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community groups.

To ensure consistency in the information provided to participants and the feedback that was sought, a discussion guide was developed which detailed:

- How to run a kitchen table discussion
- Relevant background information about the project and the matters under consideration during this engagement stage
- The feedback questions that allowed participants to indicate what was of most importance to them.

A copy of the final discussion guide is available at Appendix C.

CoD hosted eight kitchen table discussions with community members between Friday 24 May and Wednesday 5 June 2019 and gathered feedback from more than 70 community members about what’s important to them.

### 3.5 Deliberative workshops

To reach a broadly representative sample of local community members and gather their informed and considered views and perspectives about the precinct, RPS designed a deliberative workshop process. The process involved three deliberative workshops of 2.5 hours each for three consecutive weeks.

The focus of each workshop was to:

1. Deliberative workshop one:
  - Introduction to deliberation, critical thinking and being a ‘mini-public’
  - Presentation about the project, its constraints and opportunities, and the key trade-offs
  - Facilitated discussions and the collection of initial feedback about precinct elements
  - Identification of outstanding participant questions
  - Issuing participants with deliberative ‘homework’ – reflection questions for them to consider
2. Deliberative workshop two
  - Check-in and sharing of reflections since workshop one
  - Answers to questions from workshop one
  - Presentation by key stakeholders of various perspectives about the market/potential changes, including interview ‘round-robin’
  - Facilitated discussions and capture of participant questions about potential options
  - Issuing participants with deliberative ‘homework’ – reflection questions for them to consider
3. Deliberative workshop three
  - Check-in and sharing of reflections since workshop two
  - Answers to questions from workshop two
  - Deliberative activities to capture participants’ informed, considered feedback on key precinct elements.

RPS developed workshop processes and activities and liaised with the VPA and CoD on presentation material and discussion content. Although the general approach to workshops was developed prior to their commencement, processes for workshop two and three were refined following the delivery of the previous workshop and in response to questions participants raised.

Following the delivery of workshop two, RPS developed the feedback questions and processes that would be used in the third and final workshop. These were designed to capture participants’ perspectives on the key elements that the Structure Plan will need to address, in particular community benefits, built form and scale and the market.

Workshop activities were designed to ensure participants had the opportunity to provide their considered and informed feedback into all four feedback questions. Following a short introduction and a presentation on the five key elements of good urban design, participants ran through a ‘speed dating’ process in which they provided their response to each of the four questions. Responses were then collated by participants under each of the four questions and the collective feedback refined. The refined feedback was reported back to the entire group and final comments and/or additions sought.



Workshop participants sharing their views with their table groups...



and during a 'speed dating' exercise

A copy of workshop runsheets and presentations are available at Appendix D.

In order to ensure a broadly representative sample of the local community participated in the deliberative workshop process, participants were randomly selected via telephone invitation and discrete targeted Facebook promotion. In recognition of the time contributed and to defray any travel costs, participants received a stipend of \$300 at the end of the final workshop.

By the end of the deliberative workshop process, considered and informed feedback was collected from 24 local community members. The demographic make-up of the group included:

- 50 percent women and men
- Nine participants who identified as coming from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background
- Seven participants aged between 18 and 39 years old, 10 aged between 40 and 59 years old, and seven participants aged 60 years old or older
- Residents from seven different suburbs within the LGA, including seven from Preston and a further seven from Reservoir.

**Table 2. Program of deliberative workshops**

Event	Date	Time	Location
Workshop 1	Tuesday 21 May	6pm-8.30pm	Preston City Oval Grandstand Function Centre
Workshop 2	Tuesday 28 May	6pm-8.30pm	Preston City Oval Grandstand Function Centre
Workshop 3	Tuesday 4 June	6pm-8.30pm	Preston City Oval Grandstand Function Centre

## 4 FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

Following the close of the engagement program, feedback was collated and analysed.

### Quantitative data

The online survey responses contained both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data from each question was analysed to identify the number of respondents who selected each of the suggested responses. Selected responses were then prioritised based on the overall percentage of respondents who had indicated their agreement with the statement. Finally, the percentage results and prioritised statements were assessed to identify any trends in the data, in particular the statements that attracted a significant percentage of respondents. Generally speaking, statement which attracted a minimum of 45 to 50 percent of respondents were drawn out and those attracting 70 per cent or more were considered to be significant to respondents.

However, it is important to remember that the quantitative data reflected the topics thought by participants to be most important amongst the list of prepared statements, rather than the topics they independently identified to be of most importance to them. This was collected through the open-ended qualitative questions.

### Qualitative data

The majority of data collected during the engagement activities was in response to open-ended questions. Data from each engagement activity was collated for analysis, noting that feedback from market intercepts and discussions with High Street business owners were included with the market pop-ups and community drop-in feedback.

Qualitative feedback from each the online survey and the market pop-ups/intercepts and community drop-in was coded in order to record the frequency with which different topics were raised and to identify the key feedback themes. Finally, feedback themes were prioritised based on the frequency they were raised and those themes that were raised considerably more often were identified as being most significant.

However, the feedback collected at the end of the deliberative workshop was subjected to minimal intervention so that the views of the broadly representative community participants can be considered as directly as possible. Feedback collected under each of the four questions participants responded to was reviewed and related ideas were presented together. Finally, any concepts that were raised in response to the majority of the four questions were identified as being most significant.

Feedback from the kitchen table discussions which the CoD ran with local culturally and linguistically diverse community members was summarised and provided to RPS for inclusion in this report.

The outcomes of this quantitative and qualitative analysis are reported in the Section 4 What We Heard.

### Comparative analysis

The key conclusions from this engagement were developed following a comparative analysis of the data collected through all engagement activities, excluding the stakeholder meetings with landowners and LXP. This analysis considered a range of factors to identify the key conclusions and their relative priority. These factors included:

- Whether participants were randomly selected (as in the deliberative workshop), intercepted and invited to participate (as in the market pop-ups) or self-selected (as in the online survey and the community drop-in)
- Whether feedback was provided independently, in response to open-ended questions, or through choosing from a prepared list of responses
- The frequency and the number of different mechanism through which matters were raised.

## 5 WHAT WE HEARD

This section summarises the feedback we received from the community and stakeholders during the engagement activities.

### 5.1 Online survey

#### 5.1.1 Summary of key outcomes

An analysis of the outcomes of the online survey indicated that respondents:

- Were not demographically representative of the Darebin local community, a result that is in-line with other 'self-select' engagement activities
- Most valued the diversity of the Preston Market, its welcome feel and its authenticity
- Strongly felt the precinct should: be pedestrian-focussed, encouraging people to walk by having plenty to look at; be safe at any time of day or night, and minimise conflict between pedestrians and other traffic but were divided on the question of the extent and availability of car parking
- Valued inviting, green public spaces that encouraged activation
- Strongly felt people-focused activities should be at street level, and that other non-people activities should be away from the street
- Strongly supported new cultural facilities and to a slightly lesser extent supported new community facilities; and indicated they consider green spaces including community gardens as benefits for the community.

#### 5.1.2 Survey results

##### 5.1.2.1 Demographics

Survey respondents were asked to provide demographic information about themselves. These responses indicated that respondents were over-represented by:

- Women – over 60 percent of respondents identified as female
- Those aged between 35-49 years – more than 50 percent of respondents were this age
- Preston residents – almost 50 percent of respondents lived in Preston
- Long-term residents – more than 25 percent of respondents had lived in the local area for more than 20 years and over 48 percent for 10 years or more.

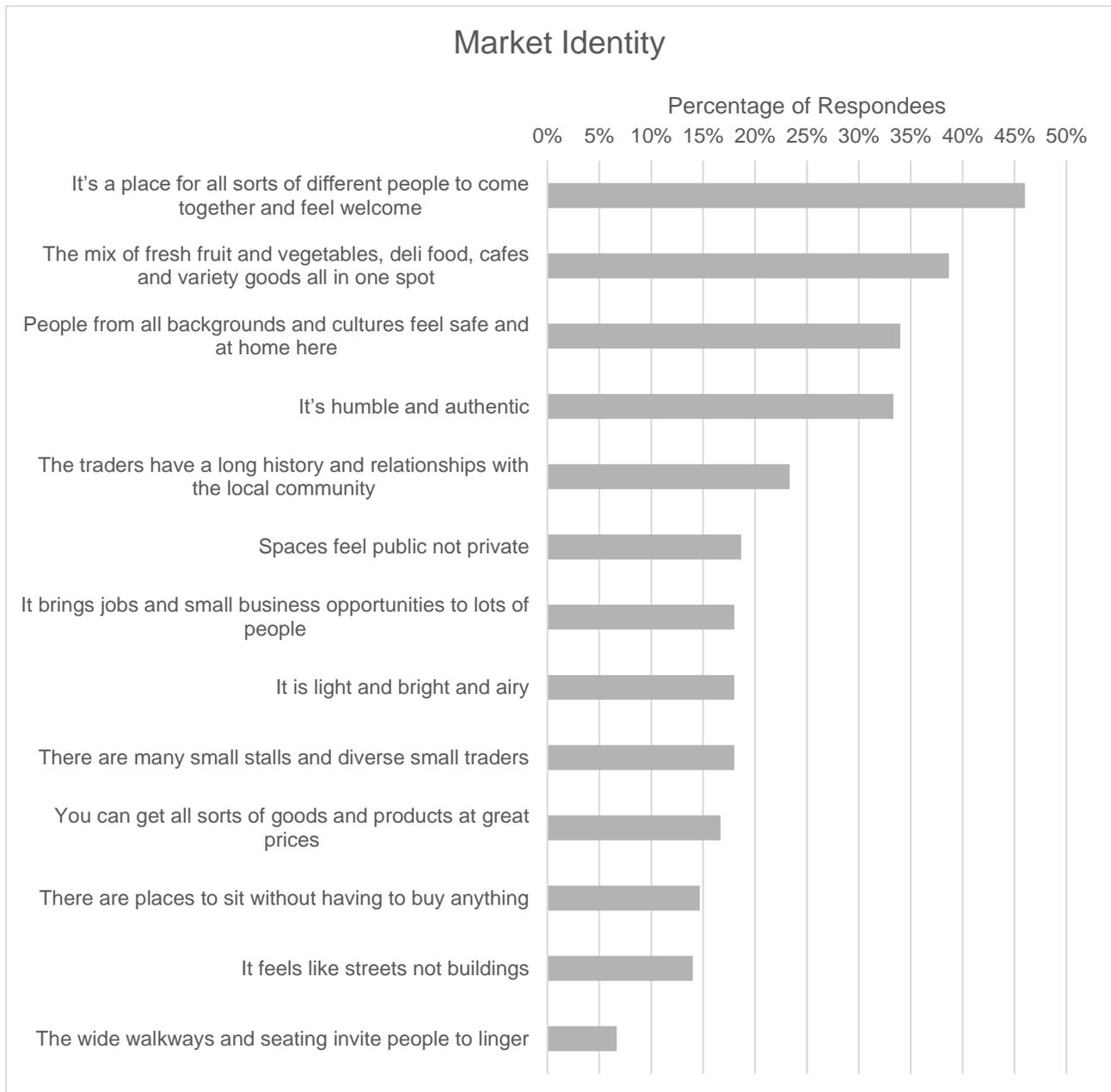
This level of non-representation of the broader community is common in engagement methodologies where participants 'self-select' to be involved.

##### 5.1.2.2 Market identity

Respondents were provided with the following context before answering questions about the market identity:

*Throughout this precinct planning process, the local community have told us how much they love and cherish the market. We are considering how best to understand and protect what makes the market special and unique and Council has undertaken an Identity Study to capture this.*

Respondents were then asked to select from a range of options the top three that were most important to them. Results are listed below:



Following this, respondents were asked ‘*what else should we be considering that makes the Preston Market Unique*’. In response:

- 54 respondents talked about the diversity of the market, ranging from the diversity of stall holders (25), the diversity of goods sold (eight), cultural diversity (nine) as well as customers, ages and community
- 28 respondents talked about how ‘real’ the market was, in contrast to a shopping centre like Northland and that it didn’t have a sterile feel to it. Another nine respondents said that the ‘non-gentrified’ feel is what is unique, with a number comparing it to the South Melbourne Market
- 19 respondents said affordability and the cheap quality goods of the market is what made it special
- 13 respondents talked specifically about the community of the market, with a sense of belonging and the stall holders mentioned specifically.

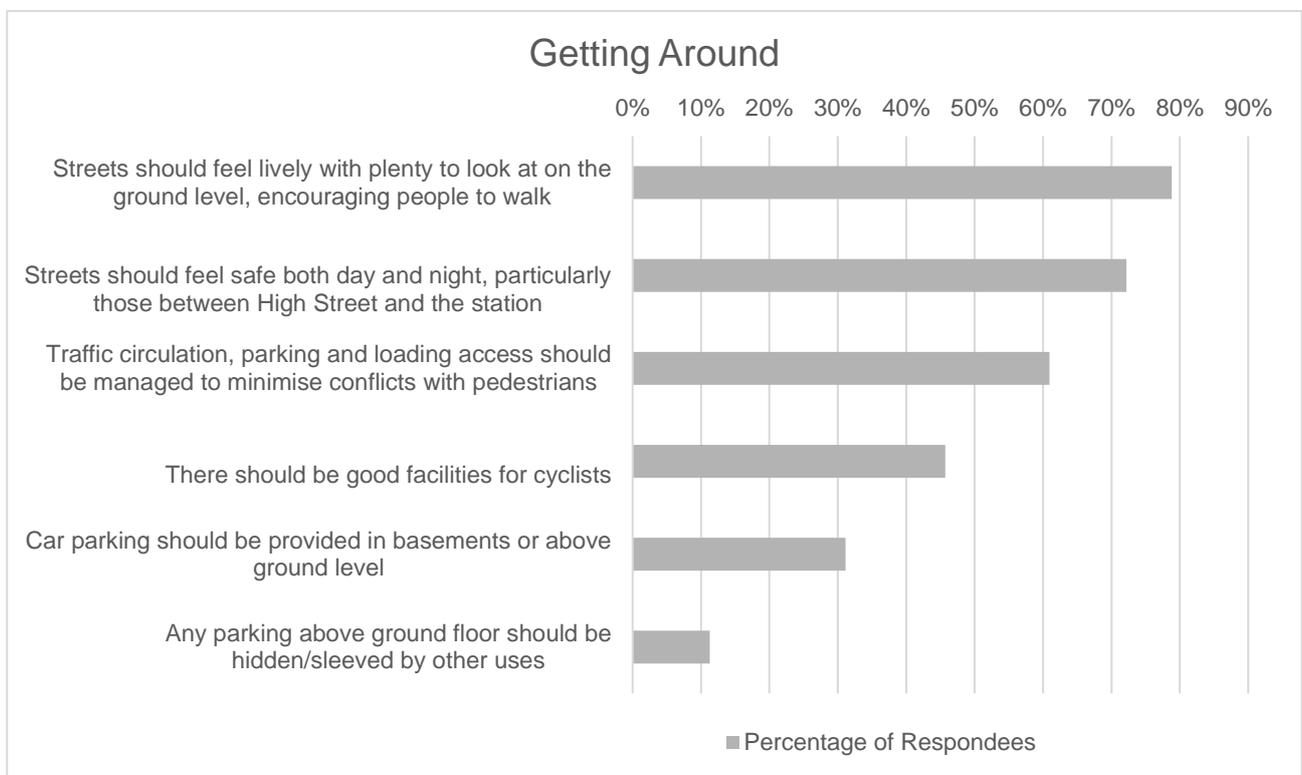
- 10 respondents talked about transport with parking and close access to public transport both being mentioned
- Nine respondents talked about the accessibility of the market
- Other things mentioned included the food, the heritage, the history, the child friendly nature of the market and its character.

### 5.1.2.3 Getting Around

Next respondents were provided with the following statement:

*How people will move around the Preston Market Precinct is vital to ensure the success of the area and how it relates to the broader Preston area.*

As with the first question respondents were then asked to select up to three responses that were most important to them. Outcomes were:



Respondents were then asked if there is 'anything else we should be considering about how people move around the precinct, and beyond'. In response:

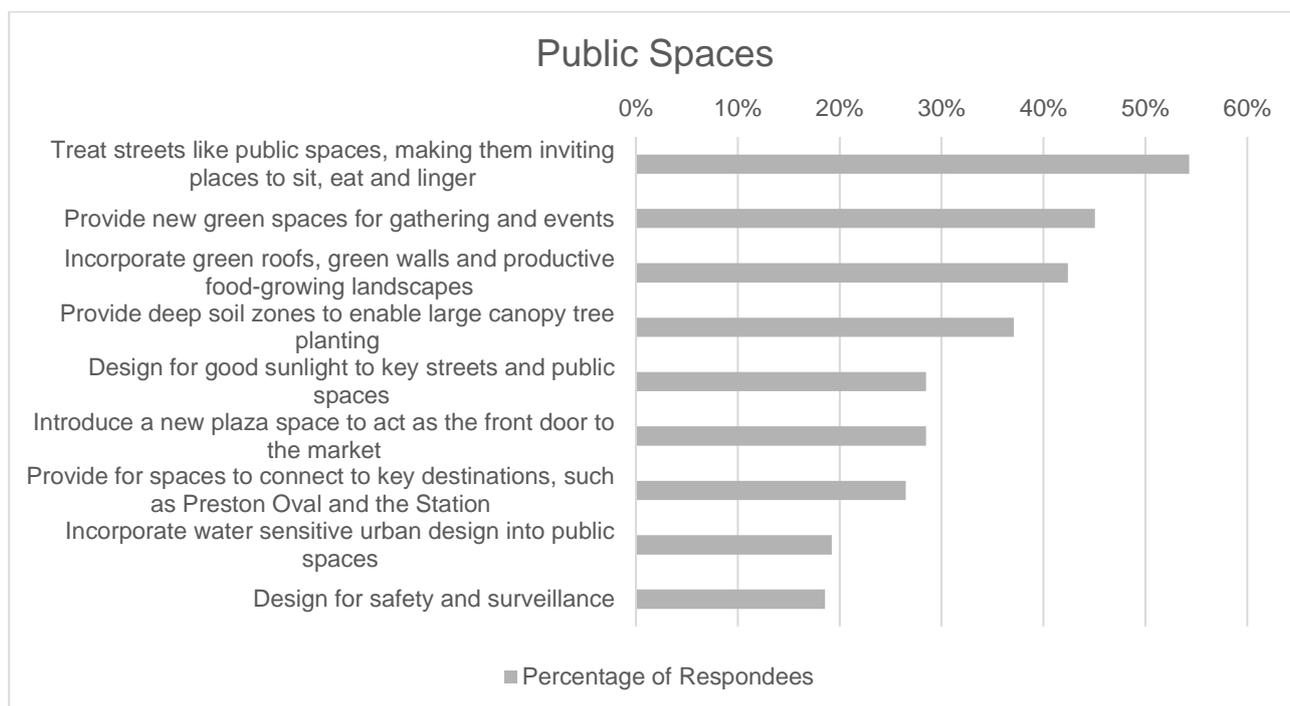
- 43 respondents discussed car parking, although there was a mixed response with 15 respondents saying it should be discouraged or reduced, 12 respondents saying it should be maintained or increased, while another 6 made suggestions around improvements such as left in left out only entrances, better signage and mixed views on above and underground parking
- 31 respondents said pedestrian access is a priority, with safety and cover for walkways getting particular mention
- 18 respondents mentioned bike parking
- 14 respondents said public transport access should be considered

- 14 respondents said special needs access should be considered, including disability, elderly and pram access
- Other things mentioned included access to High Street, the amenity of the market, open spaces, better signage, safety, traffic flow and zebra crossings.

### 5.1.2.4 Public Spaces

Respondents were provided with the following context before being asked to identify up to three statements about public spaces that were most important to them:

*We know that Preston does not have many green and open spaces that can be used for a variety of community uses. This is a key opportunity of any redevelopment of the Preston Market Precinct. New open spaces could be provided either within or nearby the precinct.*



As a result of being asked if there are ‘other kinds of open spaces you think we should be considering’:

- 24 respondents said we should be considering green spaces including 13 specifically mentioning a community garden as an option that should be considered
- 18 respondents said community spaces should be considered, including 4 saying there should be a public square or plaza, outdoor seating, lawn bowls, eating area and an amphitheatre mentioned
- 16 respondents said a children’s space or play area should be considered
- Other things respondents said should be considered were: integrating changes with the Level Crossing Removal Program upgrades, connectivity to services, safety, an arts space and the amenity of the area.

### 5.1.2.5 Built Form and Scale

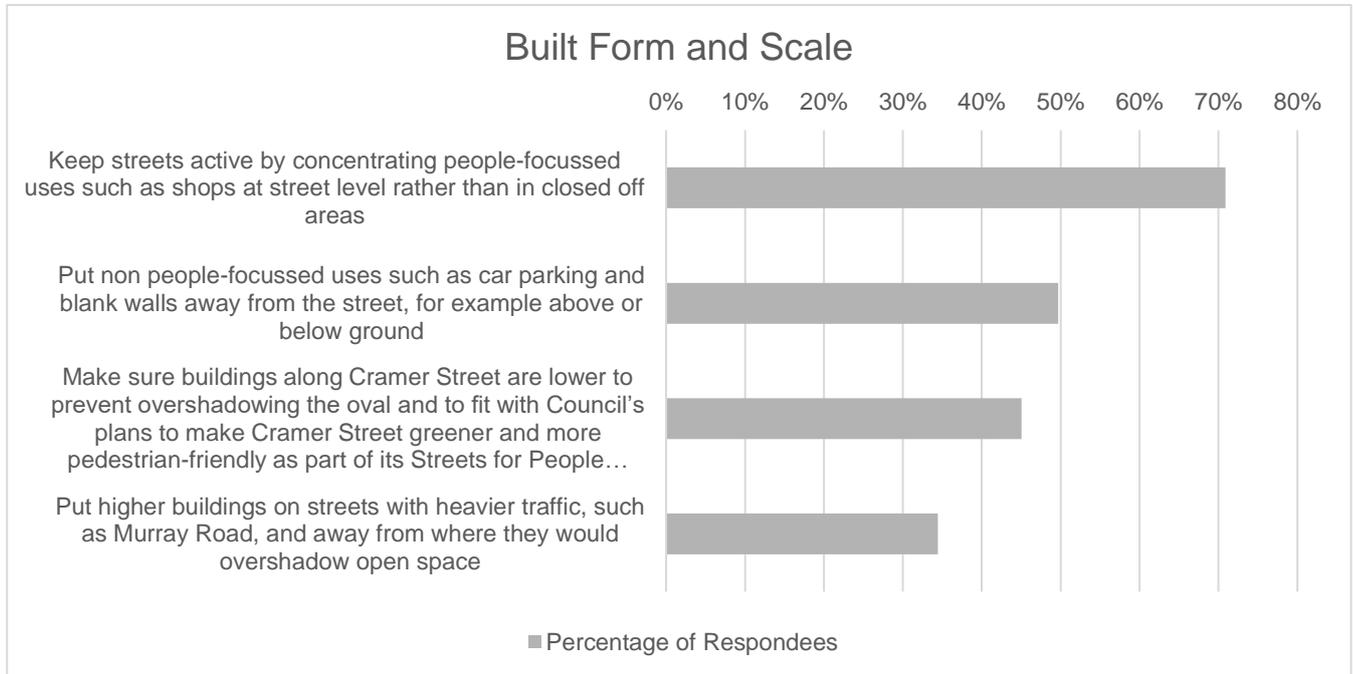
Respondents were advised:

*Buildings (their height and how they connect with other buildings, public transport, roads or footpaths within and surrounding the Preston Market Precinct) will play a central role in how the area looks, feels and functions.*

*The density of built form (i.e. how many new homes, shops, offices and facilities there are) will also have an impact on the amount of community benefit the developers would be required to deliver.*

*Getting the built form right will be essential in making sure the precinct is liveable and sustainable.*

Respondents were asked to select the two options that most resonated with them:



When asked what they thought was 'most important when thinking about the buildings in the precinct, and how they relate to surrounding spaces and streets':

- 20 said active space was important with eight saying movement around the space mattered
- 18 respondents were concerned about there being too much height
- 13 respondents said green design was a priority
- 11 said quality design, including the materials and standard for the residents living there
- 10 said they wanted to prevent overshadowing
- Seven said having an activated space was important
- Seven said maintaining the character of the area
- Other things mentioned included: pedestrian access, diversity of use of spaces and the aesthetic of the area.

**5.1.2.6 Community Benefit:**

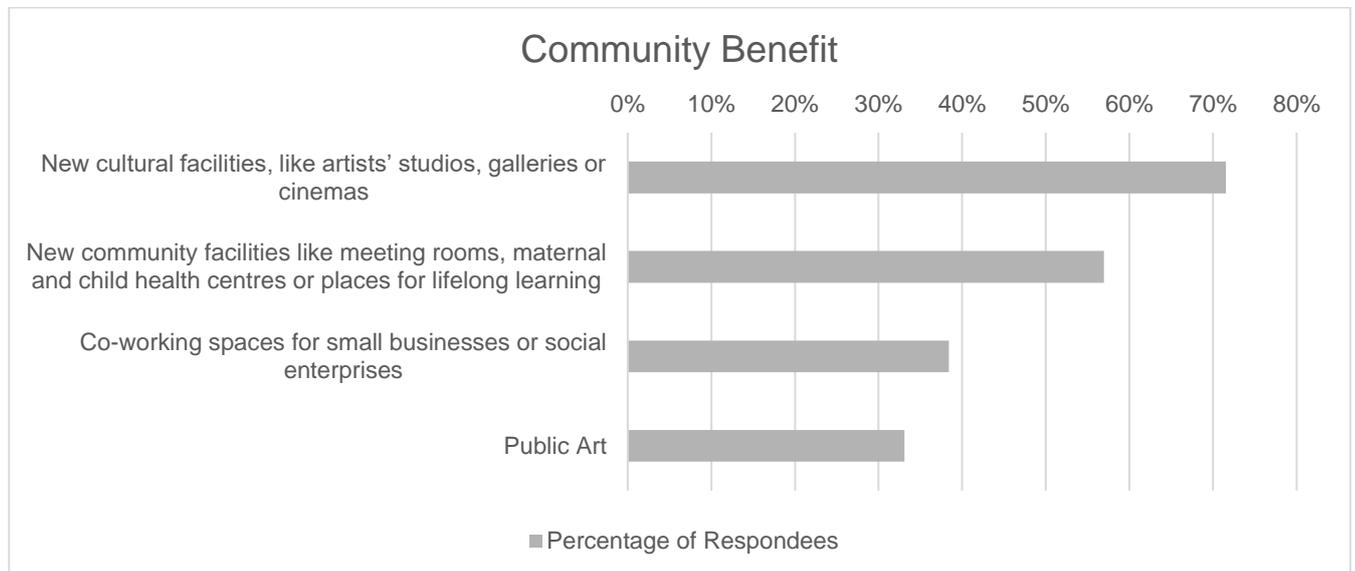
Respondents were advised:

*Due to the size and importance of the precinct, part of the requirements for any redevelopment would include consideration of what it gives back to the community.*

*New homes will bring new people who will need to access new or expanded community services and facilities. These benefits will be defined and included as part of the future planning controls.*

*Just like open space, community facilities could be delivered either within the precinct or nearby.*

Respondents were then asked to indicate the ideas that are most important to them by selecting the two options that were most important to them.



When asked what they think is needed in central Preston that would benefit the whole community:

- 21 respondents said green spaces, including six mentioning community gardens
- 18 respondents said cultural space, with 14 specifically mentioning art spaces
- 10 respondents said a community centre or gathering space, with another five wanting connections to services
- 10 said more business or more café and restaurant options.

Other things mentioned by respondents included more affordable housing (four), entertainment spaces including night cinema (five), public transport links (four) and better active transport links (four).

**5.1.2.7 Other comments:**

Finally, respondents were asked if there was anything else they wanted to say about planning for the future of the Preston Market Precinct. In response:

- 25 respondents said protecting the character of the market was really important, which was echoed by another 11 respondents not wanting any change to the market and say 'leave it as it is' and to protect its legacy
- Nine respondents mentioned green space, including six who want the market to be proactive in recycling and reducing waste on site
- Eight respondents were pro development, with four specifically saying to 'get on with it' while another seven said they wanted low density development on site
- Eight respondents discussed the engagement process, evenly split between those who thought the developer will get their desired outcome ahead of the community and the other half endorsing the engagement process.

Other items discussed included the importance of maintaining cheap food (five), maintaining or increasing parking (four), the importance of safety (four) and the importance of the development being of a high quality.

## **5.2 Stakeholder meetings**

During the three stakeholder meetings, stakeholders raised a range of different matters that reflect their various interests. Given the specificity of interest and feedback received from landowners and LXRP the matters raised during discussions are not detailed here, although they will be considered by the project team in the development of the Structure Plan. Feedback provided by the two community action group representatives has been included with community feedback provided via the market pop-ups and community drop in session, see below.

## **5.3 Market pop-ups, intercepts and community drop in session**

### **5.3.1 Summary of key outcomes**

An analysis of the feedback provided during the market pop-ups, intercepts, community drop in session and community action group meeting indicated that participants:

- Did not feel strongly about the different precinct scenarios being investigated, although those that did provide feedback about the scenarios supported a link between the market and High Street
- Felt a strong sense of identity with the cultural diversity of the market and its working-class heritage; valued it as an open and welcoming place, where visitors can sit anywhere and meet with family and friends in a relaxed atmosphere, and for its range and affordability of its food, and smaller businesses/stall-holders; and were concerned by the potential for it to become a corporate and sterile space as the local area gentrifies
- Wanted safe and accessible connections with clear separations between people and other traffic to ensure public safety, better access from the station and High Street to the market, safer pedestrian and bike connections along Cramer Street and St Georges Road, and better bus connections.
- Were divided about the amount of car parking space that should be available, some expressing that ride sharing and driverless cars were important considerations for the precinct's future, but agreed on better utilising the current car parking space
- Strongly value green open spaces, including community gardens, trees and small parks; well-lit, safe and active multi-purpose public spaces; and family friendly areas with playgrounds. Meeting places that respect and acknowledge Indigenous heritage and a smoke-free and plastic-free precinct were also mentioned
- Were concerned about whether local infrastructure could support the growing community's needs and that high buildings would cause overshadowing and create an isolated precinct; identified that managing congestion was a priority, and supported green, functional and high quality building materials and environmentally sensitive building design and solar power systems
- Identified a range of potential community benefits, including maintaining the range and affordability of market food, various types of community facilities, and diverse housing options.

### **5.3.2 Feedback results**

#### **5.3.2.1 Potential scenarios**

The six scenarios under investigation demonstrated how different land uses could be arranged on the site. Community members were invited to provide feedback on the pros and cons associated with each scenario, and to identify any others that have not been considered.

Scenario

Feedback

Scenario A: Retaining the Current Market



Two people gave feedback to retaining the current market in the existing location

Scenario B: Market Redeveloped in Current Location



One person gave feedback to the market being redeveloped in the current location and retaining the existing character. The market connection from the train station to High Street was favoured.

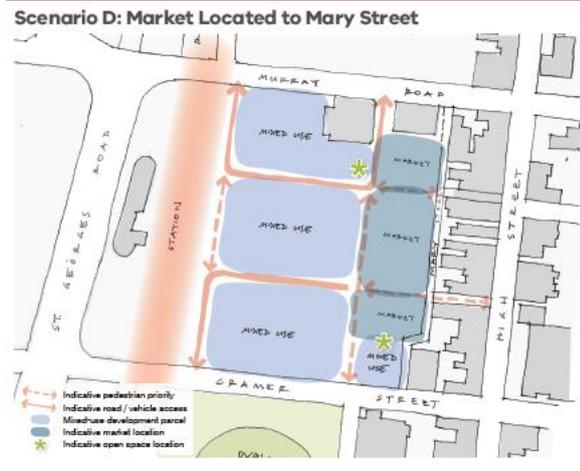
Scenario C: Market Located to Cramer Street



Two people gave feedback to the market being located along Cramer Street for increased public visibility and limited overshadowing of Preston Oval.

The possibility of open space (mixed use) between High Street and the precinct was preferred, as was the continued operation of the existing market whilst a purpose-built new market was developed.

**Scenario** **Feedback**



Six people gave feedback to the market located along Mary Street.

The strong link from the market to High Street shops was considered a good idea, as was the road for loading and unloading of goods.

The drawback of the market's limited visibility from main roads was also considered.



One person provided feedback on the market located to the station frontage and believed this design scenario was too far from the High Street shops.



No feedback was received about scenario F.

**5.3.2.2 Market identity and character**

The community expressed a strong sense of identity with the cultural diversity and proud working-class history of the market.

"I love the cultural diversity and 'grungy' feel of the market"

The unique experience that the market brings is reflected by the diversity of food, culture, and shops that provide people with an immediate connection and sense of comfort that is highly valued. People having long family associations with the market and building relationships with the traders were examples of this strong connection.

The local community also identified the market as being an open and welcoming place where diversity is valued, and it does not feel exclusive. The ability to sit anywhere with food from any store was important and seen as an opportunity to meet with family and friends in a relaxed environment.



“The availability of fresh food and products at affordable prices is why I keep coming back”

The range of food that was available in Preston, and its affordability, were mentioned by many locals as being of one of the things that they strongly value about the precinct.

People demonstrated a strong sense of pride in being from and/or living in the north and that the area's values were different from others, particularly the south, which was perceived to be more gentrified.

One of the ongoing concerns was that the precinct was going to evolve into a 'corporate' and 'sterile' space with boutique stores and mass shopping centres. Concerns that the precinct would become homogenous as the population increases and the area gentrifies were raised by some community members. Many people showed a strong appreciation for smaller businesses and stall holders to continue their operation, as this was considered a central part of the identity and character of the market.



“We don't want a 'South Yarra' in Darebin”

“Not just another shopping centre”

The identity and character of the market was believed to be reflected in the grunge aesthetic or 'rawness' that was seen in the different fabrics which make the market unique. For example, the variety of colours, combination of wooden and metal seating infrastructure along PAM Lane, and visible high ceilings that show the 'grittiness' in the architecture and 'rustic' nature of the market.

### 5.3.2.3 Getting around

Safety in movement around the precinct and accessible connections from public transport to the site was highly mentioned by the community. Suggestions were made to create a clear separation between cars, trucks, bikes and people to ensure public safety and easy access for the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with prams.

Better access from the station to the market site was important, with a few community members suggesting a foot bridge connecting the elevated rail corridor to the precinct. Improved connection from High Street to the market was a priority, including safer pedestrian and bike connections along Cramer Street and St Georges Road.

It was also suggested that better bus connections (shuttle bus) to and from other suburbs beyond the precinct were considered to encourage more connections to a growing neighbourhood. Ride sharing and the introduction of driverless cars was expressed as an important consideration when planning for the future.

“Sharing the road and navigating smoothly throughout the precinct is important for public safety”

The community was divided on the amount of car parking spaces, although there was agreement on better utilising the current car parking space for a growing population. An underground car park was considered a favourable option to protect people from harsh climates. There were also many suggestions from the community to include secure bike storage as part of a multi-storey car park solution.

Finally, the emphasis on prioritising human connections when navigating through the precinct was important to the local community.

### 5.3.2.4 Public spaces

Open, green and public spaces were strongly valued by the community because it complements the local atmosphere of the precinct where people can come together and connect with others. For some people the balance between open and sheltered areas was important to protect people from harsh climates and the need for natural light throughout the market site was strongly recommended.

Green spaces such as community gardens, small parks and plenty of trees that invite people to enjoy the shared environment was strongly encouraged, as well as creating a well-lit area that enables people to move around safely at night. Landscaped walking and cycling tracks that are functional (connects people to places) and reflects the artistic character of the area was highly valued by the local community.

“A well-lit and accessible space without having to pay too much to enjoy it”

“Spaces for meeting, talking and plentiful spaces to sit for free”

Creating public spaces that are multi-purpose for cultural events, such as Christmas markets, Chinese New Year, Greek Easter, and many other celebrations of diverse cultures was commonly shared. Public stages for live music and the performing arts, outdoor and indoor cinemas, basketball courts for active participation and spaces for young people to gather and connect with each other was important to keep the space ‘alive’.

Spaces with playgrounds and friendly areas for families with children to gather and relax was considered a priority to create an environment that is welcoming and accessible to many generations.

“More areas for kids to play and parents to relax”

Maintaining public health was also a priority, with local people suggesting a ‘no smoking zone’ be applied to the whole site.

Meeting places that respect and acknowledge indigenous heritage –a place of healing- was also mentioned by local people and was considered an important representation of the character and identity of Preston.

Many felt that more can be done to consider the environmental impacts of waste management by introducing compostable bins and a plastic-free precinct. Local people believed this could set Preston apart from other areas as leaders in environmentally sustainable design.

There was an acknowledgement that the precinct lacks sufficient green spaces, with some suggesting the oval could be used for activities other than football.



“An innovative sustainable site with trees and lots of artistic characters that reflects the local area”

### 5.3.2.5 Built form and scale

Concern about the strain of increasing density would have on infrastructure, particularly on local roads and parking, and whether there will be sufficient infrastructure to meet community needs such as affordable housing was expressed.

Managing congestion was a priority to local people when asked about how they relate to surrounding spaces and streets.

Overall community members believed too many high buildings would cause overshadowing and create an isolated precinct. A balance of low to medium height buildings was considered acceptable, as long as the design was functional, green and built with quality materials. There was also feedback on planning for green star rating buildings and a consideration for solar power systems.

Some community members believed that higher density living will not solve population growth, rather the considered approach to service provision in Preston and addressing the needs of a diverse community.



“A good balance between height and open space”

“High rise doesn't have to be ugly”

A few community members preferred higher buildings along Murray Road and lower buildings along Cramer Street to encourage natural light and prevent overshadowing of the oval.

### 5.3.2.6 Public benefit

Maintaining the range and affordability of food was identified as being an important community benefit, along with supporting local businesses to thrive and preserving the relationship with stall holders for generations to come.

There were suggestions for a variety of community facilities including a gym, library, prayer houses, learning centres, maternal and childcare centres, yoga, tai chi, pottery, painting, movie theatre, community kitchens, cooperative working spaces and innovation hubs. The provision of a new school was considered by some community members as an important benefit to encourage a 'student-friendly' environment.

“More evening events to get people out”

“What about night-time market specials, or restaurants to keep the area ‘open for business’.

Mixed-use housing including smaller units, larger units, social and affordable housing was considered important to the local community.

Many people associated public spaces and public benefits to be complementary, as they strongly believed the open areas of the precinct can be better utilised for a variety of community benefits.

## 5.4 Kitchen table discussions

### 5.4.1 Summary of key outcomes

The following is a summary of key feedback collected by CoD during discussions.

#### 5.4.1.1 Market Identity

The diversity in culture and food is valued by the community and the relaxed feel and open spaces contribute to the market’s identity.

#### 5.4.1.2 Getting around

Suggestions were made to create more bike facilities and better connections from the station to the market, with a recommendation to introduce a shuttle bus on market days around Preston Central.

Community members also expressed concern for the current parking restricting movement around the precinct and creating an unsafe environment for people.

#### 5.4.1.3 Public spaces

Green and open spaces such as picnic areas with BBQs, garden roof tops with swimming pools, colourful trees and flowers that invite people to enjoy the shared environment was strongly encouraged, as well as creating well-lit areas for public safety. More public amenities such as toilets, water taps and recycling bins to improve the environment were also suggested.

Spaces with playgrounds (climbing wall for kids) and pet-friendly areas for families to gather and relax was considered a priority to create an environment that is welcoming and accessible to many generations.

#### 5.4.1.4 Built form and scale

Concern about multi-storey buildings and public safety was expressed although there were mixed opinions about acceptable heights in the area. Maintaining the human scale of the market was important and a strong aversion to creating a ‘shopping centre’ feel to the area. Overall the community members believed high buildings would cause overshadowing, wind tunnels, privacy issues and create a ‘bitumen desert’.

#### 5.4.1.5 Public benefit

The community feedback was focussed on:

- Free parking
- Creating a bigger market
- Introducing medical services
- A variety of clothing shops
- A community centre or hub
- Pools, gyms, childcare centres and cinemas.

## 5.5 Deliberative workshops

### 5.5.1 Summary of key outcomes

Although participants were asked to respond to four separate questions – relating to future precinct success; community facilities and public spaces; built form, scaling and getting around; and important market elements – a number of common matters were raised during those different discussions. These matters were:

- Creating lots of green open spaces that support a variety of different uses
- Providing equitable accessibility for all
- Supporting diversity and the cultural identity of the area
- Providing bike infrastructure and facilities
- Maintaining the intangible essence of the market's character
- Ensuring safety
- Supporting environmental sustainability
- Allowing '18/7' activation of the precinct (daily and extended activation from early morning to late evening - 18 hours a day/7days per week) with various community, recreational and leisure options and activities.

The fact that these matters were consistently raised in response to quite different questions indicates that they are the matters that are of most importance to participants when thinking about the future of the precinct.

### 5.5.2 Feedback results

#### 5.5.2.1 Future precinct success

When asked to indicate the factors that would be most important to making the precinct a success in the future for the community, participants raised a number of different factors, including:

- Accessibility, safety, and activities and facilities for all ages, abilities and cultures
- Increasing activation ('18/7') through a range of cultural, recreational and leisure activities
- Affordability for market stallholders, shoppers and in housing
- Green open spaces.

However, discussions suggested that participants do not hold consensus views about the market location or the extent of future parking needs.

#### 5.5.2.2 Public spaces, amenities and community facilities

When asked to indicate what they wanted the precinct to deliver in terms of community facilities and public spaces, participants suggested a variety of options. These include:

- Multiple green, open spaces of various sizes– trees, gardens and water, community gardens, outdoor seating, fenced playgrounds and pet areas, and inviting (not straight) paths

- Spaces for culturally diverse communal/community activities, such as live performances, exhibits, cinema, classes (cooking), restaurants, and cafes, as well as places to gather
- Well-maintained, accessible toilets, bike parking/racks, childcare facilities, health centre and Council service centre
- Sustainable water use, solar access, efficient and solar heating, a recycling plant/hub, and natural building materials.

### 5.5.2.3 Built form, scaling and getting around

Discussions about the key elements the precinct should address in terms of built form, scale and getting around indicated that participants had quite diverse views. In particular, the matters about which participants expressed the most divergent views were related to:

- Building heights – most don't want 'skyscrapers' but some do want high rise or what has already been approved, for others one storey buildings. Some feel that there is no choice in relation to height
- Car parking – split opinions in terms of both the amount and the location of car parking was expressed.

The matters participants did generally agree on include:

- Ensuring the market is visible, protected and has natural light, and the area's character is maintained
- Providing:
  - aesthetically pleasing and environmentally sustainable buildings and materials
  - wide, accessible walkways and access through to the street network and the station
  - enjoyable places to gather and use
  - more bike infrastructure and facilities.

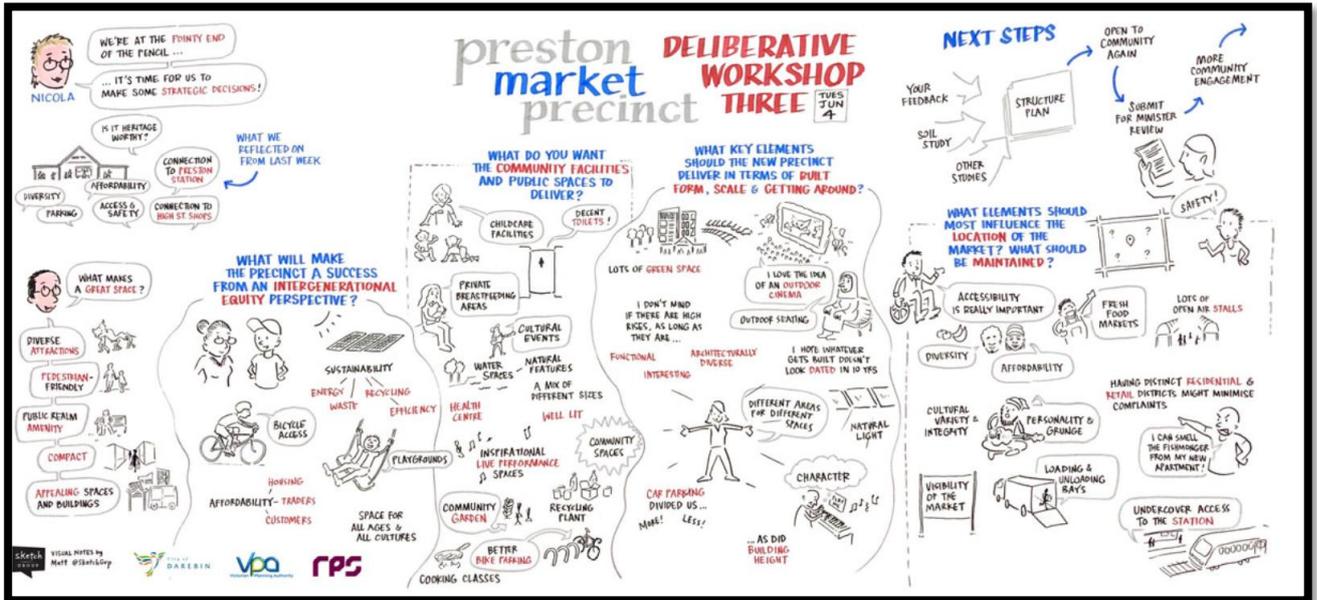
### 5.5.2.4 Preston Market

When asked to consider the elements of the market that should be maintained into the future and the factors that should most influence the market's location, participants identified the following elements should be maintained:

- The diversity, affordability and variety of its offering (including fresh food, deli, small food districts)
- Its cultural identity and 'vibe', including its open-air atmosphere
- Visibility/front door and accessibility to High Street, the station and bikes
- Link between market and new development.

Participants identified the following as the factors that should most influence the location of the market in the future:

- Location and size, visibility/front door and sunlight
- Accessibility, with undercover access to the station
- Safety.



Visual sketch of some of the feedback from participants during the final deliberative workshop by Matt @ SketchGroup

## 6 KEY CONCLUSIONS

A comparative analysis of the key outcomes from engagement activities has identified a number of consistencies in the feedback provided by the diverse community members attending those activities. The frequency with which these concepts and ideas were raised indicate that they are the matters that are of most importance to participants when considering the future of the Preston Market Precinct.

The key conclusions to be drawn from these consistencies, in order of significance, are:

**Green, open spaces** – feedback most consistently identified the provision of green, open space in the precinct is the most important consideration for participants. Providing a range of attractive and welcoming, multi-use communal spaces in which people can gather, relax and participate in community activities is also important and trees, gardens and water are key components of those spaces.

**Pedestrian-centred** – participant feedback also indicated that having a pedestrian-centred space was strongly preferred and providing the safe separation of pedestrians from other traffic and accessible access across and through the site should be another key consideration in the precinct. Supporting walking throughout the precinct was favoured, as was supporting other forms of sustainable, active transport, in particular bike riding.

**Sustainable** – sustainability was consistently raised in response to a variety of feedback questions, suggesting that participants also see it as a key consideration in the future of the precinct. The concept of sustainability was articulated in a number of ways: in terms of green building materials, solar access, energy efficiency, and solar power, and in having green-star buildings and a recycling hub in the precinct. Being smoke and plastic-free, and planning for ride-share and a driverless cars future were also mentioned. The desire for lots of green spaces, including trees that provide shade, was another way sustainability was addressed by participants' comments.

**Market character** – feedback also shows that maintaining the intangible essence of the market was an important consideration for participants. For the vast majority of participants, these intangibles are where the value of the market lies – this includes: the range and diversity of offerings, affordability, providing a welcoming and inclusive space that everyone can enjoy, having a range of stallholders, its cultural diversity and its authentic, 'grunge' aesthetic. For this majority the location of the market is not a concern.

The outcomes of the engagement program also demonstrated that there are a number of matters participants expressed a range of different views.

The most significant of these were:

**Community benefit** – participants identified a number of facilities and community assets the development of the precinct could provide. These ranged from childcare centres and CoD service centres, through entertainment options such as art/culture, cinemas and youth-friendly spaces, to providing diverse housing options and community gardens. A complete list of community benefits raised is at Appendix E.

**Car parking** – feedback suggests that participants do not share consistent views regarding car parking. For some the planning of the precinct is an opportunity to prepare for a future which is less car dependent and will require less car parking than is currently provided. For others, providing the current level of car parking, or increasing it to ensure the car parking needs of future residents are met, is important.

**Building heights** – participants also share quite diverse views about building heights, some are comfortable with high-rise buildings, others not at all. Of the concerns raised about building heights the most consistently concern raised about building heights were related to overshadowing.

Although feedback questions participants were asked to respond to throughout the engagement program did not allow for the collection of direct quantitative and qualitative feedback about the trade-offs that apply in the precinct, the engagement outcomes do suggest where community preferences lie. The two most significant preferences are: providing a range of open, green spaces is more important than limiting building height; and creating a pedestrian-centred, accessible precinct is more important than creating a car-centred space.

However, there would be value in testing how the Structure Plan resolves these trade-offs with the community prior to the document being put out on public exhibition and formal submissions are called. Consequently, RPS recommends a short, focused engagement program be undertaken once the Structure Plan has been developed to collect community feedback about the detail in the plan.

