



REIMAGINING UNIVERSITY SQUARE

Community Engagement Summary November 2014

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UNIVERSITY SQUARE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Project summary

Background

The City of Melbourne is leading a project to transform University Square in partnership with the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Government.

University Square was set-out in the 1850s along with two other 'London-style' squares – Lincoln and Argyle squares. University Square is characterised by its mature Elms. These trees, planted in the 1880s, are reaching the end of their useful life. Drought, extreme heat and age have taken their toll on these trees. Some 40% of existing Elm Trees at University Square have been assessed as having less than 12-months of useful life expectancy remaining.

With the population of Carlton expected to increase by 60% by 2026, now is a good time to think about how we can improve University square for all users and create a climate-adapted landscape for the future.

Community engagement

The first stage of community engagement was conducted from early September to mid-October, 2014.

The purpose of the engagement was to raise awareness of the project, develop an understanding of

the community's current experiences of University Square and find out what the community wanted to see and do at University Square.

The community was invited to share their experiences of University Square by completing a questionnaire online at Participate Melbourne or in-person at three pop-up information sessions.

What did we ask?

We asked people whether they currently used University square, what they liked and disliked and what they would like to see happen.

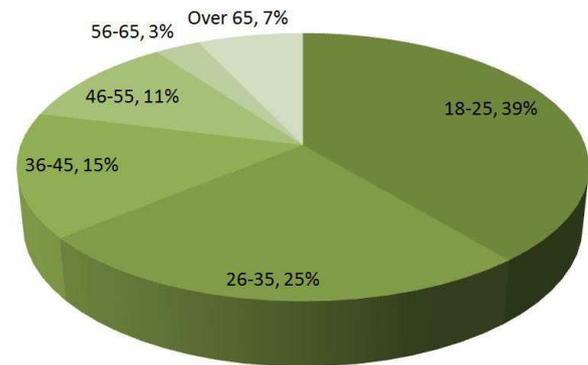
We also discussed some strategic objectives that we wished to explore including the management of a declining tree population, storm water harvest and re-use and increasing the size of the park.

[See original survey](#)

Spreading the word

Community engagement was promoted by the City of Melbourne through a range of mediums including:

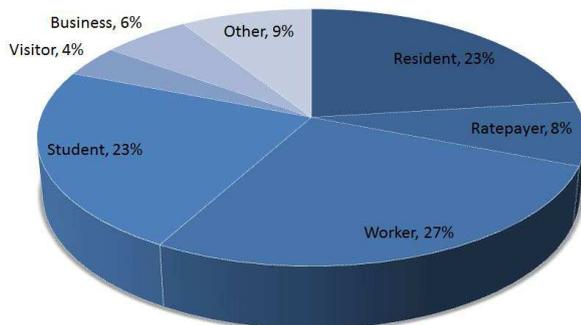
- Information sent to more than 5000 households
- Public notice boards set up at University Square
- Three pop-up information sessions held at University Square
- The City of Melbourne website directed visitors to the Participate Melbourne page
- Postcards delivered to local businesses, the University of Melbourne Library and Union House
- Social media featured on City of Melbourne Facebook and Twitter accounts
- E-mail to key stakeholders
- Promotion by external organisations and media



Age of the people who responded.

Who responded?

In total approximately 275 responses were received. The respondent mix was diverse with workers making up the largest single respondent group followed by students.



Breakdown of who responded to the survey.

Participants told us that they would like:

- More things to see and do in the park
- A bigger park with space for more trees and gardens
- The existing lawn areas to stay
- More seating
- Activities such as chess, table tennis and basketball
- Barbecue and picnic facilities
- Climate-adapted features including the re-use of stormwater, solar power and Productive horticulture
- Improved pedestrian access
- Space for markets, performances and events
- A designed road or shared zone on Leicester Street to enable the bus and vehicles to continue
- Better pedestrian connections on Pelham Street and to Lincoln Square.

Our ideas plan also includes:

- Succession planning so that we are able to manage and plan for tree maintenance, removal and re-planting in a way that ensures maximum re-planting opportunities to create a more resilient landscape.

For more information, contact City of Melbourne

melbourne.vic.gov.au



What you said:

'I use the park to pass through; there's no reason to linger.'

'There is only seating for 12 bums at the moment – more seats please.'

'The plaza looks like a cross between a bad imitation of Paris, a car park exit, and a neglected planter box.'

'Make the space work, vibrant and alive.'

'Balancing the square's two core functionalities – as a place to hang-out and a place to get you from point A to point B is the key challenge of the redesigning University Square.'

'Add some shelter to the plaza and more seating and things to do.'

'It would be good if at least one of the side roads did not exist; these function as a barrier to pedestrians.'

Park expansion

We introduced the concept of park expansion by asking:

'One concept we would like to investigate is making

University Square bigger. This would increase the useable space of University square and allow more trees to be planted in conjunction with stormwater catchment. What do you think about reducing the size of the road and parking spaces in order to increase the size of University Square?'

80% of respondents were in favour of making University Square bigger by decreasing the size of Barry and Leicester Streets including the removal of car parking spaces.

Next steps

Information captured through the first phase of community engagement has informed the development of the University Square ideas plan.

Community members can provide feedback on the ideas plan from January to March 2015.

