

Bendigo Tramways expansion

Summary of community feedback
July 2021





VicTrack



VicTrack is working with Bendigo Tramways, the City of Greater Bendigo and Regional Development Victoria on a \$10.7 million expansion of the Bendigo Tramways depot and workshops.



Overview

Bendigo Tramways has been a key part of the fabric of Bendigo for over 130 years and continues to make a major contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the community.

The project is focused on expanding the Bendigo Tramways workshops, providing storage for significant trams and enhancing the visitor experience at Bendigo Tramways.

The project will increase the number of trams that Bendigo Tramways can restore, creating more jobs and generating economic activity in central Victoria.

In June 2021, we presented a concept design to the community seeking input to inform the next stage of the project's design. To support engagement activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing requirements, an online survey was hosted from Monday 7 June to Wednesday 30 June 2021.

The objective of the engagement was to raise awareness in the community about the proposed project and to seek input into the concept design.

By ensuring that local community and stakeholder views are incorporated through the design process, social licence for the project will be enhanced, which will help ensure the project's objectives are achieved.

The survey was promoted through a range of different channels, including: City of Greater Bendigo social media, Bendigo Tramway's Facebook page, VicTrack's website and social media, on signage at Bendigo Tramways, and via a flyer distributed to local properties.

The consultation on the concept plan was also promoted with media coverage in The Bendigo Advertiser on 7 June 2021.

As a result of these methods of engagement, we had input from over 70 individuals including local residents and tram enthusiasts to help inform the design of the upgrade.

What we asked

The survey was designed to generate insights from local residents and community stakeholders who are impacted, or have an interest in the project, to help inform the concept design.

The purpose of the concept design is to broadly outline the location of key facilities and components required as

part the expansion. Once complete, the concept design will be further refined into a detailed design, which will be the basis of planning approvals for the project.

The survey sought to better understand local community insights into the proposed functioning of the site and, as community expectations in relation to the 'look and feel' of the project, noting the heritage values of the existing site and the amenity of the surrounding area.

The survey also sought to understand community concerns about the construction phase to help us plan for how we can best manage any impacts.

Who we heard from

71 people responded to the online survey.

Of the 71 people that responded (one respondent did not advise) to the question about their relationship to Bendigo Tramways:

- 15 identified themselves as living nearby
- Two worked nearby
- 20 were tram enthusiasts
- Nine were a member of a local community group
- 24 identified as other, who were a combination of supportive community members and tram enthusiasts.

What we heard

By far the most critical aspect of the upgrade is the design of the buildings and facilities, with almost half of respondents citing it as the most important.

More than a third of respondents also said that it was important that buildings and structures complement the area's unique character and heritage values, and almost as many said they wanted the facilities to allow for future proofing and further expansion of the depot.

When asked to rank aspects of the design of the buildings in order of importance, a significant majority of people said that visual appeal and blending in with existing buildings was most important. Again, comments reflected that any colours used should blend easily into the surroundings.

Please note, survey comments have not been changed to correct spelling or grammar.

Bendigo Tramways expansion - concept plan



- 1. Existing workshop/maintenance facility
- 2. New storage/maintenance facility

- 3. Staff parking
- 4. New display & storage area

- 5. Pedestrian path
- 6. Visitor path



ian bridge
 experience & food venue

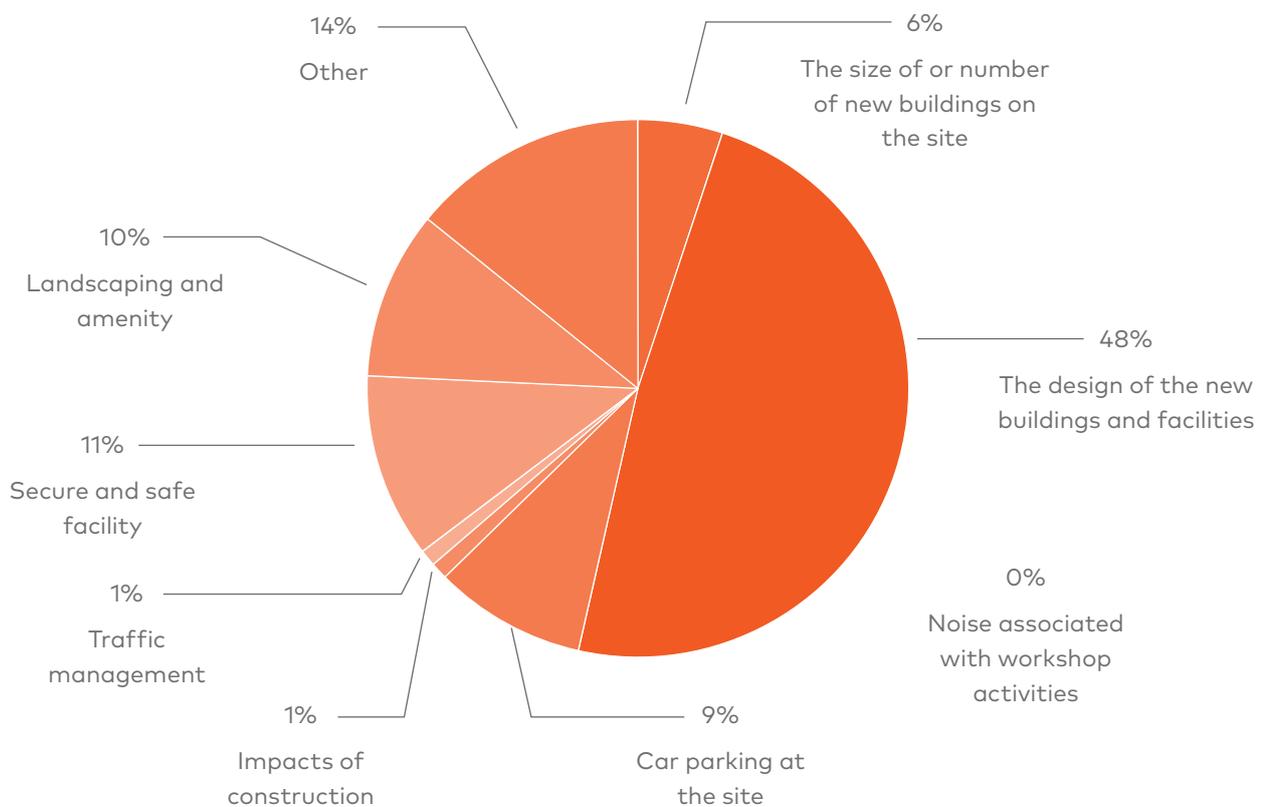
- 7. Vehicle entry & exit
- 8. Viewing platform

1. In general, what matters most to you about the masterplan for the Bendigo Tramways expansion?

Almost half of respondents (48 per cent) said that the design of the new buildings and facilities were most important to them.

Car parking (9 per cent), landscaping and amenity (10 per cent) and offering a secure and safe facility (11 per cent) were also noted by some respondents as important.

Survey respondents also highlighted that the upgrades should try to future proof the Tramways and allow for future growth both financially and by new visitors.



Some of the comments people made in particular include::

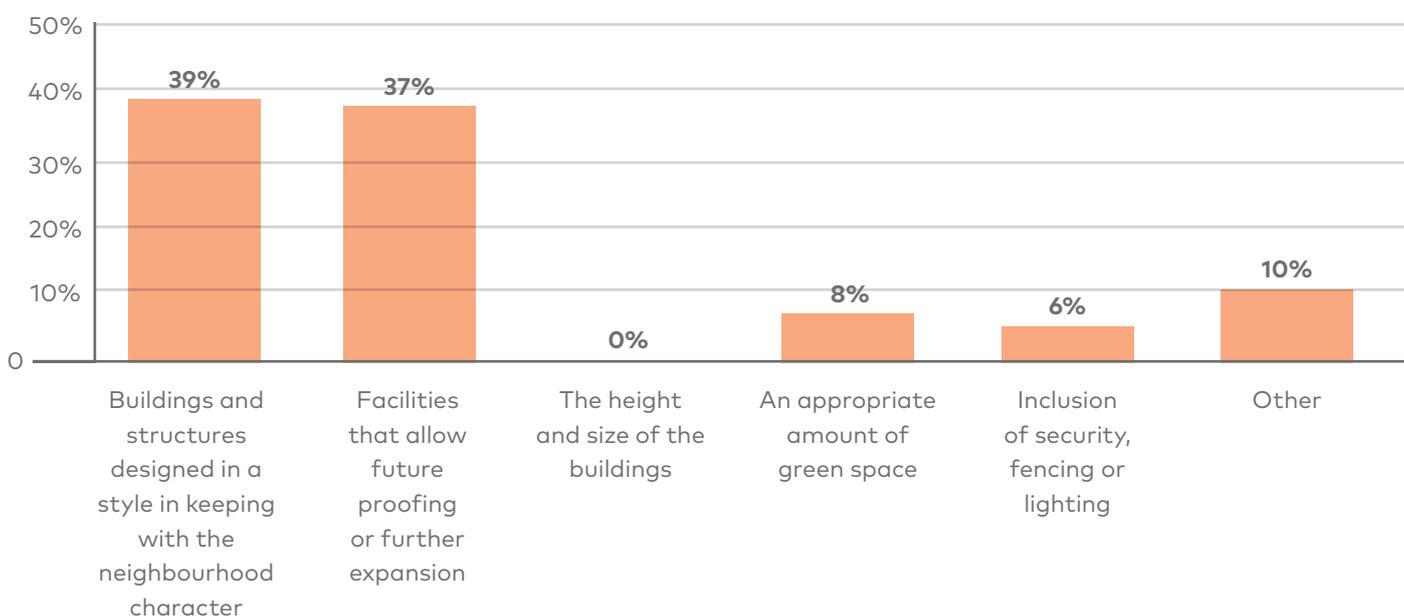
- "Getting the best use of the expanded footprint for workshop business tram storage and tourism"
- "That the facility is future proofed to allow Bendigo Tramways to continue to expand and excel in its work"
- "The visitor experience of going to the tramways"

2. What matters most to you in planning the design for the Bendigo Tramways expansion?

Of the survey respondents, 39 per cent advised that the most important aspect of the design was that the buildings and structures are in keeping with the neighbourhood character.

There was a large proportion, 37 per cent, of respondents who also wanted the facilities to allow for the future proofing and further expansion of the depot.

Feedback consistently expressed the importance of the historic trams being taken care of in an appropriate facility, so they are protected.



Some of the comments people made in particular include:

- "Ensuring that Bendigo trams are maintained and looked after, and that volunteers are reintroduced and catered for."
- "A contemporary design with 'tram' references"
- "Consider local area however ensure building are appropriate & able to allow for future expansion plus green space"



3. Do you have any suggestions about how we could improve the masterplan?

Generally, people were happy with the masterplan and didn't have many suggestions about how it could be improved.

Of those who suggested improvements to the masterplan, comments included:

- Maintain the heritage look and feel of the buildings
- Suitable access by the public and visitor car parking
- Visitor activities such as interactive tram displays, specifically directly at families and young children
- Beautification of the area with additional trees and bushes.

Some of the feedback provided in particular included:

- "Avoid it taking on a modern style that makes it look more like a fun park, rather than making it look like an exciting tram museum"
- "Visitors car parking area is needed as it is currently hard to find a place to park in the area"
- "Good plan should have a heritage look as much as possible"
- "I've gone over the master plan several times and find it very satisfactory. Any further ideas from me would only be cosmetic. So I think it's a wonderful plan overall."
- "Lots of interesting tourism and history ideas for people to come and visit and learn about the history of the trams! Detailed and sophisticated account of history."
- "Public access to viewing trams. Interactive museum displays"

4. What is important to you when considering the design of the facades of the new buildings?

When asked to rank the design considerations for the new buildings in order of importance, 46 per cent considered the need for the buildings to blend in with the existing environment to be the most important. This was followed by 41 per cent who felt the visual appeal of the buildings was most important. More than half of respondents believed the reduction of glare to be the least important aspect of the design.

Importance (most to least)	Consideration
1	Blending in with the existing buildings
2	Visual appeal
3	Soundproofing
4	Reduction of glare

5. Are there materials or colours you would like to see included or avoided?

The survey respondents felt that the materials and colours used need to be consistent with the heritage values of the tramways site and to blend in with the local neighbourhood. Preferences should be given to 'earthy' colours and materials such as galvanised iron, red brick and steel to fit in with the heritage aspects.

Some of the comments people made in particular include:

- "Match existing materials and colours"
 - "Any buildings need to be complimentary to the heritage buildings."
 - "Heritage colours"
 - "Preference given to earthy colours."
 - "Attempt to include authentic and heritage materials relating to Bendigo tramways period"
 - "No as long as materials and colours blend in with existing buildings and environment"
 - "Red bricks obviously, steel trusses and the colours that are already in use."
 - "Rustic materials to reflect the heritage of the site"
 - "heritage colours are a must"
-

6. What should we consider when designing car parking? For example, the size of the carpark or number of accessible car parks.

Respondents requested that when designing car parking, the most important aspects and particular focus should be on:

- the number of car parks available
- the distance between the car park and tram facilities
- accessible car parks
- peak time congestion
- offering free car parking to visitors.

Increasing the number of car park spaces was noted as particularly important by some people, as the increase in visitors to the depot would otherwise lead to people parking on surrounding streets.

There should also be consideration to allow safe access to the site for families, volunteers and people with special needs.

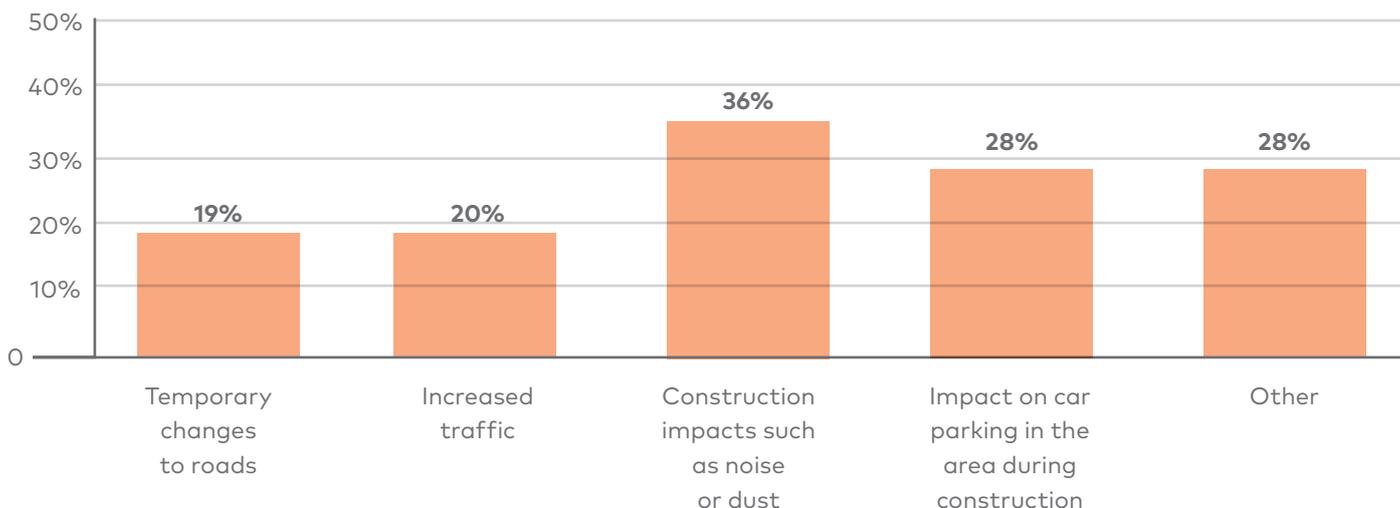
On the other hand, there were some respondents who requested the area be made vehicle free to only allow walking or bicycle access.

Some of the comments people made in particular include:

- "Number and easy of access"
 - "Getting to the museum and back to your car safely - the current arrangement with the trams going over the bridge is sometimes a bit scary."
 - "Please ensure sufficient accessible carparks, as well as bike storage for cyclists."
 - "Sufficient number of parks for the expected patronage"
 - "enough car parking required so there is no overflow on neighbouring streets"
 - "Bay size, disabled spaces, recharging bay or 2 easy flow"
 - "No cars, only bikes"
-

7. What are your key concerns relating to construction of the new buildings? Choose all that apply

When considering the construction of new buildings, the key concern (36 per cent) was that the impacts of construction, such as noise or dust, be mitigated. This was closely followed by 28 per cent of people who had concerns about the impact on car parking in the area during construction. Temporary changes to the roads and increased traffic were both cited as concerns by almost 20 per cent of respondents.



Note: respondents were able to select multiple options

Other respondents (28 per cent) had concerns other than those directly mention in our question. These included:

- "Construction period should be as short as possible"
- "Irreversible destruction of the heritage environment. The original depot is unique and any new construction must be done in a way that it does not detract from the heritage buildings."
- "Environmental - (sediment and run off into creek)"
- "Impact on neighbours."

8. What could we consider doing to reduce construction impacts?

Survey respondents were keen to be kept informed and up to date on all aspects of the construction process. Additionally, respondents requested careful planning of the works so that the majority would take place during the day, and quick mitigation of any impacts on the adjoining properties.

Some of the comments people made in particular include:

- "Ensure ongoing consultation with neighbours"
- "Measures to reduce noise & dust"
- "Work only during daylight hours and minimise the impact of construction dirt in the neighbourhood."
- "Minimise construction time"
- "Plan carefully"

9. Is there any other feedback you would like to provide?

The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and in support of the project. Some survey respondents stated that these upgrades are overdue and needed to support not just the restoration of trams but futureproofing Bendigo Tramways.

Importantly people said restoring and preserving the existing buildings was important so that the area does not lose its heritage appeal.

Some respondents thought it was important that visitors could view the ongoing tram restoration works so they could experience not just the museum aspects but the work put into restoring the trams.

Respondents also asked that the design of the buildings consider any potential impact of flooding given the proximity of the nearby creek to the tramways site and residences.

Some of the comments people made in particular include:

- "Great project and fully support the enchantment of this great Bendigo attraction"
 - "It is an amazing & positive project for enhancing employment in Bendigo encouraging travelling visitors."
 - "The development is well overdue and sorely needed. I'm sure once it is completed it will attract large numbers of tourists and locals."
 - "It is important that tourists can view the restoration work in the workshop."
 - "Yes. Get going asap because right now this project would be a huge boost for Bendigo in these sad times."
 - "Keep the design consistent with existing depot and don't turn it into an amusement park."
 - "Just please make it classical, not simplistic modernism, has to suite the style."
 - "great use of the space that is currently there. an upgrade of the creek in the area would also be required to make the whole area more visually appealing for tourism"
 - "We love visiting the trams and we look forward to the new facility!"
 - "We have submitted photos of recent floods that have impacted the area proposed for construction to highlight the impact this will have on the existing houses."
 - bench seating at the base of the large gum (that would be terrific and could be done cost effectively if featuring simple railway sleeper benches, as a nod of appreciation to the areas railway history). Currently the artist's image only features grasses planted here."
 - "Distinctive municipal buildings can become landmarks in their own right: tourists will photograph them if they are unusually appealing. Can we create something of that kind in Belgrave?."
-

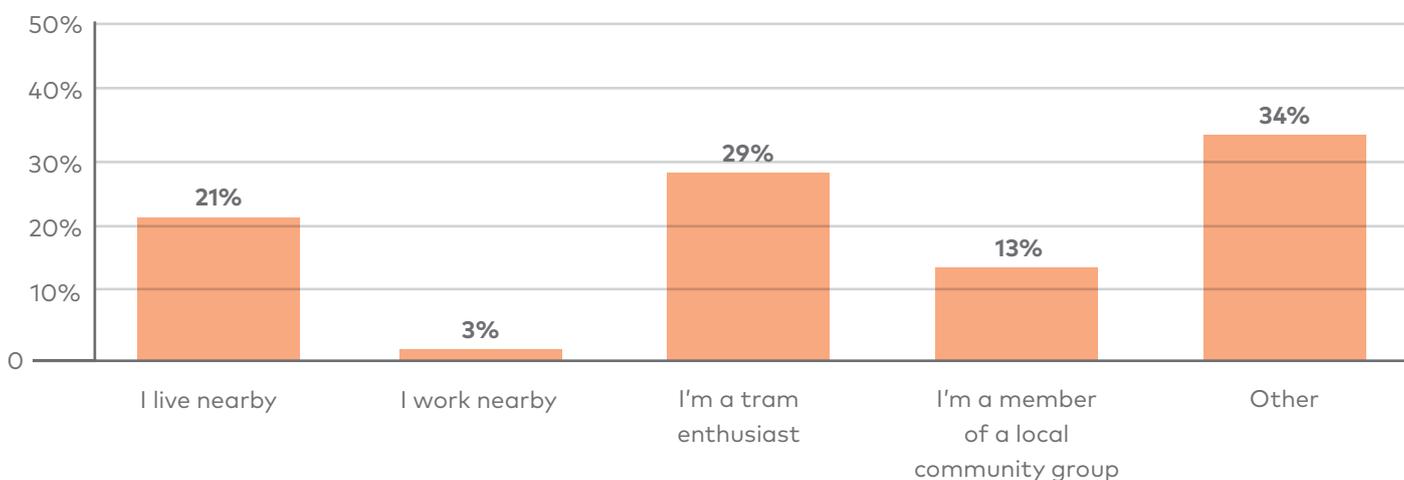


10. My relationship to Bendigo Tramways:

Of the 71 survey respondents:

- 21 per cent identified themselves as local residents
- Three per cent of respondents were local traders, or owners and employees of local businesses
- 29 per cent of respondents were tram enthusiasts
- 13 per cent were a member of a local community group.

Finally, 34 per cent identified as other, who overall were a combination of supportive community members and tram enthusiasts.



Summary and next steps:

Overall, the survey shows strong community support of the project. Local residents and community stakeholders want to see the heritage values of the Bendigo Tramways site protected and enhanced as part of the project. There is a recognition of the tramways, their contribution to Bendigo and the benefits that the project will bring. Further, people want to be kept engaged and informed as the development progresses and want efforts to be made to manage the impacts through the construction phase.

Following this consultative phase, the concept plan will be further refined into a detailed development plan. Planning approvals will be sought in the second half of the year and residents and local stakeholders will have a further opportunity to have their say on the project as part of this process.

Subject to planning approvals, construction will get underway in 2022.