

# ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS FOR WILLIAMSTOWN SCHOOL PRECINCT – WHAT WE HEARD

## Background

Council has designed a proposed road safety improvement plan for the Williamstown school precinct. The infrastructure within this plan aims to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and connectivity as well as reducing vehicle speeds and dangerous driving around Williamstown Primary School and Saint Mary's Primary School in Williamstown.

These plans have been guided by Council's Integrated Transport Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Plan and Community Plan, along with other relevant planning and traffic and transport standards and guidelines.

The proposed plan seeks to implement the below traffic treatments and safety actions

- new shared zone in Cecil Street between Parker Street and Cole Street for school drop offs and pick ups (pending approval from Department of Transport)
- reduced speed limits within the school zone
- shared user paths (pedestrians and cyclists) around the perimeter of the school precinct
- raised pedestrian crossings on roads around the school precinct
- footpath realignments for improved pedestrian safety
- traffic islands to reduce vehicle speeds
- new pavement markings and signage informing drivers they are entering a school zone
- additional signage to improve road user, pedestrian and cyclist safety throughout the area

## The community engagement process

At the time of this project, face-to-face consultations were unable to proceed due to COVID-19 restrictions. As an alternative, online engagement tools were used including:

- **online survey:** review the draft concept plan before providing feedback on the road safety improvement plan via the feedback survey on Participate Hobsons Bay
- share your feedback to the Project Team by emailing [projects@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](mailto:projects@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au) or calling **9932 1000**

These community engagement opportunities were shared via Council's digital platforms (website and social media), fliers were distributed to the Williamstown community and direct communications were made with the two local primary schools in the area.

## Who got involved

The project's webpage on Participate Hobsons Bay received 559 site visits during the engagement period between 19 August and 17 September 2020.

The community engagement process received 158 specific items of feedback on the proposed plan including 66 responses to the online survey and 10 email submissions.

Almost all respondents were from Williamstown (86%) and were members of either the St Mary's Primary School or Williamstown Primary School communities (59%). There was significant interest by those aged 35-54 years, this age demographic making up 70% of all responses.

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## What we heard from the community

### Existing conditions

The majority of respondents suggested that the existing road environment in the Williamstown school precinct is unsafe.

Around 55% considered the road environment very unsafe or fairly unsafe, with 39% deeming it very safe or fairly safe. 6% of respondents were unsure either way.

Areas of concern included:

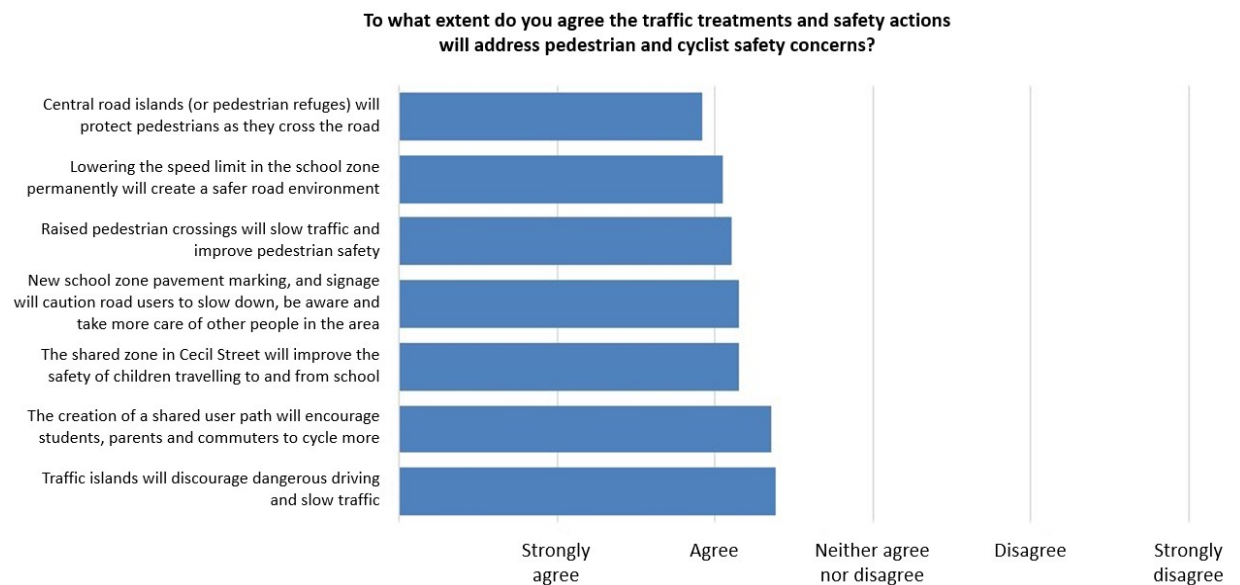
- poor pedestrian connectivity and traffic issues at the intersection of Cole Street/Hanmer Street
- safety concerns and traffic issues at the intersection of Electra Street/Giffard Street/Hanmer Street
- underutilised pedestrian crossing in the middle of Hanmer Street
- designated truck route on streets surrounding the schools
- illegal car parking during school drop off and pick up times
- pedestrian and cyclist connectivity around school and the broader area

### Support for recommendations made

Respondents were asked to what extent did they agree that the traffic treatments and safety actions proposed would address pedestrian and cyclist concerns in this area of Williamstown.

Almost all proposed traffic treatments and safety actions receive support in between the 'agree' and 'neither agree nor disagree' level. The proposed central road islands (or pedestrian refugees) were most supported, closely followed by the safety action to lower the speed limit in the school zone permanently and to install raised pedestrian crossings.

A summary of these results is presented below.



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## Suggested improvements to proposed plan

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on areas of the proposed plan that they disagreed with or that they would like to see changed or included as part of the proposed road safety improvements.

The top five overall suggestions included:

- review the existing pedestrian crossing locations in the area
- install a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Cole Street/Hanmer Street
- additional street tree planting including tree planting in traffic islands and refuges
- improve pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure in area
- further engagement on the proposed plans with residents

There were requests to remove existing pedestrian crossings that didn't align with pedestrian patterns of movement and review the need for flashing warning lights at pedestrian crossings.

Requests were also made to discontinue the designated truck route on streets surrounding the schools or apply truck restrictions during certain periods of the day.

Some comments were made relating to the traffic flow and safety concerns of turning Cecil Street into a shared zone.

Other comments received related to construction materials, design principles and car parking observations. These will all be taken into consideration within the overall feedback received.

## Additional comments

Other comments received related to the MacLean Reserve park upgrade, cyclist infrastructure outside of Williamstown, maintenance issues, law enforcement and the level crossing over Giffard Street. These comments will all be passed onto the relevant Council officers to review.

## Next steps

We would like to thank everyone for their contributions and interest in this project.

Council is evaluating all contributions made and will update the proposed plans to ensure your key concerns and feedback are reflected where appropriate.

We will then share the updated plans on Participate Hobsons Bay and confirm what changes have been made.

These plans will be finalised in late 2020 with the intention to start the improvement works from early 2021.

To keep informed on this project, visit Participate Hobsons Bay.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact 1300 179 944 or email [projects@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](mailto:projects@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au) and ask to speak with a member of the Project Team.