

**Report to the Future Melbourne Committee****Agenda item 6.3****Neighbourhood Model – Progressing the Priorities (MI 37)****21 March 2023****Presenter:** Elliot Anderson, Acting Director Community Development**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to brief Council on current progress and seek endorsement of the next steps to further the implementation of the Neighbourhood Model (Major Initiative 37 of the Council Plan).
2. The Neighbourhood Model aims to strengthen how the City of Melbourne (CoM) understands and works with different communities. On 14 June 2022, the Future Melbourne Committee endorsed the [Neighbourhood Planning Framework](#) that articulates CoM's commitment to the Neighbourhood Model as an ongoing process of 'listening, exploring and realising' priorities with the community.
3. Following consultation with almost 7,000 residents, business owners, students and visitors (82 per cent engaging with CoM for the first time), community priorities have been identified for each neighbourhood and ten [Neighbourhood Portals](#) developed featuring priorities, updates and local news and information.
4. As at 1 March 2023, the Portals have received more than 30,000 unique views since launching in October 2022. On average, 73 per cent of priorities in each neighbourhood have had a progress update as of February 2023.
5. When endorsed as a Major Initiative in July 2021, it was assumed that the proposed neighbourhood plans would be traditional, static documents. However, in line with community feedback, online Portals were suggested and supported, introducing a new, iterative approach, based on a continuous cycle of 'listening, exploring and realising' community priorities. This is a significant and leading moment for a local government, embracing a new way of working with our communities, grounded in data, and responsive to the nuance of each area of the municipality.

**Key issues**

6. Importantly, 80 per cent of priorities identified by the community are aligned to existing Council priorities and work. Overall, the resounding feedback from the community is to get the basics right, such as safety, wellbeing, access and affordability. Localised neighbourhood activities and opportunities for community members to make connections with each other also emerged as key priorities.
7. Whilst the priorities are not a list of 'actions' and the next phase of the process is to 'explore' with the community and others, it is important for CoM to work with others to 'realise' some of what has been heard. This will be critical to maintain the trust established through this process. Many of the priorities are not actionable by CoM alone and will involve partnerships and advocacy to activate.
8. Whilst 80 per cent of the priorities identified relate to current work at CoM, there are a number of priorities that will require additional planning, refocusing of resources and efforts and changes to ways of working. This will be embedded into existing planning and budget processes, over the next one to three years, and will be a critical input into the next Council Plan.
9. The community doesn't yet fully understand how the Neighbourhood Model is different to how CoM has always engaged and there are community members who have not yet been reached by this work. Communicating the model and progress in a way that resonates whilst finding different ways to connect with the community will be integral to achieving reach and sustained engagement through the Neighbourhood Model.
10. To complement the Neighbourhood Portals, a data repository of community insights for staff (the Knowledge Bank) has been piloted and is being used to inform and support work at CoM. It currently contains more than 40,000 comments and more than 25 community insight reports have been developed to support and influence projects. The next stage will involve rolling out a data collection tool to community facing Council officers (e.g. library staff, park rangers) to collect and feed community insights into the Knowledge Bank to further enhance the data to enable better understanding of community needs and priorities to guide decision making.
11. For more detailed information on the progress that has been made, insights from the consultations and next steps to address these key issues see Attachment 2.

## **Recommendation from management**

12. That the Future Melbourne Committee requests that management:
  - 12.1. progresses the neighbourhood priorities through embedding the Neighbourhood Model into council planning and budget processes, enabling community led initiatives and embedding the priorities into partnership and advocacy strategies.
  - 12.2. builds community awareness and understanding about the Neighbourhood Model through a targeted communications campaign, activating the neighbourhood portals and embedding the Neighbourhood Model into communications approaches at the City of Melbourne.
  - 12.3. tracks and measure progress through development of a research partnership, roll out Knowledge Bank tools and undertake an interim review with community to refresh baseline data.
  - 12.4. reports back by March 2024 to update the Future Melbourne Committee on proposed short and medium term actions.

### **Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 22)
2. Update on the Neighbourhood Model (Page 5 of 22)

## Supporting Attachment

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### Legal

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from management.

### Finance

2. The neighbourhood priorities will be embedded into existing planning and budget mechanisms. Some priorities can be realised within existing budgets while other, larger priorities will be incorporated in annual planning and budget processes.

### Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

### Health and Safety

4. Council projects and activities across the municipality seek to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of the community.

### Stakeholder consultation

5. Community consultation on neighbourhood planning occurred from October 2021 to September 2022.
6. Two initial workshops were held with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders followed by regular discussion on the development of the Portal content and final approval. Additional engagement will continue as the Portals develop and evolve over time.
7. There were three stages of consultation. Community members were first asked to share their priorities for their neighbourhood and outline possible initiatives needed to address these locally. The feedback received in phase one was developed into community priorities for each neighbourhood. These priorities were tested in the second phase. Community responses were positive with participants stating that CoM captured neighbourhood priorities 'well' to 'very well' or 4.4/5. The third phase was user testing of the Portals with 16 community members participating in four sessions including International Students, members of the Disability Advisory Committee, Young People and Older People. Overall, participants rated their likelihood of using the Portal in the future as 8/10.
8. To ensure inclusive engagement, the demographics of each neighbourhood were mapped before consultation commenced. Diverse ages and identities, residents, businesses, students, workers and visitors participated representing the population of each area. More work is needed to engage young children, 15 to 29 year olds and big businesses that will occur over the next year.
9. Overall, more than 7000 people were engaged across 10 neighbourhoods with 82 per cent participating for the first time.
10. Community feedback will be continually collected via the new Knowledge Bank data collection and analysis system (part of the Neighbourhood Planning Framework). This data will be regularly reviewed. The priorities in the Portals will be updated and will undertake further consultation as new areas of interest and concern emerge.

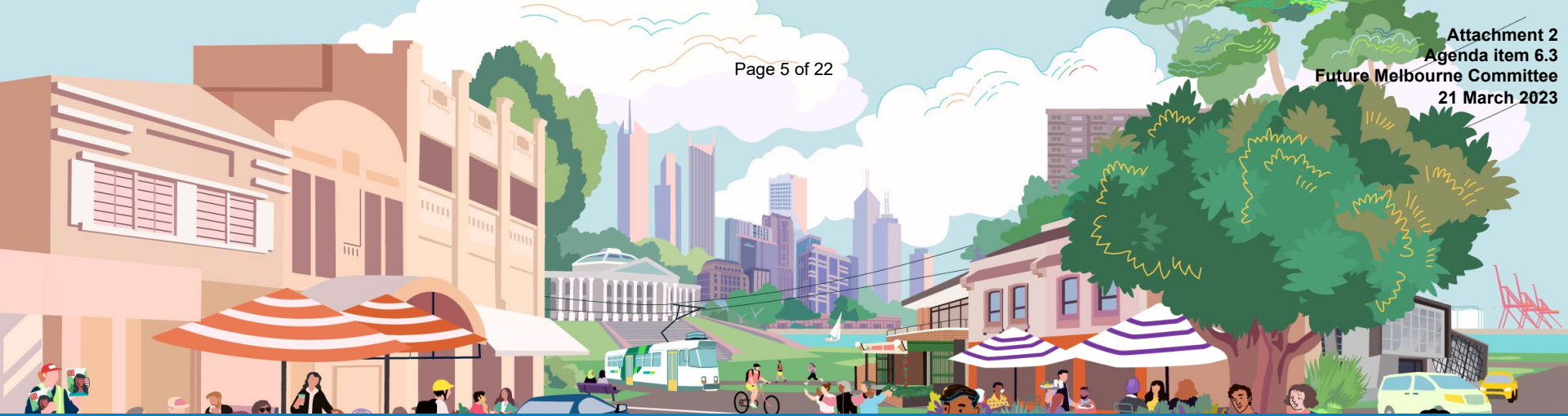
### Relation to Council policy

11. The Neighbourhood Model is a Major Initiative in the Council Plan 2021 – 2025 under the Access and Affordability strategic objective.

12. The Neighbourhood Model is aligned to CoM's Community Engagement Policy, the governance principles identified in the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy's ambition to deliver more inclusive and sustainable outcomes for our city through shared problem-solving, open dialogue and meaningful participation.
13. The implementation of the Neighbourhood Model will support progress against Goal 10 (reduced inequalities), Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, assisting to 'ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making' within the City of Melbourne.

#### **Environmental sustainability**

14. Council projects and activities across the municipality focus on enhancing both environmental and social sustainability.



## Attachment 2: Update on the Neighbourhood Model



The Neighbourhood Planning Framework, endorsed at FMC 14 June 2022, commits the organisation to an ongoing process of 'listening, exploring and realising' priorities with community.

The priorities identified by communities are articulated in 10 online Neighbourhood Portals.

This pack provides a deep dive on the work to date including:

1. What's been achieved so far
2. An overview of the themes that have emerged from the priorities
3. Key insights and learning from the work to date
4. Next steps



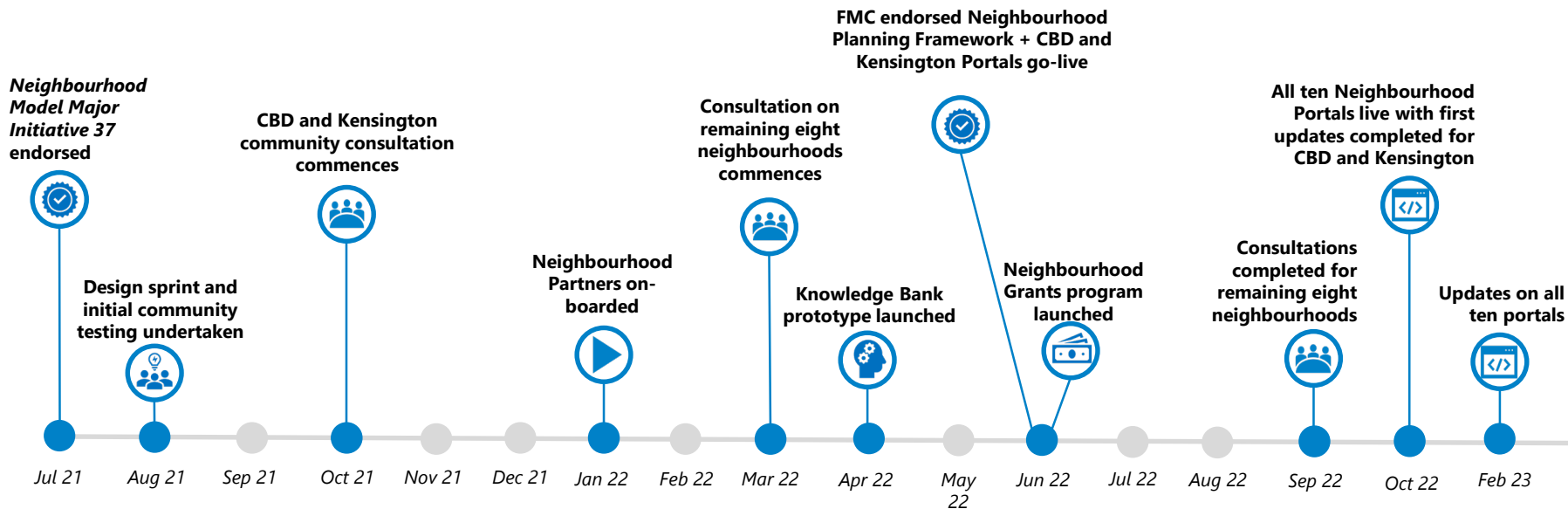


# 1. Milestones and Achievements



# Timeline of the *Neighbourhood Model Major Initiative 37*

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**7,000**

people engaged across 10  
neighbourhoods with **82%**  
participating for the first time

**16**

neighbourhood grants  
awarded

**30,000**

visitors to Neighbourhood  
Portals

**200**

community pop-ups/  
workshops delivered as during  
community consultation

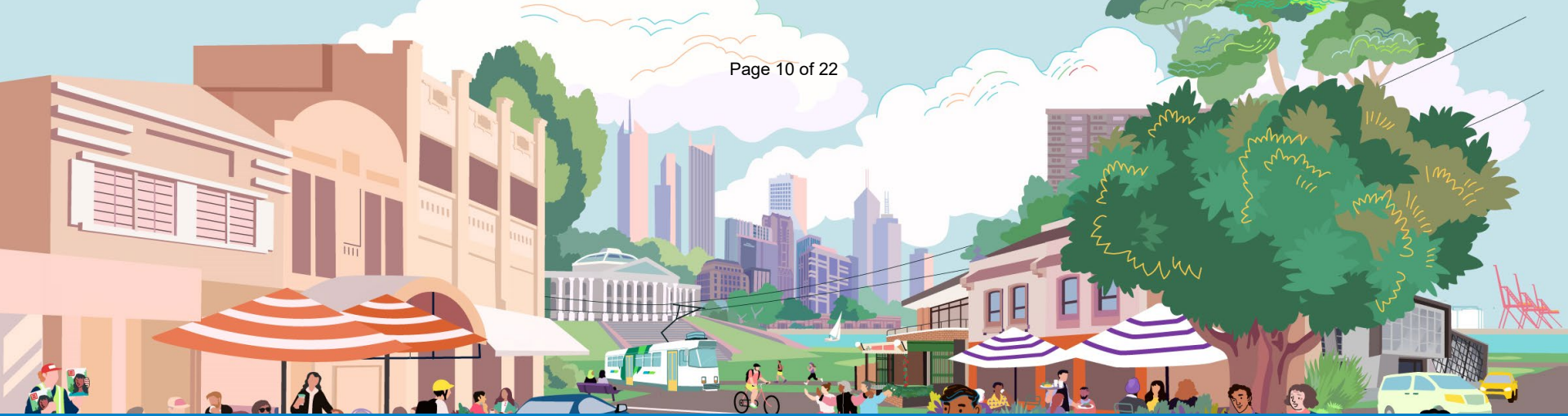
**57**

Community stories published  
on the Neighbourhood Portals

**40,000**

comments captured in the  
Knowledge Bank prototype





## 2. Overview of themes that have emerged



# These are the most common themes from the priorities that have emerged

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Within each theme there are nuances between what each neighbourhood has identified as being a priority. Viewing them at this level helps provide an understanding of the breadth of areas that are important to those that live, work, play and study in the City of Melbourne.

## **Bunurong and Wurundjeri Culture and Heritage:**

Greater recognition and opportunity to learn about heritage, places and culture.

**Affordable Housing:** affordable housing options that cater to diverse needs.

**Apartment living:** Concerns about short stay accommodation options in residential buildings as well as greater recognition and support for apartment living and strata communities.

## **Better support for people**

**experiencing homelessness:** Support for people experiencing homelessness and working towards reducing homelessness.

**Community connection:** More grassroots/community led activities and events that bring the community together.

**Community spaces and inclusive activities:** More community access to local venues and spaces for community activities, including meeting places, spaces for vulnerable groups such as older people and young people to gather, a community hub and spaces for community events.

**Diversification of shops:** Encourage diversification and increase retail, fresh produce and hospitality offerings that meet the needs of the residents.

**Dog off-leash areas:** More dog off-leash areas and responsible pet ownership education.

**Heritage Protection:** preserve old buildings and heritage.

**Parks and Greening:** Increase greening and preserving and protecting parks and open spaces.

**Public amenity:** More amenities including public toilets, seating, tables, drinking fountains, shelter and shading.

**Public Transport:** Improve public transport options

**Public housing:** More coordinated and improved support for public housing residents, particularly estates in Carlton, Kensington and North Melbourne.

## **Recreational spaces and**

**programs:** Increase options and opportunities for recreation and connection through sport and wellbeing programs.

**Safety in the Streets:** Address drug and alcohol use, mental health, aggressive behaviour and increase police and security presence and better lighting.

**Safer roads and bike lanes:** Negotiate safe shared use of roads and paths and address issues relating to aggressive and anti-social road behaviour, traffic flow and parking spaces.

**Small business support:** Provide tailored support for local businesses to help recover from COVID-19

**Traffic and Parking:** Reduce traffic, aggressive and anti-social road behaviour and better parking management.

**Waste, Recycling and Graffiti:** Improve waste management and circular economy projects



**Safety and Wellbeing** priorities include programs to help people connect, better lighting and improved street safety for all users, addressing drug and alcohol use, mental health and aggressive behaviour, increased police presence (mixed views on this) and more amenities including public toilets, seating, tables, drinking fountains.

**Access and Affordability** priorities include providing more inclusive spaces and activities, improvements to public transport and affordable housing options.



## Safety in the Streets

Address drug and alcohol use, mental health, aggressive behaviour and increase police and security presence and better lighting:

- *"Sometimes I am afraid to walk alone at night in Melbourne CBD, especially Flinders Street areas, as there are people on drugs."*
- *"More control after hours [in Docklands], many drug areas and hooning around the streets; and many people leave garbage and rubbish."*
- *"Antisocial behaviour [in North Melbourne] makes the neighbourhood feel less safe. Rough sleeping people in public areas makes me uncomfortable."*
- *"Our shop has been burgled [in South Yarra] twice in the last two years. There needs to be more safety measures in the neighbourhood."*
- *"I don't like being here [near River Studios in the Industrial part of West Melbourne] after dark. It's like a wasteland."*

City of Melbourne and Victorian Government partners are already doing a lot in these areas however the community feedback reveals a gap that the next stage of this work will address.

## Safer roads and bike lanes

Negotiate safe shared use of roads and paths and address issues relating to aggressive and anti-social road behaviour, traffic flow and parking spaces:

- *"The only negatives [in Carlton] would be... the anti-social behaviour on Lygon Street and the weekend car hooning."*
- *"We have many elderly residents [in East Melbourne] who walk around the area and it's dangerous to have speeding trucks cut through."*
- *"Less rat-running traffic. More enforcement of 40 speed limit in Gatehouse St, Parkville."*
- *"Traffic lights length [in Southbank] - so many of green lights for pedestrians last for ten seconds on large roads making it impossible to cross."*
- *Toorak Road, South Yarra, is very congested and cyclists and e-scooters on the footpaths are dangerous to everyone."*
- *"The intersection of Dudley and William Streets [in West Melbourne] is dangerous, drivers are going through red lights."*



Carlton: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/carlton-neighbourhood-portal>

CBD: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/cbd-neighbourhood-portal>

Docklands: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/docklands-neighbourhood-portal>

East Melbourne: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/east-melbourne-neighbourhood-portal>

Kensington: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/kensington-neighbourhood-portal>

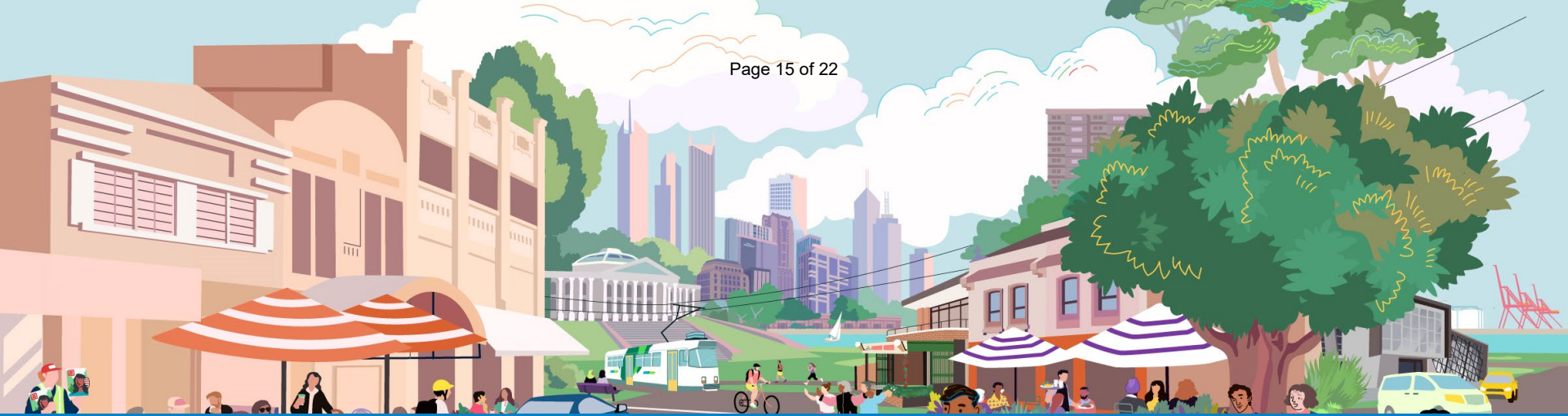
North Melbourne: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/north-melbourne-neighbourhood-portal>

Parkville: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/parkville-neighbourhood-portal>

Southbank: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/southbank-neighbourhood-portal>

South Yarra: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/south-yarra-neighbourhood-portal>

West Melbourne: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/west-melbourne-neighbourhood-portal>

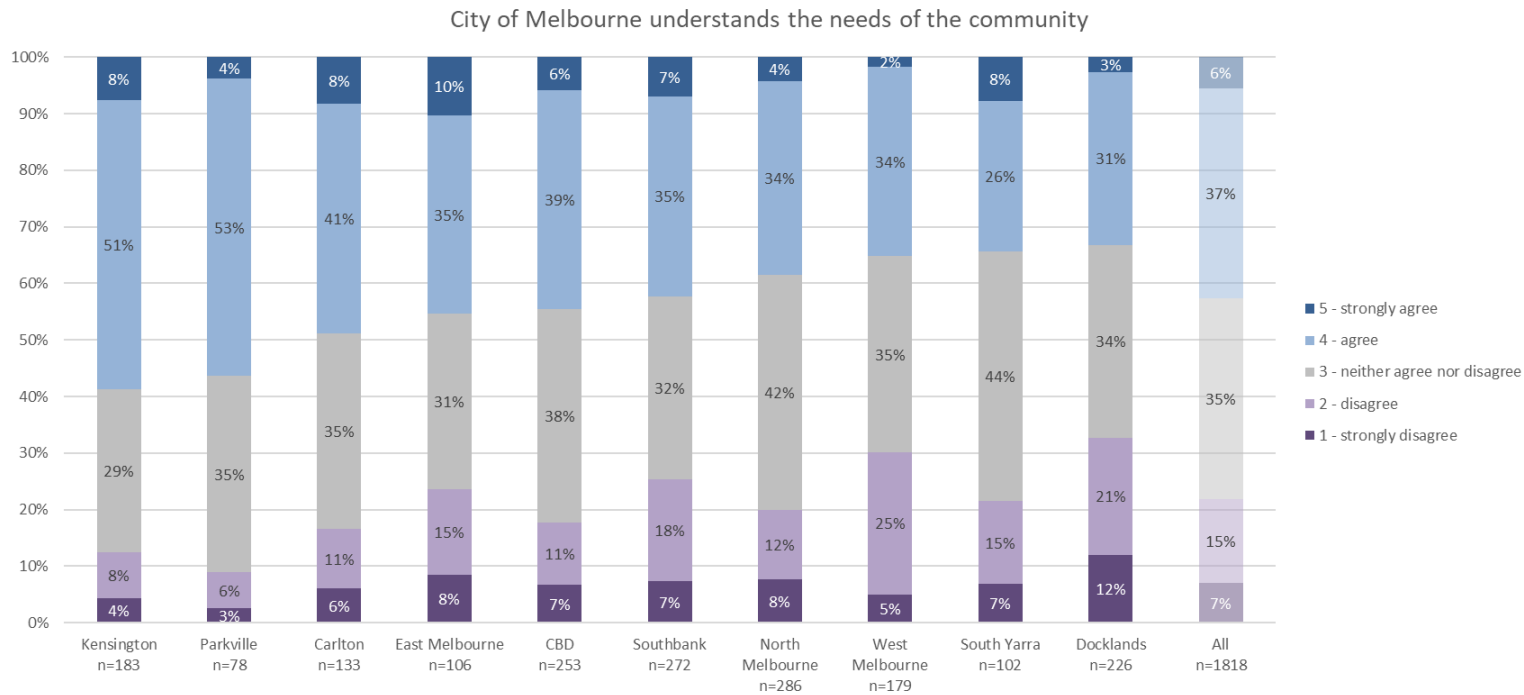


### 3. Key insights and learning so far



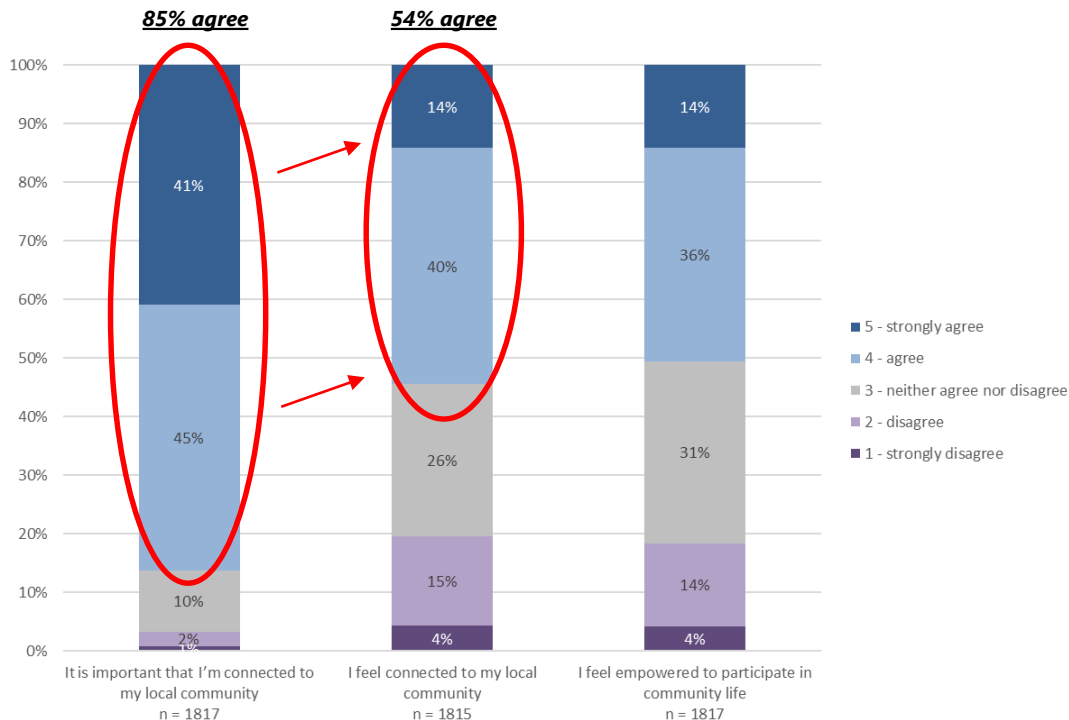
# 43% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'City of Melbourne understands the needs of the community'

However, 35% of respondents indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. There is a significant opportunity to engage those that have provided a neutral response to be more positive. At the same time, if no progress is made on the priorities, we risk having the 35% becoming negative towards the CoM.





# 85% of respondents agree that connection to local community is important however only 54% agree that they feel connected to their local community



These results indicate there is a disconnect between the desire community has to be connected and their actual feelings of connectedness and ability to participate in community life.

A quarter of respondents were neutral about feeling connected which could be influenced by many variables including the lack of ability to make connections during the pandemic.

These findings support two of the common themes that have emerged from this work: communities seeking more opportunities to connect and more spaces that are community focused and inclusive.

These questions will be asked every 12 to 18 months to monitor progress.

### Voice of the community:

*"Community initiatives can bring people together, since community connection is key for resilience. It's important for community to know that council can plan and enable (and not block) successful initiatives to scale..."*

April 2022 | Are there any initiatives that you think could address [your] top three priorities in North Melbourne?



## ***Equity Vs equality***

- Some groups have reported barriers to participation (e.g. public housing residents, young people, older people). Other groups have indicated more satisfaction with the existing infrastructure, services and opportunities. A key consideration is how City of Melbourne balances where to focus its efforts.

## ***A strong foundation to build from***

- 80% of priorities identified by community are aligned to existing Council objectives and work. While there is some activity and effort to support the remaining 20% of priorities, there is opportunity for more coordination and realignment of effort (e.g. supporting Apartment Living, Community Spaces).

## ***City of Melbourne is not visible***

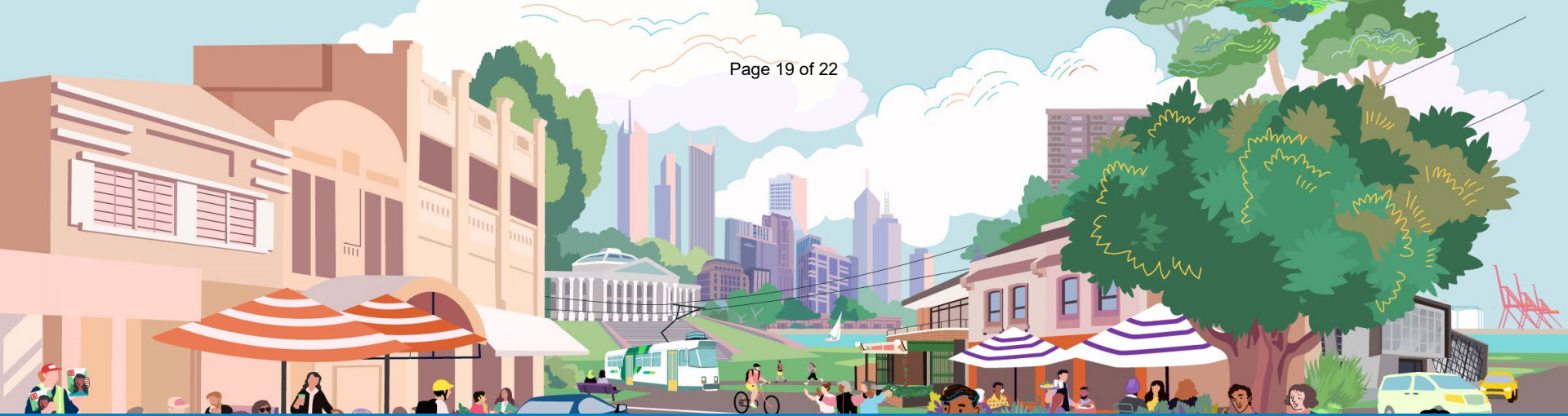
- In some areas, community members commented that City of Melbourne is 'nowhere to be seen', when funding and support is provided by City of Melbourne for several organisations in the area. This provides an opportunity to improve how City of Melbourne promotes the work that is done in partnership with others.

## ***Get the basics right***

- Community was asked 'what is missing in your neighbourhood?', instead of sharing that they want more community infrastructure or investment for large projects, community consistently shared that 'getting the basics right' was what mattered most – waste, public amenity (more park benches, toilets), safety and accessibility.

## ***Communication is critical***

- 43% of residents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'CoM understands our needs', and while 80% of community priorities align with existing work, there was limited awareness of this. Communication of City of Melbourne work through the neighbourhood portals and other channels will be integral to making progress on the neighbourhood priorities.



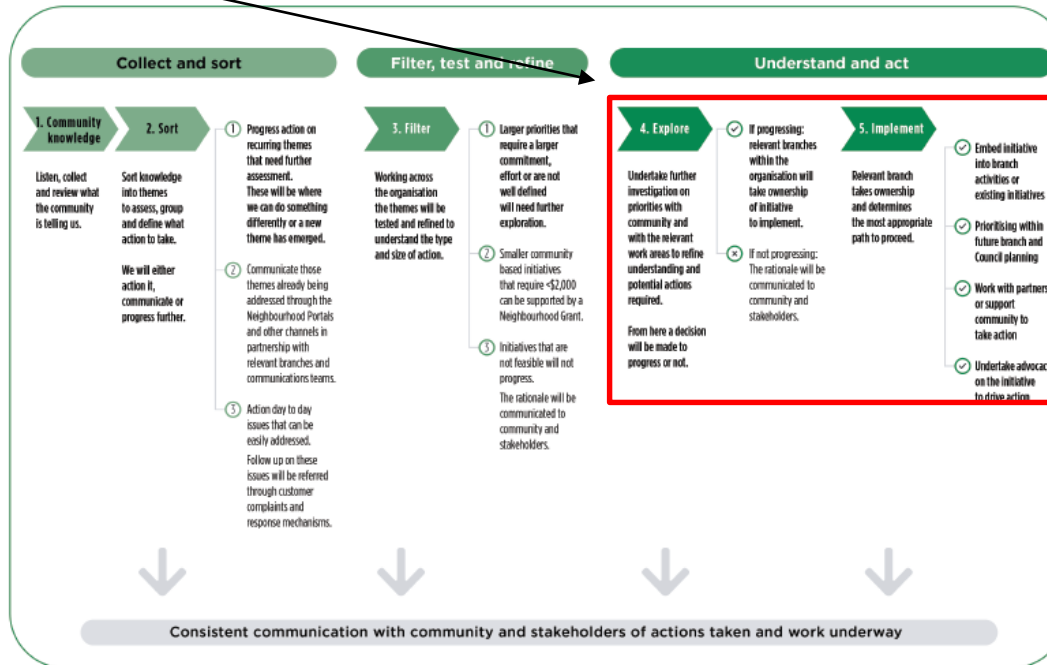
### 3. Next steps



# Moving from the 'Collect and Sort', 'Filter, test and refine' phases of the Neighbourhood Planning Framework into the 'understand and act' phase.

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The Neighbourhood Planning Framework commits the organisation to an ongoing process of 'listening, exploring and realising' priorities with community. The next stage is further exploration to better understand and progress the neighbourhood priorities.



Neighbourhood Planning Framework



# Short and medium term deliverables to be progressed over the next 6 to 18 months

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Focus	Deliverables
<b>Progressing the neighbourhood priorities</b>	<p>This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embedding the neighbourhood model into annual planning and reporting processes ensuring the priorities are reflected in branch plans and a commitment to progress 80% of the priorities across all neighbourhoods</li><li>• Enabling community led initiatives that respond to the neighbourhood priorities and providing support through the Neighborhood Grants program</li><li>• Partnering and advocating for action on the neighbourhood priorities with state government and other stakeholders. This will involve using the neighbourhood data and insights to inform CoM advocacy efforts, to seek grant funding and influence cross-sector partnership forums (e.g. Inner Metro Partnership, M9)</li></ul>
<b>Building community awareness and understanding about the neighbourhood model</b>	<p>This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing a communications campaign and activation plan that will empower community members with actions they can take to shape their neighbourhood. This campaign will be targeted at those with no or low engagement with CoM to increase and diversify community engagement and participation</li><li>• Activating the Neighbourhood Portals with local content including events, news and community stories driven by the Neighbourhood Partners</li><li>• Embedding the neighbourhood model into strategic communications approaches to provide more targeted content that responds to the priorities and issues that matter to each neighbourhood</li></ul>
<b>Tracking and measuring progress</b>	<p>This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishing a research partnership to measure the impact of the neighbourhood model and outcomes achieved for CoM and community</li><li>• Undertaking a check-in survey to track progress, ensure the priorities are still reflective of the neighbourhood and to understand the impact of the neighbourhood model</li><li>• Rolling out a data collection tool to community facing council officers that will collect and feed the community voice into the Knowledge Bank (an internal repository of community insights) to support better understanding and decision making</li></ul>





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