

Bendigo Tramways expansion

Summary of community engagement on updated design

January 2022



Overview

About the project

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.

Bendigo Tramways has been a key part of the fabric of Bendigo for over 130 years and continues to contribute 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 an initial 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. You can find out what we heard by reading the community engagement report on the VicTrack [website](#).

Having received detailed feedback from the community on the concept design, we then further refined the design and presented our updated design for comment. A further online survey was hosted on the VicTrack website from Friday 22 October to Friday 5 November 2021.

The objective of this final stage of engagement was to seek the community's input on some of the key features of the site, particularly the design of the new storage facilities, and how we can minimise impacts during construction.

By ensuring that local community and stakeholder views were 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 Vic Track's website and social media, on signage at Bendigo Tramways, and via a flyer distributed to local properties.

As a result of these methods of engagement we had input from 19 individuals, including local residents and tram enthusiasts, to help inform the design of the upgrade.

What we asked

The purpose of this final stage of consultation was to seek input from the community and other stakeholders on some of the key design features of the site, to help inform the final design.

It focused particularly on the design of the new storage facilities and the 'look and feel' of the expansion, noting the heritage values of the existing site and the amenity of the surrounding area.

Additionally, it asked how we can minimise construction impacts once works on the project get underway.

Who we heard from

Nineteen people responded to the online survey.

- Five identified themselves as living nearby
- Three worked nearby
- Six were tram enthusiasts
- Three were a member of a local community group
- Two identified as other, who were a combination of supportive community members and tram enthusiasts.

What we heard

Overall, the respondents supported the construction of the new building and facilities with few concerns over the need for the expansion.

Similar to our initial consultation, a significant majority of people said that the visual appeal and blending in with existing buildings was most important. Some respondents did not agree with the current use of multiple colours on the storage sheds and the new building. The feedback stated that these colours did not fit with the surrounding area and should be reworked.

Additionally, there were a number of concerns around the vegetation proposed. Many respondents identified the need for additional trees, garden beds and a design for the large open space to the east of the new car park.

Finally, there were concerns that the lack of onsite car parking would force visitors to park in the surrounding street's reducing the parking available for residents.

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

Bendigo Tramways updated design



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|---|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Existing workshop/maintenance facility | 3. Staff parking | 5. Tram history display | 7. Visitor ticketing & cafe |
| 2. New storage | 4. Storage | 6. Vehicle entry & exit | 8. Tram entry & exit |

What we heard

1. When considering the look and feel of the updated design, do you have any further comments or suggestions?

Similar to our initial consultation, almost half of respondents (42 per cent) said that the design of the new buildings and facilities were most important to them. Specifically, that the colours need to blend in with the existing heritage features of the buildings and the surrounding area.

Some respondents felt that the renders provided did not fit the 'look and feel' of the surrounding suburb, particularly stating that the use of multiple colours on the storage sheds and new building did not fit with the area and should be reworked.

Some of the comments people made in particular include:

"No, I am in support of the design"

"It all looks great."

"Need to tone in with existing buildings"

"The design should be in keeping with the character of the existing building and of that era."

"Looks good, maybe more local trees required"

"There is a section for staff parking but is there public parking?"

What we're doing:

VicTrack and Bendigo Tramways are reviewing design elements so they enhance the new development and fit with the amenity of the area.

2. In general, are there any further changes to the updated design you'd like to suggest?

Some feedback expressed the need for onsite parking for the public and not just for staff. Furthermore, noting that during high peak times, such as TAFE days, street parking would be stretched and disrupt the local residents.

Also, respondents were concerned that the new building's footprint was reduced, significantly minimising the ability to store and work on heritage trams, when compared to the initial design presented in June 2021.

Finally, multiple respondents advised that there was no clear design or thought for the open space to the east side of the property, noting that this spot provides a great opportunity for accommodating additional flora and fauna for the public as well as a place to picnic.

Some of the comments people made in particular include:

"No car parking for visitors, as on street parking has always been an issue on TAFE days, with new courts & go hub this will only increase. No allocation for cars towing caravans as grey nomads are users."

"The new second building should be twice the proposed size!"

"The green space does not seem to be resolved There is an opportunity to make the area a better haven for birds and other fauna in the area."

What we're doing:

As design work and investigations progressed it was identified that the new building needed to be slightly scaled back to ensure it can fit within the allowable area for buildings, given the constraints posed by the flood plain.

Because of size constraints within the site, only staff parking can be provided onsite at this time, as per the current arrangement. Because of historic industrial uses and its location in a floodplain, careful consideration will be given to the best use for the open area of land to the south of the site.

We will look at planting appropriate vegetation where possible to improve the appearance of the area for the local community.

3. Is there anything else that we could consider doing to reduce construction impacts?

Similar to the initial stage of consultation, 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 majority would take place during the day, quick mitigation of any impacts on the adjoining properties and installing tree preservation zones.

As the adjoining pedestrian shared user pathway attracts a large number of users, respondents noted the impacts of the construction works need to allow for the continued use of this pathway.

Finally, the additional parking that will be required by the construction workers would significantly impact the surrounding residents and needs to be considered carefully.

Some of the feedback provided in particular included:

“Tree preservation zones, night works to free up traffic during the day “

“Tidy up the creek area but keep the basic design and configuration.”

“The back creek trail is also heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists and will continue to need to be used so little disruption there would be required. My major concern is the amount of extra parking that is going to be required by tradespeople during the construction. Parking on Hargreaves and surrounding streets is always at capacity, especially when Bendigo TAFE is open for students. Construction workers will no doubt be taking residents car parks which is a major concern.”

“Not really, just keep communication with updates etc.”

“I don't believe there will be significant construction impacts.”

What we're doing:

The impacts of construction are yet to be finalised, but every effort will be made to keep disruption to local residents and the shared user pathway to a minimum by reducing noise, dust, traffic changes and keeping works to daylight hours.

There will be options for construction workers to park on site and every effort will be made to avoid the need for workers to park on local streets.

4. Are there any other improvements might we consider as part of this project?

In addition to previous comments, survey respondents strongly identified the need for onsite public car parking to allow easy access for visitors. This would also reduce the impacts on the surrounding streets, as residents have noted that at peak times there is a significant lack of on-street car parking.

Feedback further suggested the need to increase the new building footprint to allow for the housing and restoration of more trams.

Many respondents requested more thought on improving the surrounding area, not just the tramways site but the adjoining shared user pathway. Feedback provided noted that the project focuses on the workshop expansion and not necessarily the open area of land on the site.

Some of the feedback provided in particular included:

“The project only appears to focus on the tram development. It needs to also include the development of parkland in the open space (this could mean anything low maintenance habitat plants to something more formal).”

“Still doesn't seem to be much consideration given to visitor parking on previous or updated plan, which might be due to the lack of land?”

“At a minimum, you should return to the original plan for the new second building. The amount of undercover secure space for trams needs to be much greater”

“More solar”

“More plants and trees”

What we're doing:

As stated previously, as design work and investigations progressed it was identified that the new building needed to be slightly scaled back to ensure the project could be delivered within the proposed timeframe and budget.

Because of size constraints within the site, only staff parking can be provided onsite at this time, as per the current arrangement

Because of historic industrial uses and its location in a floodplain, careful consideration will be given to the best use for the open area of land to the south of the site.

We will look at planting appropriate vegetation where possible to improve the appearance of the area for the local community.

Summary and next steps

Overall, as with the initial survey, there was strong community support for the project and general support for most aspects of the current design. Again, local residents and community stakeholders expressed the need to see the heritage values of the tramways site protected and enhanced as part of the project.

Further work will take place to identify appropriate vegetation that can be planted in the open area to the south of the site to improve its appearance for the local community.

Additionally, as part of our planning process an acoustic and vibration report will be completed. This report will be submitted to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to ensure any future impacts to the community are minimised.

Finally, the community want to be kept engaged and informed as the development progresses and for efforts to be made to manage the impacts through the construction phase.

Following this consultative phase, the updated design will be further refined into a final design. Planning approvals are currently being sought.

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

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