

Urban Forest Strategy Strategic Directions: Inclusion of Community engagement feedback on the Vision and Principles.

Feedback from community consultation has been considered, and amendments have been incorporated in the final Strategic Directions, which finalises Stage 1 of the Urban Forest Strategy 2040.

Overall, the feedback for the draft Strategic Directions was very positive, and no major changes to the document were suggested or made. The most significant changes were to:

- Add an explanation of who ‘we’ means at the start of the principles (‘Collectively with Council, community and industry partners’)
- Add baselines for the four proposed target metrics under a new section called ‘We will track progress’, with the actual targets to be determined and included in Stage 2
- Under the ‘Biodiverse’ principle, refocus from biodiversity corridors to habitat more broadly.

There was strong interest in the strategy, and many ideas were put forward about actions, targets and implementation. While these comments were out of scope for the Strategic Directions (which is higher level), they are being used to inform Stage 2, the Targets, Action, Implementation and Evaluation Plan.

Table 1 below details the changes made to finalise the Strategic Directions. In response to community feedback, the following amendments have been made to the Strategic Documents to improve the content, understanding, community alignment or to address minor omissions. A summary of the recurrent improvement suggestions with response or amendment made are provided in Table 1:

Table 1: Community feedback on Stage 1: Strategic Directions

Feedback relating to the Vision (from Table 4.1 in engagement summary)	Response / Amended Revision
Supportive of draft Vision (13 responses)	Noted. Positive feedback is encouraging.
Requests for more detail, targets, and an explicit commitment (8 responses)	Agreed & Amended. Targets and more detail will be included in Stage 2, the Targets, Action, Implementation and Evaluation Plan. Baseline metrics for proposed targets have been added to the Strategic Directions to make it clearer that specific targets are in development for the final Strategy, which will combine Stage 1 & 2 in a single document.
Some topics seem unclear or missing (8 responses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations engagement and the types of (remnant) ecosystems that are culturally significant (in addition to Flagship fauna and species). • How to achieve the urban biodiversity goal with limited garden spaces and mostly multiuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted. Council will follow its First Nations engagement process as relevant to each project. • Noted. Delivering urban biodiversity is challenging, and a range of actions will be

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<p>areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haven't seen or heard of the vision prior to this. Would like to know how the State Government's intention to assume more planning powers from Councils will affect this and other environmental strategies. Residential areas close to or at the boundaries with industrial sites and/or empty industrial sites are not considered for greening. Testing non-indigenous trees as 'climate ready' requires scientific study. Some private businesses are pushing species for profit over local indigenous trees (which cope with temperature extremes and provide habitat). What is "urban" greening? Urban Greening is not abundant in the City of Port Phillip, it's dominated by footpaths and space for cars. 	<p>included in Stage 2 to build on progress so far (eg. biolinks).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct. This is a new vision for an updated urban forest strategy. Noted. Council will continue to advocate for State Government planning to support better greening outcomes. Noted for Stage 2. Noted. There are many unknowns in how urban trees will cope with future climates and increases in pests and diseases. While some large-scale research has been done on the climate resilience of species (eg. Which Plant Where), in-ground testing is needed. Planting and monitoring diverse species is best practice. Urban Greening (also known as urban forest) is defined in the foreword and glossary. This Strategy aims to increase its abundance.
Feedback and requests for specific locations within municipality (7 responses)	Noted for Stage 2.
<p>Requests to be more ambitious (3 responses)</p> <p>It could be more ambitious. The target for increasing tree canopy is low. 0.6% increase in public green canopy over a decade suggests we need ambition.</p>	Noted. New targets are being developed in Stage 2. A new reference to this work and the baselines for proposed metrics has now been included in Stage 1.
<p>Email submission participants</p> <p>Suggestions to consider references to private land, shady corridors for walkability, water, climate adaptation, social equity, and developing a bold and innovative UFS based on robust research, analysis, and key stakeholder input.</p>	Noted. The draft Strategic Directions addresses these points.
Feedback relating to the Principles (from Table 4.2 in engagement summary)	Response / Amended Revision
<p>Draft Principle 1 – Together (4 responses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify who "we" refers to (is it homeowners and landholders) and clearly explain who we will be working together. Consider adding specific or clear actions. Support emphasis on greening everywhere, including areas such as St Kilda East, Balaclava, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed & Amended. Intent is for "we" to recognise the collective responsibility of Council working together with everyone involved in urban greening, including those who work, live and play in the City. By-line added in principles snapshot to improve clarity. Actions being developed in Stage 2. Agreed. Together principle explicitly acknowledges gaps in greening distribution and

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and Ripponlea that have been neglected in the past.	the aim to achieve greening equity.
<p>Draft Principle 2 – Resilient (10 responses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify which resilient plant species are acceptable and necessary to reduce heat and flood vulnerabilities as local indigenous tree species have proven very resilient and could be considered as a first option for plantings. Consider stating "Improving Liveability" and greening neighbourhoods in all areas beyond the Elwood canal, beachfronts, and iconic streets. Refer to the current uneven distribution of tree cover in Port Phillip. Concerns that a focus on reducing heat and floods may prioritise foreshore suburbs. Support for focus on retention and compliance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted. Species selected for planting are based on the best available knowledge at the time, and the local context. Preferred species lists are not suitable for a long-term strategy as they are likely to change over time as in-ground testing is conducted and new knowledge arises. Agreed and included. "...and improve liveability" included under Resilient principle. Urban heat almost always corresponds with low canopy cover, and areas near the coast may be cooler than areas further inland. Together principle explicitly acknowledges gaps in greening distribution and the aim to achieve greening equity. Noted.
<p>Draft Principle 3 – Biodiverse (3 responses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify what is being prioritised over and incorporate clear actions. Consider including "habitats" or support for local fauna and extend to establishing greater habitat reserves beyond "corridors" (which implies limited land space). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions being developed in Stage 2. Agreed and amended. Principle now reads "...creating habitat", replacing "...establishing wildlife corridors". Supporting text amended to refocus on habitat more broadly.
<p>Draft Principle 4 – Integrated (9 responses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify what "invest" means or how it will be done, and whether it implies spending money now to elicit more money at a later date (ie. sale). Support for various element of principle. Suggestion to review clearways in St Kilda (i.e., Princes Street) to determine if they are still required (post-COVID) and consider roadside plants at the bookends of parking areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted. In this case, 'invest' means spending money, staff time or other Council resources (such as increasing the amount of Council land that is greened), to deliver the stated public good outcomes. Stage 2 will further clarify the level and type of investment. Noted. Noted for Stage 2.
<p>Draft Principle 5 – Quality (2 responses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to extend and include strengthening controls to stop the removal of large trees on private land. Support setting a tree canopy target of at least 40% by 2050 (including parks, streets, and private land) and interim targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted. Noted. Targets and evaluation plan being developed in Stage 2, and new reference to this work and the baselines for proposed metrics included in Stage 1.

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Requests for more detail, a commitment, and to be more ambitious (7 responses)	Noted. More detail will be included in Stage 2.
Feedback and requests for specific locations within municipality (6 responses)	Noted for Stage 2.
Supportive and complimentary of draft Principles and UFS (4 responses)	Noted. Positive feedback is encouraging.
Other feedback (3 responses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest an indigenous view and land management perspective is referenced and emphasised in the Principles. • Asks how the strategy will be informed by locations identified as currently trapping urban heat and whether these locations could be aligned with key implementation initiatives. Also, consider whether directly combatting urban heat should be a Principle to ensure alignment with other strategic work (i.e., Public Health and Wellbeing Plan). • Asks for more indigenous and Australian plant species to be planted, for more green connections to be created to major hubs; and to rewild parks with quolls owls and other animals that balance the ecosystem, and to reduce foxes, cats, and mynas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed. We are engaging with Traditional Owners about how we can work together • Noted. The Resilient principle states that “With the latest mapping technology, new greening can be prioritised where it is most needed to reduce exposure and vulnerability to extreme heat and flood risks and improve liveability.” Stage 2 should further clarify how action will be informed by mapping. • Noted. The Biodiverse principle states that “We prioritise biodiversity, supporting healthy ecosystems and creating habitat”, and explicitly addresses the need for Indigenous plant species to provide habitat for native wildlife.
Email submission participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of mention of inclusion and equity and suggested including a reference to “equitably distributed”. • Other suggestions included incorporating general overarching goals related to biodiversity, community perceptions and satisfaction with the quality of the environment within the municipality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together principle explicitly acknowledges gaps in greening distribution and the aim to close those gaps to achieve greening equity. • Agree. Targets being developed in Stage 2.
Feedback relating to actions or specific ideas (Table 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 in engagement summary)	
Actions or specific location greening suggestions	Noted for Stage 2.
Draft Vision, Principles, tree canopy and implementing the UFS (4 responses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to address urban impacts of climate change by setting targets and prioritise greening across the City: UFS needs to address urban impacts of climate change and neighbourhood amenity for open space. Consider cooling, biodiversity and adopt the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed, most comments covered in Stage 1. • Remaining comments (eg. targets and investment) noted for Stage 2.

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<p>principle of using native species. The PECAN priorities reflecting these future issues to be included in the strategy. The Yalukit Willam nature reserve exemplifies beauty, biodiversity cooling and integrated water urban design which can be adopted in other open spaces. Set a tree canopy target of at least 40% by 2050 (including parks, streets, and private land), and interim targets. Increase investment in greening to reach the tree canopy target, prioritise greening in urban heat island hot spots and area lacking public open space, ensure greening is equitable across the City, protect trees on private land and encourage greening on private land, prioritise greening over other uses of public space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to monitor outcomes through collaboration: Monitor outcomes of UFS through citizen science that combines 'Friends of' groups and EcoCentre, with researchers from urban ecology field. • Generally supportive of the UFS: Background material provides a good basis for the Council's strategy although the Vision statements could align more closely with community feedback (i.e., realistic, and able to monitor progress). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted for Stage 2. • Agreed and amended. Targets and evaluation plan being developed in Stage 2, and new reference to this work and the baselines for proposed metrics included in Stage 1.