



Wattle Glen Public Realm Framework

Community Engagement Report – Project
Understanding Phase

Nillumbik Shire Council

15 October 2021



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Document status

Status Code	Revision	Author	Reviewer		Approved for issue		
			Name	Signature	Name	Signature	Date
S4	0	N. Jones, C. Bärtels	N. Jones		C. Tsalkos		15/10/2021

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Executive summary

Introduction

Two online community consultation sessions were hosted in September 2021 to inform Nillumbik Shire Council's (Council) Wattle Glen Public Realm Framework (PRF) Project. These will inform the Draft Public Realm Framework, which will be put to the community for further consultation in March 2022. A revised Public Realm Framework is anticipated to be released in July 2022.

The PRF Project aims to identify connections between key destinations in need of improved accessibility, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Enhancements to public spaces also aim to better reflect and promote the preferred character of Wattle Glen.

Methodology

A total of 22 members of the community joined the 90-minute workshops held on Saturday 11 September and Thursday 16 September to share their thoughts on four key themes determined for the purposes of the workshop: *Township identity and character*, *Accessibility and transport*, *Environment and heritage*, and *Open spaces*.



Key Community Sentiments

- **Connection with nature** – participants were keen to share what they valued about Wattle Glen: its abundance of outdoor spaces, local flora and fauna, its relaxed, secluded existence. They were proud of the place they live in, and many hoped to better share the valued features of the township with visitors, while also maintaining some seclusion.
- **Safety** – participants also provided valuable insight into areas that required investment, with many feeling unsafe when travelling around local areas. Issues included busy roads, poorly maintained or non-existent walking and cycling paths, insufficient lighting at night, and difficulty accessing destinations.
- **Awareness of local cultural heritage** – feedback also addressed a lack of awareness of the heritage of Wattle Glen among locals and visitors alike. Many said appropriate signage and education could contribute to sharing the area's rich history, preserving it for future generations.
- **Preservation of the natural environment** – a recurring theme throughout the sentiments expressed was the natural environment of Wattle Glen, and the multitude of benefits it brings to residents: participants agreed that vegetation, particularly indigenous, should be protected, maintained, and even increased, and the success of the township measured in the wildlife that thrives in it.
- **Connectivity** – enhancing the character and connectivity of the township, and providing areas for recreation and social engagement, open spaces were found to be invaluable.

The outcomes of the workshops, presented in this report, will assist Council in developing the PRF to improve and enhance the liveability of Wattle Glen.

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1. Purpose of Engagement

To better reflect and promote the preferred character of Wattle Glen through enhancements to public spaces, community views were gathered on accessibility, connectivity, sense of place, inclusivity, community interaction, and public safety.

The workshops also set out to identify connections between key destinations in need of improved accessibility, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

The key community sentiments will inform the Draft Public Realm Framework.

1.1 Workshop structure and attendance

Two online workshops were held in September 2021 to engage with the Wattle Glen community to understand what people value about the area, and to gather their aspirations for the future.

Participants

The workshops were promoted by Council on Participate Nillumbik and throughout the Shire, inviting stakeholders such as property owners and tenants, Wattle Glen Residents Association, local business owners, Wattle Glen Primary School, community and sporting organisations, Country Fire Authority, and relevant State Government authorities.

Held on Saturday 11 September 2021 and Thursday 16 September 2021, the two 90-minute community workshops were attended by 13 and 9 members of the community respectively. Local residents were strongly represented in these groups. Two members of Council's strategic planning team were present and supported by a team of three from GHD (two facilitators and one tech support).

Location

The session took place on the virtual online platform Microsoft Teams. Engagement for the PRF Project had initially set out to host in-person workshops at Wattle Glen Primary School, however restrictions on group gatherings in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic prevented in-person engagement.

Format

The workshops commenced by providing context and background for the PRF Project: its scope and purpose were outlined, as well as the outcomes Council hoped to achieve with the session.

Participants then joined a Breakout Room (7 and 6 participants in the first workshop, 4 and 5 in the second), each with one moderator and one Council officer. Four themes had been set for the purpose of discussion at the workshops:

- Township identity and character
- Accessibility and transport
- Environment and heritage
- Open spaces

These themes were explored through a series of questions, and notes were taken to record answers in each Breakout Room. Following the small group discussions, participants returned to the main workshop room, where final comments were shared. GHD and Council provided an overview of further opportunities for community engagement, next steps, and closed the session.

This report presents a summary of the discussions that took place in the workshops. The complete list of themes, guide questions and community feedback can be found at the end of the report (see Attachment 1).

2. Key sentiments

2.1 Township identity and character

“A nature hub for locals”

“A lot of people don’t know where Wattle Glen is – do we want it too well known?”

“The best of both worlds with the convenience of major activity centres nearby”



Invitingly secluded

Wattle Glen is largely perceived by its community as ‘laid back’, ‘relaxed’, ‘secretive and hidden’. While the anonymity of the township is valued by most, some felt Wattle Glen has a weak definition of place. Others point out they would also like to ‘give people a reason to visit’. As such, participants stressed they would like Wattle Glen to largely remain fundamentally unchanged and protected, particularly from development.

Importantly, the discussion explored whether participants perceived Wattle Glen to be part of, or separate from, Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge. Most participants said it felt separate, and that it offers the ‘best of both worlds’: basic needs are met within Wattle Glen while the proximity to Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge is convenient to seek out additional services.

Participants explained that while they enjoyed that Wattle Glen is largely hidden, they would welcome some greater acknowledgement of its existence, as geographical features and a lack of signage create poor visibility and awareness of Wattle Glen, and even visitors often drive past unaware of its existence. Signage could be installed, though this should be sensitive and match the ‘tucked away’ character of the township.

Participants stated that the urban break between Wattle Glen and Diamond Creek should be maintained, with surrounding paddocks and the electricity easement contributing significantly to this.

These insights all point to participants wanting to intrinsically retain the secluded sense of place, while sensitively raising awareness of the township.

Sense of community

Opinions were divided on the sense of community within the township, with some participants noting it is lacking and should become more inviting, particularly for young families.

It was felt it needed something to act as a community centre, with a gateway to the new trail and township which would make it more friendly. Pepper’s Paddock, considered to be the ‘heart of the community’ along with the General Store (which, one participant noted, could have a better interface with Pepper’s Paddock), does this to some extent but more is needed.

Participants believed events and festivals would provide opportunities to gather and celebrate the community and one participant suggested promoting local artists’ works in the natural spaces, while another suggested building a community garden underneath the transmission line. It was noted that the local school has also applied for a grant to build a community garden.

Connection with nature

The strong character, and key feature for many who live in Wattle Glen, is its natural environment and abundance thereof. Local outdoor spaces provide key areas to connect with friends and family and participate in recreational activities.

There is a strong desire within the community to live, work and play connected to the outdoors. Notably, a significant number of concerns raised in the discussions on the theme of township identity and character revolved around Wattle Glen’s natural features.

It became evident that the proximity to and abundance of natural spaces in Wattle Glen were a key reason participants value their 'nature hub'. Suggestions for the enhancement of its character largely revolved around improving access to natural spaces, maintaining these, and protecting their existence.

One participant suggested a network of trails that enable pedestrians to connect with Wattle Glen's abundant natural spaces and appreciate their beauty.

Participants were also acutely aware of the risk climate change poses to their community, highlighting that clean water should be prioritised, and 'exemplary environmental protection and good design' should be demonstrated.

Participants were also aware that other people perceive Wattle Glen as a beautiful place, and that its 'strong natural habitat' is a 'part of the character' – the community is 'proud' and should 'promote' its environment.



2.2 Accessibility and transport

“Not a friendly town for foot traffic, too dangerous, so people defer to cars”

“Pedestrian crossings are inconveniently placed”

“Need for pedestrian crossings to improve safety and encourage active transport at all times of the day”



Connected network

Some participants said that the sense of a connected network was lacking in Wattle Glen. It is currently seen as very segmented with little cohesion and the main roads dividing the township.

Participants suggested a network connecting key destinations within Wattle Glen, such as the Reserve and the soccer club. It was also noted that the poor connection between the neighbourhoods of Sunnyside and Warrington Crescents seem to make them ‘separate mini communities’, and that a more connected and integrated walking network would encourage people to walk around Wattle Glen.

Kamarooka Drive was seen as being more connected to Diamond Creek than Wattle Glen due to issues with the connectivity of the local footpath network. The primary school reported missing out on student enrolments because of this.

The lack of conveniently placed pedestrian crossings was also noted, as well as the lack of signage around Wattle Glen, which complicates the journey for those less familiar with the area.

Road and rail access

Participants would like to look at ways to slow traffic down, which they felt had become much busier going into the pandemic. The main roads, Main Hurstbridge Road and Kangaroo Ground-Wattle Glen Road, were reported to have become an informal link to the Western Ring Road and East Link, using it as a commuter run. These busy roads don't offer safe crossing points.

Participants say there needs to be a safer route from the Wattle Glen train station to Mannish Road and bus stations. There is also currently no link between the bike path and the train station. Some pointed to the isolation of the train station and the need for a pedestrian rail crossing. Participants also discussed the paths connecting the Diamond Creek Trail and Pepper's Paddock, noting their inadequacy.

To increase connectivity across Heidelberg-Kinglake Road, various suggestions were made: some participants pointed to the roundabout, others closer to the intersection with Mannish Road and Wilsons Road (as part of broader improvement to increase the safety of traffic entering the main road from Mannish Road and Wilsons Road).

Cycling, Pedestrian and Horse-Riding Access

Workshop participants were keen promoters of the need for better ‘active’ transport infrastructure, advocating for the upgrade of paths for pedestrians, cyclists and horseback riders, and supporting signage. Most noted that destinations outside of Wattle Glen were usually accessed by car, while walking and cycling to destinations was preferred within the township. As such, the large number of people active in the outdoors is reliant on the township's supporting infrastructure.

However, Wattle Glen was not currently seen as friendly to pedestrians, cyclists or horseback riders. The local path network was perceived to be separating the community based on either side of the local school, and there was a strong desire for new and safe crossings (for mixed use).

There was also comment on several areas which currently have no footpaths, making it difficult to walk near the road and which get very muddy following wet weather. There was support voiced for the construction of pedestrian bridge over Watery Gully Creek that would connect the north and south sides of Pepper's Paddock. Comment was made that construction of such a bridge would need to be sensitive in design and strongly consider environmental impacts of construction.

Participants also support infrastructure upgrades for recreational purposes, with some proposing a network of paths to explore the township's natural spaces more easily. Suggestions included improving facilities and infrastructure at the Wattle Glen end point of the Diamond Creek. For example, by improving parking facilities and linkages for pedestrians and cyclists to other locations. One participant also referred to the difficulty of accessing the Diamond Creek Trail from the Green Wedge Trail on horseback.

Safety

Safety proved to be a key concern for participants. With paths 'very close to fast moving traffic' or non-existent, some noted they did not feel safe going for a walk with a pram, others were not comfortable letting their children walk to the primary school or would like to have more viable walking access to the nearest high school.

Foot and bike paths are not always clear or visible, with poor lighting at night contributing to hesitancy to walk or cycle. One participant stressed that they sometimes have to 'run the gauntlet' when walking or cycling. Kamarooka Drive, for example, is poorly lit, and the lack of footpath means pedestrians walk on the road or in the mud.



Figure 2 **Wattle Glen Roundabout**

2.3 Environment and heritage

“Live local, plant local – incorporate this more in public spaces”

“Strengthening the fabric of the community by getting young members involved in outdoor, nature-based activities that focus on biodiversity”

“[We would like to see] Not lots of crowds, but something that brings the community together”



Participants showed strong support for the enhancement and protection of Wattle Glen’s natural and cultural heritage, including indigenous heritage.

Preservation of the natural environment

Retaining the Green Wedge was seen as critical, not just for Wattle Glen and Nillumbik Shire, but for its contribution to the sustainability of all of Melbourne.

The biodiversity and natural spaces around the township were seen as invaluable to the community, with many underlining again the need for infrastructure upgrades and signage that would enable and facilitate meaningful and safe experiences in the outdoors.

‘Live local, plant local’ was a sentiment reflected by many participants, who supported the integration of indigenous vegetation into trails. It was recommended that Council acquire 36 Mannish Road (32 hectares of land currently for sale) to provide trails, protect the character of the township and the local environment.

Weed management, acknowledged to be a key factor in retaining indigenous flora, was perceived to be poor and insufficiently resourced. Some voluntary groups had been undertaking this, such as the Friends of Pepper’s Paddock, but there has been less opportunity for this since the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The local waterways were regarded as being in a poor state through neglect and little maintenance. Prioritising clean water and management of storm water was seen as a key priority.

Awareness of local cultural heritage

A lack of awareness of Wattle Glen’s history was pointed to by some participants, and the need for residents and visitors alike to be given the opportunity to learn and better understand it. Here, too, signage proved to be a contributing barrier. Heritage signage, as well as signage pointing to recreational nature-based areas, were thought to provide an opportunity to raise awareness and share the rich heritage of the area.

Participants pointed to the area's gold-digging past, its gullies, mixed farming history, 99-year-old school, mud brick buildings, and more destinations that could be showcased.



Figure 3 **Wattle Glen General Store**

Participants also hope to see more educational activities held in the outdoors, particularly allowing children to learn about their local environment. Participants expressed a desire to reinstate old picnic ground facilities and provide upgrades to Wilson Road, which again demonstrates participants are eager to benefit from easy access to its abundant natural environment while ensuring it is maintained and preserved.

2.4 Open spaces

“Limiting development to retain open spaces, shared trails”

“Educational spaces for young people to grow and connect”

“Keeping the rural hamlet feel with vistas of farmland. Open space and shared trails are the key to enjoying our natural environment.”



Conservation

The question in relation to open spaces in Wattle Glen was met with resounding support for their preservation and enhancement. Participants were strongly against development that puts at risk the size and health of existing natural areas, and advocated for even more green spaces to ‘pause and enjoy’ (noting the possibility of Council purchasing the land for sale at 36 Mannish Road). They are seen as a place for young people to grow and connect, and could provide opportunity to share local history and heritage.

Again, participants note poor connectivity between some key (e.g. in vicinity of Kamarooka Drive for pedestrians) as well as as well as poor signage (on Valley Road, for example). This further underlined safety concerns previously voiced, with participants stating they would like to access and spend time in these natural spaces without having to be concerned about their safety.

Participants also said they would like Council to measure the success of its natural areas by the wildlife that thrives in it, and suggested promoting these areas as part of the local ecotourism strategy.

Recreation options

Wattle Glen is rich in potential destinations that could benefit from upgrades – examples included Pepper’s Paddock (more interactive play equipment), disused roads to become walking trails, and the wetlands. The new wetlands area is a great place to travel to and sit, and while Watery Gully Creek is also nice, it doesn’t go far enough.

Seeking ‘more and greener’ opportunities for outdoor recreation, participants underlined the central and beneficial role it plays in the lives of the local community.

One participant described Pepper’s Paddock as the ‘worst park’, stating that the park should be revitalised. Notably, dominant structures should be avoided, and any upgrades and improvements should be sensitive and not intrude on the charm and character of the place.

The local tennis club was seen as a good feature. More facilities for older children were suggested such as a skate park (the closest one is located in Diamond Creek which children cannot go to on their own) and the scout hall could be more utilised. Issues regarding the leases of the tennis club and scout hall were believed to be preventing much enhancement of these facilities.

Safe, shared off-road trail connections would also promote and support healthy and active lifestyles.



3. Conclusion

The Wattle Glen community cares deeply about its cultural and natural environment and showed a strong sense of pride in the area they live in, a number of whom had lived in the area for many years.

Insight was provided into aspects valued, and ideas for their enhancement and improvement. Feedback was constructive, creative and passionate.

The Wattle Glen community feels a strong sense of connection with its natural environment. Participants value its abundance of outdoor spaces, the township's secluded existence, and hope to protect and enhance the environments and spaces that create the unique character and atmosphere in Wattle Glen.

The natural spaces the township offers its residents and visitors provide areas for recreation, relaxation, and connectivity with friends, family and the broader community.

Preservation of nature was a key message throughout all themes: participants want to see the success of the township measured in the wildlife that thrives in it, and the health and abundance of the flora, particularly indigenous.

Key improvements were noted in relation to access and transport infrastructure: the need for more and better walking and cycling trails is clear, with the community focused on active lifestyles in which nature plays a central role.

With a self-confessed lack of knowledge around the local cultural heritage, participants also expressed they would like to see a more educated community that is better able to share its history with future generations.

Found to be invaluable, participants advocated for the upgrade, improvement and enhancement of open spaces in Wattle Glen, with the aim of creating a strong and connected community.

Attachment 1

**Workshop questions
and combined breakout room notes**

Theme 1: Township and character

What type of place do you imagine Wattle Glen being in the future?

- Natural, indigenous environment, biodiversity potential, truly amazing
- Character stronger
- Entrance to township has lots of potential to identify indigenous environment
- Climate change – prioritise clean water, storm water
- Watery gully, local environment is degraded, water way in bad state, really needs priority, has been neglected. Little maintenance
- Reserve relates to local trails, primary connection from major points. Lots of weeds
- Demonstrate exemplary environmental protection, good design
- Roundabout to Reynolds Rd, and Wilsons Rd, lots of opportunity to integrate strategic planting and green infrastructure
- Level Crossing Removal Project, train line duplication, Govt doing major planting exercise. Phips crescent, Wilson Rd, need to tap into that
- Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge poor cousin, no pathway from bridge to station, no pathway from school to Reynolds Rd
- No lighting focus, quite difficult walking from train station. Trip hazards
- A place to breathe with locals and visitors appreciating it for what it is
- A nature hub for locals that provides natural spaces
- An environment at risk – we value the natural environment and its wildlife
- A nature hub for locals and visitors, valued by all
- A place to breathe and connect with nature
- An environment at risk - great need to protect the biodiversity of WG
- Hope to keep it the way it is now
- Safer, more interactive while keeping it rural
- Even greener! More opportunities for outdoor recreation
- Missing a 'showpiece'
- More inviting to young families, roads hard to cross, unsafe, footpaths not enough, affordability
- Wilson Rd, came from Greenvale, too dangerous, couldn't park car near land, road too narrow
- Diamond Creek trail, no place to park car so can use trail
- Identify and character continues, rural nature, trees, safe roads but not too urbanized, keeps us cool
- Green Wedge shire contributes to all of Melbourne
- Habitat and wildlife corridors, need to keep it safe
- Look at ways to slow traffic down. Much busier going into pandemic. Informal link to western ring rd and east link. Using it as commuter run
- Strong natural habitat as part of character, other people think beautiful place, strong identifying feature, be proud and promote
- Very segmented at the moment, not a lot of cohesion. Main roads divide the township, not safe crossings, particularly around station. Peppers paddock does that a little bit



How would you be describing to someone the way it looks, feels, and interacts as a community?

- Love the area, gum trees would like to keep that feel
- Rural feel, not over developed
- Don't want to develop buildings
- Pressure for pedestrian crossing, beautify carpark area
- See it as rural hamlet (not a town). Town has infrastructure
- Rural, peaceful is what is so attractive
- Creek side trail, connectivity
- People don't know Wattle Glen is start of green wedge trail, really important to link that to Diamond Creek trail
- Improve signage, bringing together the big infrastructure projects
- A lot of people don't know where it is. Do we want it too well known?
- Can't tell where you are at end of trail
- Visibility from station an issue
- More signage at roundabout
- Main Hurstbridge Rd, up from Station. Old Hurstbridge Rd has boulders. Trees got taken out. Electricity sub-station an eye sore, could have been overflow carpark
- Negotiating main road
- We value that it's laid back, secretive and hidden - anonymous
- Lacks vibe and sense of community – drive-by only
- Convenient – best of both worlds (no signage to compromise the secrecy), a sanctuary between major activity centres
- Cyclical and work- and/or age-dependent: Wattle Glen can seem like your whole world before it dissipates
- Laid back, secretive, hidden and anonymous
- Lacking vibe and a sense of community - a drive-by destination only
- Convenient - the best of both worlds with the convenience of MACs nearby
- Centre of Nillumbik
- A popular destination for all kinds of visitors
- Artworks in landscape
- More pedestrians, connections in path, explore on foot, but not concreting but trails
- Protect for people who live there but inevitable will get more people. Won't stay as refuge
- Creating more spaces for habitat and wildlife so retain that sense of refuge
- Families having connection to nature
- Bike path well used
- Hasn't got same sense of connection, need something to act as community centre, and gateway to new trail and township, 80 acres. Would make it more friendly
- Give people a reason to visit

Theme 2: Accessibility and transport

How do you imagine you would be moving in/around Wattle Glen in the future?

- Council could buy strategic pieces of land
- Good connections
- Kids yabbing and riding bikes
- Sculpture on roundabout
- Walking within WG, driving to major activity centres/destinations outside of WG
- Active transport within, driving around Wattle Glen
- Separate shared trails – safer paths for pedestrians and cyclists
- After rain can't walk to private school because too much mud, up to Valley Rd. More car reliant in that weather
- More walkable and cyclable
- Would like kids to walk to high school, but too busy roads
- Remove train crossing, upgrade and pathways from train to creek



Are there any barriers to ease of access within and around Wattle Glen?

- Issues with lighting, Camarooka Drive, not footpaths so walking on road or mud
- Link up to people
- Risk people could get hurt
- Elis cottage, should be promoting
- Public acquisition of land, Clark Ave, could contribute to community
- Need serious investment
- Insufficient footpaths to improve ease of access – running the gauntlet at times
- Need for pedestrian crossings to improve safety and encourage active transport at all times of the day
- Feeling unsafe walking with a pram
- Quality
- The number and quality of footpaths in WG - pedestrians don't feel safe
- Roads connecting WG to other destinations are busy and present a challenge for locals
- Lack of signage around WG
- Dangerous connections/paths/trails/roads
- Unclear foot /cycle paths
- Improve/install lighting to create safer footpaths
- Not friendly town for foot traffic, too dangerous, so people to defer to cars
- No pathway between bike path and train station
- Not comfortable to let kids go on bike path on their own
- People running between train and bus
- Not a strong enough punctuation
- Have to drive if want to do a walk with children e.g. Smiths Gully
- Strong support for pedestrian access to Peppers Paddock from the north – would involve the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Watery Gully Creek which would need to be sensitive in design and consider environmental impacts

Are there any key connections like roads, pathways, public transport etc. that need to be retained or improved?

- Feeling unsafe at night due to poor lighting
- Lowering speed limits through WG
- Pedestrian infrastructure, walking trail, crossings (esp schools) (e.g., to Temple Ridge)
- Roundabout or slower traffic to enable residents to join traffic when exiting WG
- Need for improvement of walking paths, roundabouts, lighting
- End of Diamond Creek trail – accessible shared path
- Improved access between key destinations within WG
- Slowing down traffic
- Avoid dangerous intersection – anxiety on certain roads
- Crossings inconveniently placed
- Community garden underneath transmission line. School as put in for a grant to have community garden at school
- Reserve, soccer club, trail, all linked
- Maybe a second crossing
- Safer from train station to Mannes Rd
- Connect bike path with township

Theme 3: Environment and heritage

What do you imagine the role the environment and sustainability will play in the Wattle Glen of the future?

- Indigenous environment and biodiversity fundamental – culture and flora
- Enhance local history, Elis cottage, fruit growing, information signage place strategically
- Top of Diamond Creek trail, combining parking with sporting club
- Reinstating old picnic ground facilities
- Top end of Wilson Rd, only have to walk a short way
- Link indigenous vegetation, integrate in trails
- Creating nature-friendly connections (e.g., walking paths) that don't put at risk the health of the environment and promote/support active transport (safe, shared, off-road trail connections for all)
- Live local, plant local – incorporate this more in public spaces
- Maintaining and managing invasive species
- Strengthening the fabric of the community by getting young members of the community involved in outdoor activities, nature-based activities, focus on biodiversity
- Connecting through walking
- Increasing bird and frog life
- More space for nature experiences rather than structured experiences. 80 acres would connect with that



How would you like to be describing the heritage of Wattle Glen in the future?

- Main entrances integrated
- Wattle Glen event, wattle festival to celebrate
- #wattle up, wattle glen, Jane Goodall Institute
- Not lots of crowds, but something that brings community together
- See more wattles. Used to have that

- Rich nature-based and biodiverse heritage
- More heritage signage within the township, picnic areas
- More information on WG's history to share with locals and visitors
- Raise awareness through signage
- Signs of gold digging
- Some heritage signage that show history
- Areas have heritage value

Are there any important heritage and environment functions and values you'd like to retain or reinforce?

- Patton Hill, connection to reserve in Hurstbridge and Wattle Glen, walking trail
- Wilson Rd plans?
- Focus on making Wilson Rd safe, traffic too fast, issues with people coming back from station at night
- Issue using Wilson Rd as short cut. Need footpath, only on road at the moment.
- Footpath stops at old age home
- Dumped cars still there
- Gullies, mixed farming, keeping of grazing animals orchard – retaining and sharing this heritage with residents and visitors
- Lack of awareness around local heritage
- Gullies, orchards, mixed farming - retaining and sharing this heritage with residents and visitors
- Retaining indigenous species to preserve the local character
- Creating a network of paths that connects key points/areas within WG, and enables the community to connect with the environment
- School turns 100 next year – Oct 6th
- Environment for wildlife, support species
- Weed management to retain indigenous flora
- Been huge amount of clearing, weed management poor, not enough resource commitment. Watsonia everywhere, bone seed
- Friends of Peppers Paddock – one of few community activities
- Pandemic impacting maintenance

Theme 4: Open spaces

What do you imagine the role open spaces will play in the Wattle Glen of the future?

- Safe connectivity
- Not concerned re safety
- Very important for visitors, could be part of eco-tourism that Council is trying to promote
- Recreation
- Limiting development to retain open spaces, shared trails
- Places for children to learn and experience nature/local heritage
- Infrastructure blending into nature (e.g. bridges going over, rather than destroying nature)
- Yarding for horse riders near the general store to be able to stop and safely enjoy the public open space and environment
- Carpark would be much better suited to be closer to Wilson Rd, as long as there is safety and development to Wilson Rd



- More places to pause and enjoy - public seating, picnic tables
- Places for children to learn and experience the natural and cultural heritage
- Infrastructure that blends into nature
- Why are more car parks needed, if there are already car parks at train station?
- Connecting with nature
- Teaching and sharing WG's historic past
- Educational place for young people to grow/connect
- Use Peppers Paddock when children younger
- New wet lands area is great place to travel to and sit
- Watery gully creek also nice, but doesn't go far
- Would be good to walk into 80 acres area
- Pathway through Smith's Gully more connected to Wattle Glen
- Clear signage that went from Valley Rd.
- Main roads are a natural barrier, but good if could join the two key open space/trails area
- Camarooka Drive more connected to Diamond Creek, could this be connected more to Wattle Glen. Miss out on student enrolments because of this. - looks different, more built up, but other side more trees, acreage

Are there any important open space functions and values you'd like to retain or reinforce?

- Lovely gum trees
- Peppers paddock, lots of parties
- Can't access the north side very well
- Old Hurstbridge Rd not a road, just a walking track, so don't want parked cars. Just boulders at the moment. Needs upgrading
- Like to see walking trail rather than run down road
- Swamp is natural area, could be very nice
- Measuring the success of our open spaces by the wildlife that thrives (e.g., presence of frogs)
- Enhancing and improving accessibility to ensure they are easier to get to and visitors are made aware of these spaces (e.g., through signs) – they seem to be hidden away
- Reinforcing/creating more public seating & picnic tables
- Repurposing disused roads as footpaths/walking trails
- Footpath to Valley Road, if not further
- Improving accessibility and awareness of open spaces (e.g. through signage)
- Repurposing disused roads as footpaths/walking trails
- Creating more public seating & picnic tables
- Peppers Paddock – upgrade! More beautiful and interactive, better play equipment
- Great wetlands
- PP is the heart of Wattle Glen – key to maintaining the atmosphere and character of WG
- Less plastic, more natural building products/equipment
- Keeping it subtle, not overdone
- Showcase mudbrick buildings in the area
- Appreciating local art in the Shire
- Tennis club a good feature
- Children would like a skate park, because can't go to Diamond Creek on their own
- Tram park, lots of people going there
- Peppers Paddock hasn't been upgraded

- Scout hall under utilized
- Way department of Sustainability manage the scout hall, tennis club, issues re leases etc.

Additional feedback provided individually by certain participants:

- Car parking at the Wattle Glen end of the Diamond Creek Trail is insufficient and it becomes a jumble of cars parked everywhere. The participant was indicating the area becomes congested in terms of people being able to move through and use the public spaces there. (NB: This situation may decrease in magnitude soon when the trail is extended to Hurstbridge and it becomes the new end point of the trail)
- There is nothing at the WG end of the Diamond Creek Trail that WG shop and park are nearby
- Peppers Paddock and the general store are the “heart” of Wattle Glen and should be a focus point for the project
- Pepper's Paddock has a lot of potential. The area at the back (north side) of the park is not utilised and more could be made of this space for the community
- The public toilets in Peppers Paddock need to be better maintained
- The school is hidden away from the rest of the township – the participant appeared to be indicating its presence and location in the township should be more pronounced
- It would be potentially good to have some clearer indication for traffic moving along Heidelberg-Kinglake Rd that they are travelling through Wattle Glen and that this indication reflect WG's preferred character. However, there is also a nice aspect of WG not being clearly known and being somewhat of a secret. I took from the participant's comments that any proposal for H-K Rd, or other key entrance points, to better indicate the presence and preferred character of WG needs to be subtle.
- “The neighbourhoods of Sunnyside Cres and Warrington seem to be like separate mini communities because they are poorly connected. I would like to propose that the council creates a pedestrian walkway between Sunnyside and Warrington using the west side of the primary school. Perhaps the council could do this via easement agreement or negotiate to purchase that strip of land from the school. As it is, it is an unofficial path that people on the Sunnyside Cres side often use to go to the Station. Also when people go for walks they tend to go where they can do circuits. If there was a new proper walkway put in there, people on both sides would be able to 'go around the block' so to speak going back and forth between Sunnyside and Warrington.”
- There is no clear pedestrian connection between Warrington Crescent and Sunnyside Crescent, as the school and residential properties are located between these two streets. This lack of a link has the following impacts:
 - People either do a walking loop (for leisure) south of the school or one north of the school depending on where they live, which restricts community interaction and choice of walks
 - The lack of link also significantly prevents a direct pedestrian line from residences south of the school to Peppers Paddock and the train station
- There is the opportunity to walk an informal track that exists within the western edge of the school, but not when the school is in operation
- There is also the opportunity to take steps at the west end of Sunnyside and travel north along Main-Hurstbridge to the train station and Peppers Paddock, but:
 - The steps are very steep
 - The pedestrian environment along M-H Rd is very poor. The path is very close to fast moving traffic and there is no shade from the elements (see the street view at the end of this email)
 - For many, that route is not direct – as you have to head the wrong way before being able to head the correct way
- There is a link around the east side of the school on Reynolds Road, but this path is not very direct for many residents
- The participant recommends a formal public link be created where the informal link currently exists (i.e. within the western edge of the school).

Teams chat comments:

- Very difficult for horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists trying to get from the Green Wedge Trail to the Diamond Creek Trail
- Awkward for kids walking to school as well
- Difficult crossing main road to station and to Wilson Road for the walking trail.
- Apologies I have enormous difficulties with Teams and I've not been able to be seen or heard. I've now lost everything except chats. So to pop my 2 cents worth in: I can understand fighting developers but sadly that is pricing families out of the area. Perhaps there can be some compromise. Secondly there is a need for improvements to safety around the school - speed reduction measures on Reynolds Rd and a footpath from the crossing up Warrington to the school. Thanks, the participant
- Where would the car parks go? Why are more car parks needed, if there are already car parks at train station?
- Carpark would be much better suited to be closer to Wilson Rd, as long as there is safety and development to Wilson Rd
- Thanks to the team for the opportunity to contribute today.
- Thank you for this opportunity to be a part of these developments for our community
- With the busy roads, very dangerous for pedestrians and horse riders, so safe, off-road trails critical
- Orchards, mixed farming and keeping of grazing animals - the latter still important today. Importance of safe, shared, off-road trail connections for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. All major road crossings must be for mixed use
- Keeping the rural hamlet feel with vistas of farmland. Open space and shared trails are the key to enjoying our natural environment.
- More places to pause and enjoy - public seating, picnic tables. Yarding for horse riders near the general store to be able to stop and safely enjoy the public open space and environment.
- became much busier at the roundabout when people started using this route as an informal Western Ring road/Eastlink connection
- Thanks guys, very much appreciate this opportunity
- Thank you. :-)
- Open spaces that provide places for people and habitat – yes
- Is it possible to slow the KG/WG road to 40kph past Peppers Paddock? General Store?
- Is Council buying that land a possibility?
- Another opportunity for connection could be a community garden in the area under the transmission lines between WG and DC
- I'm the (new) crossing supervisor, so I spend a lot of time observing the traffic and the speed it approaches and exits the roundabout, so reducing the speed of that part of the road to 40 would be useful.
- Last time lockdown restrictions ended, PP was VERY popular with large family groups meeting up for picnics.
- The Scout Hall is definitely under utilised. I don't know what goes on at the Sports ground... it seems very disconnected from the rest of WG.



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