

# What do you think?

## RESIDENT FEEDBACK

The Methodist Mission canvassed a number of the people we work with for their opinions on the draft strategy. We have encouraged those people to put in submissions of their own and to speak to those submissions.

The feedback from those people (six young people aged 14-19, three young parents, and three older people 55-70, all resident in South Dunedin) can be described as a “wish list” (in their own words):

### Young People Want

1. Somewhere safe to for under 18s to hang out, with couches, music, video games, table tennis, pool games, computers and internet access; youth art on the walls, dance classes and with a youth worker on site after 3pm.

### Young Parents Want

2. Activities and mothers’ groups for young mums.
3. Child-friendly café in South Dunedin with pram access – there isn’t any!
4. A mall that is appealing, there are too many service providers in the South Dunedin Mall and no thoroughfare, and no parking.
5. Relocation of the toilets randomly stuck between the banks on the courtyard: they are not appealing to use and are not child friendly, and it is a waste of a possible green area.

### Older Residents Want

6. Somewhere for residents to share skills, crafts and ideas; a drop-in centre with activities for older people, running on different days.
7. Flower pots hanging in the main street – beautify the area.
8. A grassy lunch area in the main street, somewhere to meet and be social

***The Mission notes that the WesleyVillage facility, with services provided by the Mission and other agencies, and as used by volunteer groups, is intended to meet requests 1, 2, and 6.***

## METHODIST MISSION FEEDBACK

1. The Mission notes that feedback from residents largely relates to two elements: the opportunity to connect, to experience a socially connecting environment; and to have somewhere safe and warm to do this. Given the social dislocation evident in South Dunedin, this is not a surprise, and the **Mission is pleased to have further evidence of the appropriateness and need of the WesleyVillage development.**
2. Recalling the ODT’s article of September 2009 headlined “*Team to Tackle Revamping South Dunedin*” that reported GM Styles saying the underlying idea of the study was to “*gather information to discover how improvements could be made to the urban environment of South Dunedin*” and that synergies with other Council projects in the area would be sought (including a specific reference to the South Dunedin Library) the Mission is concerned to see that the end result addresses a very limited range of activity and geography.

We understand that some believe the issues relating to the industrial corridor on Hillside Road, South Dunedin’s high density low income housing, and the future use of Carisbrook are more easily dealt with separately, especially given that these are issues to be debated in public. However, acting as if these issues are independent of one another runs a significant risk of piecemeal change lacking integration and thereby worsening conditions. **Council is encouraged to reintegrate its discussions on these issues so that an holistic set of recommendations can be reached.**

3. The Mission is concerned that in regards the retail strip there is an unrealistic view on the part of some that South Dunedin can become a destination shopping strip a la Petone in the Hutt (first bullet point page

10). We point out that Dunedin already has a destination shopping area (Port Chalmers), and we note that Petone benefitted from extraordinary population pressures, proximity to the Wellington CBD via trains, and immediate sea frontage, all acting to persuade young urban professionals to move to the area and gentrify it. South Dunedin faces none of these advantages. **It is the Mission's view that the South Dunedin retail centre will always struggle to be more than a local shopping hub.**

4. Nevertheless, much can be done to make it a more attractive, safe, and comfortable shopping area for local residents. Like many others, we at the Mission, have read Malcolm Gladwell's *Tipping Point*, in particular the narrative about graffiti on the New York Subway, and **agree that there is considerable benefit to be had from raising the overall "feel" of the strip.**
5. We also agree that the current layout of the strip does not lend itself at all to impromptu gatherings, or other beneficial social contact, and we welcome suggestions to address this.
6. The major issue in regards the bulk of the suggestions, seems to us at least, to be how they will be organised and funded. While the ideas presented are encouraging and genuine in their intent, it is our understanding (from copious amounts of research) that if there is a "they" in a community who are going to organise events, rejuvenate the strip etc, then "they" won't do this if it is delegated to them. "They" need to be encouraged, invited, and supported. **We recommend Council consider a collaborative relationship with the Mission and other groups of residents already active in South Dunedin (including congregations, mothers' groups, neighbourhood watch groups etc) toward realising these ideas.**

Further we note the economic conundrum: doing up buildings, making private property look "nice" requires cashflow and profitability for the building owners/lessees, either to invest, or to provide return on investment: until the economic background of those shopping in South Dunedin is much improved, **it is hard to imagine commercial landlords or lessee's choosing or able to afford renovation.**

7. We are supportive of the local community organising events for its own (and others') consumption. We recommend Council acknowledge that the local community may need some assistance with undertaking this work, and that in fact there are several local communities (ethnic, age, interest, faith, class, etc) – **a diversity of events and groups will do far more than a single group trying to be all things to all people.**
8. We invite Council to identify the "heritage precinct" more specifically (page 6) as most of those we spoke to, including staff, weren't aware there was one, and couldn't think what it might encompass ... there is therefore an opportunity for greater promotion of this area.
9. We believe that the major barrier to high use of the Mayfair is its location – on the dark side of the street across a major thoroughfare, and past the blank face of the South Dunedin Mall. We believe these three factors are significant inhibitors to casual use of that area, and **considerable work will have to be done to make it destination-worthy.**
10. Given that the retail strip is taken to include the Gasworks, some blocks away, we were somewhat disappointed that our WesleyVillage did not also rate a mention (pages 6 and 7), particularly given the range of community building activities intended for the site. **We would be happy to provide Council with a full briefing on the WesleyVillage concept if memories need refreshing ... with scones?**
11. We believe that one of the major barriers to resident use of the South Dunedin retail strip is the way most of us access that part of town: via one of the arterial routes that so handily spit vehicles out onto the one-way system or Portsmouth Drive. Moreover the Cargills' Corner and Macandrew Road intersections provide no invitation into the central strip. **Better traffic management is required, if those in vehicles are to be nudged toward local retailers.**

Beyond traffic management lie some other opportunities to invite traffic: as an example we wonders if a collaborative project between the Polytechnic Art School, WINZ, Creative New Zealand, Council and Hillside Engineering, might not provide Dunedin with the world's largest mural stretching down Hillside Road (at least 5 blocks long). With echoes perhaps on the South Dunedin Mall fascia, and so on.

If the aim is to attract non-South Dunedin residents to shop in South Dunedin, then Council is encouraged to consider **making the Cargills' Corner – Macandrew Road stretch of King Edward street pedestrian only, in the same way Cuba Mall in Wellington** has managed to become “funky” rather than “respectable”, and generated an improved level of economic activity.

12. We feel the question about Transport (in the provided feedback form) might be self-defeating. Were the strip to become more visually appealing, pedestrian-centric, sociable, etc, then drivers may well be happier to walk further. Given that nearly 40% of South Dunedin residents have no access to a vehicle it may also risk prioritising the interests of only a portion of the possible customer base. **Additionally, we recommend Council include consideration of any change to the right-hand rule, and the impact on lane design, and traffic management, prior to settling any transportation questions.**
13. Although the Mission is supportive of the idea of a regular street market (page 14), **we recommend considering the issue with care.** There are risks of setting up in competition with the Farmers' Market, the weekday South Dunedin Community Hall market and/or of a market that retains the “low tone” of the area already.
14. And although we are supportive of events as a community building activity in South Dunedin, we again recommend caution. **Promotional events have a different flavour and focus to community focussed events, and may not add much to social cohesion in South Dunedin.**
15. The strategy doesn't seem to have considered the barrier effect of there being no pedestrian access to the shopping precinct from “behind” (the residential area between King Edward Street and Corstorphine/Kew Hill). We recommend Council consider how **walkways from the blocks behind, even perhaps linking Bathgate Park and King Edward Street via an attractive domestic-scale access way.**
16. If Council is serious about importing consumers to the South Dunedin retail strip then we believe the best investment that could be made is in a free city-circuit bus. We understand that this is outside of DCC's remit and lies with the ORC. Nevertheless, the idea of South Dunedin as a run down part of town is so ingrained in the public perception that **if we want people to get over the “South D” emotional barrier, we need to remove all the barriers.**
17. It is the Mission's belief that if we as a city want to raise the feel and tone of South Dunedin, there is really only one strategy that will work: **raising the incomes of those that live in South Dunedin.** This goal will be achieved by **investment in the education, welfare, and opportunities of South Dunedin residents;** not in dressing up where they shop, laudable thought that goal is.

## ORAL SUBMISSION

The Mission would welcome the chance to speak to this submission. Please contact:

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