

Engagement Report

Little Venice Canalside and Paddington Green RIBA Stage 2 (concept design)

July 2025

City of Westminster

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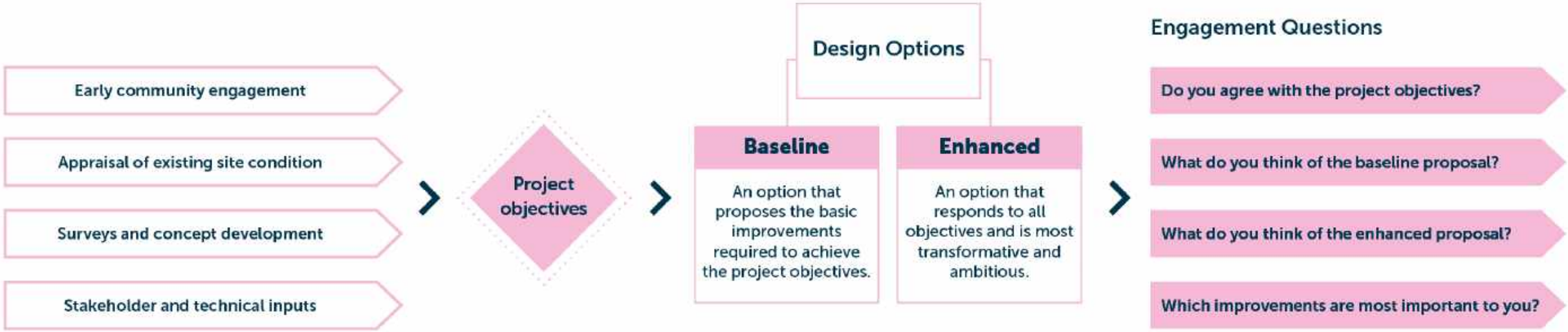


INTRODUCTION

This report presents the feedback that we heard throughout the RIBA Stage 2 (concept design) public engagement for the proposed improvements across the Little Venice Canalside and Paddington Green areas. The engagement ran from 13 April to 18 May 2025 and aimed to gather feedback on design options and project objectives to ensure that the final proposals reflect the needs and aspirations of local residents, key stakeholders and visitors.

The engagement was conducted through a combination of in-person and digital methods, including public exhibitions, online surveys, stakeholder meetings, and targeted outreach. This inclusive approach ensured a broad and diverse range of voices were heard, helping to shape the future of these important public spaces.

If you would like to see the engagement material or hear more about the programme, please visit: https://paddingtongreencanalside.commonplace.is/
You can also contact our team directly at: paddingtonplaceplan@westminster.gov.uk

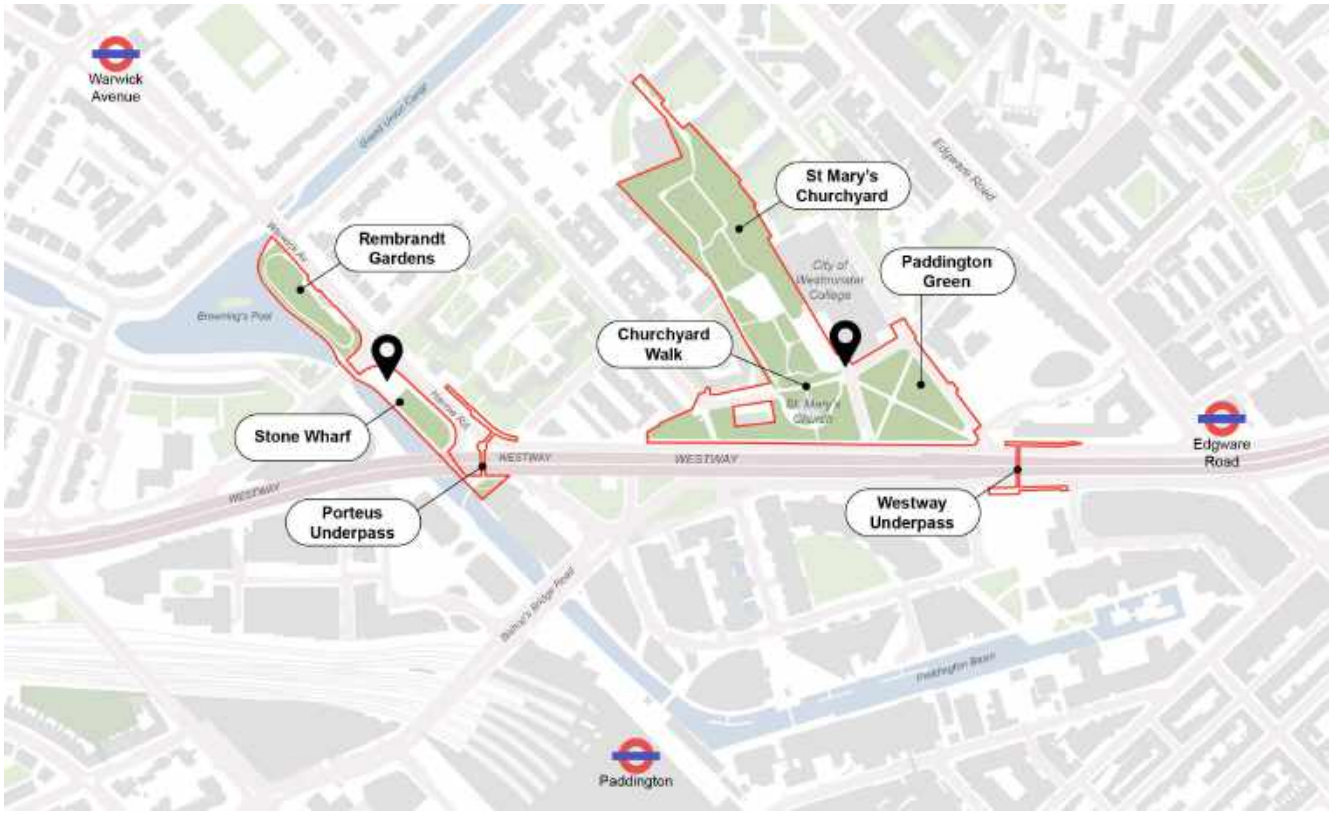


ABOUT THE PROJECT

In July 2024 Westminster City Council launched the Paddington Green and Little Venice Canalside Public Realm Improvements project with the ambition of creating safer, more accessible, and greener public spaces. Throughout September and October 2024, we carried out initial community engagement to understand your experiences and aspirations for the spaces, as well as your concerns about any changes. We listened to your views and translated this feedback into key objectives, which informed a series of design ideas.

The Stage 2 exhibitions showcased the design ideas that have come out of this initial phase. Residents and visitors alike had the opportunity to tell us what they thought about each of the ideas to help us refine a preferred proposal to take forward to the next stage. A short online survey was open for five weeks from Monday 14th April until Sunday 18th May. We encouraged all those who live, work or study around Paddington Green & Little Venice Canalside to submit their feedback.

Map showing all sites covered by project, as well as exhibition locations:



Exhibition Locations

ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

How did we engage?

- 2 public exhibitions presenting design options for all sites. One exhibition located at Stone Wharf for all Canalside sites, the other at St. Mary's Churchyard for Paddington Green sites.
- A Commonplace project page
- 2 online surveys (1 for each area – Little Venice Canalside and Paddington Green)
- 2 public events
- A 1:1 meeting with Residential Mooring holders at Stone Wharf
- Drop-in discussions with attendees of Cavalcade
- A drop-in event for City of Westminster College Students

How did we promote the engagement?

- 3166 flyers sent to nearby residential addresses (Little Venice Ward)
- 30 posters installed across the area
- 2 large banners installed in key locations
- 2 stakeholder emails asking for their views and to distribute within their networks
- 2 commonplace newsletters
- Emails to internal colleagues to distribute within their networks
- Liaised with Student Union representatives to promote the survey among College students
- Spoke to a resident who shared the survey in a large local dog-walkers WhatsApp group

How many people have we engaged?

Online:

- 2178 Commonplace visitors
- 157 Survey respondents across both areas, of which 115 confirmed responses via email
- 177 new page subscribers (216 total)
- 8 direct emails

In Person:

- 26 attendees over the two public events, including 4 Councillors
- 13 students and 4 residents throughout the drop-in session
- 5 residential boat owners
- A number of Cavalcade visitors

ENGAGEMENT PHOTOGRAPHS













SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Across both areas, respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining the character of the spaces, enhancing biodiversity, and ensuring accessibility and safety.

Little Venice Canalside

Overall objectives are well supported for Rembrandt Gardens, Stone Wharf and Porteus Underpass (70%). However, although the majority supports improvements to the area, there is a split between the preference for the enhanced options versus the baseline.

- Great support for improving the cobbled path and improving the space under the bridges
- Support for increasing greening and places to sit
- Support for improving connectivity between Warwick Avenue and Paddington Station, either via an evening time Canalside route or by improving visibility between either end of Porteus underpass
- Requests to prevent conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. Due to limited capacity, desire to prioritise and protect the Canalside path as a pedestrian leisure route
- The heritage of the area should be promoted further
- Support for the staircase at Rembrandt Gardens and improvements to the dead-end.
- Anti social behaviour needs to be managed for any improvements that will attract more people to the site during the evening



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

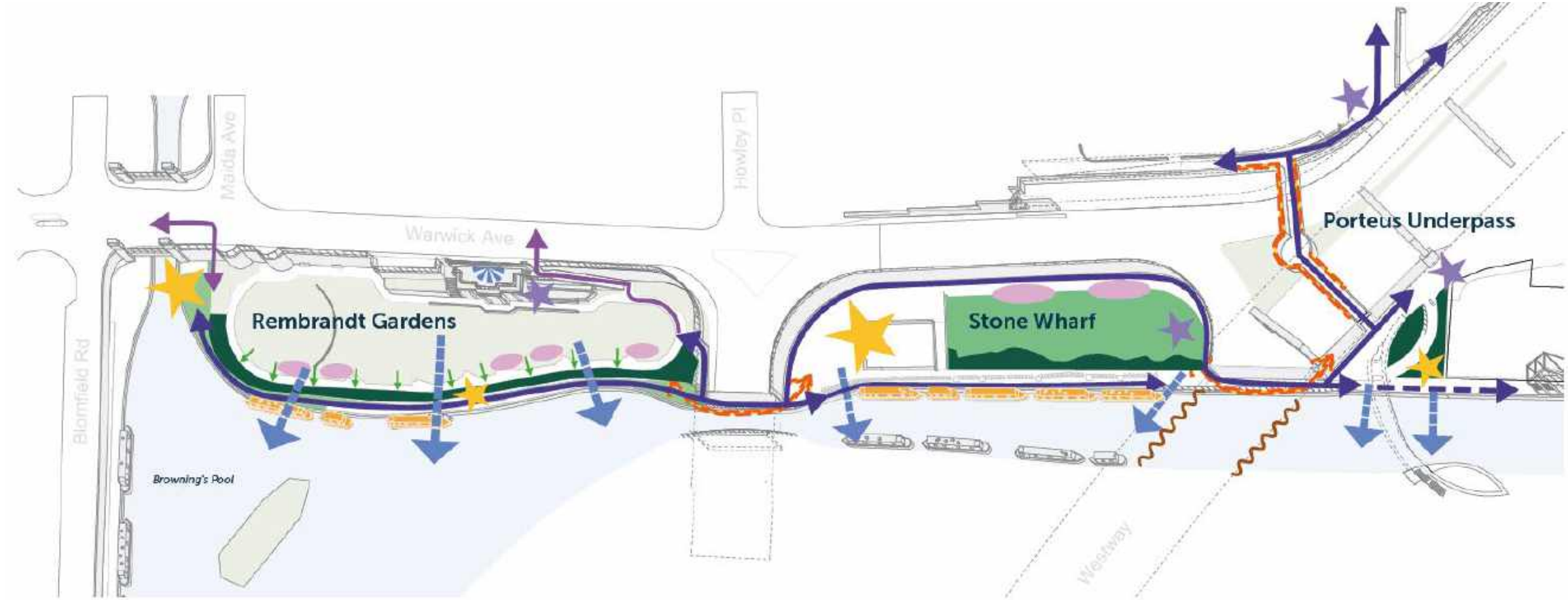
Paddington Green

Overall objectives are supported by most people (76%) for St. Mary's Square, Churchyard Walk, St. Mary's Churchyard, Paddington Green and Westway underpass, with stronger preference for the enhanced options (over 70% across all sites). Strong support for enhanced lighting, inclusive play areas, and improved safety. Widening and improving lighting on Churchyard Walk was seen as an essential improvement to improve safety and connectivity.

- Inclusive Playground and widening Churchyard Walk were seen as major improvements, adding both more activity to the area and enhancing safety
- General support for introducing more uses in the Churchyard such as sport equipment, a running track and more seating
- Noise from the Westway is a big challenge, especially on the southern edge of Paddington Green
- Upgrades to the Underpass are very welcomed and should be a priority
- College Students are supportive of the teenage corner, Churchyard Walk and improved lighting in the area
- Support for pedestrianisation of area in front of the College if parking can be relocated to Hall Place



LITTLE VENICE CANALSIDE OBJECTIVES



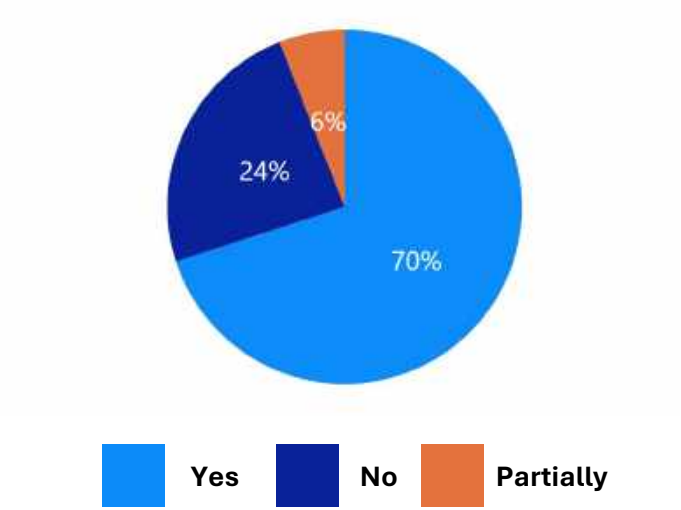
- Key entrances
- Key public spaces
- Informal play opportunities
- Primary routes to be safe and accessible
- Access and connections to surroundings
- Views of interest
- Wayfinding and lighting opportunities
- Increased biodiversity
- Open-up views through vegetation
- Protect residential and bookable moorings
- Sound mitigation

LITTLE VENICE CANALSIDE OBJECTIVES

Rembrandt Gardens

- Protect the existing character of Rembrandt Gardens
- Enhance biodiversity and greening along the edges
- Enhance visual connection to Browning's Pool
- Enhance the safety and accessibility of the routes along the Canalside
- Create new public space by Warwick Bridge

Do you agree with the project objectives for Rembrandt Gardens?



Total number of responses: 50

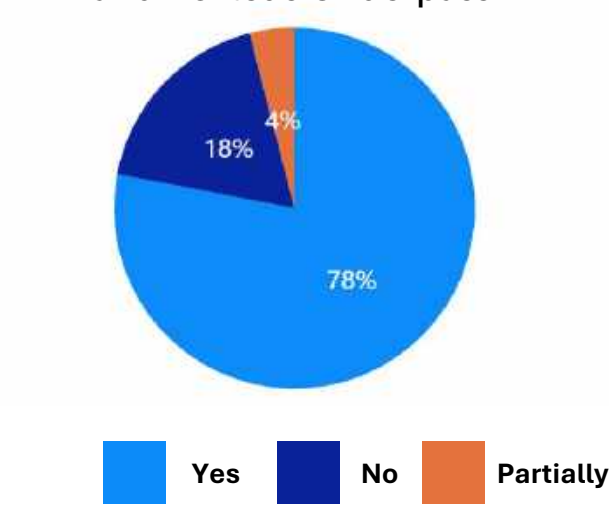
Stone Wharf

- Protect the existing character
- Enhance the safety and accessibility of the routes along Canalside
- Enhance Biodiversity and Greening
- Create new opportunities for flexible uses

Porteus Underpass

- Enhance the visibility and safety in the underpass
- Enhance the biodiversity and greening around the underpass
- Enhance wayfinding

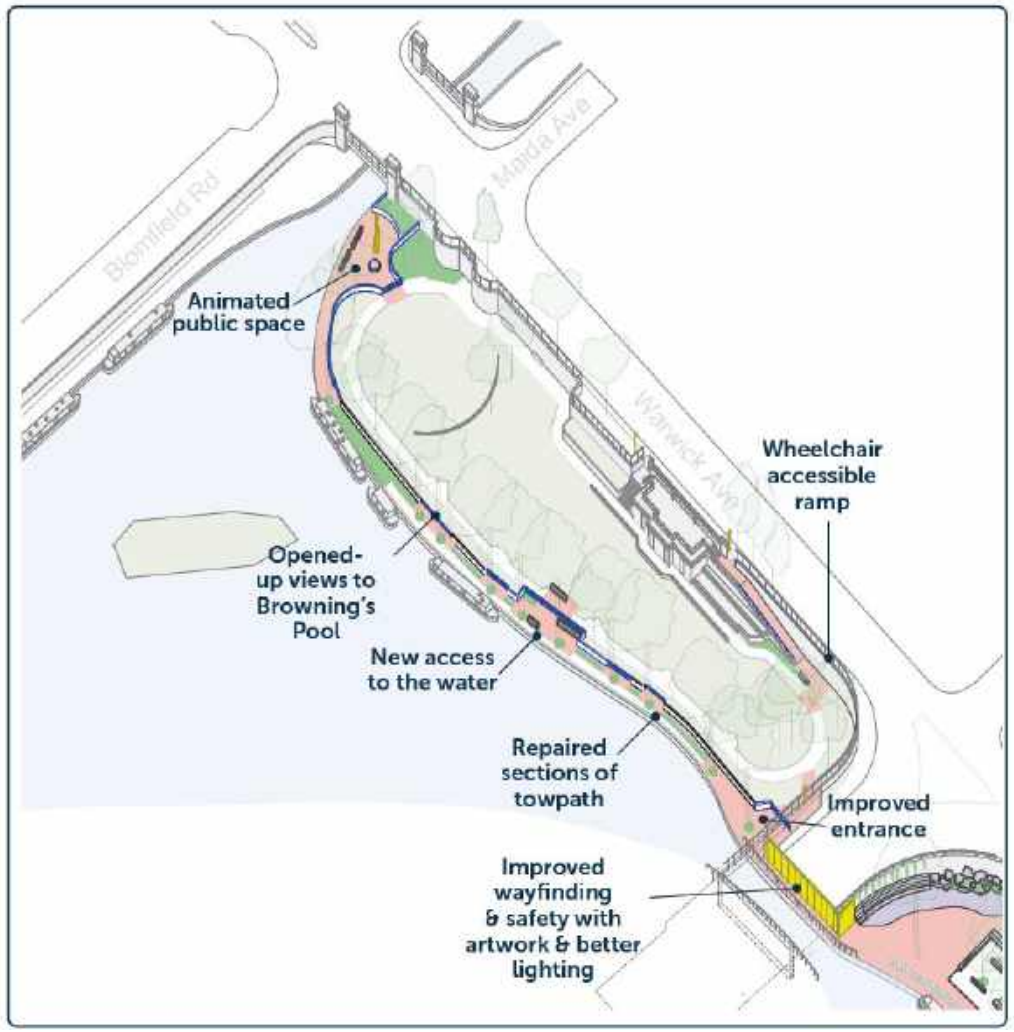
Do you agree with the project objectives for Stone Wharf and Porteus Underpass?



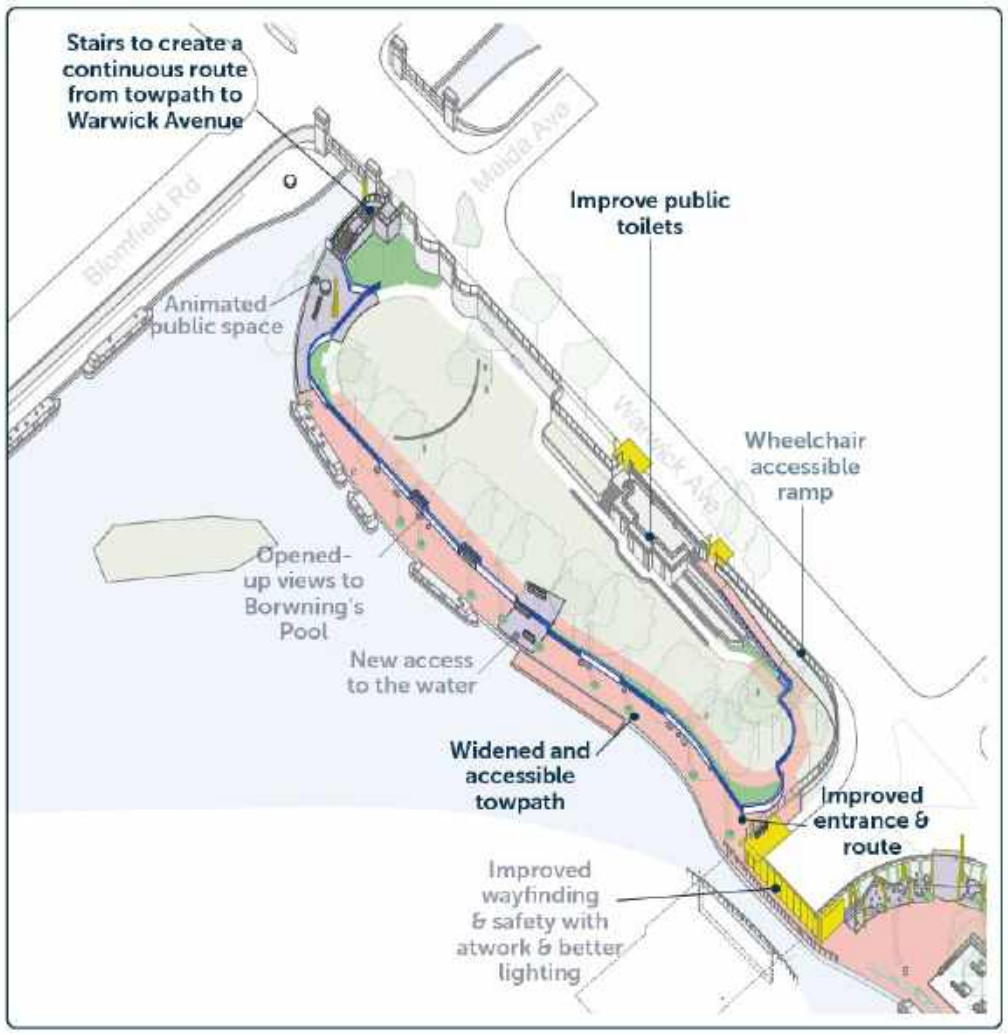
Total number of responses: 50

REMBRANDT GARDENS DESIGN OPTIONS

Baseline Option



Enhanced Option



View the full exhibition boards here: [Digital Exhibition Boards - Paddington Green And Little Venice Canalside]

REMBRANDT GARDENS FINDINGS

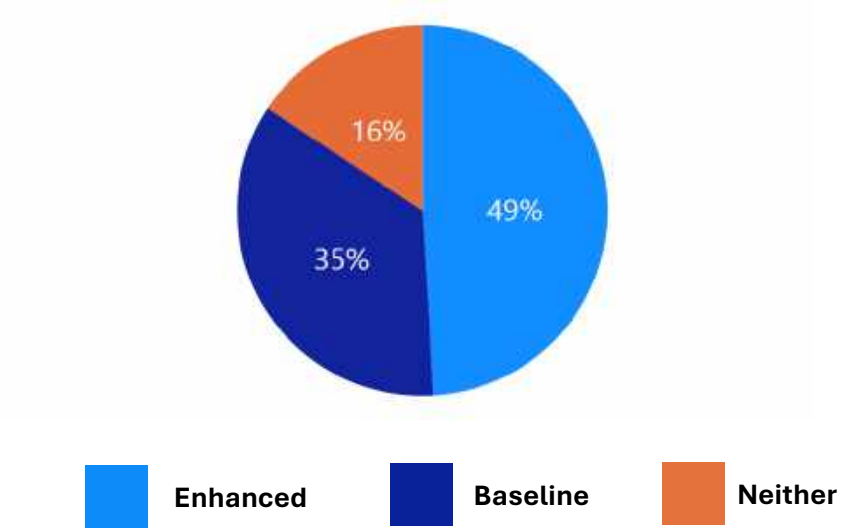
At Rembrandt Gardens, 84% welcomed improvements to the site, with a slight preference for the enhanced option with 49% of the votes, with the baseline coming close at 35% .

Priorities favoured repairing the existing towpath, improving under the bridges and creating a new public space at the dead-end. Less people were concerned about offering a publicly accessible pontoon and making the Gardens access ramp wheelchair compliant.

" Protect the historical character of the sites and protect all trees across the sites. Also lighting enhancements should be sensitive and in keeping with the heritage and conservation status of the area. "

"The gardens are lovely, and so is the towpath, though it needs to be widened. The last thing you want is 'an animated public space'. "

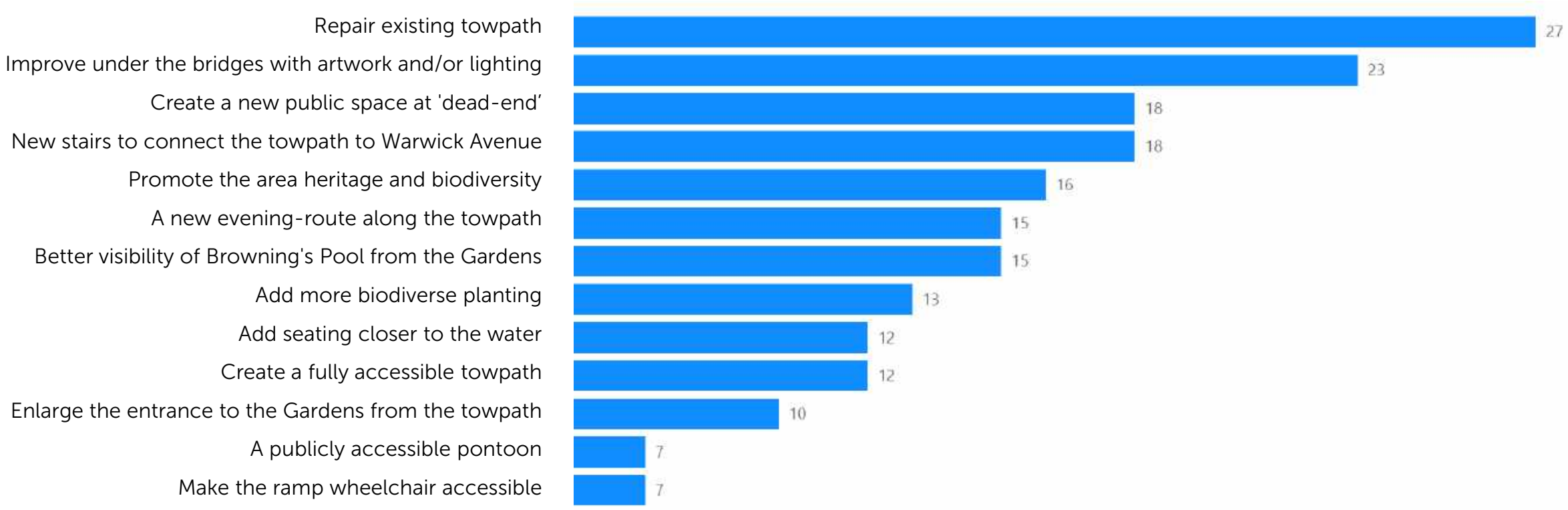
Which option do you prefer for Rembrandt Gardens?



Total number of responses: 51

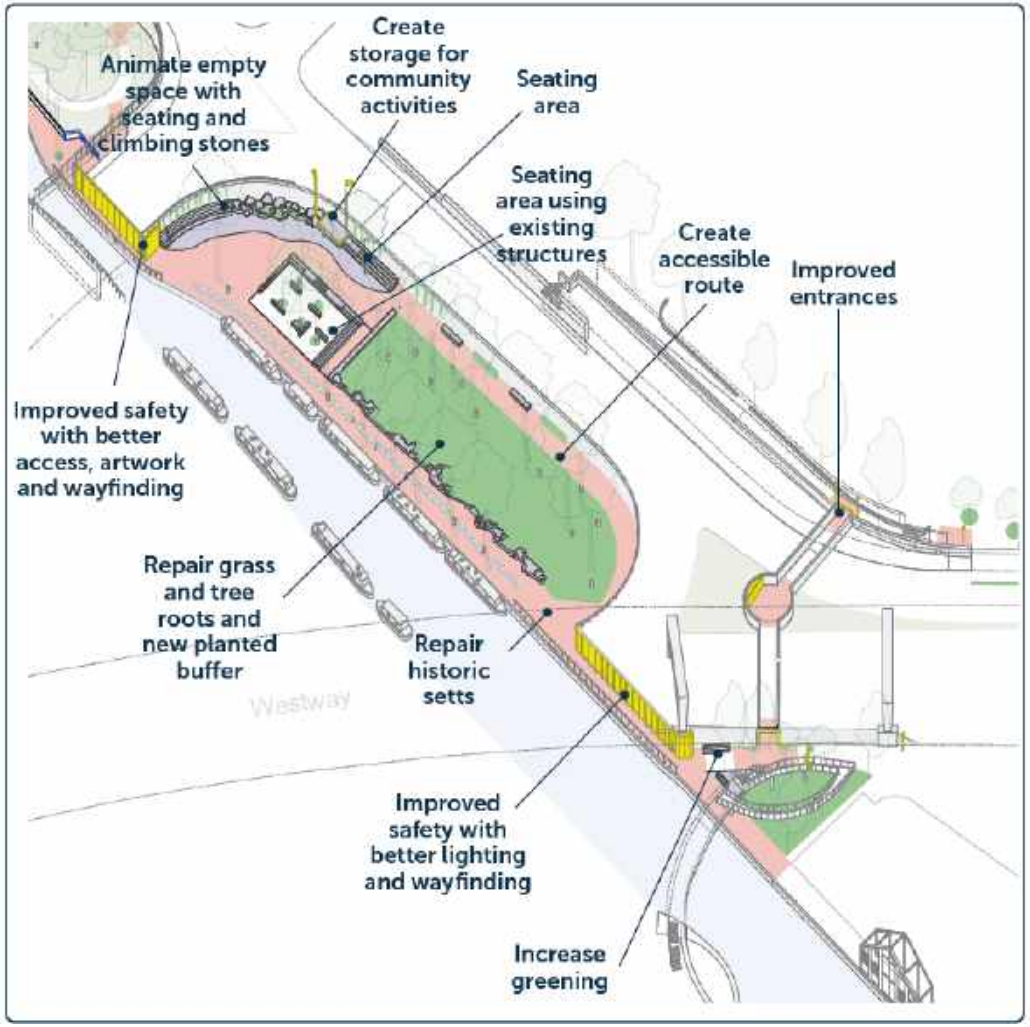
REMBRANDT GARDENS FINDINGS

We have asked survey respondents which of the baseline and enhanced improvements they most want to see if we were to develop a hybrid option. Of the total number of responses, these are the most voted improvements:

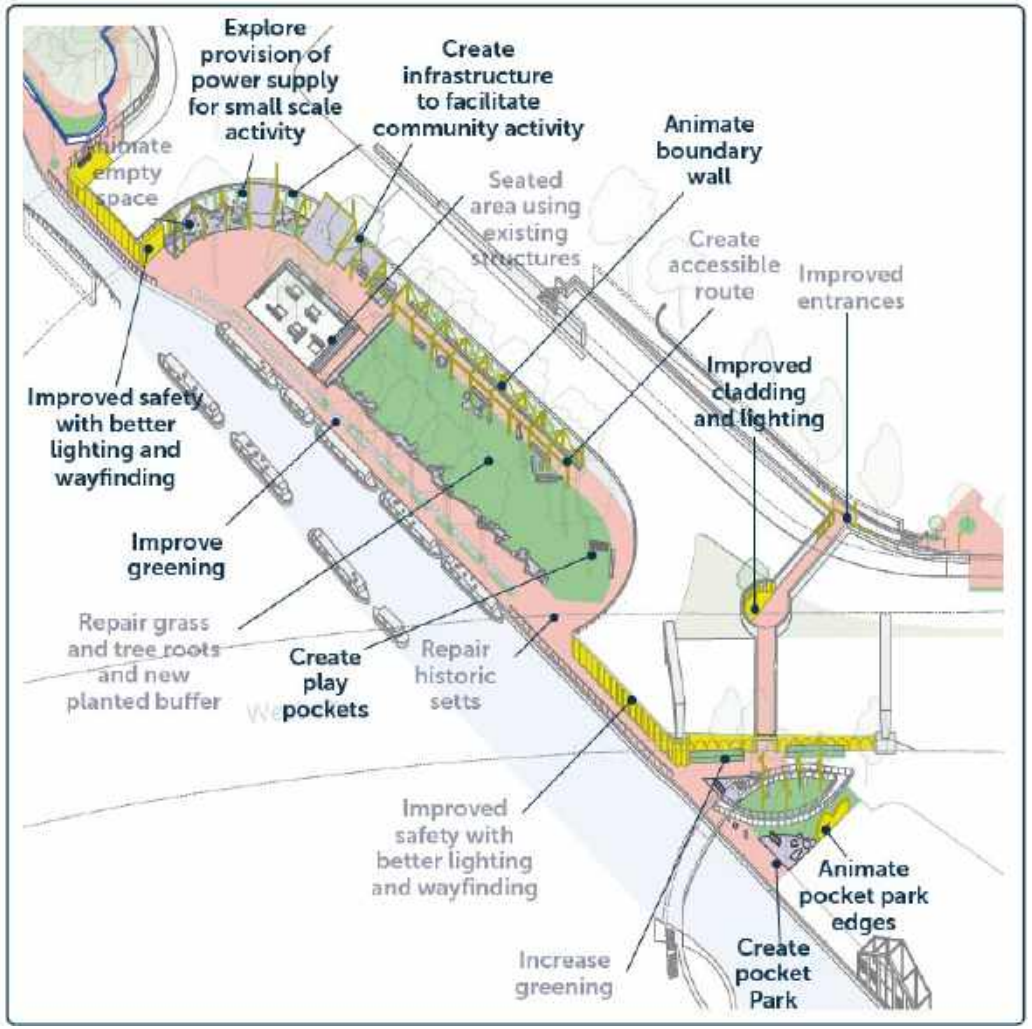


STONE WHARF & PORTEUS UNDERPASS DESIGN OPTIONS

Baseline Option



Enhanced Option



View the full exhibition boards here: [Digital Exhibition Boards - Paddington Green And Little Venice Canalside]

STONE WHARF FINDINGS

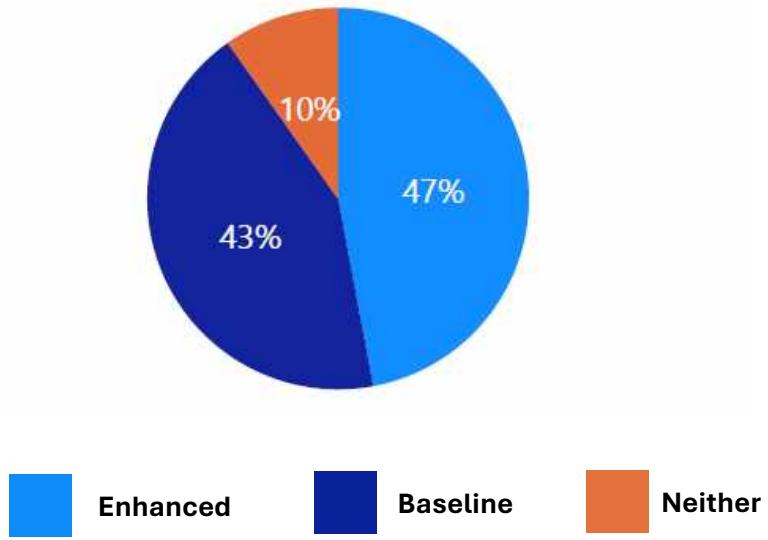
At Stone Wharf, 90% welcomed improvements to the site, with a slight preference for the enhanced option with 47% of the votes, with the baseline option came close second at 43%.

The top priority is to retain and even out the cobbled path with other priorities around improving under the bridges, create new seating and introducing more planting. Less people were interested in the climbing rock garden and the accessible platform and storage for community events.

" I fully agree with the lifting and restoration of the original wharf, cobbles and canons, the retention of the Barrel Garden and the provision made for storage/structure for community events. "

" No play area please - this is a little area of tranquillity and to turn it into a playground would destroy this. "

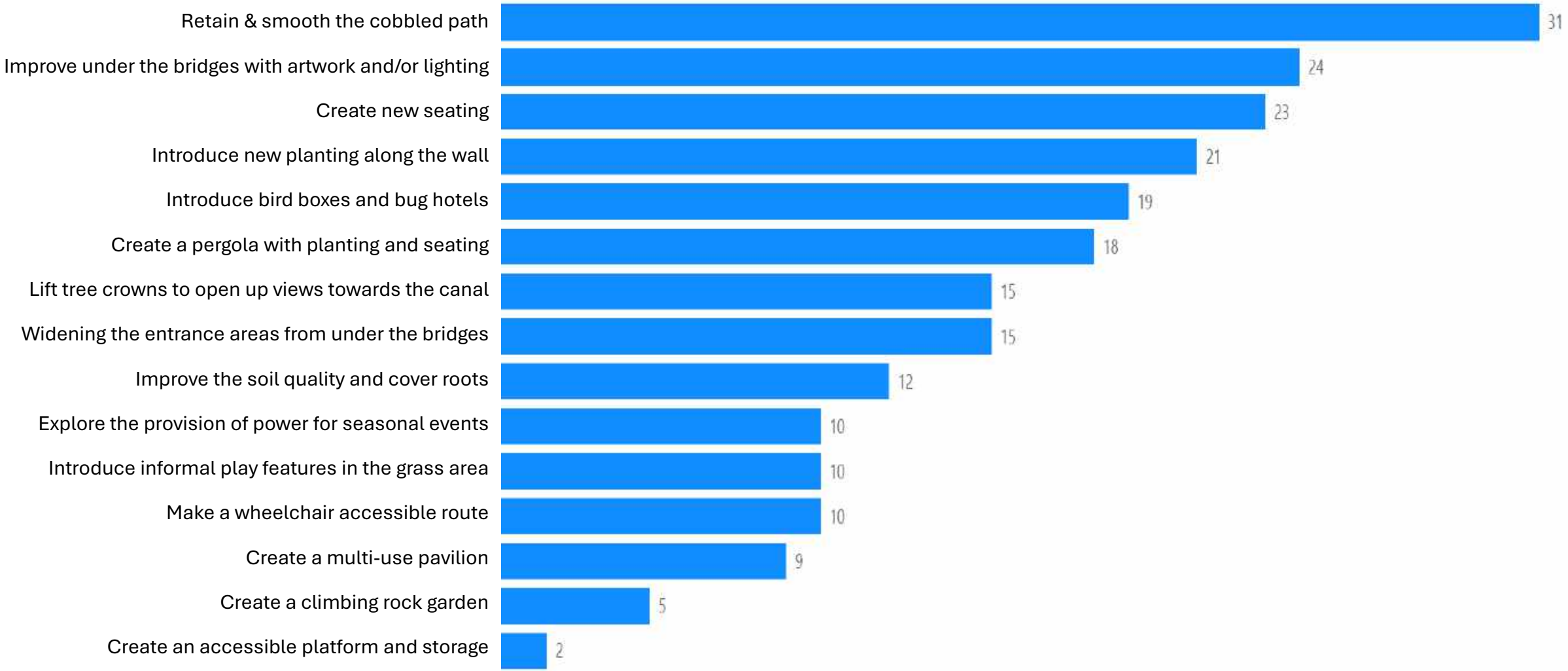
Which option do you prefer for Stone Wharf?



Total number of responses: 51

STONE WHARF FINDINGS

We have asked survey respondents which of the baseline and enhanced improvements they most want to see if we were to develop a hybrid option. Of the total number of responses, these are the most voted improvements:



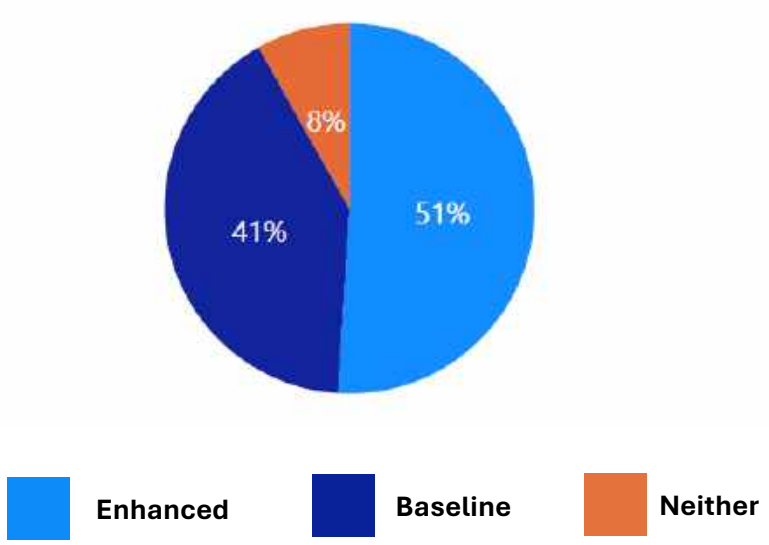
PORTEUS UNDERPASS FINDINGS

At Porteus Underpass 92% welcomed improvements, the enhanced option gathered 51% of the votes , and the baseline 40%. Improving its luminosity, the signage, wayfinding and lighting as well as creating large planters were in the top priorities for the space. Less people were interested in play-on-the-way features.

" This is a key underpass to access Paddington/Maida Vale. Needs to feel safe and introducing greenery and seating and good lighting encourages people to respect the space and not throw rubbish on the ground or in the canal. "

" Porteus pass is a functional space. Limited resources should be invested in making it safe and usable. Additional resources should be invested in Stone Wharf and Rembrandt rather than trying to pretend Porteus is not first and foremost a practical and important thoroughfare. "

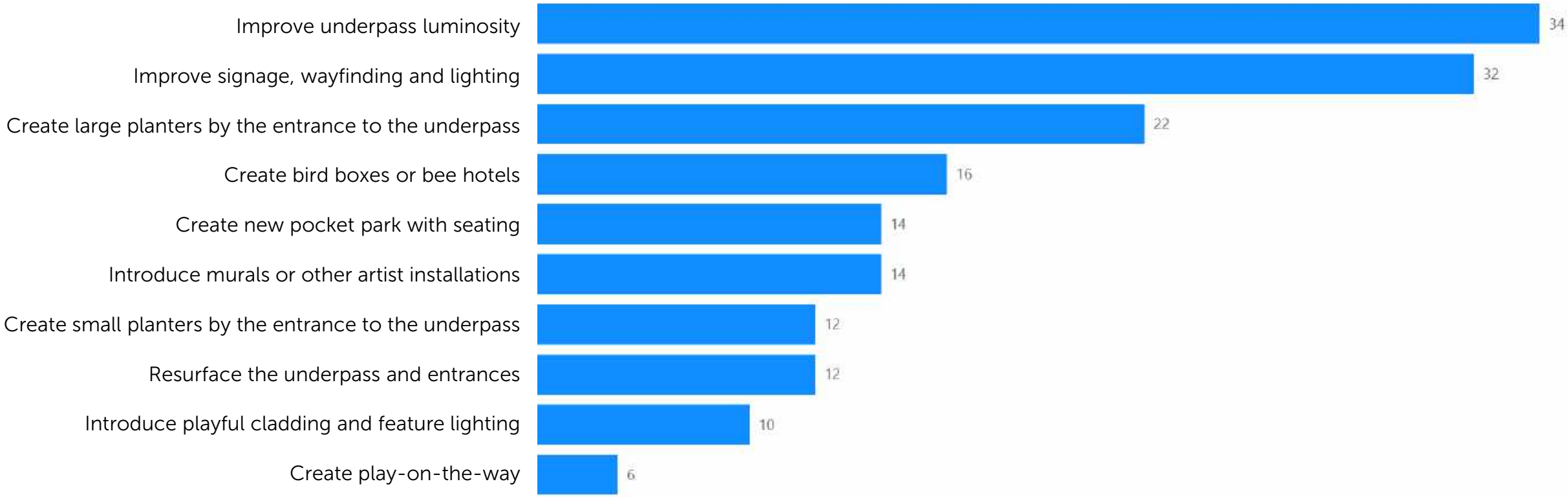
Which option do you prefer for Porteus Underpass?



Total number of responses: 49

PORTEUS UNDERPASS FINDINGS

We have asked survey respondents which of the baseline and enhanced improvements they most want to see if we were to develop a hybrid option. Of the total number of responses, these are the most voted improvements:



PADDINGTON GREEN OBJECTIVES



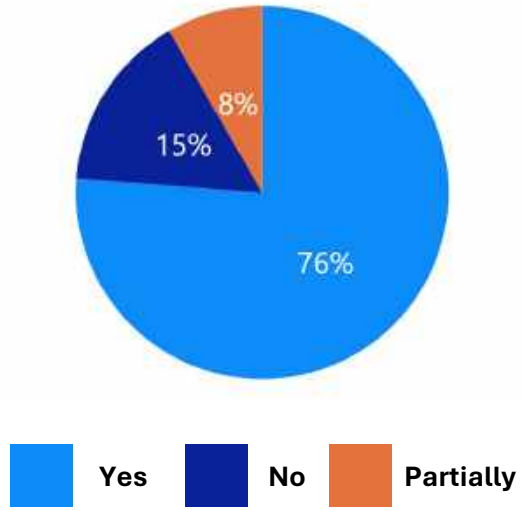
- Key entrances
- Key public spaces
- Play opportunities
- Primary routes to be safe and accessible
- Accesses and connections to surroundings
- Views of interest
- Wayfinding and lighting opportunities
- Increased biodiversity
- Open-up views through vegetation

PADDINGTON GREEN OBJECTIVES

Objectives:

- Protect the spaces' existing character and celebrate history and heritage
- Enhance Biodiversity and Greening
- Enhance accessibility across all sites
- Enhance legibility and wayfinding
- Enhance lighting and remove blind corners
- Enhance the College forecourt to improve pedestrian safety
- Enhance entrance points to the park and the Church
- Enhance underpass to make it safer and more inviting
- Create a main East-West route connecting the Churchyard to its surroundings
- Create more definition of spaces in St Mary's Churchyard
- Create new uses and activities in St Mary's Churchyard

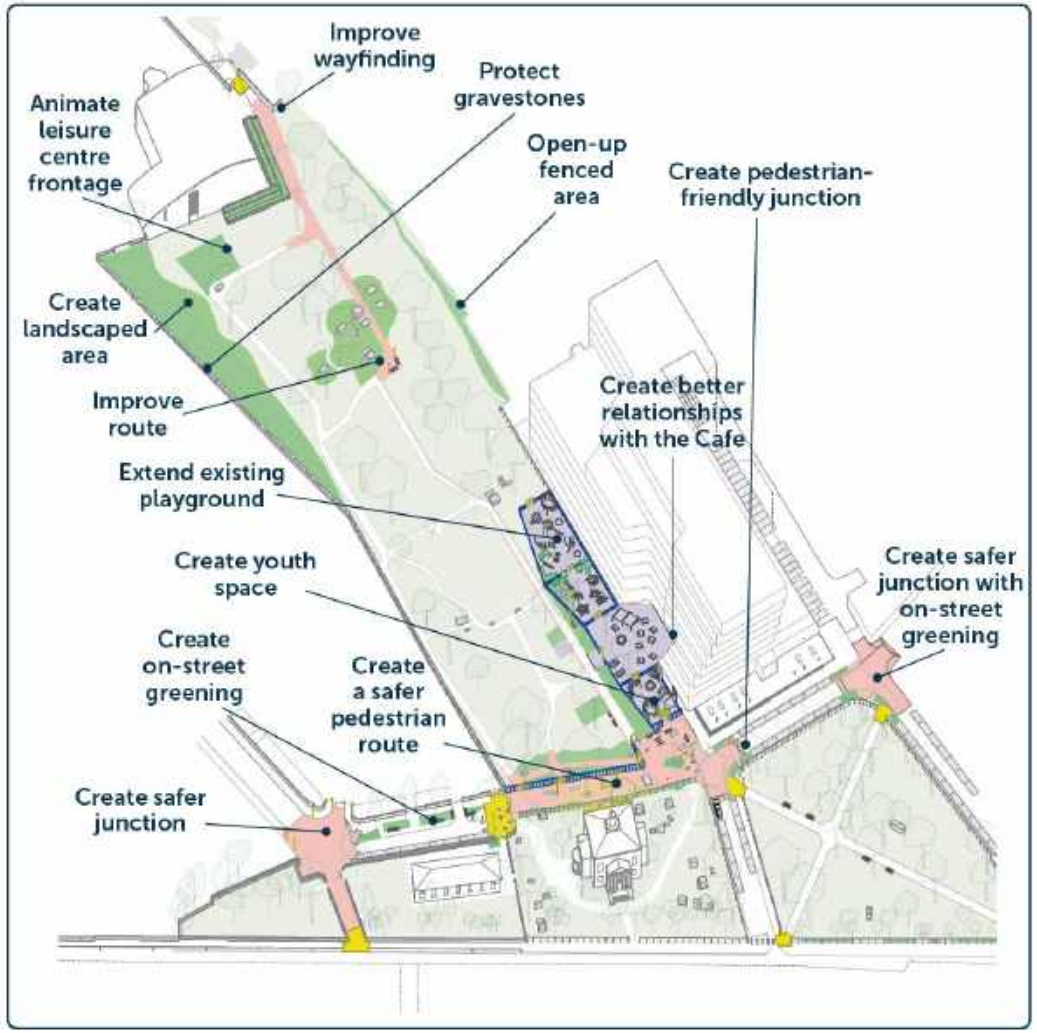
Do you agree with the project objectives for Paddington Green?



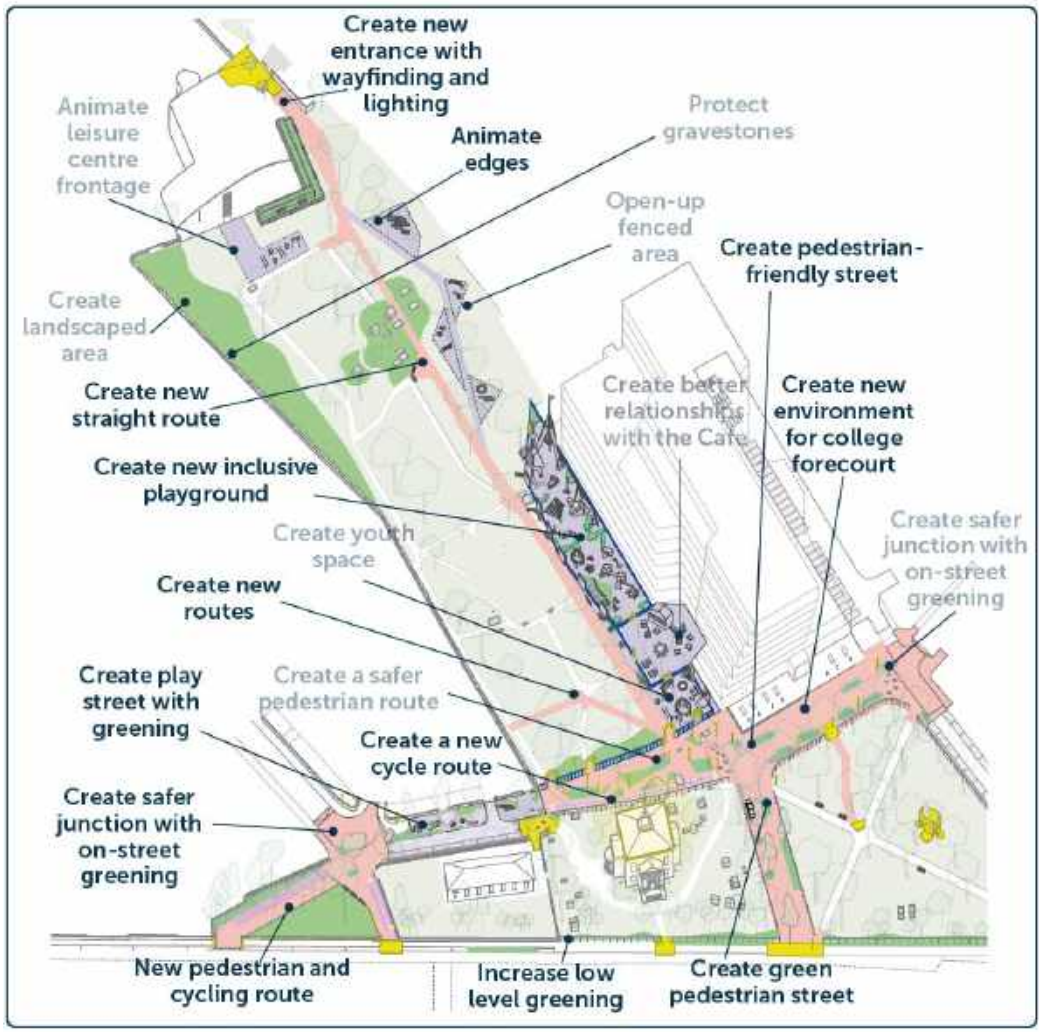
Total number of responses: 84

ST. MARY'S SQUARE & CHURCHYARD WALK DESIGN OPTIONS

Baseline Option



Enhanced Option



View the full exhibition boards here: [Digital Exhibition Boards - Paddington Green And Little Venice Canalside]

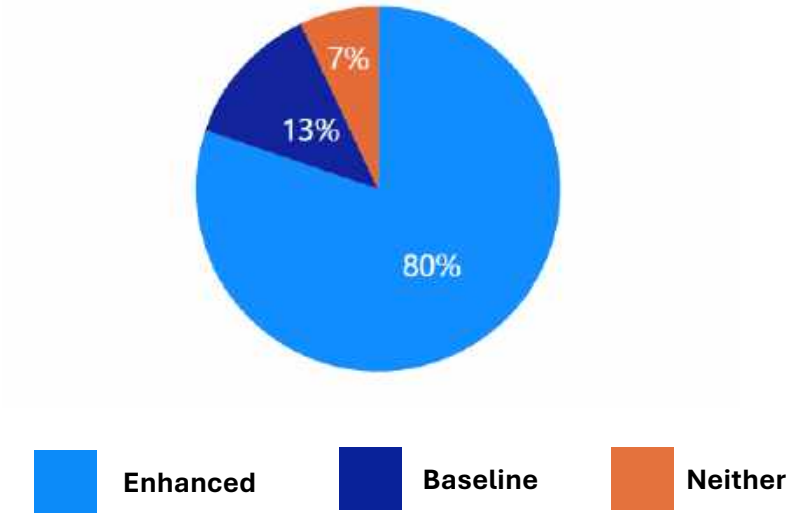
ST. MARY'S SQUARE & CHURCHYARD WALK FINDINGS

At St Mary's Square and Church Walk the enhanced option was preferred by far, with over 80% of the votes. The priorities focussed on planting new trees, lighting the Church on all sides and creating a play street and play structures along the route. Widening Church Walk was also of interest to most people. Raised tables and cycle parking gathered less interest though they were voted for between 10 to 15 times regardless.

" The space works well now and needs minor enhancements. Greater infrastructure is likely to mean more concrete in an area where open land and greenery are paramount. "

" I like the idea of a play street. We cross that street every day for nursery pickup, and it is difficult to navigate with small children and parked cars. At times I have even witnessed delivery motorcycles speeding down this street and THROUGH the churchyard to cut across illegally. Making it a play street would certainly make us feel safer and more relaxed. I also really like the idea of the wider pedestrian area with seating and planting. "

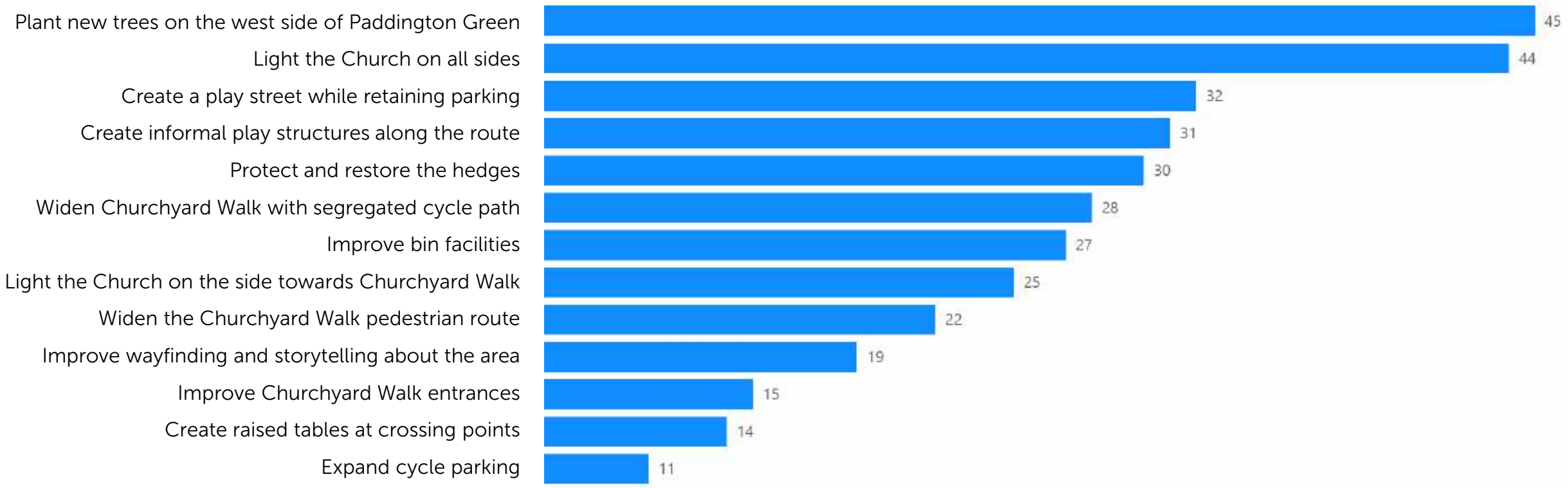
Which option do you prefer for St. Mary's Square & Churchyard Walk?



Total number of responses: 86

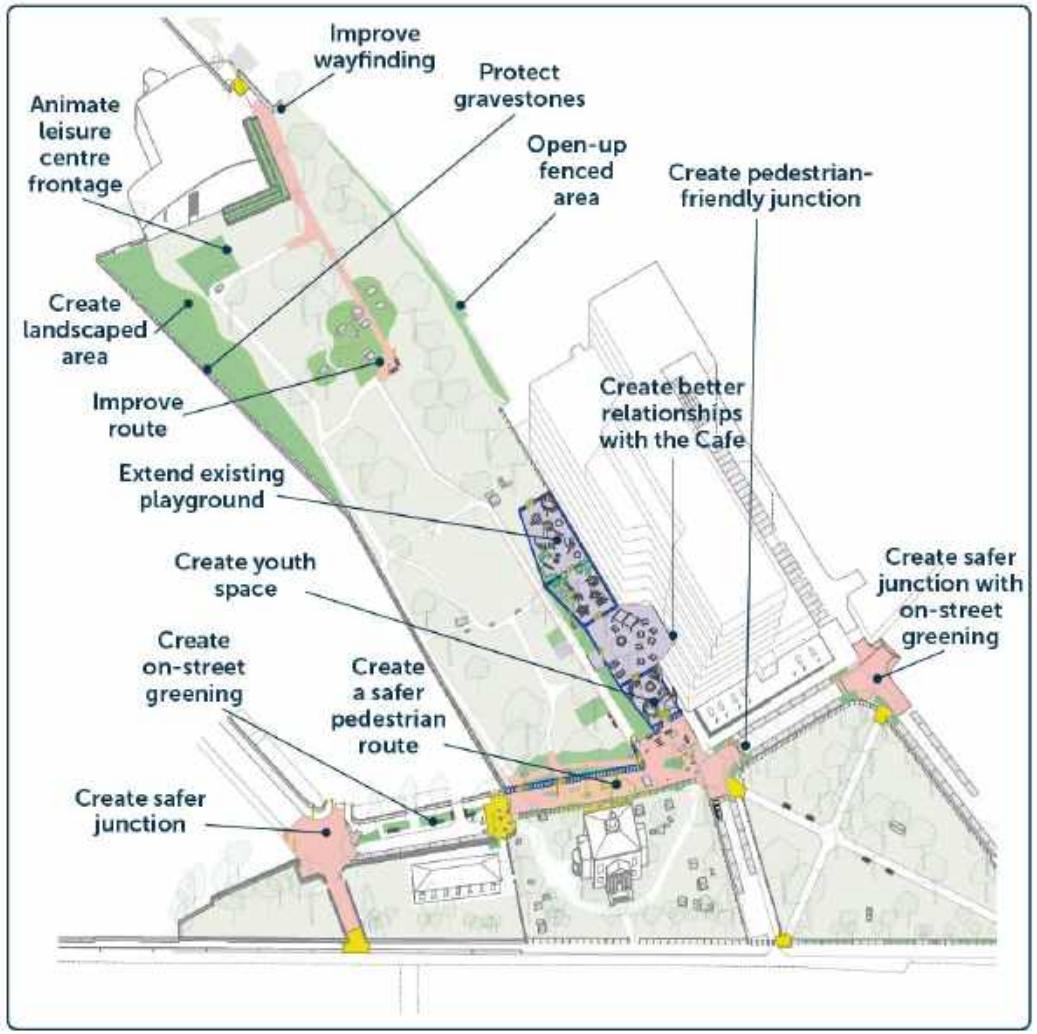
ST. MARY'S SQUARE & CHURCHYARD WALK FINDINGS

We have asked survey respondents which of the baseline and enhanced improvements they most want to see if we were to develop a hybrid option. Of the total number of responses, these are the most voted improvements:

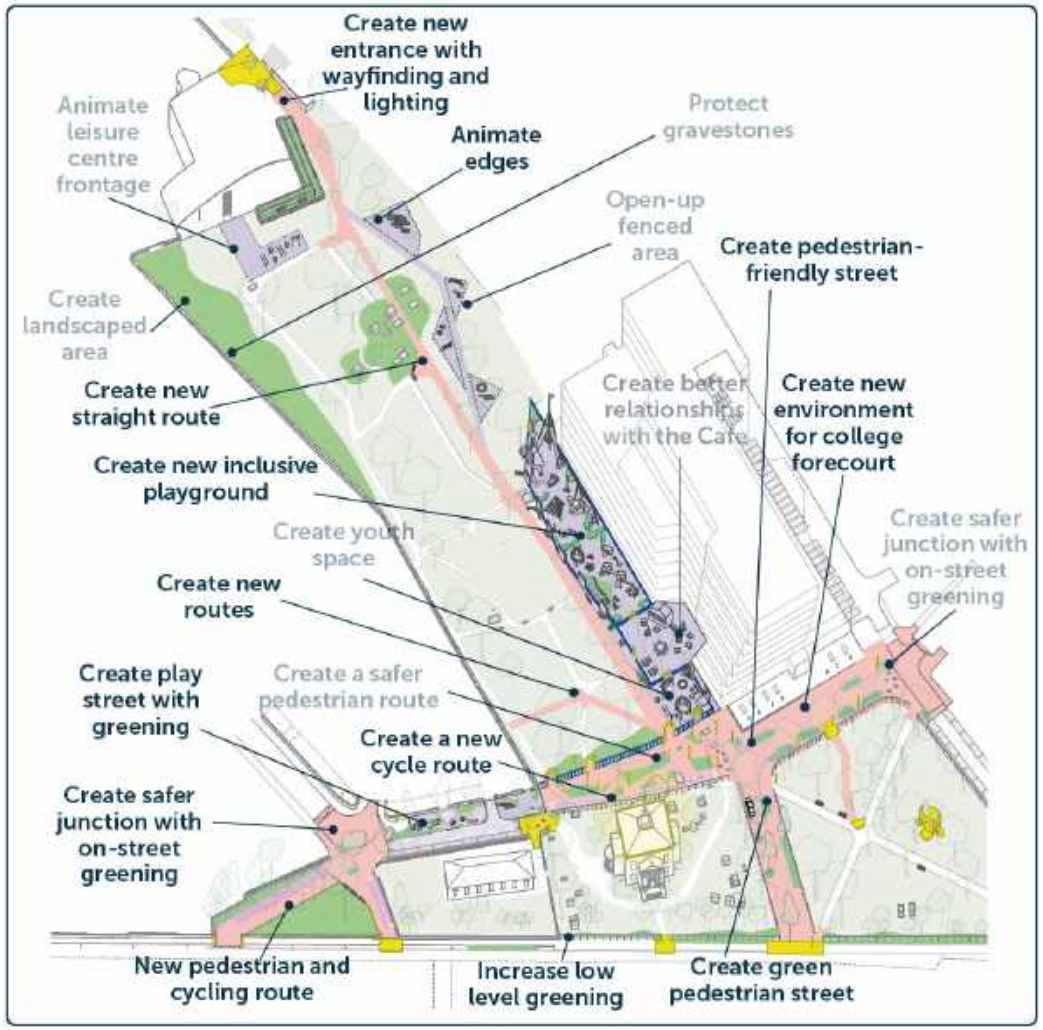


ST. MARY'S CHURCHYARD DESIGN OPTIONS

Baseline Option



Enhanced Option



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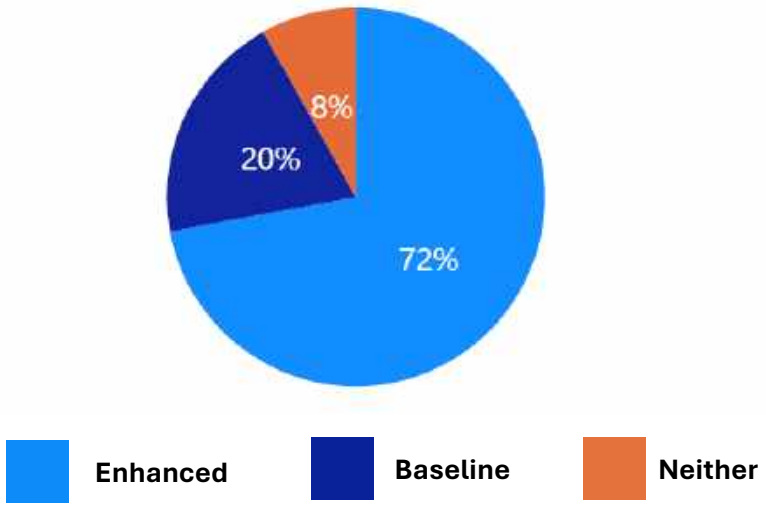
ST. MARY'S CHURCHYARD FINDINGS

The preferred option for St Mary's Churchyard was the enhanced with over 72% of the votes, with improvements to the lighting, increase to biodiversity and the inclusive playground being the top priorities. Creating picnic areas, an adventure area and a straight path through were also referenced by about half the votes. Improving the wayfinding and storytelling and creating a youth corner seemed to be lower priorities, though they regardless gathered approximatively 15 to nearly 20 votes.

" More walking routes to the space make it more attractive, and the play structures appear more enticing and fun! "

" I would love to see a flagship fully inclusive playground and play area that will be pioneering the future designs of playgrounds around the country. The concept designs from the students of Westminster University are outstanding and should be seriously considered. "

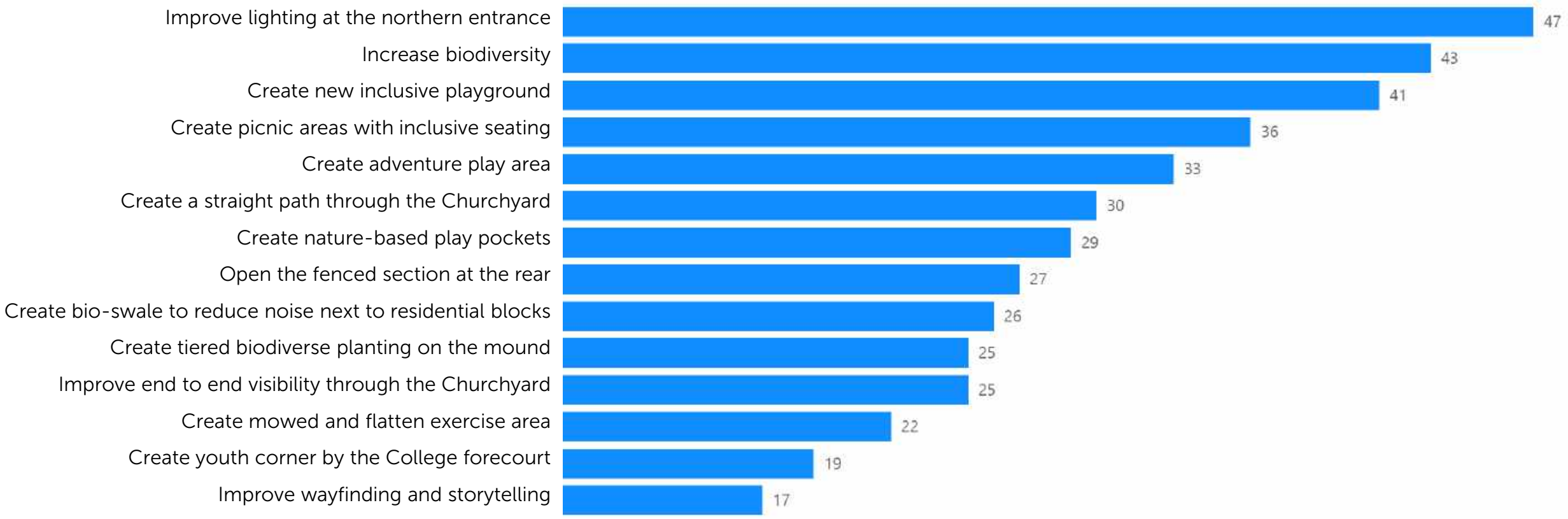
Which option do you prefer for St. Mary's Churchyard?



Total number of responses: 86

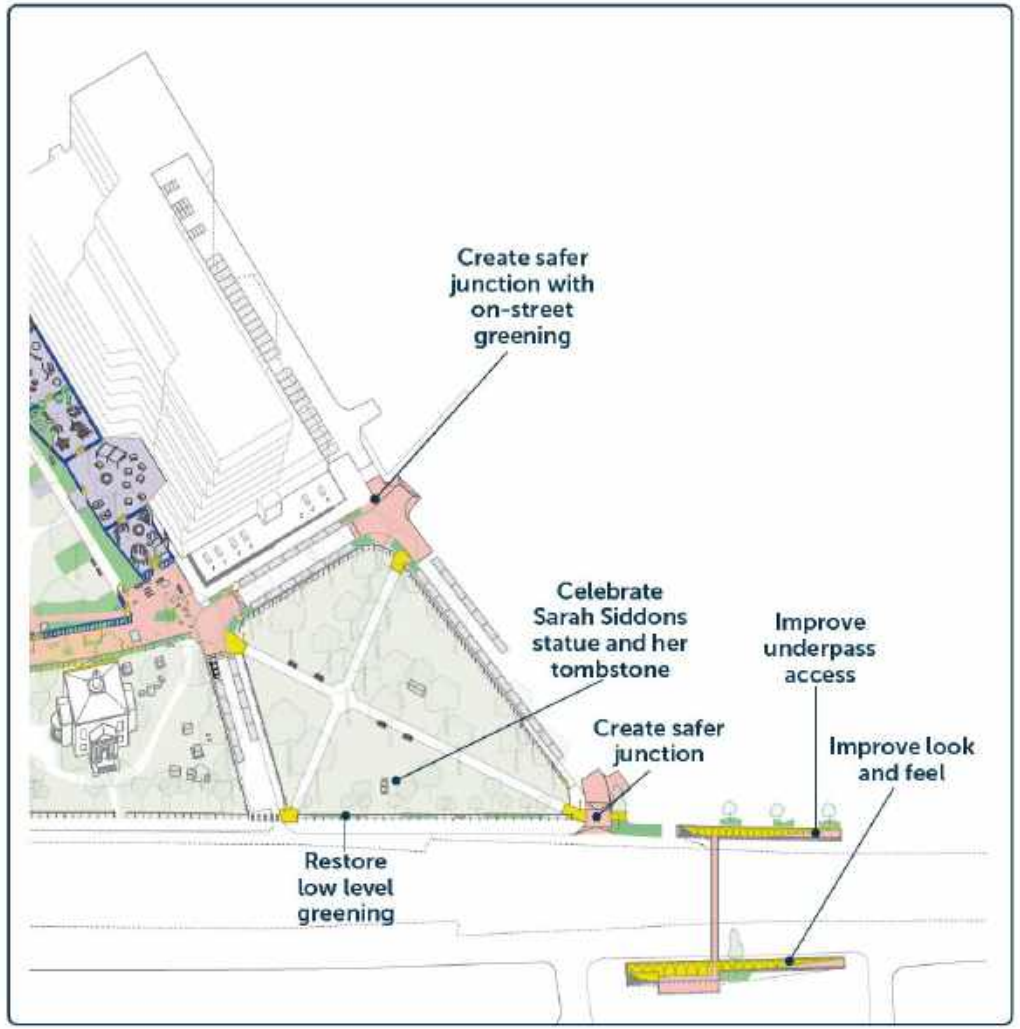
ST. MARY'S CHURCHYARD FINDINGS

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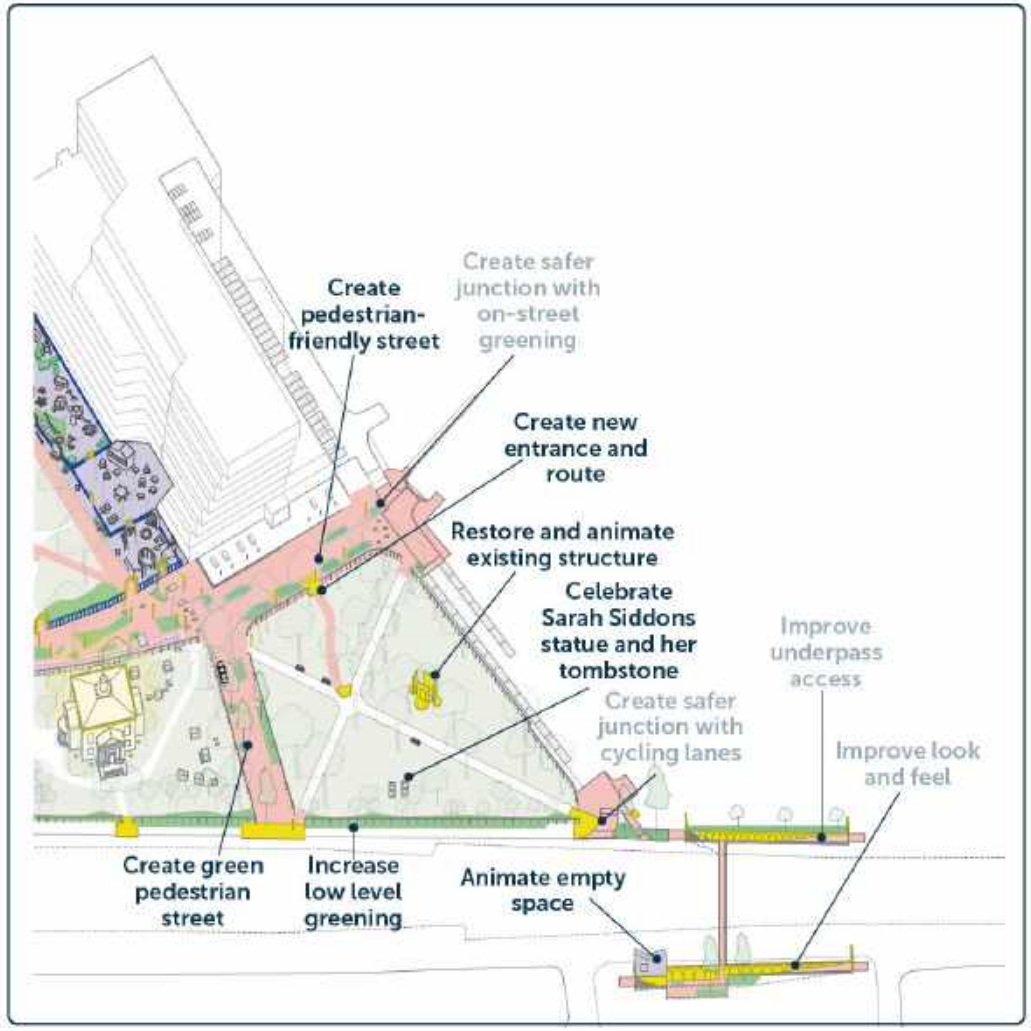


PADDINGTON GREEN & WESTWAY UNDERPASS DESIGN OPTIONS

Baseline Option



Enhanced Option



View the full exhibition boards here: [Digital Exhibition Boards - Paddington Green And Little Venice Canalside]

PADDINGTON GREEN & WESTWAY UNDERPASS FINDINGS

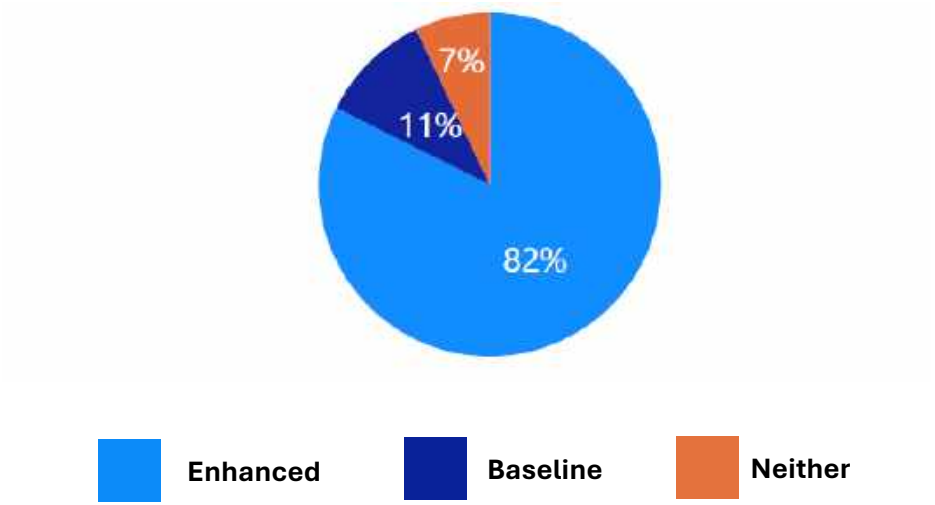
At Paddington Green and the Westway Underpass, the enhanced option is by far the preferred choice by over 82% of the votes. Improving lighting in the Green, and improving the cladding, tiling and lighting of the underpass are top priorities. Making the area in front of the College pedestrian came as the third top priority whilst repositioning Sarah Siddons statue and celebrating the bunker were only voted for about 10 to 12 times.

" Much needed pedestrian only spaces as shown in the enhanced option. "

" This section seems to be focusing on benefiting the college and will purely enlarge their footprint. "

" Please do not build anything in the parks - we need these open spaces more than ever as more and more development is springing up in the area and there are so few places to enjoy nature. "

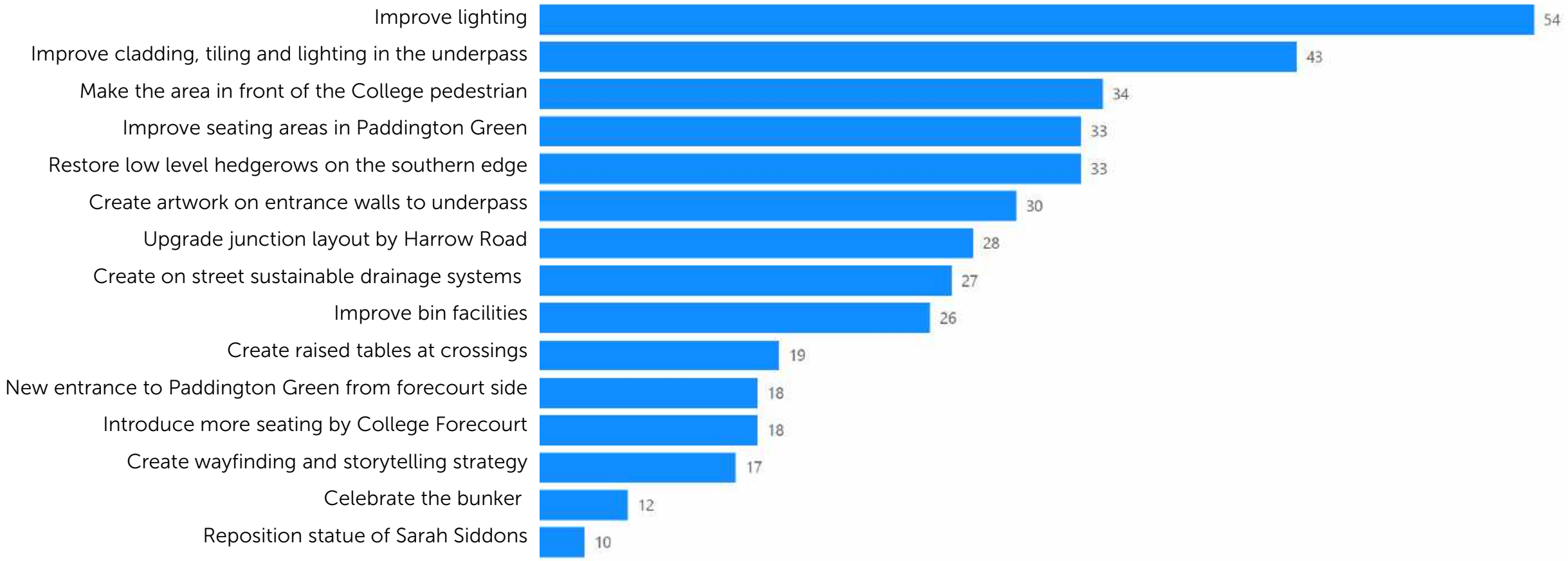
Which option do you prefer for St. Mary's Churchyard?



Total number of responses: 85

PADDINGTON GREEN & WESTWAY UNDERPASS FINDINGS

We have asked survey respondents which of the baseline and enhanced improvements they most want to see if we were to develop a hybrid option. Of the total number of responses, these are the most voted improvements:



NEXT STEPS

This public engagement on the Concept Designs across the Little Venice Canalside and Paddington Green areas will inform a unified design for each of the sites. We will now align your priorities with technical, cost and urban design considerations.

The next steps to take the projects forward are:

- Confirm the list of improvements for each site
- Present the hybrid option for each site in a Concept Design Report
- Prioritise the design and delivery of the following sites:
    - **St. Mary's Inclusive Playground:** Procure a contractor for the inclusive playground while developing the design, equipment selection and specification with the local community
    - **Stone Wharf:** Progress the design alongside supporting new uses such as an outdoor classroom programme ran by Floating Classroom
    - **Artwork and improvements under the bridges at Canalside:** Develop the design alongside procuring a contractor and artist/collective to develop the artwork.

HIGH LEVEL PROJECT PHASES & OUTCOMES

Concept Design: Completed

Design Development

Phase 1 (3 sites) starts July 2025

- Develop detailed designs and cost plans
- Secure funding for delivery
- Secure delivery partner

Statutory Consultation

- Undertake Planning Application, if appropriate.
- Faculty Approval for improvements on Church of England land

Final Design

- Prepare construction and delivery package.
- Publish realistic delivery timeframe.

Construction

- Delivery of final design (phased, if appropriate, to minimise disturbance.)