

# Community Engagement Strategy



**CITY OF  
PARRAMATTA**



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This strategy is a roadmap for creating and maintaining good relationships and effective engagement with community and stakeholders. It strives to embed best practice consultation for engagement with our communities now and into the future.

Here at the City of Parramatta we strive for best-practice engagement and consultation both online and in-person.

We believe it's important that the community can see and have a direct impact on the decisions of their Council and our City - which is why we have developed this strategy.

We value input from the community and stakeholders as it helps us to create good public policy and a city that has people at its core. It also helps ensure that the services we provide are relevant, timely and valuable.

We look forward to listening and engaging with our community through this strategy - and to creating a stronger, more participative city for all.

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# What is community engagement?

Community engagement, also known as 'public participation', is about involving people in decision-making and it is at the very core of our democratic processes in local government. Community input and participation is crucial for building a great city where people want to live, work, and visit.

The City of Parramatta Council has an organisation-wide commitment to engaging our communities on the issues that matter in a transparent, open, and accountable way.

## Why is it important?

The City of Parramatta recognises that people have a right to be informed and to have a say on projects that are important to them, or which have an impact on their daily lives. Community engagement provides Council with a better understanding of community views and values and helps us to make more informed decisions and deliver better services.

## Why do we need a strategy?

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines our approach to engaging with the community and stakeholders. It provides transparency and clarity for all stakeholders so they can understand their role in the decision-making process. The strategy outlines who, when and how we will engage on plans and policies. The level of community involvement varies depending on the project and the potential impact of the decision.

## Legislative requirements

Council must comply with a number of different pieces of legislation which set out when we must initiate consultation. Section 402(4) of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires that: *The council establish and implement a strategy (its community engagement strategy), based on social justice principles, for engagement with the local community when developing the community strategic plan.*

A yet to commence amendment to the Act by the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016* will insert a new provision under section 402A which will require the following: *A council*

*must establish and implement a strategy (called its community engagement strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).*

## Implementing Community Participation Plan requirements

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) also requires that all planning authorities such as Councils outline how and when the community will be engaged across planning functions like policy making and assessment.

Our Community Engagement Strategy (this document) has been developed in accordance with these requirements as well as those set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*. The strategy also covers non-planning matters.

# Our engagement principles



The City of Parramatta's approach to community engagement is guided by eight key principles, which are based on the Community Participation principles outlined in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*:

## Building relationships

We act in an honest, open and respectful way to build strong relationships, partnerships, and trust with our stakeholders. We encourage effective and on-going partnerships with the community to provide meaningful opportunities for participation in decision-making.

## Right to be involved

We believe that our stakeholders have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them. All communication should outline that feedback is invited and no-one is prohibited from participating.

## Clarity of purpose

Our engagement is well-planned with a clearly defined purpose and stages for community input. We are clear about why, how, and what we are engaging about. If the community is affected by a decision they should be consulted.

## Accessible and inclusive

We actively seek views representative of the community, and we provide a range of engagement activities to ensure that the broadest possible range of stakeholders can participate. Barriers to engagement are identified and measures are put in place to help reduce or overcome these.

## Timely and coordinated

We engage early on and provide enough time for stakeholders to provide input so that views can be genuinely considered. We collaborate across Council to ensure our engagement activities are coordinated.

## Tailored

We use a range of engagement and communication methods that suit the purpose and type of project we are consulting on. We consider the impact of the proposed project, complexity, risk, timing and the range of stakeholders involved. Information should be in plain language, easily accessible, and in a form that facilitates community participation.

## Transparent

We make our decisions in an open and transparent way and provide feedback to our stakeholders in order to explain our decisions and let them know how their input has been considered.

## Learning from practice

We evaluate our engagement activities and learn from the feedback that has been provided to us.



# Engaging our community



If we are to effectively engage, we must have a clear picture of who we are engaging with. The diverse nature of our community highlights that a one-size-fits-all engagement approach will not work – we must constantly employ a range of engagement methods.

More than 250,000 people make Parramatta their home, and we're a fast-growing city with a diverse community. This video clip explains the current makeup of our city. [cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/about-parramatta/community-data-demographics](http://cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/about-parramatta/community-data-demographics)

## **We are fast growing**

By 2036, our population is forecast to grow to more than 443,000. We are young, with 29.1% of our population aged between 25 and 39, but we have a diverse range of age groups - 23.5% of our population is under 19 and 16.8% are over 60. Our median age is 34 years, two years younger than the median age in the Greater Sydney region. Our age profile is forecast to be similar in the future, with people aged between 25 and 39 making up around 30% of our population in 2041.

## **We are diverse**

More than 52% of our population speak a language other than English at home. Almost half of our population were born overseas with 28% arriving in Australia less than five years ago. The region will continue to grow and Parramatta's welcoming multicultural character will continue to attract more people to the area.

## **We recognise the traditional owners of our land**

We seek to address the legacy of our past and ensure a great quality of life for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, with 0.8% of the community identifying as part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. There are approximately 700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who travel to the City to work, as well as some 20,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Sydney who utilise services and facilities in the City of Parramatta.

## **We are prosperous**

More than 26% of the population are considered high income households. In the next five years, an estimated 30,000 additional people will be working in Parramatta. With more than \$10 billion in projected investment, the city will attract new workers in knowledge-intensive jobs.

## **We have vulnerable communities**

Nearly 15% of households are considered low income and earn less than \$650 per week. Just over 9% of people do not have an internet connection at home. Inequality across Australia has risen over the past 20 years and the share of wealth going to the lowest 20% of households continues to decrease. It is important for us to provide access to all sectors of the community to participate in engagement.

# Who do we engage with?

## Our stakeholders

A vital component of the community engagement process includes comprehensively reviewing and identifying key stakeholders who will be impacted by or who have an interest in a decision.

Our engagement aims to reach a broad cross-section of the community to ensure a range of views are heard. Stakeholders can be:

### Internal:

This mainly includes staff across different teams in Council, in addition to Councillors who represent the community.

Consulting early with internal stakeholders can add value to a project and fosters a culture of collaboration and effective communication within the organisation.

### Internal and external committees:

Council has a number of committees made up of staff, Councillors as well as external community members and they convene on issues relevant to specific topic areas. The committees include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee
- Access Advisory Committee

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Australia Day Awards Judging Panel
- Code of Conduct Panel of Conduct Reviews
- Heritage Advisory Committee
- Local Planning Panel
- Major Projects Advisory Committee
- Parramatta Cycleways Advisory Committee
- Parramatta Light Rail Community and Business Advisory Committee
- Parramatta Smart City Advisory Committee
- Parramatta Traffic Committee (PTC)
- Parramatta Traffic Engineering Advisory Group (TEAG)
- Riverside Theatres Advisory Board
- City of Parramatta Wentworth Point Working Group (CoP WPWG)
- CEO Performance Review Committee
- Community Grants Committee
- Council Significant Property Projects Committee
- Council Finance Committee.

### External:

The list of external stakeholders is long and varied. Stakeholder groups who may be identified in a community engagement process include:

- People who live, work, or visit the City of Parramatta
- Businesses operating in the City of Parramatta
- Active industry groups or associations
- Community, sporting, cultural and environmental groups
- Not-for-profits and voluntary groups
- State and federal government agencies and Local Members of Parliament
- Neighbouring local councils
- Young people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- Schools, colleges, and universities
- Older people or those living in assisted care.

# Inclusive participation



The City of Parramatta recognises that some communities are 'harder to reach' as they may have special needs or barriers to participation such as experience, language and accessibility. Council is committed to providing opportunities for these communities to participate and 'have a say' by:

- Translating resources and information where necessary
- Avoiding technical jargon and using language which is easy to understand
- Providing language aides at events where necessary
- Providing information in accessible formats
- Ensuring a variety of engagements methods are made available
- Ensuring venues are accessible
- Meeting the commitments outlined in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP).

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI)**

The City of Parramatta recognises the Darug peoples as First Australians, peoples of the oldest continuous living culture in the world. The name of Parramatta is a derivation of the word Burrumatta or 'place where the eels lie down' (breeding location for eels within the Parramatta River). We are

committed to working with Traditional Owners on matters of land, water, language, culture, and cultural heritage. Council, through its Reconciliation Action Plan, is working to embed indigenous issues and interests through its corporate documents, policies, and projects. We want to ensure that the voices of Darug peoples are included in this process and that our relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are not just transactional, but meaningful and lasting.

## **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities**

We recognise that our diversity of cultures and sense of community are our greatest strengths. Diversity is fundamental to our identity with 49.5% of residents born overseas and 52% speaking a language other than English at home.

We translate our communications and engagement materials according to the demographic profiles of the residents, visitors, and workers in our City. We work closely with a range of community, sporting, and cultural organisations to build strong and resilient communities. We celebrate culture and diversity, past, present, and future.

## **Young people**

Council is committed to building a city that is welcoming and inclusive of young people. We provide opportunities for young people to become active citizens through co-design initiatives as well as face to face and online engagement activities.

## **Vulnerable people**

We have vulnerable people that live, work, and visit the local government area including low income households, social housing tenants, the elderly, people experiencing homelessness, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI) people.

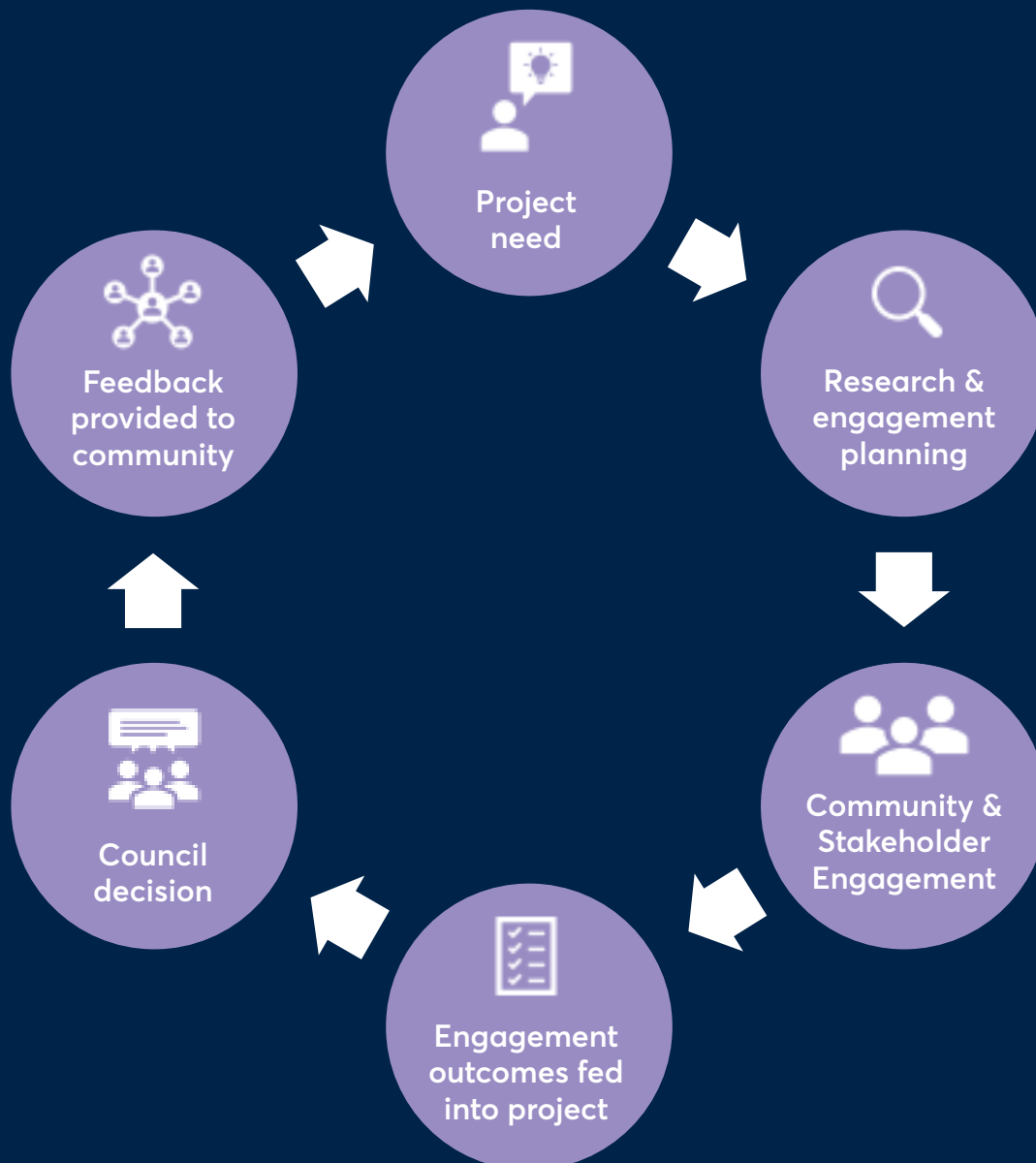
We are committed to creating engagement opportunities that allow vulnerable and harder-to-reach groups to have their views heard.

# Decision-making process

When the Council has a project, the person in charge will develop an engagement plan for their project. This Strategy will guide the way engagement is planned and completed, including lots of factors,

like how much the project is going to impact the community or how interested the community might be in the project. The requirements for public participation will also be considered, for example, minimum

or maximum exhibition timeframes to ensure the community can make submissions. The general process for starting engagement, and how it works is shown in the diagram below.





# What engagement looks like for the City of Parramatta

**Our engagement is usually linked to plans, strategies and work outlined in our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R).**

This framework shows how often we engage around those plans and strategies. Community engagement and the feedback that people provide influences every part of what we do, including the day to day activities and the overarching goals and strategies shown on the right.





# How we engage

## Levels of participation

Our approach to engagement can vary depending on the need and impact of the project. Legislation such as the *EP&A Act 1979* prescribes the minimum requirements for planning related projects. Council is also governed by the requirements specified in the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The IAP2 (International Association of Public Participation) Spectrum ([www.iap2.org.au](http://www.iap2.org.au)) shows that differing levels of participation are legitimate depending on the goals, timeframes, resources and levels of concern in the decision to be made. The IAP2 model is recommended by the Division of Local Government for preparation of Community Engagement Strategies.

Most importantly, the spectrum sets out the promise being made to the public at each participation level. Levels of public participation range from informing (low engagement, providing information) to empowering (providing decision-making capability to the community and stakeholders).

No single approach will serve all projects, and the Council will look at the issue, problem, or opportunity, what objectives can be achieved by engaging, and how stakeholders can help make decisions.

**Inform** – usually means that a decision has been made or action is needed, so the community and stakeholders are provided with information.

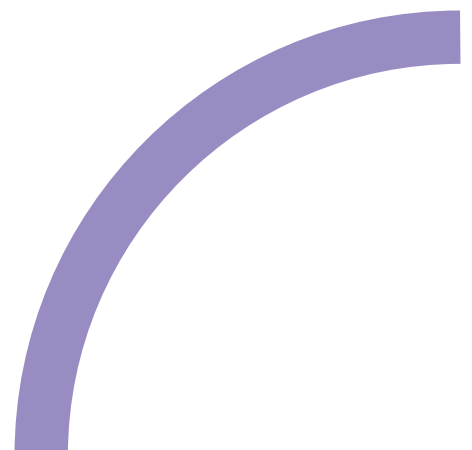
**Consult** – the community can provide feedback on the issues, options, and decisions.

**Involve** – the community's concerns and feedback are reflected in decision-making.

**Collaborate** – the community and Council partner in decision-making towards a common goal.

**Empower** – the community and stakeholders have final decision-making power.

The City of Parramatta provides a range of ways for the community and stakeholders to participate, as outlined in the table on page 17.





<b>Inform</b>	<b>Website and social media</b>	Social media channels such as facebook and the Council's website to share information.
	<b>Advertisements, signs, letters and notices</b>	Notifying about projects, policies, issues and ways to engage. A letter, sign, advertisement or notice may also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invite the community to participate in engagement</li> <li>• describe the matter, project or issue</li> <li>• Outline how people can find out more information</li> <li>• advise how to make a comment or be involved</li> <li>• outline the timeframe for consultation.</li> </ul>
	<b>Customer contact centre and Council libraries</b>	Call centre available for communities to find out information. Printed material and information made publicly available at Council libraries.
	<b>Translated communication materials</b>	Both online and in print that align with key community demographics to support our multicultural community.
<b>Consult and involve</b>	<b>Online engagement portal</b>	<a href="https://oursay.org/cityofparramatta">oursay.org/cityofparramatta</a> – a place for the community to share their ideas, have active conversations, and help shape plans, policies, and projects. The portal is optimised for mobile phones and language translations.
	<b>Research and Engagement Panel</b>	The panel is made up of 9,000 residents, visitors, business owners, and students. This panel receives email invitations to participate in online surveys and forums, in-person workshops, attend events or public meetings. For more information, visit <a href="https://cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/living-community/community-engagement-have-your-say/our-city-your-say">cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/living-community/community-engagement-have-your-say/our-city-your-say</a> .
	<b>Annual Youth Forum</b>	The Youth Forums are an opportunity for young people (aged 12-25 years) to engage directly with staff to discuss and provide feedback on Council plans and activities that are relevant to young people. The forum is held around April each year and is tailored for two different age groups – a session for school groups and a session for young people not in school.
	<b>Workshops and community meetings</b>	Meetings and workshops with community and stakeholders to work through an issue or to gather feedback on particular aspects of a project or policy related decision.
	<b>Council meetings</b>	Members of the community can participate in Council's formal meeting process prior to a decision being made as outlined in Council's Code of Meeting Practice. This can include speaking at a public forum, making submissions and petitions or as an observer at Council meetings.
	<b>Public exhibitions and submissions</b>	Exhibition process seeks written community and stakeholder feedback on a plan, policy or project.
	<b>Random selection surveys</b>	Using market research software for telephone, online, and offline surveys optimised for mobile phones and language translations.
	<b>Drop-in sessions and pop up stalls</b>	Casual and informal events where community and stakeholders can attend a drop-in session at a venue or a temporary pop up stall to gather information and provide feedback on an issue or project/policy related decision.
<b>Collaborate and empower</b>	<b>Advisory committees</b>	These committees are made up of various members of our community and Councillors who advise the Council on views, needs, and interests in the local area. Committee members are selected because of their experience or skill in the area relating to that committee interest. More information can be found online at <a href="https://cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/council/governance-of-the-council/advisory-committees">cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/council/governance-of-the-council/advisory-committees</a> .
	<b>Deliberative processes like 21st century town hall meetings and citizen juries</b>	Deliberative forums for in depth consideration of an issue by a cross section of the community to provide well informed feedback on how a decision should be made.
	<b>Community and stakeholder reference groups</b>	Groups of community and stakeholders that meet with staff, Councillors, or others to work through an issue, determine a decision for a project, policy or plan and provide advice on the decision.





# When we engage

This following table explains how we would engage around the plans and strategies, as well as other work we do, so the community knows what

to expect. Planning related projects have specific exhibition timeframes which must be met, these are outlined on the following pages.

When	Engagement level	How	What	Exhibition period
<b>Maintenance and renewal capital works</b>	Inform	Share balanced information on current activities and plans. Take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of Council's proposal	Communicate updates to keep community informed	We will let you know at least 14 days in advance of work
<b>Council Plans and Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike Plan</li> <li>• Parramatta Ways</li> <li>• Tourism Strategy</li> <li>• Cultural Plan</li> <li>• Economic Development Strategy</li> <li>• Heritage Plan</li> </ul>	Inform	Share balanced information on current activities and plans. Take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of Council's proposal	Communicate updates to keep community informed	We will let you know before anything changes
<b>Environmental Education Programs</b>	Involve, and empower	Share information around adopting sustainable behaviour changes	Directly influence environmentally sustainable behaviour change in the City of Parramatta	We work with residents, businesses and schools

When	Engagement level	How	What	Exhibition period
<b>Council's key long-term plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Delivery Program</li> <li>• Community Engagement Strategy</li> <li>• Local Strategic Planning Statement</li> <li>• Land Use Strategy*</li> </ul>	Involve	Work directly with the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities/channels for residents and ratepayers to share their views	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan	28 days
<b>Council's Annual Operational Plan and Budget</b>	Involve	Work directly with the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities/channels for residents and ratepayers to share their views	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan	28 days
<b>New capital works and place making</b>	Involve	Work directly with the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities/channels for residents and ratepayers to share their views	Directly reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan	We will provide at least 14 days' notice for any engagement opportunities
<b>Council's key planning instruments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Control Plan (DCP) (minor***)</li> <li>• Section 7.11 Plans</li> <li>• Voluntary Planning Agreement</li> </ul>	Consult	Ask for community views. In addition to minimum statutory provisions, take all reasonable steps to ensure known stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input	Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision	28 days

When	Engagement level	How	What	Exhibition period
<p><b>Council's key planning instruments -</b> Planning Proposals (minor<sup>***</sup>)</p>	<p>Consult</p>	<p>Ask for community views. In addition to minimum statutory provisions, take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to provide feedback</p>	<p>Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision</p> <p>Reasons for decisions are provided in the Council Report and through the Department of Planning Industry and Environment's (DPIE) website</p>	<p>28 days or:</p> <p>(a) if a different period of public exhibition is specified in the gateway determination for the proposal—the period specified, or</p> <p>(b) if the gateway determination specifies that no public exhibition is required because of the minor nature of the proposal—no public exhibition</p>
<p><b>Council's key planning instruments -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Proposals (major<sup>**</sup>)</li> <li>• Development Control Plans (DCP) (major<sup>**</sup>)</li> </ul>	<p>Involve</p>	<p>Work directly with the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities/channels for input</p>	<p>Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision</p> <p>Reasons for decisions are provided in the Council Report and through the Department of Planning Industry and Environment's (DPIE) website</p>	<p>28 days or:</p> <p>(a) if a different period of public exhibition is specified in the gateway determination for the proposal—the period specified, or</p> <p>(b) if the gateway determination specifies that no public exhibition is required because of the minor nature of the proposal—no public exhibition</p>
<p><b>Council's other key policies</b></p>	<p>Consult</p>	<p>Ask for community views about options identified by Council. Take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input</p>	<p>Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision</p>	<p>28 days</p>

When	Engagement level	How	What	Exhibition period
<b>Development Applications (DAs)</b> other than for complying development, designated development or for State Significant Development (SSD)	Consult	Ask for community views about options identified by Council. In addition to minimum statutory provisions, take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to provide feedback	Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision  Ensure Council's statement of reason for decision is published	14 days  <i>Note: See relevant DCPs for specific details (some specify longer timeframes for certain types of development)</i>
<b>DAs for designated development</b>	Consult	Ask for community views about options identified by Council. In addition to minimum statutory provisions, take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input	Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision  Ensure Council's statement of reason for decision is published	28 days  <i>Note: See relevant DCP for specific details (some specify longer timeframes in certain parts of the LGA)</i>
<b>Application for modification of development consent</b>	Consult	Ask for community views about options identified by Council. In addition to minimum statutory provisions take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input	Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision  Ensure Council's statement of reason for decision is published	Usually not less than 14 days unless the proposed modification is to correct anomalies or will have minimal environmental impact  <i>Note: See relevant DCPs for specific details</i>

When	Engagement level	How	What	Exhibition period
Re-exhibition of any amended application	Consult	Ask for community views about options identified by Council. In addition to minimum statutory requirements, take all reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders are advised of the opportunity to input	Recognise community views and concerns and ensure these are reflected as inputs into Council's final decision  Ensure Council's statement of reason for decision is published	Council may re-exhibit an amended application at its discretion dependent on the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extent it differs from the original application</li> <li>• environmental impact</li> <li>• effect on local amenity</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: See relevant DCPs for specific timeframes (where relevant)</i></p>

^ Exclusion of Christmas/New Year period: The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition. This is a requirement under the EP&A Act and as such this overrides provisions in DCPs that relate to this notification period.

*Note. See also section 36 (2) of the Interpretation Act 1987 for the applicable rule where an exhibition period includes a weekend or public holiday.*

Members of the community who are affected by proposed major development should be consulted by the proponent before an application for planning approval is made.

If a particular matter has different exhibition or notification period that apply under the EP& A Act, the longer period applies.

Submissions with respect to a plan, application or other matter may be made during the minimum period of its public exhibition. Where the exhibition is for a specified longer period, then submissions may be made during that specified longer period.

Where a plan, application or other matter has been publicly exhibited, the plan or application is not to be made, determined or finalised, until after the public exhibition period has ended.

Providing reasons for decisions will enable all stakeholders to a decision to understand why it was made. The statement of reasons can be very simple for simple decisions, and more detailed for complex decisions. For applications for development consent (DAs) and modifications of DAs (being an application that was publicly exhibited). Council must provide a public notification of:

- the decision, and
- the date of the decision, and
- the reasons for the decision (having regard to any statutory requirements applying to the decision), and
- how community views were taken into account in making the decision.

*\*An Employment Lands or Housing Strategy.*

*\*\*A precinct based planning proposal or DCP (such as the CBD Planning Proposal) or comprehensive LEP or DCP amendment (such as the Harmonisation Planning Proposal).*

*\*\*\*A minor planning proposal or development control plan is either site-specific or a single-issue type amendment.*





# Public exhibition

## What is public exhibition?

Public exhibition is the official period in which draft documents are made available for consultation and feedback. Public exhibition of draft documents and development applications must first be endorsed by Council before being made available for public comment.

The community and key stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback to Council, usually in the form of a written submission.

## How will I be notified?

The level of engagement may vary across projects but at a minimum Council will:

- Provide information on Council's website
- Provide notification to impacted residents and adjoining properties
- Advertise the public exhibition period in a local newspaper
- Make information available at the customer contact centre and libraries
- Ensure consistency with the notification requirements in the development control plan as they apply to any parcel of land.

## What if I don't agree with a document on exhibition?

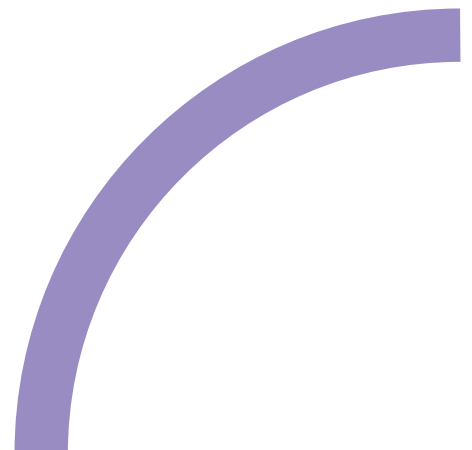
You can make a submission by post or email and clearly provide your reasons for objection. Council will then review all issues raised in a submission before making a decision. We take submissions seriously, regardless of the number of submissions received, we review the issues raised in each one.

You can expect us to acknowledge your submission in writing. We also want you to know that the submission may be released in public information and is not considered confidential.

## Exhibition timeframes

This section outlines the types of proposals that must be made available for public exhibition as a requirement of the EP&A Act 1979 and the minimum required exhibition timeframes.

There are mandatory and non-mandatory requirements that apply, and these are outlined to the right.



PLAN MAKING - Mandatory exhibition timeframes	
Draft Community Participation Plan	28 days
Draft regional or district strategic plans	45 days
Planning proposals for Local Environmental Plans (LEP) subject to a gateway determination	28 days or as specified by the gateway determination which may find, due to the minor nature of the proposal, that no public exhibition is required
Draft Development Control Plans (DCPs)	28 days
Draft contribution plans (including growth centres and planned precincts)	28 days
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	28 days

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT - Mandatory exhibition timeframes	
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State significant development)	14 days
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days

Several of our functions and proposals do not have minimum exhibition timeframes. In line with our community engagement objectives, we typically exhibit these type of documents as follows:

GENERAL - Non-mandatory exhibition timeframes	
Draft policies and guidelines	28 days based on the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal
Application for modification of development consent that is required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	Up to 14 days based on scale and nature of the proposal
Re-exhibition of any amended application or matter referred to above	Discretionary based on the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

There may be other proposals not subject to the mandatory exhibition timeframes for which we have the option to exhibit for at least 28 days and engage with the community in line with our community engagement objectives. Additionally, there may be some occasions where a government priority or administrative requirement demands immediate action on proposals that prevents the implementation of our usual community engagement process.

## Extending exhibition periods

We will always exhibit a proposal for the specified minimum timeframe and will consider an extended timeframe based on the nature and scale of the project. Any timeframes for engagement are in calendar days and include weekends and public holidays. Any public exhibition over the Christmas/New Year period would be extended into January the following year.

Council is also not required to make available for public inspection a planning matter that the publication of, would be contrary to public interest, because of its confidential nature, or any other reason.

## Feedback

There are many ways for the community to provide feedback, or raise questions outside of formal exhibition and we will always consider and respond to your views and concerns.

### Contact Centre

126 Church Street, Parramatta  
Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 5pm

### General enquiry line

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### General emails

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### Engagement team

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### Website

[cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au](http://cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au)

**Development line** – (02) 9806 5524

### National Relay Service

1300 555 727 (Speak and Listen)

133 677 (TTY)

0423 677 767 (SMS relay number)





# Implementation of goals & objectives

The Community Engagement Strategy is aligned with Council's community engagement aspirations, vision, and legislative obligations as outlined through the *Local Government Act 1993*, the *EP&A Act 1979*, and Council's *Community Strategic Plan*.

The strategy provides clear engagement goals, objectives, and actions for Council including:

## Overarching goal:

To involve, engage, listen, and be transparent with all of our communities when developing any policies, programs or activities (other than routine administrative matters). Importantly, the outcomes of community engagement support Council's efforts to:

- identify community objectives
- prioritise what Council delivers with its resources
- identify acceptable service levels
- monitor community satisfaction.

## Objective 1:

**To provide a best-practice, consistent, and considered approach to engagement that is meaningful and appropriate for our diverse communities of all ages and abilities.**

### Actions:

- Adopt an organisation-wide approach to engagement through the development of a Community Engagement Strategy (this document), policy, staff toolkit, and the adoption of the IAP2 framework
- Ensure all projects (other than those of an administrative nature) have a community engagement component. Provide support to project teams to design and deliver meaningful engagement activities
- Utilise best-practice online communication and engagement techniques including online panel participation, focus groups, social media, as well as the use of video, to create energy and excitement around Council's engagement activities
- Translation of materials to reach CALD communities where appropriate
- Enhance engagement between Councillors and the community through the provision of 'Councillor meet and greet' opportunities at Council run events and family fun days
- Provide staff with support and regular training in the IAP2 framework
- Provide staff with ongoing support and guidance regarding best-practice tools particularly for legislated engagement projects via a centralised approach to research and engagement
- Conduct an annual community and stakeholder research program to provide community insights and improve and inform internal decision-making
- Conduct an annual community satisfaction survey and maintain an overall satisfaction rating of 7 in 10 people who are satisfied/highly satisfied with council services
- Share engagement and research insights with staff via presentations, documented case studies and the internal publication of data to encourage informed, best-practice decision-making.

## Objective 2:

**Forge an open and collaborative culture across the organisation regarding the delivery and approach to community engagement.**

### Actions:

- Ensure that all business teams are planning for, budgeting and internally communicating all projects containing community engagement
- Develop and introduce a community engagement implementation plan template to assist with planning and delivery of activities
- Ensure community engagement plans are co-designed and agreed between Council's engagement team and the project or subject manager
- Ensure a flexible and responsive approach to the advice, tools, and support provided for each project, making sure the projects consider scale, budget, impacts, timeframes and meet legislative obligations

- Create a decision-making flow chart and register of projects to establish a clear process for the project or subject matter expert to receive early advice and support in community engagement
- Educate project teams regarding their responsibilities to comply with legislative requirements and Council policies and practices.

## Objective 3:

**Develop a strategy to increase participation and membership of the online research and engagement panel (Our City, Your Say).**

### Actions:

- Actively recruit new panel members at key activities and events
- Identify demographic gaps within the panel and actively target those groups to ensure the panel is demographically representative
- Increase panel membership by 3% annually (approx. 270 people)
- Improve youth membership by 3% through targeted promotion
- Explore new ways of engaging with the panel and increasing participation/response rates
- Maintain a 40% response rate from panel members annually.

## Objective 4:

**Implement cost effective engagement strategies and ensure best use of limited engagement resources across the organisation.**

### Actions:

- Raise awareness of best-practice and efficient engagement methods by sharing engagement and research insights with staff
- Provide staff with ongoing engagement support and training
- Manage Council's highly effective online research and engagement panel (Our City, Your Say)
- Promote and encourage the use of Council's social media platforms to increase community use.

## Objective 5

**Explore contemporary engagement methods with a view to improving and extending Council's engagement activities.**

### Actions:

- Actively participate in conferences, training, and forums
- Actively collaborate and share knowledge with other local, state and federal agencies where appropriate
- Identify and work with innovative and best-practice industry providers
- Source a community engagement tool/portal to provide a central location for all engagement activities.

## Objective 6

**Enhance oversight of how community engagement is being conducted and integrated into decision-making.**

### Actions:

- Prepare a quarterly community engagement summary report/dashboard for the Executive and Councillors
- Conduct quarterly community engagement meetings with key team leaders, Council Managers, and staff to exchange information on policies, tools, and processes to support delivery of engagement
- Conduct regular meetings for key project teams undertaking planned or current engagement activities. Ensure engagement requirements, adequate budget resources and lead times are incorporated into project approval
- Update elected officials about legislative changes and how community participation will inform decision-making and highlight opportunities for Councillor involvement.





# Evaluation and reporting: measuring success

Monitoring and reviewing Council's engagement activities is essential in order to identify areas for improvement and to realise goals more efficiently. Council will use a variety of evaluation and reporting methods to assess and communicate its progress including:

- Undertaking annual audits to check progress against the objectives identified in this strategy
- Reviewing the strategy, policy and toolkit every four years
- Undertaking a community satisfaction survey annually and reporting these outcomes
- Reviewing participation levels in engagement activities including the Our City, Your Say panel
- Reviewing verbal and written feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness of our engagement activities
- Number of staff trained in the IAP2 framework annually
- Quantitative and qualitative information collected
- Quarterly executive level reporting to improve visibility of engagement delivery.

## Responsibilities

A dedicated budget for community engagement activities regarding key Corporate Planning documents, such as the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework suite, sits within the Governance and Planning portfolios.

All other community engagement activities except for the annual community satisfaction survey, the management of the online panel, and centralised database of projects and staff training, are to be funded by the relevant council department seeking input from the community.

All business teams must plan for community engagement, ensure there is adequate budget set aside for engagement activities, and communicate within Council on an annual basis the engagement they have planned for the coming period. The subject/project manager or expert is responsible for complying with legislative requirements and the City of Parramatta Community Engagement Strategy.

The Community Engagement team is a supporting function providing access to the online panel, providing advice on resources, engagement design, and engagement planning.

# Glossary

Term	Definition
Contribution plans	A plan developed by councils for the purpose of gaining financial contributions from new development towards the cost of new and upgraded public amenities and/or services required to accommodate the new development
Community Strategic Plan (CSP)	A Council plan prepared under the Local Government Act 1993 which focuses on achieving the long term social, environmental and economic aspirations of the community
Designated development	Designated development refers to developments that are high-impact developments (e.g. likely to generate pollution) or are located in or near an environmentally sensitive area (e.g. a coastal wetland)
Development Control Plans (DCP)	A plan that provides detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in a Local Environment Plan (LEP)
Gateway determination	A gateway determination is issued following an assessment of the strategic merit of a proposal to amend or create an Local Environment Plan (LEP) and allows for the proposal to proceed to public exhibition
International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)	An industry association guiding the standards and principles of engagement across the world but also from an Australian perspective
Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	A process which involves an amendment to a Council's LEP which sets the planning framework for a local government area
Local Strategic Planning Statement	A strategy that focuses on the vision and priorities for land use within a council area



**CITY OF  
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