

Integrated Community Strategic Engagement

Tuesday, 19 September 2023
City Finance and Governance Committee

Strategic Alignment - Enabling Priorities

Program Contact:

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Public

Approving Officer:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's commitment to seeking and listening to the feedback of the community is a priority to ensure that Council can make informed decisions with the views of the community in mind. Council and the Community have raised suggestions for improving the way in which community engagement is conducted and how community feedback informs decision making.

Council is undertaking a review of Community Engagement to best reflect the changing needs of the community, meet legislative requirements and focus on good practice. The completion of this review includes the introduction of a legislative Community Engagement Charter, in accordance with the Local Government Reform.

To support immediate improvements to the way community feedback can be sought, considered and shared in a meaningful and timely manner, an Integrated Community Engagement Framework is proposed.

Conducting more face to face engagement, undertaking a business/resident precinct engagement approach and bringing together the consultation for key decisions have been identified as a key opportunities to enhance the integration of engagement. Council has a number of significant upcoming strategy and policy decisions to progress that require community participation and the interplay of these engagement activities is essential.

The three primary areas of focus for the Integrated Community Engagement framework include:

- Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2028, being the primary direction setting Strategy that guides Council's strategic and policy decision making, sets a vision for the future and aspirations to deliver key activities, with targets and measures of success (Community engagement to occur in late 2023)
- Council's City Plan, being the primary development and spatial plan that articulates the current built form of the city and guides decision making for future needs for the city (Targeted stakeholder engagement occurring in September 2023 as part of the evidence and research basis for the plan with Community engagement occurring in early 2024)
- Council's Transport Strategy, being the primary strategy that guides the accessibility transport and movement for the city, supporting the Asset Management Plans. (Community engagement occurring in early to mid 2024)

This report proposes an Integrated Community Engagement Framework, as well as a program of forecasted activities for 23/24 for Council information.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 26 September 2023 for consideration

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL THAT COUNCIL

1. Endorses the Integrated Community Engagement Framework and 2023/24 Program, Attachment A to Item 4.7 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 19 September 2023.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Enabling Priorities
Policy	Council's Community Consultation Policy is relevant to the consideration of information within this report (Link 1 view here).
Consultation	There is no consultation required as a result of the decision of this report, however, the report contains information about consultation activities that are occurring, or will occur as a result of Council considering other decision-making reports
Resource	Activities outlined in this report will be conducted using existing resources or approved budgets. There are no additional resources required as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	There are no additional risks identified as a result of this report
Opportunities	There are no additional resources required as a result of this report
23/24 Budget Allocation	There are no additional budget resources required as a result of this report
Proposed 24/25 Budget Allocation	There are no additional budget resources required as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
23/24 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Background

1. In April 2023, a workshop was undertaken with Council Members to enable Council to shape how they wish to consult and engage with the community.
2. A summary of the feedback received includes:
 - There needs to be a breakdown of our city demographics to better understand the needs of our community.
 - There is a genuine lack of trust in the online engagement platform and brand of Your Say.
 - Our Council and community would like more face-to-face interactions and we need to ensure we use different ways to engage.
 - We need to be more considered in packaging engagement information from our community.
 - We need to utilise existing relationships, groups and precincts and provide tools to support them to be involved in decisions.
 - It's important we work with other organisations and stakeholders and ensure they are aware of council's projects and activities.
 - Our engagement needs to be inclusive and accessible to all community members.
 - Community engagement is vital to the success of the City of Adelaide.
 - Our engagement needs to be innovative and inclusive and not just about 'surveys'.
 - We need to ensure we hear the voice of our community and learn from their knowledge.
3. Anecdotal feedback collected over the past 12 months from the community about opportunities to improve engagement include:
 - a desire for the community to participate in engagement that informs decisions of Council,
 - to be notified in advance of engagement activities that affect them,
 - that Council conduct engagement with the existing community groups face to face, in their area or neighbourhoods,
 - and to ensure that the community is informed about how the feedback has been used (closing the loop).
4. To ensure valuable community and Council Member feedback can inform the engagement approach, the Administration has conducted a review of community engagement and identified opportunities for improvement and an Integrated Community Engagement Framework (the Framework) has been proposed.
5. The intention of the integrated approach is to ensure that the community is aware of significant decisions of council in advance, and their ability to provide input into multiple decisions at one time, with a focus on making it easier to participate in decision making. The Framework will support the significant plans and strategies that Council are considering to be developed in a cohesive way and that clarity is provided to the community on the role and functions of each plan.
6. To support the Framework, an Integrated Community Engagement Program 2023/24 has been developed and will outline the community engagement activities associated with Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2028, City Plan, and Integrated Transport Strategy and other key policy and project engagements over the current financial year.

The Integrated Community Engagement Framework

Why integration is important

7. The following considerations have been identified to support integrated community engagement:
 - 7.1. Council's purpose is to understand, support and provide services that meet the needs of our community. Community engagement is the primary way in which our Council can seek, listen to and share the feedback of the community and represent these views in decision making.

- 7.2. Our primary legislative obligations are set out within the *City of Adelaide Act 1998* and the *Local Government Act 1999* and our Strategic Plan sets the direction and vision for our future fulfillment of these responsibilities along with other related legislative obligations.
- 7.3. The breadth of our services, facilities, programs and projects are significant and varies, and one can never be delivered independently to the others. Community involvement in decision making is critical, particularly with the intertwined nature of local government in mind.
- 7.4. Therefore, integrating the way in which we engage for the big decisions and delivery of Council services and projects will ensure that the Administration:
 - 7.4.1. Identifies in advance which decisions will benefit from community engagement
 - 7.4.2. Identifies related decisions and deliverables in advance
 - 7.4.3. Identifies how conversations with the community about these decisions and deliverables can be planned in the most meaningful way for our community, to inform Council decision-making
 - 7.4.4. Creates a consistent and predictable approach to planning and delivering engagement
 - 7.4.5. Builds the level of trust that the community has in Council
 - 7.4.6. Continues to conduct engagement and consultation activities in line with Council's Consultation Policy Statements.

How we will integrate community engagement

8. The integration of community engagement activities will involve:
 - 8.1. Ensuring that each engagement is conducted in a way that is informative, interactive and inclusive of people in the City of Adelaide and broader South Australia; and in a variety of methods.
 - 8.2. Planning our engagement activities in line with our Strategic Plan, Annual Business Plan and Budgets, project delivery and Policy/Strategy review cycles in advance.
 - 8.3. Communicating in advance the big decisions of Council when the community's participation will be sought.
 - 8.4. Planning a business/resident precinct based approach (based on the precinct areas supported by Council's Place Coordinators) for engagement activities that relates to each area, occurring on a quarterly basis in their community.
 - 8.5. Bringing known data and insights to these engagements and subsequent decisions to assist the community to provide informed and connected responses.
 - 8.6. Creating a cycle of conversations to ensure the community is asked once and their feedback can be used multiple times - leveraging from conversations and information we have already captured to inform other decisions .
 - 8.7. Sharing with the community what we have heard and how it has impacted decision making (or will impact it in the future).
 - 8.8. The use of technology to support these processes.

Supporting the changes

9. To ensure the integration of community engagement is successful, and to reflect the feedback of Council Members, the following activities have been identified and will be applied:
 - 9.1. Provide a forward agenda of significant strategies, plans and policies reviews that requires community input – creating an Integrated Community Engagement Program for each financial year.
 - 9.2. Create quarterly communications and forums in business/resident precincts to share what will be occurring in the coming months.
 - 9.3. Be clear with the type of involvement the community can have in the decision – relying on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum as described within Council's Consultation Policy.
 - 9.4. Create more signage at relevant project sites to ensure the community is informed about what works will be occurring.
 - 9.5. Ensure our online presence and physical collateral are of the same family by creating visual/design elements that are consistent to reinforce the City of Adelaide brand.

Current Policy Statements

10. Councils current policy statements continue to be an important part of this Framework. When engaging the community in a decision-making process (of which legislated public consultation is a part) Council will:
 - seek out and encourage contributions from people who may be affected by or interested in a decision.
 - provide relevant, timely and balanced information so people can contribute in a meaningful way.
 - provide a variety of appropriate and accessible ways for people to have their say and to speak honestly.
 - actively listen so that people's ideas and input assist in making the final decision
 - consider the needs and interests of all people in the decision-making process.
 - tell the community about the final decision, and how their input was considered.
 - collaborate with peak bodies and other levels of Government to achieve common goals for Council.

Primary Focus for this Integrated Community Engagement Program 2023/24

11. The Integrated Community Engagement Program 2023/24 will enable the community's feedback from each activity to inform the next planning or engagement activity, and will focus on three primary engagements:
 - The Strategic Plan's role in setting Council's vision, aspirations and commitments for outcomes for the city and community over the next four years. Community engagement on the Strategic Plan is planned to occur from mid-September to the end of October 2023.
 - The City Plan's role in informing the public realm requirements and opportunities in a spatial format for the next ten years. Community engagement on the City Plan is planned to occur in early 2024.
 - The Transport Strategy's role in setting the movements and accessibility requirements and opportunities and the related infrastructure requirements. Community engagement on the Transport Strategy is planned to occur from April 2024.
12. The program for 2023/24 also includes the strategies, plans, policies and projects which require (or have been determined to require) community engagement efforts.
13. The key phases of document development and review, and project development have been identified through a community engagement lens to show where and when engagement is most likely to occur in the development cycle. These include:
 - 13.1. Planning - identifies the need to develop or review a strategy, plan or policy, defining, scoping and planning the content, stakeholders, content and engagement requirements.
 - 13.2. Research and data - gathers all the information we already hold and conducting purposeful activities such as market research, surveys or other research activities to identify any areas of information we are yet to learn about. This can include identifying reputable sources and best/great practice, as well as relying on our staff expertise and experience. This step creates the evidence base for Council to consider prior to adopting a plan, strategy or policy for the purpose of consultation.
 - 13.3. Drafting - uses the knowledge, research, data to form a draft for Council to consider.
 - 13.4. Consultation - conducts the engagement activities that are most suitable for the decision making required, in a way that meets the needs and expectations of the impacted community. For many of the items in the 2023/24 program, there will be legislative requirements that need to be addressed.
 - 13.5. Analyse and Amend - considers all inputs to determine if the feedback or research gives rise to a necessary change or amendment to the planned document
 - 13.6. Adopt and 'close the loop' - the official decisions of Council is undertaken, and the community is informed about the result and how their feedback has been used to inform that outcome. This information is also used to feed into the cycle of other plans, strategies and policies under development or review.

Current Engagement Priorities

14. The priority engagement activities that will fall under the integrated approach include the Councils Strategic Plan 2024-2028, City Plan and Transport Strategy. The information collected from the community for each activity will be shared (where appropriate) to inform the other priority engagements.

- 14.1. Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2028, being the primary direction setting Strategy that guides Council's strategic and policy decision making, sets a vision for the future and aspirations to deliver key activities, with targets and measures of success.
- 14.2. The community engagement to occur in late 2023. The key steps for the upcoming for the whole of community engagement for the Strategic Plan are:
 - 14.2.1. Public Notice to be published via The Advertiser and SA Gazette.
 - 14.2.2. Written communications to key stakeholders i.e. State and Federal elected representatives, CEO's of councils and LGA, CoA Panels and Committees, President/Coordinator residents and precinct groups.
 - 14.2.3. Your Say page on Council's website seeking the feedback and views of the community.
 - 14.2.4. Social media campaign.
 - 14.2.5. Community Forums for business/resident precinct areas, which may also align to other projects (timing of the Strategic Plan engagement permitting).
 - 14.2.6. Drop in sessions at Council customer facing sites.
- 14.3. Council's City Plan, being the primary development and spatial plan that articulates the current built form of the city and guides decision making for future needs for the city. The City Plan will be an innovative tool to enable data-led decision making about the growth of our city towards 2036.
- 14.4. Targeted stakeholder engagement for the City Plan will occur in September 2023 as part of the evidence and research basis for the plan with whole of community engagement occurring in early 2024. The key steps for the upcoming for the targeted stakeholder engagement for the City Plan are:
 - 14.4.1. Website created and launched.
 - 14.4.2. Launch event for targeted stakeholder engagement.
 - 14.4.3. City Plan Studio established in the Adelaide Town Hall meeting hall to facilitate the Targeted stakeholder engagement which includes five theme based forums and 4 drop in sessions.
 - 14.4.4. Surveys available for those who attend the targeted stakeholder engagement.
 - 14.4.5. Letters to the targeted stakeholders seeking written submissions and feedback.
- 14.5. Council's Transport Strategy, being the primary strategy that guides the accessibility transport and movement for the city, supporting the Asset Management Plans.
- 14.6. Community engagement for the Transport Strategy will occur in early to mid 2024.

Related Legislative Amendments

15. The Administration is aware that a legislated Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) has been developed by the Local Government Association and the Office of Local Government and is awaiting a participation review or general consultation process (the community at large) prior to proclamation. As this Charter will likely impact community engagement policies and frameworks, the Administration has paused bringing the review back to Council. It is expected this will be available in October or November 2023

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Council's Consultation Policy

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Integrated Community Engagement Program for 2023/24

- END OF REPORT