

Update on progress of Integrated Community Engagement Framework

Strategic Alignment - Our Corporation

Public

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City Finance and Governance Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the endorsement of the Integrated Community Engagement Framework (the Framework) by Council on 26 September 2023, Administration has been providing regular updates on how this framework has been implemented. This update follows information provided to Council in November 2023 and has a focus on activities between November 2023 and March 2024.

This report updates on activities related to the three key projects under the Framework – the Strategic Plan 2024-2028, City Plan, and the Integrated Transport Strategy – plus examples of how the Framework has been applied, and also a response to one of the questions in Council’s 22 August 2023 resolution relating to consultation with residents in high-rise buildings.

The report outlines next steps in Administration’s communication with Council Members around community engagement. It also flags Administration’s commitment to continuously improving community engagement while awaiting the outcome of the Office of Local Government’s ‘Local Government Participation and Elections Review’, and its revised Community Engagement Charter.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL:

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Notes the update on the progress of the Integrated Community Engagement Framework, and the Integrated Community Engagement Program 2023/24 (Attachment A to Item 7.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 16 April 2024).
2. Notes that a further update on the progress of the Integrated Community Engagement Framework will be provided in the second half of the year to wrap up 2023/24 and that future updates in this space will be provided to Council Members via E-News.
3. Notes the outcome of an internal review into community engagement with people living in high-rise buildings, and the report assessing impacts of distribution of promotional material for the consultation on the Draft Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (Attachment B to Item 7.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 16 April 2024).
4. Notes the status quo approach to engaging with the western City community until such time as the Integrated Community Engagement Framework is fully implemented, including work to review Council’s approach to supporting local economic activity, place activation and precinct engagement.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Corporation
Policy	Council’s Community Consultation Policy is relevant to the consideration of information within this report
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	Not 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. An Integrated Community Engagement Framework (the Framework) was proposed at the 19 September 2023 City Finance and Governance Committee and endorsed by Council on 26 September 2023.
2. The Framework focuses on making it easier for the community to participate in decision-making by ensuring that they are aware of significant decisions of Council in advance and can provide input into multiple decisions at a time. It also supports significant plans and strategies under consideration by Council to ensure cohesion, clarity and a consistent narrative for the community by recommending ways to better integrate community engagement activities ([Link 1](#)).
3. At the 21 November 2023 meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee, an update was provided on the progress of the Framework for noting ([Link 2](#)).

April update on the progress of the Framework

4. The Integrated Community Engagement Program 2023/24 (**Attachment A**) enables community feedback from each activity to inform the next planning or engagement activity and focuses on three primary engagements – the Draft Strategic Plan 2024-2028, City Plan, and Integrated Transport Strategy.
5. The feedback gathered from each project will be used in the development of other key projects. For example, the findings of the consultation from the Asset Management Plans, draft Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) and City Plan will feed into the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2024-2028. This ensures any insights gained are shared across Council to inform other services, projects and decisions.

Strategic Plan 2024-2028

6. The results of the consultation on the Draft Strategic Plan 2024-2028 were presented to the City Finance and Governance Committee on 21 November 2023. The Strategic Plan 2024-2028 was adopted by Council on 12 December 2023 and now provides direction for the planning and budgeting of projects and services. The community has been informed about how their feedback will be used to inform various Council decisions concerning policy, planning, services, and projects.

City Plan

7. The City Plan launched an online engagement activity from 1 March to 8 April 2024. This engagement activity allows participants to ‘drop a pin’ on a map to gather their views on what was important to them in their local area and identify opportunities for growth and renewal. For the remainder of 2023/24, the City Plan will focus on engaging residents through a combination of online and in-person events to build on what we have heard.

Integrated Transport Strategy

8. The Integrated Transport Strategy will provide evidence-based strategic direction for transport networks and systems in the city. It will facilitate effective decision-making and ongoing action and evaluation to drive change and provide clear information about transport policies and desired street and transport network outcomes.
9. Two phases of community engagement are planned. The first focuses on the strategy framework and discussion papers, to set out development of the strategy, baseline information, and issues and opportunities. The second focuses on the draft strategy, including draft transport network maps, outlining how streets will change to achieve the desired place and movement outcomes for people, and an implementation plan.

How this Framework has been applied

10. A integrated online and in-person engagement approach has been adopted in response to Council Member feedback to improve inclusivity and accessibility, support informative, interactive and inclusive engagement, and capture diverse perspectives. Having a community engagement presence at existing events provides the organisation additional opportunities to interact face-to-face with the community. The following are examples of in-person activities undertaken since November 2023:

10.1. University of Adelaide Welcome Day – 19 February 2024

The University of Adelaide Welcome Day attracted over 2,000 students and allowed the City of Adelaide (CoA) to strengthen community engagement amongst students. Administration engaged with over 200 community members and informed them of ongoing consultation projects, such as the draft DAIP and Draft Integrated Climate Strategy 2030.

10.2. Fringe Vibes on Hutt Street – 2 March 2024

An interactive community engagement stall was set up at the Fringe Vibes on Hutt Street event to share information about current consultation projects. Over 200 community members attended and participated in a range of activities to provide their feedback. The feedback gathered is informing projects and initiatives such as the Draft DAIP, the Integrated Climate Strategy 2030, place connections to the south-east, City Plan, and the Integrated Transport Strategy.

11. Insights obtained from these sessions will inform decision-making and facilitate a cycle of conversations that builds relationships with the community. Further opportunities to leverage existing events are being identified to progress the integrated approach.
12. A precinct/neighbourhood focus based on areas supported by Council's Place Coordinators and the City Plan is being considered. This allows CoA to frame upcoming consultation activities via a more a strategic approach focussed on local communities and places.

Response to 22 August 2023 Council Resolution – consultation with high-rise inhabitants

13. Council on 22 August 2023 resolved to request '*an internal review of the consultation process to consider how we consult with residents of high-rise buildings, how decisions are made when there is no consensus, and how transparency, and communications can be improved with community members.*' The response to this part of the Motion is below.

Consultation with residents of high-rise buildings

14. Administration reviewed current consultation processes with residents in high-rise buildings and identified physical access as a key issue. This means the effectiveness of communications materials such as letter box drops was limited for these residents due to the inability to deliver such materials. Based on the distribution of promotional material for the consultation on the Draft Strategic Plan 2024-2028, it was recognised that several residential apartments could be not accessed, the majority of these being student accommodation (see **Attachment B** for details).
15. Consequently, Administration is working with student co-ordinators to facilitate the distribution of printed materials. We are also considering liaising with bodies corporate or building managers to communicate to residents in high-rise apartments regarding Council's consultation activities.
16. The outcome of the review highlights the importance of an integrated online and in-person engagement approach to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. While there is a preference for more face-to-face community engagement, the use of online approaches mitigates issues around physical access to certain buildings.

How decisions are made without consensus

17. The purpose of public consultation is to allow community members to provide feedback on issues that are important to them or may impact on their local community. The CoA undertakes community consultation on a range of projects, policies and initiatives. Depending on the type of project and the engagement tool used, a decision is not always required. For more significant projects such as Strategic Plans and Business Plan and Budgets, Administration collates, analyses and presents the feedback to support Council decision-making.

Improving transparency and communications

18. Administration endeavours to 'close the loop' with the community consistently across all consultation projects. This includes developing a standardised template to ensure we communicate to community members on the outcomes of the consultation and how their feedback has been used. Administration is also making minor process improvements encouraging staff to close the loop on their projects.
19. Better transparency will result from improving how we share community engagement insights across the organisation, to ensure we build on what we have already heard from the community and not repeatedly ask the same questions of our community.
20. Work is also being progressed to develop a process to allow consistent presentation of community engagement feedback to Council.

Response to 27 February 2024 Council resolution – exploring establishment of a community advisory committee for the Western part of Adelaide

21. Council resolved on 22 August 2023 to seek ‘a draft proposal for the establishment of a community advisory committee of people who bring local knowledge and ideas and are prepared to champion the west as a safe, supportive, connected community with a strong unique culture.’ The initial response to this part of the Motion is below.
22. The City of Adelaide and the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) support a range of existing community and business advisory groups through precinct groups and place coordinators.
23. Other groups currently operating in the West End include the Adelaide West End Association; the Hindley Street Stakeholders Reference Group, formed to provide advice to the Hindley Street Revitalisation project; and the West End Village Association Inc.
24. The City Plan will facilitate and guide future growth and development in the City of Adelaide from July 2024, including consideration of social and community infrastructure required to support population growth. Stakeholder engagement activities around City Plan are continuing, including with residents of the western side of Adelaide.
25. Separately CoA plans in Q1 2024/25 to externally review Council’s approach to supporting local economic activity, place activation and precinct engagement. This Review work will be a necessary input to finalising the Framework engagement approach going forward, and define approaches to engaging with all groups across the City.
26. Until the Integrated Community Engagement Framework is fully implemented, Administration proposes using existing governance structures and resources to engage with the community.

Next steps / Related Legislative Amendments

27. Administration will further update Council in the second half of the year on the process of integrating community engagement for 2023/24. That will be the last update in the current format.
28. Following the final report, Administration will update Council Members on community engagement via E-News. Council Members will that way be provided with more up-to-date information on community engagement developments given shorter e-News lead times compared to those for formal reports.
29. Administration is aware of the legislated Community Engagement Charter being developed as part of the South Australian Office of Local Government’s ‘Local Government Participation and Elections Review’. Consultation on this concluded 28 March 2024 with outcomes expected to be published in May 2024.
30. This Community Engagement Charter is likely to impact CoA’s community engagement policies and frameworks, and Administration continues to undertake continuous improvement activities ahead of reporting back to Council on the finalised Community Engagement Charter.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Integrated Community Strategic Engagement – 19 September 2023

Link 2 - Update on the progress of the Framework – 21 November 2023

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Integrated Community Engagement Program for 2023/24

Attachment B – Strategic Plan delivery report
