



Strategy Refresh Focus Group Report

Client: City of Parramatta

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We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, Ancestors and Elders past and present.

We recognise the strength, resilience and contributions of First Nations Peoples, and the eternal and spiritual connection held in the lands, skies and waters, through cultural practices and beliefs.

Our team is proud to live, learn and thrive in the place we now call Australia, and recognise sovereignty has never been ceded by First Nations Peoples of this continent.

As embedded in our values, we are committed to building connected, healthy and resilient communities and creating purposeful outcomes that reflect our deep appreciation for the peoples and cultures that make us who we are and shape where we are going — together as one.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Endorsed by the City of Parramatta in 2018, the *Community Strategic Plan 2018-2038 Butbutt yura barra ngurra* (CSP), sets out a long-term vision for the area to be Sydney's central city, sustainable, liveable and productive - inspired by our communities. Updated in 2022, the CSP has six key goals: Fair, Accessible, Welcoming, Green, Thriving and Innovative.

The CSP is supported by a number of strategies, which help to make this vision a reality. These documents identify ideas, actions, and opportunities for different areas that can be impacted around Parramatta. They set out how Council can work together with community and collaborate with partners to make life better for all people - whether they live, work, visit or study in Parramatta.

Cred Consulting was engaged by City of Parramatta Council to design and deliver a series of focus groups to inform the refresh and development of four of Council's strategies:

- Socially Sustainable Parramatta Framework
- Economic Development Plan
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Smart City and Innovation Strategy.

The focus groups followed an earlier broad engagement program held in 2022.

1.2 Purpose of engagement

The focus groups aimed to:

- Test principles, priorities and/or actions in the draft strategies
- Identify how the strategies could be improved to better meet the needs and expectations of the community.

1.3 Engagement program

The focus groups were held on the following dates:

- Economy focus group: 26 April 2023
- Environmental sustainability focus group: 27 April 2023
- Social focus group: 3 May 2023
- Smart city and innovation focus group: 4 May 2023.

1.4 Recruitment of participants

Focus group participants were independently recruited by Taverner Research, to ensure a demographically representative group of the community were in attendance at each session.

The selection process was designed to ensure the group of participants reflected the Parramatta LGA census data as closely as possible. A range of demographic factors were considered, including suburb, ward, age, gender, household type, housing tenure, cultural background and ability.

The recruitment process aimed to reflect census data for the LGA where possible, however this was ultimately dependent on the mix of community members who expressed interest, indicated availability for the session and attended the session. The focus was on ensuring a broad mix of representation.

2. Economy

2.1 About the Economy focus group

The Economy focus group was held on 26 April 2023 to inform Council's Economic Development Strategy. Cred Consulting facilitated the focus group online via Zoom.

The purpose of the focus group was to explore community priorities proposed in the Draft Economic Development Strategy, including how clear they are, how they resonate with the community and ideas and suggestions to achieve these priorities.

The session commenced with an ice-breaker quiz to engage participants and encourage them to start thinking about the subject matter, and a brief presentation by Council staff describing the strategy and providing context. This was followed by a facilitated conversation that focused on the following priorities in the Economic Development Strategy:

- Our City is integrated and well-planned with access to jobs, services and leisure
- Our City is vibrant and a destination of choice
- Our economy is strong, diverse, and resilient

Participants were provided the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas throughout the 1.5 hour session. At the conclusion of the session, Council staff outlined the next steps for the project.

2.2 What we heard

This section reports findings by questions under each priority.

2.2.1 Priority: Our City is integrated and well-planned with access to jobs, services and leisure

How important is easy access to jobs to you?

As shown in Figure 1, the majority of participants (15) indicated access to jobs is very important or important.

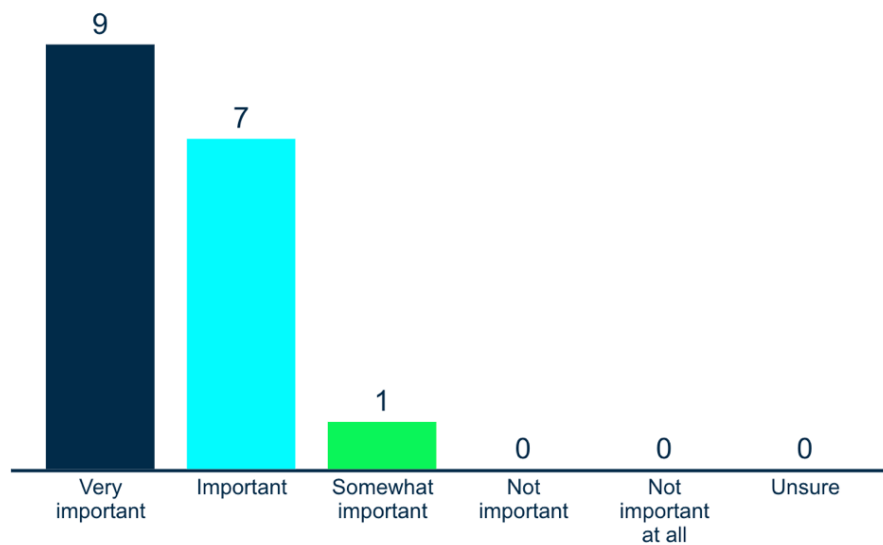
Overall, most participants told us easy access to jobs close to home is very important because it allows for a better work-life balance, with less time spent on travel, allowing more time to be spent with family and after work activities. One participant also noted less travel will have a better outcome for the environment.

One participant indicated easy access to jobs is somewhat important, noting it's not important to travel to the office as there are so many jobs offering work from home, and would like to see better connectivity from Parramatta to other areas to make access to workplaces easier.

"I want something that I can walk to or even catch public transport quickly to that location, I want to spend more time with family."

“If people have to go to work [travelling] to Sydney CBD, it adds unnecessary traffic to the roads and crowd on the train. If more people are travelling, it adds to pollution – besides saving time travelling, you’re also saving the environment.”

Figure 1 - How important is easy access to jobs to you?



What kind of jobs would you like to access closer to home?

Participants were asked what kind of jobs they would like to access closer to home, with suggestions including:

- IT jobs (4 comments)
- Council/government jobs (2 comments)
- Retail (2 comments)
- Healthcare (2 comments)
- Corporate / office (2 comments)
- All jobs (2 comments)
- Jobs close to home (2 comments)
- Flexible jobs
- Accounting, finance
- High paying jobs
- Transport
- Subject matter expert offering jobs, and
- Jobs that lead to careers e.g. where you can grow without having to relocate.

One participant expressed they would like to see IT jobs closer to home because the industry is currently growing.

Two participants expressed they value jobs closer to home and that are easy to access via public transport.

“I use public transport and also my son lives in Rooty Hill with intellectual disability, so it takes me two hours door to door even though I live in Eastwood. I might not work, but if I did have a job in Parramatta, it would be easier for me to travel to him - a shorter time.”

How important is easy access to services to you?

As shown in Figure 2, all participants indicated easy access to services is very important or important (16 participants).

Parramatta is close to services

Some participants indicated they moved to Parramatta because of its close proximity to services such as healthcare and childcare, and easy access to services via public transport or by walking.

Travel time and access to services by public transport

One participant noted easy access to services close to home is important to allow time to travel to and from appointments.

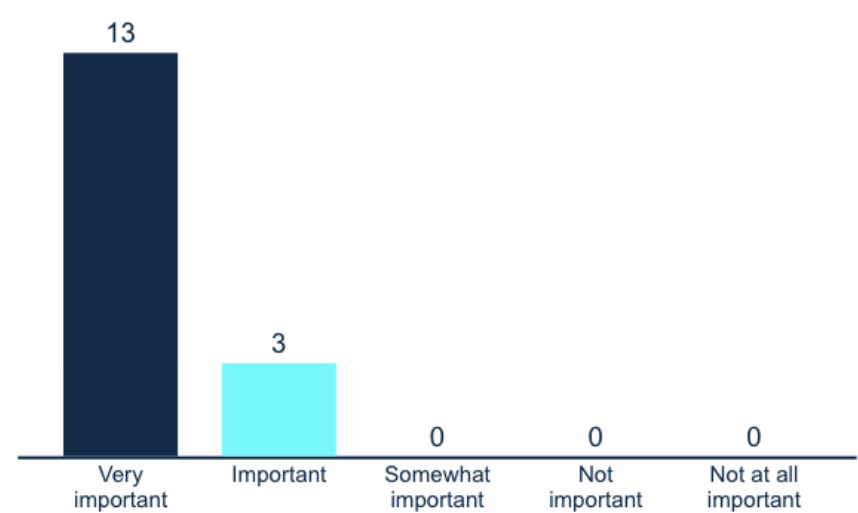
One participant expressed public transport is important to facilitate easy access to services.

“Probably one of the reasons why I moved here - I do work remotely at home, so I can get a fast train from Parramatta to the city, but I also live closer to the Harris Park Medical Centre and I found that was really important.”

“One of the reasons why we all moved here is probably location or access to whatever we may need, vibrant place to go shopping, the environment, but mainly for the services aspect - It’s close to a station, medical etc.”

“Because if you have a specialist appointment in Parramatta, it’s got to be easy to access at a particular time and a particular day – go on public transport for a shorter time - it’s just got to be easier to access so you have time to travel there.”

Figure 2 - How important is easy access to services to you?



What sort of services would you like to see in the Parramatta LGA?

Participants were asked what kind of services they would like to see in the Parramatta LGA, with suggestions including:

- Bigger and better range of spaces for community gatherings throughout the year (5 comments)
 - Community halls for events
 - Community gathering spaces
 - Indoor spaces to gather, particularly during colder seasons and for wet weather
 - Places to meet your neighbour
 - Similar to the Harris Park community centre
- Public spaces (4 comments)
 - Better parks (3 comments)
 - Playgrounds and beaches
- Better public transport (3 comments)
 - More/better public transport access to the north and south
- Medical (2 comments)
- More schools and childcare (2 comments)
- Sports facilities and events (2 comments)
 - Host more sporting events like marathons
- More activities for young children to get involved in and meet other little children and families
- Better university
- Job seeking and financial goal setting workshops
- Entertainment, shopping, dining, banking
- Parking, and
- Service NSW to be in a central location like Parramatta Square, noting the current location of Service NSW is a far walk to get to and not as easy to get to via public transport for those that live in other suburbs e.g. Sydney Olympic Park.

“Community centres – we’ve got a lot of really good things, but this is where people could go for yoga classes, or if its pouring rain have your family gathering there. I lived in the Blue Mountains, and community centres were well-used for those things - it’s a good place to meet your neighbours as well.”

“I have a three-year-old girl, and it would be good idea if there were some activities where you can meet other little children, where we can meet other families, and make friendships that way. It’s just me and my little daughter here, so it’s just sometimes hard to meet other younger people. Activities for children.”

Barriers to accessing jobs or services in the Parramatta LGA

Participants were asked what barriers there are to accessing jobs and services in the Parramatta LGA. The top barriers identified by participants is parking (11 comments), public transport (5 comments) and advertisement of jobs in the LGA (2 comments).

Comments made in relation to specific barriers are summarised below.

Parking

Many participants noted parking as a barrier to accessing jobs and services in the Parramatta LGA. In particular, participants expressed parking meters in Parramatta are too expensive and there is no all-day free parking. Participants also noted paid street parking hinders people's access to local businesses such as cafes.

“Parking should be free to generate the economy, high foot traffic. Paying for parking meters is discouraging people from dropping to a café to buy a coffee and all that without having to feed a parking meter.”

“When I moved to the area almost 30 years ago, one of the boxes it ticked was all the parking, like all day rooftop parking at Wilsons, or at least three hours free, and then go to the train station. That's just all gone, so I personally don't go to Parramatta to shop.”

Transport

Participants expressed lack of public transport options and frequency of services is a barrier to accessing jobs and services in the Parramatta LGA. One participant noted they would like to see increased public transport services at night to support retail workers.

Many participants noted the shuttle service offered in Parramatta is underutilised due to its limited stops. Participants would like to see the shuttle service connect to the train station, increase frequency and stops across more suburbs in the LGA. One participant noted they did not know there was a shuttle service in Parramatta.

One participant also expressed a strong need to better plan and coordinate transport and services around entertainment precincts like CommBank Stadium and Riverside Theatre. This participant noted when events are concurrently hosted, there is limited bus services to accommodate the number of people travelling via transport, as well as limited access to Ubers and taxis. This participant would like to see increased frequency of services, as well as late-trading cafes for waiting passengers

“There is a free shuttle service around parramatta which should be more areas to take you around where you need to go – to a few more suburbs.”

“Why does the shuttle not go near the train station, which already has a bus stop? Such a strange decision ... It used to.”

“A good idea would be for the shuttle to go to Harris Park, Rose Hill and Westmead Hospital.”

Advertisements

Two participants noted they would like to see increased advertising of jobs in the Parramatta LGA, with a suggestion to advertise in high foot traffic locations such as having a bulletin board near the station or Westfields.

Other barriers

Other barriers identified by participants include:

- The financial cost of accessing services
 - Cost of living is impacting access to services
- Distance/hours of operation
- Lower paying jobs in areas outside of the CBD
- The industry you work in may not be as available in this LGA

Would you rather have access to jobs and services close to home or to travel to the Parramatta CBD to access them?

Participants were asked whether they would rather have access to jobs and services close to home or to travel to the Parramatta CBD to access them.

Overall, most participants (8) would like to have access to jobs and services close to home and the CBD, while other would prefer access to jobs and services close to home (7).

Comments made in relation to specific preferences are summarised below.

Access to jobs and services close to home

Participants that would like access to jobs and services closer to home indicated they prefer spending less time traveling to the CBD and would like to spend that time elsewhere. One participant also noted parking is challenging in the CBD.

One participant prefers services and amenities closer to their home, as they find it inconvenient and stressful to park in Parramatta CBD and wait for unreliable buses. They also expressed they feel unsafe walking in certain areas at night, and tend to choose restaurants and services closer to home.

“Having a job closer to home would be good rather than commuting all the way to CBD... I’d rather spend 20 mins doing something productive at home.”

“In the night, if I do go out to a restaurant, it gets a bit creepy walking to those dark stretches, so I’ll go to a restaurant closer to home. It’s really stressful to try and get parking and get there on time. I live in Epping. Sometimes buses don’t turn up for half an hour and you end up waiting at the bus stop. So, for me, I much prefer services closer to home to access.”

Access to jobs and services can be either close to home or in the CBD

Eight participants indicated they prefer having access to jobs and services close to home and/or in the CBD.

One participant commented they prefer having services and retail jobs closer to home as they don't drive and rely on public transport, but as a young person they would like to have the option to travel to the CBD to go out.

One participant noted whilst services are in close proximity to where they live, the Parramatta area is a wide region and would like to see better planning of services to be in a central location that is easily accessible via car or public transport.

2.2.2 Priority: Our City is vibrant and a destination of choice

What can we do to support our local economy?

Participants were asked what can be done to support the Parramatta LGA local economy. The top suggestions include community events for people of all ages, day and night (9 comments), increased parking and transport to get to places and events (7 comments), cafes and restaurants (3 comments) and funding for small businesses (3 comments).

Comments made in relation to specific ideas are summarised below.

Community events and activities

Nine participants would like to see more community events and activities, day and night, to support the local parramatta economy. Participants would like to see events such as night markets, street food festivals, heritage events, cultural events, family friendly festivals to encourage visitation and activation in Parramatta. Participants also noted they would like to see events and activities for people of all ages.

One participant indicated they would like to see activities other than bars and restaurant offerings.

One participant also suggested there is an opportunity to use under utilised spaces to host events and activities.

“Bring Vivid Sydney to Parramatta – they used to do Vivid at Chatswood, so having some installations at Parramatta would be cool.”

“Food festivals like Lakemba Ramadan Festival would bring more attention to Parramatta – it would definitely attract multicultural crowds.”

“A lot of activities are usually around bars and restaurants – add more activities like go-karting or a swimming pool at Parramatta Park, or archery – any activities that will give entertainment to both grown-ups and children.”

Getting around the LGA

Seven participants would like to see more free parking, particularly at night and over the weekends, to support visitation to local businesses, places and events.

Participants would also like to see increased frequency of public transport services, as well as better connections to enable people to travel across the LGA and support the local economy.

“Free parking at evening time and weekend.”

“Increase frequency of public transport and perhaps a night time shuttle bus.”

“Get rid of parking meters but keep restricted parking because people would park there all day and would limit others access to parking.”

Funding for small businesses

Three participants would like to see funding and incentives for small businesses. In particular, one participant would like to see easier systems and processes for people starting a small business, and a better understanding of how to access funding.

“Hassle-free paperwork for those starting a small business. Be more lenient on how we can access funding, from a local business perspective.”

Cafes, restaurants and bars

Three participants would like to see more cafes, especially at night, and rooftop bars.

Other ideas

Other ideas to support the local economy include:

- Provide more avenues and workshops for job readiness
- Job fairs and business expos to explore what small businesses are doing and help support them
- Supporting CALD community and skills training for immigrants
- Complete the Parramatta CBD beach program
- Publicise what the council offers e.g. sports and recreation activities
- Increasing diversity of businesses in the Parramatta CBD east of Church St to encourage activation and vibrancy
- Community spaces
- Library opened late at night
- Safe spaces for all kinds of people including gender diverse, multicultural etc.

Nighttime economy beyond the Parramatta CBD

Participants were asked what they would like to see in terms of nighttime economy beyond the Parramatta CBD. The top ideas include encourage late night trading of businesses and services (8 comments) and arts and cultural events, activities and installations (8 comments).

Comments made in relation to specific ideas are summarised below.

Encourage late night trading

Seven participants would like to see late night trading of businesses in areas beyond Parramatta CBD, including retail and shops, libraries, and cafes/ restaurants.

“Salute to midnight openings of stores.”

“Forestville Library recently did 24-hours opening experiment - so Phive could definitely do something like that.”

Arts and cultural events, activities and installations

Eight participants would like to see more arts and cultural events and activities including concert venues, return of the Roxy Theatre, music events, galleries, weekly Vivid Parramatta installations, and space for art performance, and open-air cinemas.

Other ideas

Other ideas for the nighttime economy beyond Parramatta CBD include:

- Well-lit parks and more basketball or tennis courts to encourage activation and make places more inviting at night
- Family friendly spaces
- Community spaces that are safe for everyone, including the gender diverse and multicultural community etc.
- Food events
- More night markets and festivities
- Multicultural activities to meet others and network
- More cafes

“Having more further out basketball or tennis courts to encourage that nighttime activity would be good, and it would make them more inviting places at night. Would let anyone play – get people out of the house and healthier and all that good stuff.”

2.2.3 Priority: Our economy is strong, diverse, and resilient

Job growth outside of the Parramatta CBD

Participants were asked where else they would like to see job growth outside of the Parramatta CBD.

The top suburbs suggested include Sydney Olympic Park (7 comments), Harris Park (3 comments) and Epping (3 comments).

Comments made in relation to specific suburbs are summarised below.

Sydney Olympic Park

Participants would like to see job growth in Sydney Olympic Park to increase visitation and foot traffic, noting there is no activation apart from the easter show and weekend events. Participants noted there is an opportunity for the new metro/light rail to improve travel connections and increase ease of access to and from the suburb.

Harris Park

Participants would like to see job growth in Harris Park because of its close proximity to Parramatta CBD and potential to be a suburb known for its food, with one participant referring to Harris Park as being the 'Newtown' in the Parramatta LGA.

One participant would like to see better access to parking in the area.

“Because it’s closer to Parramatta and it’s got great potential around that area – it’s like Newtown being closer to the Sydney CBD.”

Epping

One participant commented Epping is close to the metro/light rail.

Other suburbs participants suggested include, Granville, Rosehill, Westmead, Wentworthville, Macquarie Park, Eastwood LGA, Ryde LGA.

Industry sectors that are important for a strong economy

Participants were asked which industry sectors they think are important for a strong economy. The top two industries suggested were healthcare (8 comments) and IT (6 comments).

Healthcare

Eight participants indicated healthcare is important for a strong economy, emphasising Westmead Hospital is important infrastructure for the area. One participant would like to see more resources invested in hospitals, particularly staffing.

One participant noted Westmead has important infrastructure and facilities for the community, however there are no local services such as groceries or restaurants to support the local community.

Westmead has a big hospital and other facilities, but I found that there’s hardly any restaurants to support, there’s no supermarket around that part – I either drive to Parramatta and have issues of parking (two minutes by train, driving is half an hour) - you could’ve walked if there was a supermarket in Westmead, it would be much faster. And having other things around Westmead, bars and other activities – making more small shopping arcades. There are lots of customers, but not any businesses!”

IT

Six participants indicated the IT industry is important for a strong economy, with one participant expressing IT is continually evolving and is a growing field with various skill sets and domains for people to work in.

“IT is the future, and it keeps on advancing as new technologies come about and it’s also a very growing area. There’s different skill sets within it, different domains where people can work in, so I think it’s just growing.”

Other ideas

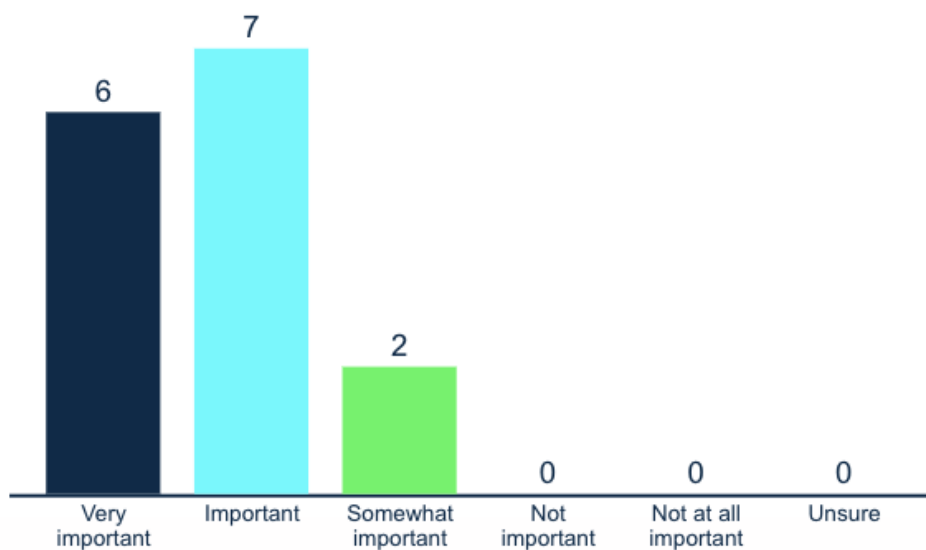
Other industries participants think are important for a strong economy include infrastructure (3), finance (3), hospitality (3), government (2), retail (2), education (2), accommodation (e.g. hotels) (1) and police (1).

One participant would also like to see Parramatta LGA attracting and supporting start-up hubs.

How important is it to you that businesses in Parramatta adopt sustainability initiatives?

As shown in Figure 3, majority of participants (13) indicated it is very important or important for businesses in Parramatta to adopt sustainability initiatives, followed by two participants who felt it is somewhat important.

Figure 3 - How important is it to you that businesses in Parramatta adopt sustainability initiatives?



Reasons why participants think it is important for business to adopt sustainability initiatives include:

- Parramatta Council needs to lead by example and make Parramatta more special and attractive
- As Parramatta grows, there is opportunity to set standards for new businesses to follow sustainable requirements e.g. water consumption
- It's important to think about the future of our city and people
- As sustainability becomes a key focus for government and the private sector, there is a community expectation for businesses and services to also be responsible in this area.

One participant noted sustainability initiatives comes at a cost to the business or consumer, and with increasing costs of living the priority for businesses should be to survive first.

“Usually to me sustainability comes at a cost – to business or to consumers - and hence in a rising cost environment, with inflation and interest rates high, it’s not going to be the number one concern. Businesses [currently] need to take more efforts to try to survive first.”

Would you like to see council encouraging businesses to implement sustainable practices?

Majority of participants (9) would like to see council encouraging businesses to implement sustainable practices. Many participants (5) indicated they would like to see council provide subsidies to small businesses to implement sustainable practices and ensure implementation is successful.

Other comments and ideas include:

- Composting might be an easy start
- Recyclable takeaway items
- Incentives for using reusable or recyclable items
- More recycling areas that are affordable
- Encouraging innovation in sustainability practices, and
- Improving public transport, to reduce cars on the roads.

“As it is the future but the council has to support as well.”

“Provide subsidies to incentivise businesses to adopt sustainable practices.”

“As long as it doesn’t increase the compliance cost.”

3. Environmental sustainability

3.1 About the Environmental Sustainability focus group

The Environmental Sustainability focus group was held on 27 April 2023 to inform Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Cred Consulting facilitated the focus group online via Zoom.

The purpose of the focus group was to explore with community the priorities proposed in the Draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy, including how clear and inspiring they are, and how Council can better empower the community in decision-making around the priorities.

The session commenced with an ice-breaker quiz to engage participants and encourage them to start thinking about the subject matter, and a brief presentation by Council staff describing the strategy and providing context. This was followed by a facilitated conversation that was guided by the following questions:

- How clear do you find each of the priorities?
- How inspiring do you find each of the priorities?
- Do you have any other suggestions for improvement?
- Do the actions under the priorities empower the community?
- How could they be improved to better empower the community?

Participants were provided the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas throughout the 1.5 hour session. At the conclusion of the session, Council staff outlined the next steps for the project.

3.2 What we heard

How clear do you find each of the priorities?

The five priorities and associated step-changes were presented to focus group participants. These included:

- Climate Positive: from a high carbon emitting community to a leader in climate action
- Future-Ready Community: from a city of high growth precincts to resilient and sustainable communities
- Blue-Green City: from forgotten waterways at the head of Sydney Harbour to a water sensitive city known for its green space
- Nature Positive: from a city with nature to a city for nature
- Circular Economy: from a city that manages waste to a no waste community.

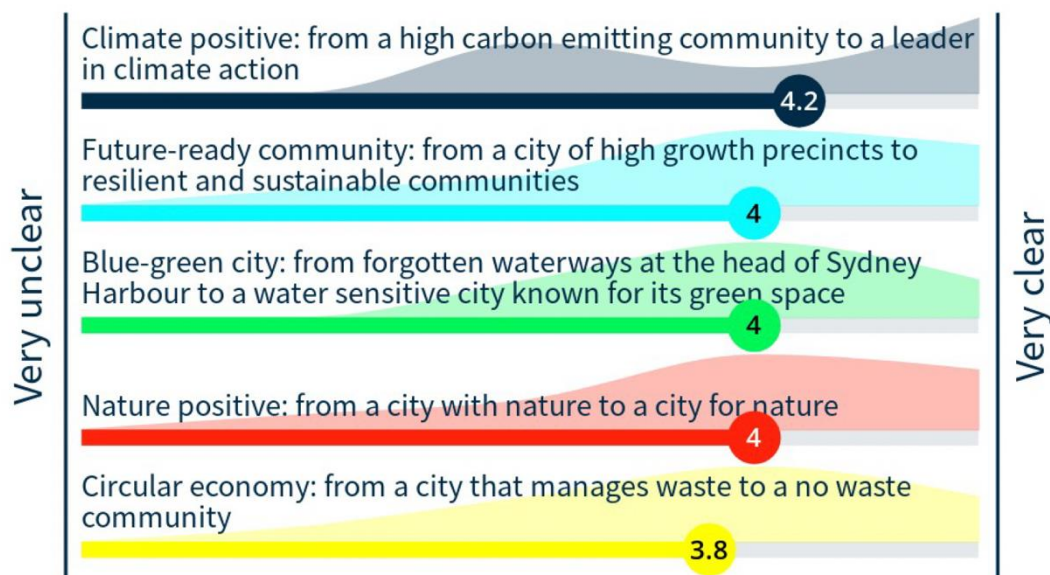
Participants were then asked to indicate how clear they found each of the priorities and associated step-changes. Participants could rate the priorities according to the following scale:

- Very unclear
- Somewhat unclear
- Neutral
- Somewhat clear
- Very clear

Participants generally indicated that they found the priorities and step-changes clear. As shown in Figure 4, most priorities received a score of 4 or higher, indicating that on average, participants found them somewhat clear or very clear.

The highest rated priority was climate positive, which received a score of 4.2, demonstrating a strong level of understanding from participants. The lowest rated priority was circular economy, which received a score of 3.8, demonstrating a lower level of understanding from participants.

Figure 4: How clear do you find each of the priorities?



Comments made in relation to specific priorities are summarised below:

Future-ready community

One participant expressed support for the future-ready community priority and step-change, given the current economic situation and high population.

Circular economy

One participant expressed dissatisfaction with the circular economy priority and step-change, stating that it feels reactive instead of proactive. They indicated a preference for the priority and step-change to focus on being a city that reduces waste, instead of managing waste.

How inspiring do you find each of the priorities?

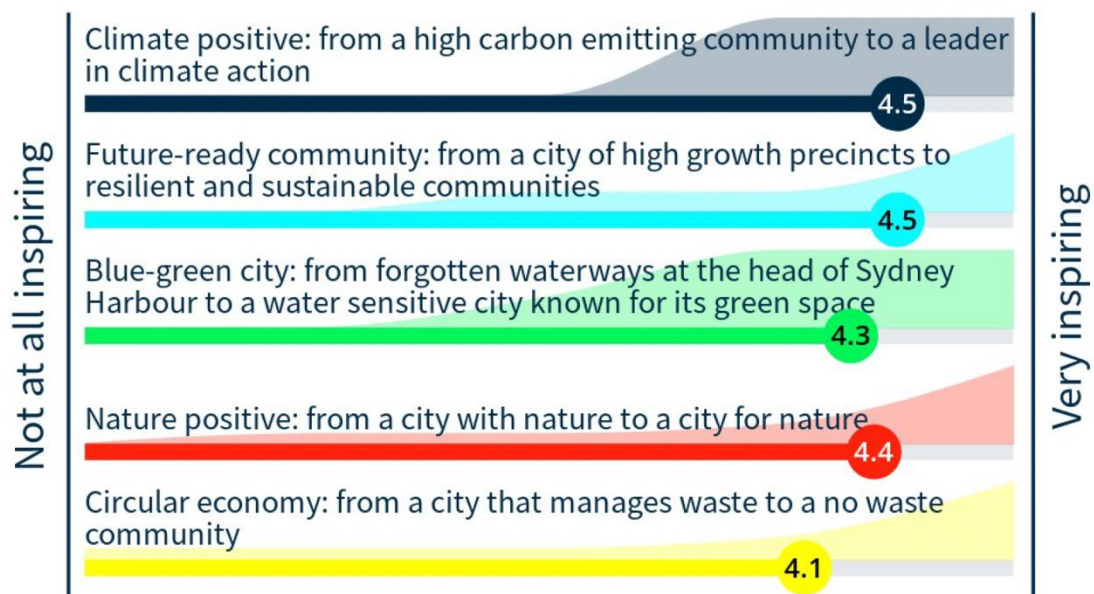
Focus group participants were asked to indicate how inspiring they found each of the priorities and associated step-changes. Participants could rate the priorities according to the following scale:

- Not at all inspiring
- Not very inspiring
- Neutral
- Somewhat inspiring
- Very inspiring

Participants generally indicated that they found the priorities and step-changes inspiring. As shown in Figure 5, all priorities received a score of 4 or higher, indicating that on average, participants found them somewhat inspiring or very inspiring.

The highest rated priorities were climate positive and future-ready community, both of which received a score of 4.5, demonstrating a strong level of excitement from participants. The lowest rated priority was circular economy, which received a score of 4.1, demonstrating a slightly lower level of excitement from participants. Participants expressed a desire for these priorities to inspire other councils.

Figure 5: How inspiring do you find each of the priorities?



Comments made in relation to specific priorities are summarised below:

Climate positive

Participants expressed support for the climate positive priority and step-change, given the increasing impacts of climate change and the need to transition toward renewable energy sources.

Future-ready community

One participant noted that the step-change is confusing as the LGA will still be a high growth precinct in the future, regardless of if it is resilient and sustainable. They suggested the wording could be changed to reflect a high growth, resilient and sustainable community in the future.

Another participant expressed support for this priority and highlighted the need for greater focus on electric vehicles in the LGA.

Nature positive

One participant expressed support for the City of Parramatta to be focused on nature and wildlife, while another stated that it is difficult to be positive about this priority while many trees in the LGA are being cut down.

Suggested improvements to the priorities

Participants were asked to share suggestions to improve the priorities and step-changes. Feedback from participants about the priorities is summarised below:

- The step-changes are much clearer than the priority titles
- Break down the statements into a series of steps or actions
- There is a need for simple communication and ongoing education for the community
- Provide clarification about kerb-side gardens
- Prioritise reuse and recycling of waste
- Support for the priorities in general
- Concern around the achievability of balancing growth and prioritising nature and open space (in relation to future-ready community)
- Concern around what impact Council can have on the supply chain and waste reprocessing and remanufacturing (in relation to circular economy).

Participants also made suggestions for additional initiatives that City of Parramatta could implement. These are summarised below:

- Ongoing funding to reduce waste, through providing cloth nappies and period cups
- Create free or subsidised plant programs to encourage residents to plant trees in their backyard
- Encourage apartment buildings to improve the gardens
- Plant more trees in the CBD
- Provide Aboriginal bush tucker in plant giveaways
- Provide funding or incentives (particularly for low-income community members) to remove gas appliances and wood heaters, and install solar panels
- Protect heritage buildings in the LGA.

Do these actions empower the community?

The priorities and associated actions were presented to focus group participants. Participants were then asked to indicate whether they felt that the actions empower the community in decision-making around the priority.

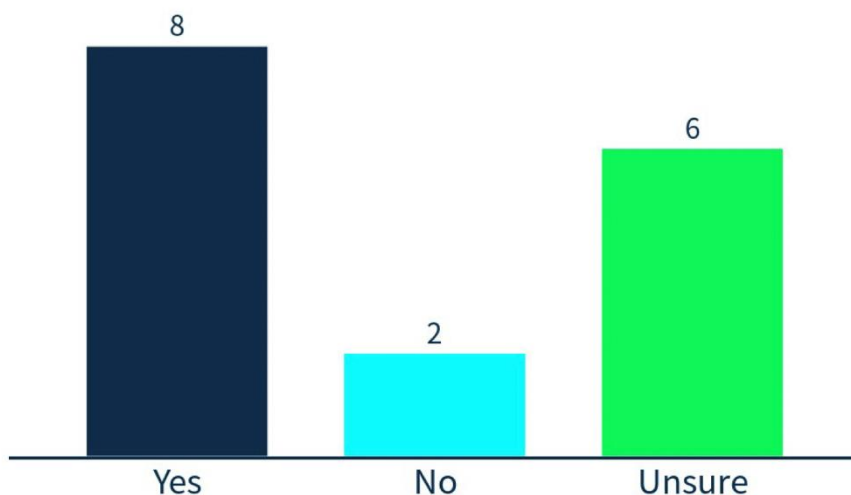
Climate positive

Actions:

- Develop and pilot a community decarbonisation program supporting those most in need through education and incentivisation.
- Promote Low-Carbon Transportation through Council's Integrated Transport Strategy

As shown in Figure 6, the majority of participants (8) indicated that the actions under the climate positive priority empower the community in decision-making. This was followed by six participants who were unsure.

Figure 6: Do the climate positive actions empower the community?



Participants identified the following potential improvements to the climate positive actions:

- Present the actions more clearly in a way that the community can understand, using simple language and less jargon
- Clear information and regular updates communicated to residents in an accessible way (such as through social media, email newsletters, translated content in community languages, pop-up stalls in shopping centres and QR codes on signage across the LGA)
- Provide examples showing how actions will be implemented and how they will affect day-to-day life for the community
- Create catchy phrases or jingles
- Include community engagement goals to encourage community participation and ownership
- Provide multiple ways for the community to engage with Council on this content

- Communicate more widely about what Council is working on and the projects or individual outcomes that have been achieved
- Create ambassador roles for community members from different backgrounds, so they can take a lead role in implementing actions.

Future-ready community

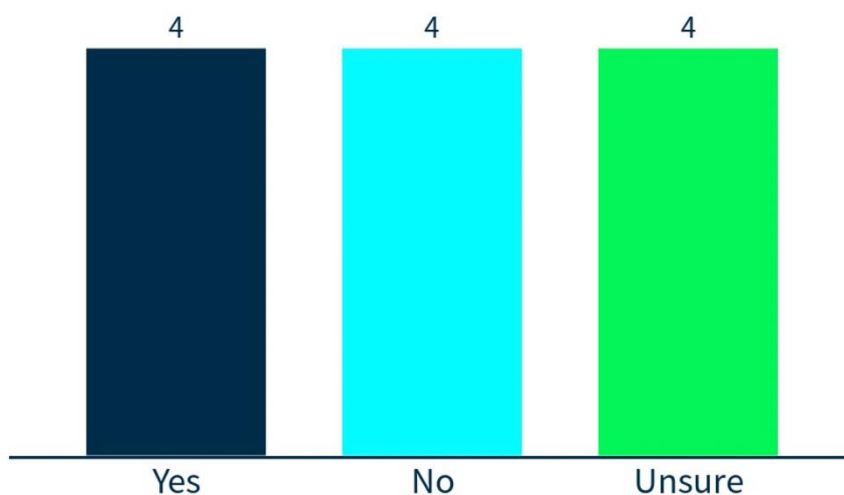
Actions:

- Prepare our community through a resilience-led approach to engagement and planning, piloted through the Floodsmart System and Parramatta River Flood Study

As shown in Figure 7, voting was an even spread across all options relating to the future-ready community priority, with four participants who stated that the action empowers the community in decision-making, four participants who stated that it does not, and four participants who were unsure.

Overall, participants expressed concern that the wording of the action is too difficult to understand. They felt that this means the action is not engaging or empowering, and is not inclusive to people in the community with lower levels of education or proficiency in English.

Figure 7: Do the future-ready community actions empower the community?



Participants identified the following potential improvements to the future-ready community action:

- Present the action more clearly in a way that the community can understand, using simple language and less jargon
- Communicate how the action is relevant to the local community
- Provide examples of what people can do at an individual level to be ready
- Focus more on heatwaves as opposed to floods, given they are more deadly and impact more people in the City of Parramatta LGA

- Clarify what “prepare our community” involves. One participant suggested being more specific about what will actually happen
- Clarify what a “resilience-led approach” means
- Clarify what the Floodsmart System is.

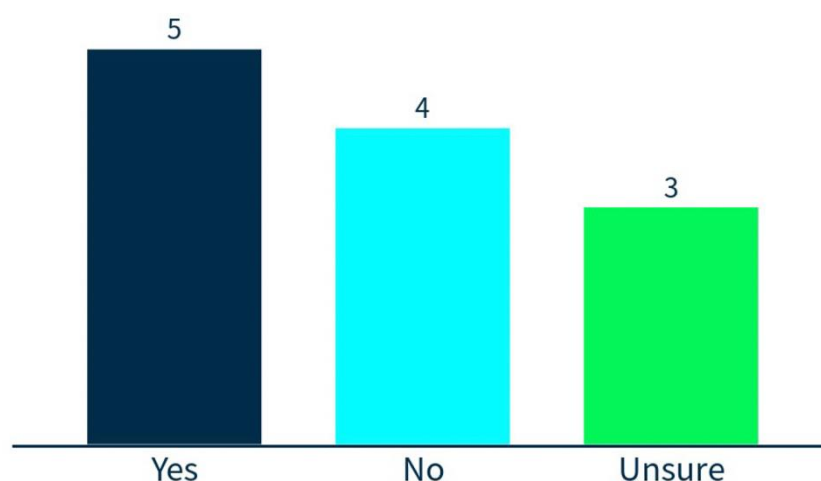
Blue-green city

Actions:

- Review and identify opportunities to diversify and expand community access to and engagement with outdoor water-based activities.
- Research and identify key issues for community engagement to guide future waterway health behaviour change programs.

As shown in Figure 8, the majority of participants (5) indicated that the actions under the blue-green city priority empower the community in decision-making. This was followed by four participants who voted no and three participants who were unsure.

Figure 8: Do the blue-green city actions empower the community?



Participants identified the following potential improvements to the blue-green city actions:

- Change the language of the actions to move away from phrases like “review and identify”, which is the step before the action, to outline the action and outcome itself
- Clarify or change the language of “blue” and “green”. It is not immediately clear without further context
- Ensure water-based activities are accessible for all ages
- Clearly communicate which areas can be accessed by the community and where the entry points are located
- Provide the community with data about the water being safe for swimming

- Combine ideas around water-based activities with other activities that may be more inclusive and appealing for the broader community, such as walking, park visits and picnics. Some people may like to enjoy water-based environments without being in the water
- Address how the flood study of Parramatta River and the tidal nature of the river will be considered.

Nature positive

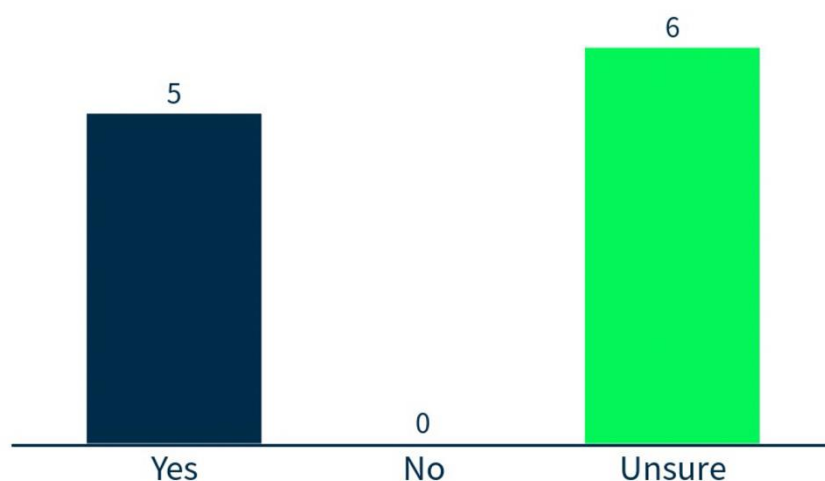
Actions:

- Innovate on-ground biodiversity regeneration through Council leadership in programs such as; Bushcare, National Tree Day, and fox/ rabbit partnerships..
- Research and identify Nature Positive behaviour change program opportunities for forward programming and resourcing.
- Become a recognised local government leader in nature positive community research, and citizen science program/s

As shown in Figure 9, the majority of participants (6) indicated that they were unsure whether the actions under the blue-green city priority empower the community in decision-making. This was followed by five participants who voted yes.

Participants felt that the actions under the nature positive priority were easier to understand than some other priorities due to the recognisable program examples included.

Figure 9: Do the nature-positive actions empower the community?



Participants identified the following potential improvements to the nature positive actions:

- Include more examples and opportunities at a local community level
- Implement kerb-side garden initiatives, so the community can be empowered to participate in the priority at an individual level
- Create community gardens, including in daycare centres, and classes to teach people how to garden at home
- Provide resources and information about gardening

- Give out free plants, succulents and bush tucker trees
- Make Bushcare easier for the community to join.

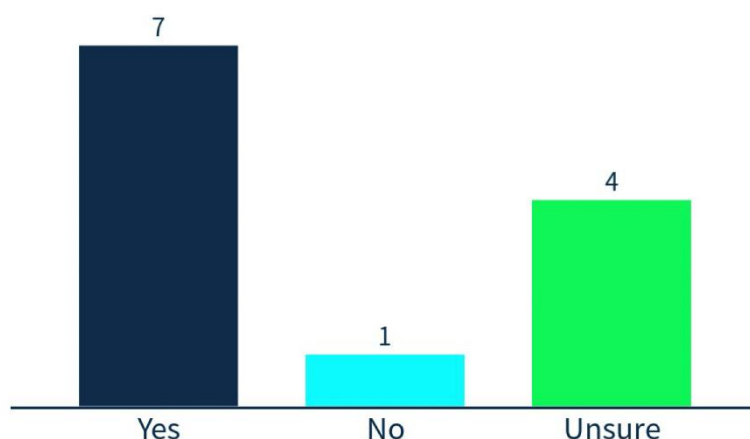
Circular economy

Actions:

- Transition and expand waste and resource recovery services for residents, businesses and public places in-line with new industry directions and higher standards.
- Provide space for broader community engagement programs that drive community resource avoidance, recovery and reuse utilising Councils new Community Recycling and Resource Recovery Centre.
- Pilot a behaviour change program testing compliance, targeted education and smart management techniques to reduced litter and illegal dumping across the LGA.

As shown in Figure 10, the majority of participants (7) indicated that the actions under the circular economy priority empower the community in decision-making. This was followed by four participants who indicated that they were unsure.

Figure 10: Do the circular economy actions empower the community?



Participants identified the following potential improvements to the circular economy actions:

- Focus more on the future, with innovative solutions as opposed to older ideas
- The actions should focus more on preventing waste, as opposed to how Council will reuse or clean up waste
- Hold local businesses more accountable for the waste they generate, and reduce single-use plastics in businesses
- Require people to take their own rubbish to the tip and pay a contribution, like in Canberra
- Require payment from residents for Council clean up services
- Educate businesses and the community on reducing waste

- Build a recycling centre with a shop to buy second-hand goods.

4. Social

4.1 About the Social focus group

The Social focus group was held on 3 May 2023 to inform Council's Social Strategy. Cred Consulting facilitated the focus group online via Zoom.

The purpose of the focus group was to explore community priorities proposed in the Draft Social Strategy, including how clear they are, how they resonate with the community and ideas and suggestions to achieve these priorities.

The session commenced with an ice-breaker quiz to engage participants and encourage them to start thinking about the subject matter, and a brief presentation by Council staff describing the strategy and providing context. This was followed by a facilitated conversation that focused on the following priorities in the Social Strategy:

- A safe, inclusive and welcoming community
- A community where people can live healthy lives
- A city with affordable, diverse and resilient homes for all
- A city of learning and opportunity

Participants were provided the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas throughout the 1.5 hour session. At the conclusion of the session, Council staff outlined the next steps for the project.

4.2 What we heard

This section reports findings by questions under each priority.

4.2.1 Priority: A safe, inclusive and welcoming community

Supporting young people in our City

Participants were asked how they would like to see young people supported in Parramatta City. The top ideas included a range of programs and activities (9 comments), engaging with young people (4 comments) and education workshops and workplace experiences (3 comments).

Comments made in relation to specific ideas are summarised below.

A range of social and active programs and activities

Nine participants indicated they would like to see a range of programs and activities that engage and support young people including arts and crafts, mentoring program, after school activities, social events and recreation programs.

Two participants also suggested life-skill workshops and programs to support young people such as CV wiring, job hunting and changing tyres.

One participant indicated programs and activities should be affordable for young people.

“Life skills/mentoring - like resume writing or how to change a tire, or things like that. There’s a lot of spaces that they can hang around, but something more beneficial in the long-run, done in a cool, fun way to help them engage and gain life skills. Doesn’t have to be in a school setting, could be done in a youth group, but they’re getting something out of it...”

“More free educational and social events like free certified skills classes, fun social activities.”

“Recreation programs that are affordable - sport, art, music.”

Education and employment experiences

Three participants would like to see educational and employment-based experiences and opportunities to support people in upskilling and finding jobs.

“Workshops on skill acquisitions and training and how to be self-employed.”

“Giving them council work for the unemployed until they find a permanent job.”

“Making young people more aware how they can get involved in the management of our area. Some councils overseas have youth councillors who help run the areas.”

Engaging with young people

Three participants indicated it is important to engage young people on what can support them, and to also involve them in decision making opportunities.

One participant also noted young people should be engaged on platforms that they use the most.

“Allow for feedback on what works for them.”

“Engage in decision making and opportunities for leadership.”

“I know Council has a lot of programs, but they’re not advertised where young children or people are looking at them, so it’s about engaging with young people on the platforms that they’re using.”

Other ideas

- Build playrooms they can hang out and talk to others in the same age group
- space for music/festivals and unknown bands to play/perform
- Student accommodation to support university students moving to the area
- Feeding homeless people
- More venues for entertainment and social gatherings
- Regular street activity and events for the community to enjoy
- Advertising/education - going into high schools and talking about what council has to offer to them.

Improving feelings of safety for our community

Participants were asked what could improve feelings of safety for our community and visitors in both private and public spaces.

The top suggestions to improve feelings of safety include:

- More lighting (12 comments)
- Installing CCTV cameras (6 comments)
- Increasing police or security presence (5 comments), and
- Having a neighbourhood watch program (5 comments).

“I work in the Parramatta area and just walking home at night after the end of Daylight Savings - when I walk, I go for exercise - but I just don’t feel safe walking through Parramatta Park at night, so I’ll often take a bus when I could be walking.”

“If police patrol more regularly, people will feel safer than if they’re on the shift - especially after nine or 10pm sometimes, it can be very quiet.”

“Winston Hills is fully-funded in our area, and we’ve got support through our newsletter, but it could be supported and expanded even more, for example to use Council premises for meetings - rather than rely on the community to provide those environments to get people together. And looking out for each other is really important, which goes hand-in-hand with police patrols - which Council doesn’t really have much control over.”

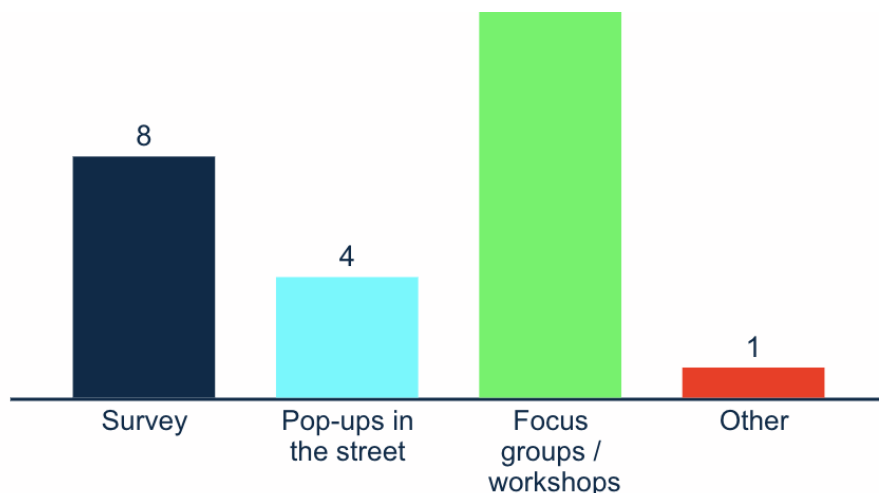
Other ideas

- More help points with emergency buttons
- Less police patrols as this could be intimidating for some cultures
- Safe spaces where you can go if you don’t feel safe
- Improved signage in areas which are potentially dangerous or risky in regards to mobility
- More stringent smoking bans in public areas, and
- Mobile security buggy cars.

How would you like Council to engage with you when planning for our City?

As shown in Figure 11, majority of participants would like to be engaged through focus groups and workshops (14) when planning for the City, followed by surveys (8), and pop-ups (4).

Figure 11 - How would you like Council to engage with you when planning for the City of Parramatta?



Comments made in relation to specific engagement methods are summarised below:

Paid focus groups / workshops

Participants would like council to engage with them through focus group and workshops because they provide an opportunity for the community to meet one another and have open discussions, and it also allows the community to get a better understanding of context rather than misinterpreting questions through questionnaires.

“I feel like a lot of the times when we have questionnaires, a lot can be missed out on and people might interpret things differently, or we don’t get the full scope of what they actually think when they tick a box. Focus groups would be able to get more of what people actually think.”

Pop-ups

One participant indicated pop-ups in streets can capture a general community sentiment, rather than surveys which typically engage the same people. This participant also noted that it’s a good opportunity for council and councillors to meet the community and see what is happening on the ground.

One participant would like to see pop-ups in shopping centres.

“I am part of Participate Parramatta, so whenever there is a survey, I fill it in. But I think there’s people who are more engaged than others. Pop-ups in streets capture a more general sense of the population, who typically may not be aware of the different ways they can speak to Council. When there were markets at Centenary Square, there was a stall from Council or NSW Government, and I thought that was a really helpful with generosity planning, and a great way to engage with people.”

Surveys

One participant expressed they prefer surveys as a better way for people to contribute their feedback and also hear back from council on the outcomes.

“I think surveys are better because then everyone can contribute their views. And put your comments if you really care about the community, and send comment to Council, and then see what the outcomes are.”

Other ideas

Other ideas for ways council can engage with the community include:

- Providing incentives to the community for completing a survey or attending a pop-up (2 comments)
- Newsletters
- QR codes be included in areas which have been earmarked for development, and
- Engaging the community in a variety of ways to ensure you get a range of views and responses.

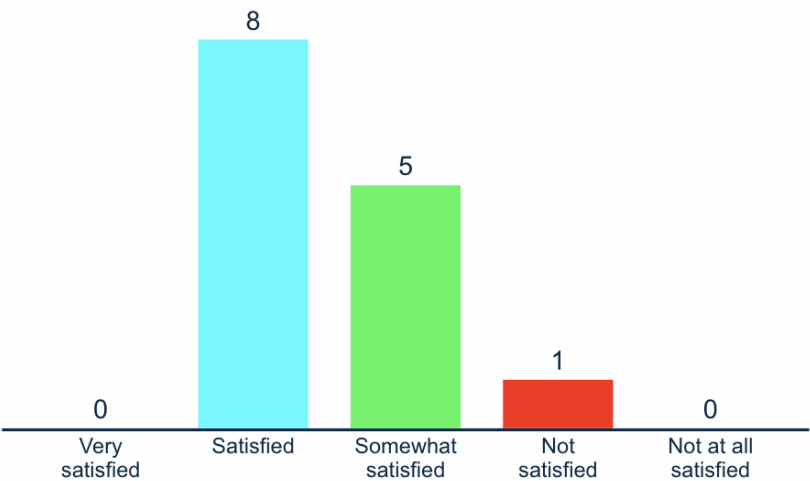
Some participants noted some of the community do not understand the planning system which makes it harder to engage with council. One participant suggested community education on the planning system and how to get involved would be useful.

4.2.2 Priority: A community where people can live healthy lives

Rating experiences with Council’s facilities that contribute t healthy and active lifestyles

As shown in Figure 12, majority of participants (8) were satisfied with council’s facilities, followed by participants that were somewhat satisfied (5) and not satisfied (1).

Figure 12 - Rate your experience with Council's existing facilities that contribute to healthy and active lives



One participant expressed they think council has done a great job at delivering infrastructure such as walking tracks, cycling paths and green spaces around the area.

One participant indicated they do not use council's facilities often.

Participants made suggestions to improve council's facilities including:

- Increase number of dog parks in the area (2 comments)
- Increasing connected paths, particularly around parks
 - Two participants would like to see this at Mays Hill Reserve
- Better programs and services that cater for the needs of people with hidden disabilities, especially children
- Increasing lighting in parks at night to allow for late night use and visitation
 - Opportunity for scheduled lighting at night or solar lighting
 - Increase lighting from Parramatta to Westmead
- Council to maintain public spaces to ensure spaces can be used safely (e.g. grass growing through cement at courts near Mays Hill Reserve), and
- A place to swim and outdoor exercise equipment.

"I feel like there are more paths still needed. One is in Mays Hill Park, but there's not a path on the side of the park. What I enjoy doing is walking, but [the path] might end suddenly, or I have to cross the road – so [I would like to see] more paths around those parks."

I just don't think Council is addressing people with hidden disabilities. There are things for visual disabilities, but a parent of a child with a hidden disability that's about to become an adult, there's not that much there to support him [my son] when he goes to something... its more up to me to organise everything for him. Things like, facilities to attend programs would be helpful. I've taken him to the new Library - it's great, but its visually too much for him, so he can't go and study there."

"Lighting really makes a difference – tennis court at Mays Hill, it's a great place to have a swing but there's no lights, so if I want to go at 6pm, I couldn't. There are a few parks closer to North Parramatta that if there is a group that's hired the area and the lights are on... but if there's not, there's no lights and you don't know when they'll be on or off ... there could be a schedule or roster, or even solar, so people can travel [to use these facilities] more regularly. I understand that will be [coming] at Parramatta Park. Walking from Parramatta to Westmead could be more accessible if there was lighting."

What can Council do to encourage healthy living for all people living in the LGA?

Participants had the following suggestions for Council to encourage healthy living for all people living in the LGA:

- Men's and women's shed (4 comments)
- Active recreation groups (4 comments) such as walking groups, social sports, yoga classes
 - Online or in-person

- Free or subsidised programs (4 comments) such as discount at the aquatic centre for locals, providing vouchers for sporting equipment, or affordable snacks at events
- Social activities
 - Walk and talk with a coffee at the end
 - Encourage social events which promote learning new sports etc
- Mental health support
- Multipurpose spaces with courts, bike paths, equipment and open grass spaces
- More green spaces with adequate lighting
- Walking path with signs
- Provide more free water stations
- Free workout equipment in parks
- More safe fitness facilities
- Places to rent bikes
- Farmers markets that are low-cost produce, and
- More indoor swimming pools for exercise.

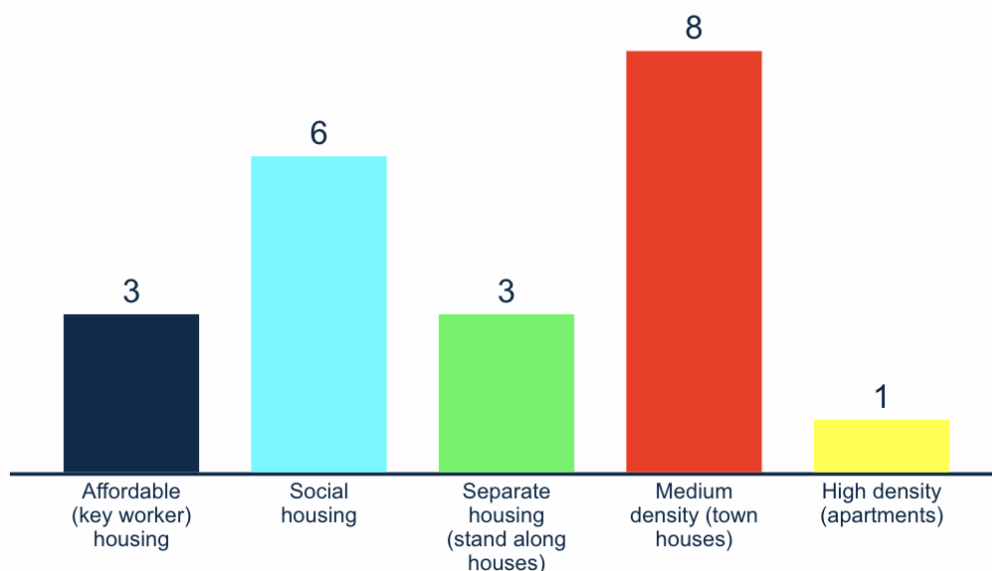
4.2.3 Priority: A city with affordable, diverse and resilient homes for all

What housing options would you like to see more of in the LGA?

As shown in Figure 13, majority of participants (8) would like to see more medium density housing in the LGA, followed by social housing (6), affordable housing (3) and separate housing (3).

Comments made in relation to specific ideas are summarised below.

Figure 13 - What housing options would you like to see more of in the LGA?



Medium density housing

One participant noted that whilst there is a lot of high density apartments being developed in the area, this housing type doesn't allow for people to build their family, including having children, allowing for intergeneration housing or pets.

"I think there's heaps of apartments coming up and around and that's great, but not many of them allow for building a family - whether that's children, inter-generational housing, or pets – and pet-friendly apartments don't really exist... But an easy go would be town."

Social housing

Two participants indicated they would like to see more social housing spread across the LGA, rather than congregated into one area, to allow for more diversity amongst communities and to avoid creating hotspots for crime and other anti-social behaviour.

"I work with people in social housing and if it's congregated into one area, it doesn't allow for diversity. And to allow people who live in social housing to see people living a different sort of lifestyle. I work out of Mt Druitt and there's not a mix of social housing and other housing, so they're all in congregated in one area."

"With the economy the way it is, we need to be able to bridge that gap for people who need social housing and people who can't afford those rents as well."

Affordable key worker housing

One participant would like to see affordable key worker housing to support a range of people in the area, including nurses and students, to be able to live and work closer to home.

"My wife's a nurse who works there and a lot of her colleagues come in from lots of other parts of Sydney because they can't afford to live close to work. The young nurses coming through, she talks about all the time. One student nurse is travelling from Hornsby everyday – that's not that safe, especially if she's doing night shifts."

Do you think Council should lobby the state and federal governments to do better on housing?

Participants were asked if they think Council should lobby the state and federal governments to do better on housing.

Participants that voted 'yes' (11) commented:

- Council is well positioned to address the housing situation and can provide information from the ground up
- Opportunity for councils to collaborate to have a bigger impact
- Council can be an additional voice to the conversation, noting the results are not guaranteed, and
- Suggestion to introduce gated manufactured community housing that is affordable for non-self-funded retirees to downsize.

Two participants voted 'no', with one participant comments Council needs to stick to the tactical points on housing and leave the strategy to the other governments.

Additional comments include:

- All governments should all work together (2 comments)
- More affordable housing options are needed, and
- Could increase council rates.

Do you want council to invest in an affordable housing project?

Participants were asked if they want council to invest in an affordable housing project.

Participants that voted 'yes' (11) commented:

- Affordable housing for key workers (2 comments)
- One participant would like to know more details of what this is, understand what the tradeoffs would be and would like community consultation to inform this decision
- Parramatta has a lot of space
- Council should invest in housing to accommodate the population growth of the LGA, as well as other infrastructure and support services
- With the current housing crisis yes but would need more details around the project
- Opportunity for this project to generate more income to help the community, and
- Opportunity for gated manufactured housing villages for over 55s.

One participant voted 'no' because it may ruin open spaces, and two participants indicated they were unsure.

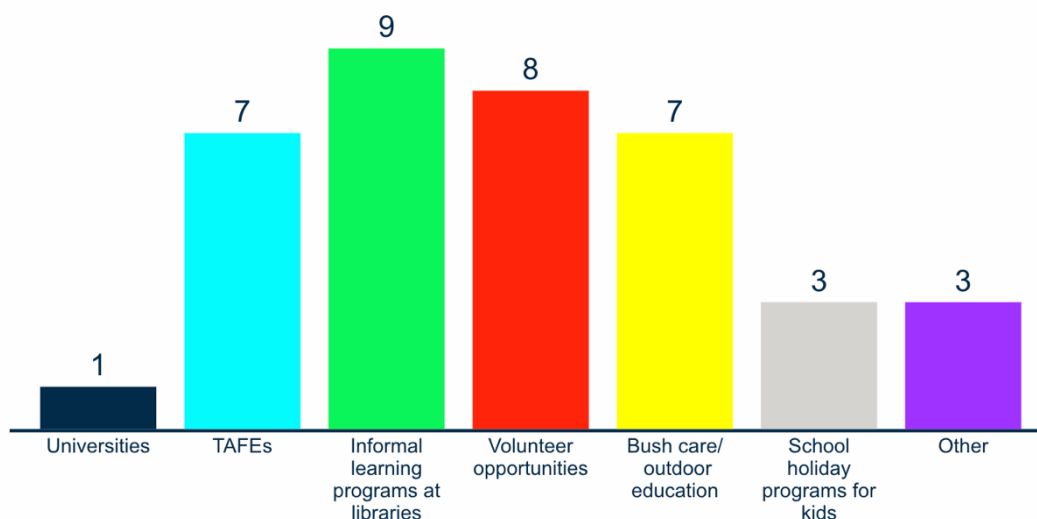
4.2.4 Priority: A city of learning and opportunity

What learning opportunities would you like to see in the LGA?

As shown in Figure 14, the majority of participants (8) would like to see informal learning programs at libraries, followed by volunteer opportunities (8), TAFEs (7) and bushcare/outdoor education (7).

Comments made in relation to specific options are summarised below.

Figure 14 - What learning opportunities would you like to see in the LGA?



Informal learning programs at libraries

One participant would like to see libraries as a place for community to come and have talks by local experts and support one another.

One participant would like to see monthly talk and teaching events at libraries that involves children and students and would like to engage and understand from children what topics they would like to listen to.

Bushcare/ outdoor education

One participant comments there is an opportunity to facilitate outdoor education particularly as Parramatta is a corridor for animals flora and fauna, and there are many animals within the council area.

Other

One participant commented there could be a lot done in the community education space, indicating there is an opportunity for Council to brand itself as a learning hub to attract some business colleges to the city and host Ted Talks on a regular basis.

“Years ago, Victoria was branding themselves as the ‘Smart State’. And organisations in tough times still spend a lot of money on the education of their people and business, communities and education is something that can bring a lot of money into the Council area, as well and physically. We can get people to come into the city – opportunity to brand us and show what’s going on – leading the forefront of education. We could bring a lot of dollars in as well.”

What is needed in the LGA so that all children aged 0-5 years have access to learning opportunities?

Participants were asked what they think is needed in the LGA so that all children aged 0-5 years have access to learning opportunities.

Suggestions included:

- Affordable and subsidised childcare (3 comments)
- Social and learning activities in public spaces (3 comments), including:
 - Facilitated opportunities for socialisation and play at parks and storytime outdoors (2 comments)
e.g. park meetups (free coffee for parents)
 - Library activities, free music
 - Swimming lessons at the new PAC
 - Workshops for new parents about how to teach their young ones
- Better family support to enable every family to enroll their children into childcare
- Specialised childcare for all key workers, including nurses, police, SES
- Inclusive learning that caters for intellectual disabilities, autism that allows them to feel included
- Free quality children's books delivered to homes
- Sensory gardens
- Spaces for young children (creches etc.) with learning opportunities
- More mum/dad and bub groups (2 comments) including multicultural groups, and
- Readiness for school program.

5. Smart City and Innovation

5.1 About the Smart City and Innovation focus group

The Smart City and Innovation focus group was held on 4 May 2023 to inform Council's Smart City and Innovation Strategy. Cred Consulting facilitated the focus group online via Zoom.

The purpose of the focus group was to explore with community the principles, priorities and five of the actions proposed in the Draft Smart City and Innovation Strategy.

The session commenced with a brief presentation by Council staff describing the strategy and providing context. This was followed by a facilitated conversation that was guided by the following questions:

- What is your level of support for each of the principles?
- Do the principles capture everything? Is there anything missing?
- Which priorities are most important to you?
- What activities would you like to see Council do to complete the actions?

Participants were provided the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas throughout the 1.5 hour session. At the conclusion of the session, Council staff outlined the next steps for the project.

5.2 What we heard

Principles

The six principles were presented to focus group participants. These included:

- Transparent
- Collaborative
- Experimental
- Community-first
- Resourceful
- Inclusive

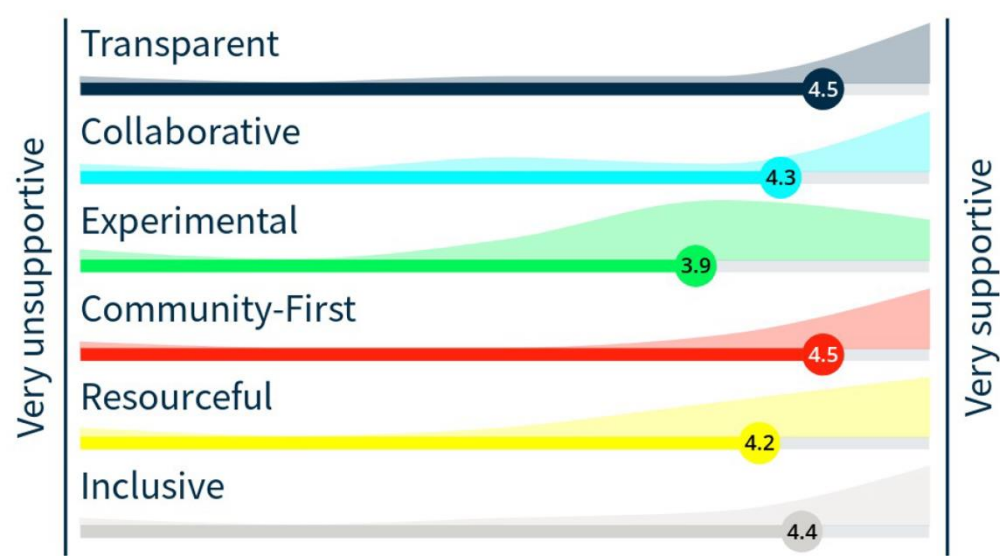
Participants were then asked to indicate their level of support for each of the principles. Participants could rate the principles according to the following scale:

- Very unsupportive
- Somewhat unsupportive
- Neutral
- Somewhat supportive
- Very supportive

Participants generally indicated that they were supportive of the principles. As shown in Figure 15, most principles received a score of 4 or higher, indicating that on average, participants were somewhat supportive or very supportive.

The highest rated principles were transparent and community-first, which received scores of 4.5, demonstrating strong support from participants. The lowest rated principle was experimental, which received a score of 3.9, demonstrating slightly lower levels of support from participants.

Figure 15: What is your level of support for each of the principles?



Comments made in relation to specific principles are summarised below:

Transparent

Participants stated that transparency helps to build trust, and that this is very important when making changes in the community. One participant noted that they have seen the area develop well and they are supportive of the way it is progressing. They stated that transparency will help to ensure Parramatta is developed in a good way.

Experimental

Participants generally felt that there were more important principles that should be prioritised over being experimental. Participants expressed a lack of trust in new processes and technology, and stated that experimental approaches need to be tested and evidence-based.

Community-First

Participants expressed support for community involvement in this strategy and highlighted the need to consider the diverse, intersectional community in its entirety.

Resourceful

Participants indicated the need to be efficient with existing resources and with time. It was noted that support of the community is the most important step, followed by resourcing. Participants also felt that resourceful and sustainable are two connected elements, and sustainability needs to be considered.

Priorities

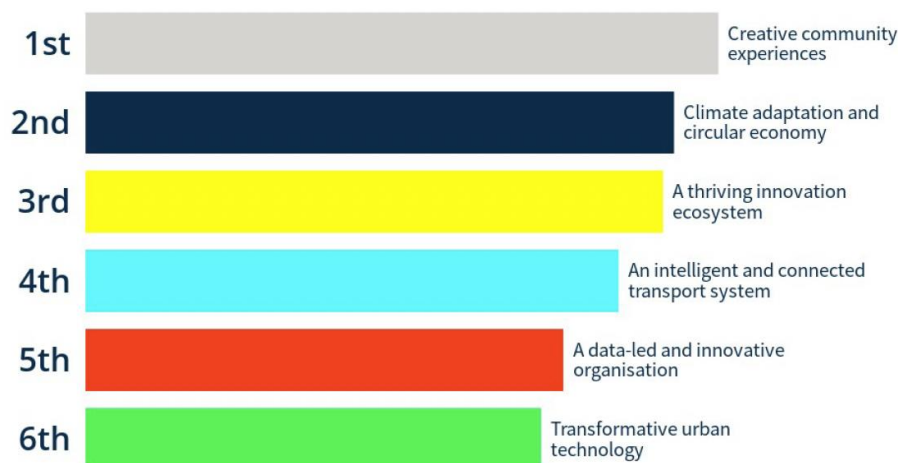
The six priorities were presented to focus group participants. These included:

- Climate adaptation and circular economy
- An intelligent and connected transport system
- Transformative urban technology
- A data-led and innovative organisation
- A thriving innovation ecosystem
- Creative community experiences

Participants were then asked to indicate which priorities were most important to them, by ranking them in order of importance.

As shown in Figure 16, participants ranked creative community experiences as their top priority. This was followed by climate adaptation and circular economy, and a thriving innovation ecosystem. The lowest rated priority was transformative urban technology.

Figure 16: Which priorities are most important to you?



Comments made in relation to specific priorities are summarised below:

An intelligent and connected transport system

Participants expressed support for improvements in the transport system, including accessible transport, because it allows people to get around and connect with others in the community. One participant suggested phasing out cars in the LGA.

Transformative urban technology

Participants indicated the need for micro-cooling in high traffic areas and a reduction in waste. Participants noted that sensors from smart infrastructure creates toxic e-waste, which needs to be considered.

A data-led and innovative organisation

Participants saw value in evidence being used to support decisions. Participants stated that the innovation technology in relation to Council operations (such as having the ability to look at previous rates) is not as smart as it could be, and there are opportunities to improve this. They also identified the need for data on environmental changes in the LGA.

Creative community experiences

Participants stated that creative experiences bring the community together, and that if people are happy and thinking creatively, the other priorities will flow naturally. Participants also suggested eco-friendly community events to maximise the parks in the area.

General feedback

Participants also provided the following general feedback:

- Important to prioritise needs over wants
- Keeps Council accountable
- Smaller arts funding needed in suburbs
- Need events that help the community understand how to be an informed digital citizen.

Actions

Five key actions from the strategy were presented to focus group participants. These included:

- Test digital programs in libraries and in community hubs at Phive and Wentworth Point
- Collaborate to offer physical and digital spaces for innovators to connect, share ideas, and learn
- Help communities make better decisions based on environmental conditions
- Organise contests for creative problem-solvers to tackle difficult city challenges

Participants were then asked what activities they would like to see Council do to complete each action. The suggestions provided are summarised below:

Test digital programs in libraries and in community hubs at Phive and Wentworth Point

Participants suggested the following activities for Council to implement to complete this action:

- Workshops and tutorials at a variety of times and locations
- Pop-up stalls in shopping centres and community hubs
- A survey to understand the needs in the community, to help inform workshops
- Advertising in newsletters, at the library, on the Council website/app and at community events

- Food truck festival with a range of culturally diverse offerings
- Live Life Get Active fitness classes
- Free memberships
- Computer-generated music competition
- Open days
- Community meet-ups
- Farmer's markets
- Use university precincts for digital connectivity for residents
- Events in parks, gathering places and places of worship
- Matchmaking programs for young, technologically-advanced people to meet and support older people who struggle with technology.

Collaborate to offer physical and digital spaces for innovators to connect, share ideas, and learn

Participants suggested the following activities for Council to implement to complete this action:

- Matchmaking programs for young, technologically-advanced people to meet and support older people who struggle with technology
- Park runs
- Night markets, craft/handmade markets and farmer's markets
- Competitions for a variety of interest groups
- Activate heritage buildings to connect arts, innovation and technology
- Parramatta Innovation and Arts Prize
- Technology Innovation Festival
- Open days to invite people to explore spaces
- Provide amenities in the public domain to allow people to work outdoors, such as Wi-Fi, outdoor charging stations, seating and sheltered areas
- Use noticeboards in train stations to alert residents of environmental hazards.

Help communities make better decisions based on environmental conditions

Participants suggested the following activities for Council to implement to complete this action:

- Create an app with local information (such as air quality, which ovals are open, natural hazards and upcoming events)
- Flood alarm
- Use noticeboards in train stations to alert residents of environmental hazards
- Share information using social media
- SMS people directly about hazards (however it was noted that this may create privacy concerns)

- Enable vulnerable people to register to receive warnings (e.g. an asthma sufferer could register to receive warnings of high pollen).

Organise contests for creative problem-solvers to tackle difficult city challenges

Participants suggested the following activities for Council to implement to complete this action:

- Trivia nights with real-world community problems
- Parramatta Nobel Prize
- School projects and competition around problem solving and tackling issues
- Innovation prizes
- Showcase the work of competition participants at a festival or exhibition
- 'Escape rooms' where a group of people are given a problem to solve in a certain amount of time
- Market researcher on the street
- Technology road show program with a local film
- Parramatta Amazing Race
- Work with community groups and services (such as Rotary, Lions Club and Bushcare)
- More categories for the Garden Awards, to include building, development and built environment actions.



02 9357 2476
www.credconsulting.com.au
info@credconsulting.com.au
ABN 57 620 957 815