

Draft Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan

Engagement Evaluation
November 2021

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1. Introduction

The draft Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan (SSAP) outlines the actions Council will take in the planning, provision and long-term management of sportsgrounds. As a strategic guidance document, it aims to inform and strengthen Council's role in the delivery of sportsground facilities to the community by:

- Detailed service area planning to deliver adequate, quality, best practice sportsgrounds and associated facilities to meet sport, physical activity and population needs;
- Advocating for the provision of adequate, quality, best practice sportsgrounds and associated facilities to meet population needs;
- Helping secure funding and partnership opportunities for sport;
- Providing an evidence base to challenge, where appropriate, the scale, location or appropriateness of proposed sportsground upgrades and development in the context of impact and outcomes for the community;
- Supporting preparation of operational and capital works budgets for the short, medium and long term; and
- Supporting preparation of short, medium, and long-term asset management plans.

1.1. Purpose of consultation

The aim of the public exhibition period was to raise awareness of the draft SSAP, to seek input and feedback on the plan, and to demonstrate to the community and stakeholders that Council values their input and is working to deliver the best possible outcomes for the City of Parramatta.

The opportunity to provide feedback on the draft SSAP was open to the community for a total of six weeks, from Wednesday, 1 September to Wednesday, 13 October 2021, and accessed via Council's engagement portal, Participate Parramatta' <https://participate.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/sportsground-strategy>.

1.2. Engagement response

The Participate Parramatta platform was viewed 2,375 times by 1,229 visitors and Council received a total of 62 submissions over the consultation period, as follows:

- 45 people/organisations responded via the online survey; and
- 17 via email submissions.

The team hosted a live webinar on the draft SSAP that garnered 18 registrations and facilitated 6 requested meetings with various stakeholder groups.

2. Methodology

Numerous methods and channels were used to reach the community and direct them to Council's online engagement portal Participate Parramatta to provide feedback. These included:

2.1. Direct correspondence

Emails were sent inviting feedback to a list of sporting clubs and associations who are current hirers of sportsground facilities this covered approximately 104 contacts across 44 clubs/ associations.

Invitations and reminder emails were sent to peak sporting organisations including, AFL NSW, Football NSW, Volleyball NSW, Baseball NSW, Cricket NSW, Little Athletics NSW, Touch Football NSW, Hockey NSW, Softball NSW, NSW Rugby League, and NSW Rugby Union.

Emails were sent to other stakeholders including, Department of Education, Western Sydney Parklands Trust, Office of Sport, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Western Sydney Academy of Sport, and Western Sydney Local Health District.

2.2. Social media

- City of Parramatta Facebook page
- City of Parramatta Instagram page
- Active Parramatta Facebook page
- Participate Parramatta Facebook page

2.3. Electronic direct notification

- Participate Parramatta newsletter
- ePulse newsletter
- Active Parramatta newsletter

2.4. City of Parramatta's corporate website

The draft SSAP appeared on the City of Parramatta main page carousel and exhibition page, promoting the webinar and Participate Parramatta page.

2.5. Webinar

A webinar was held to provide an opportunity for community members and stakeholders to ask questions and learn more about the draft SSAP.

2.6. Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholders were able to book in 15-minute interviews with the project team to discuss any questions they had regarding the draft SSAP prior to making a submission.

3. Engagements

Overall, the opportunity to provide feedback for this project was presented to an estimated 119,179 persons culminating in 2,568 engagements with the information and 62 formal contributions.

3.1. Direct correspondence

There were 17 written submissions received and 4 enquiries regarding the draft SSAP.

Submission	Count
Sporting club/ association	7
Peak sporting organisation	5
Government organisation	2
Community group/ organisation	1
Resident/ individual	2

3.2. Social media

A paid campaign was scheduled across Facebook and Instagram. Organic social posts also featured on the City of Parramatta (40,000 followers), Participate Parramatta (6,956 followers) and Active Parramatta (3,800 followers) Facebook pages.

Overall, the social media combined campaign garnered a reach of more than 38,000 resulting in 916 clicks to the project page.

Paid advertisements	Count
Reach	37,729
Link clicks	916
Engagements	959

3.3. Electronic direct notification

Channel	Subscribers	Open rate
Participate Parramatta Newsletter September #1	10,228	3,329 (32.5%)
Participate Parramatta Newsletter September #2	10,348	3,218 (31.1%)
Active Parramatta Newsletter	5,030	1,507 (30%)
ePULSE Newsletter	55,732	15,072 (27%)

3.4. City of Parramatta corporate website

CoP website	Count
Reach	289,913
Exhibition page views	112

3.5. Participate Parramatta

The exhibition was hosted on the Participate Parramatta engagement platform

Project page events	Count
Views	2,375
Visitors	1,229
Contributions	63
Contributors	62
Survey completions	45

Document downloads	Count
SSAP Printable	77
SSAP Digital	234
SSAP booklet	0
SSAP summary	0
SSAP Summary – Simplified Chinese	30
SSAP Summary – Korean	28
SSAP Summary – Hindi	32
SSAP Summary – Arabic	22
SSAP Webinar Content	7
Total	423

3.6. Webinar

The webinar was held on Tuesday, 21 September 2021 from 6pm to 7pm attracting 18 registrations, several of whom were representing community sports associations.

3.7. Stakeholder Interviews

Six (6) stakeholder interviews were held with the following sporting organisations: AFL NSW, Parramatta Little Athletics Club and Little Athletics NSW, Epping Eastwood Football Club, Winston Hills Soccer Club, Parramatta District Cricket Association, and Roselea Football Club. Of the groups that had stakeholder interviews, six provided a submission or completed the survey following the interview.

4. Key findings

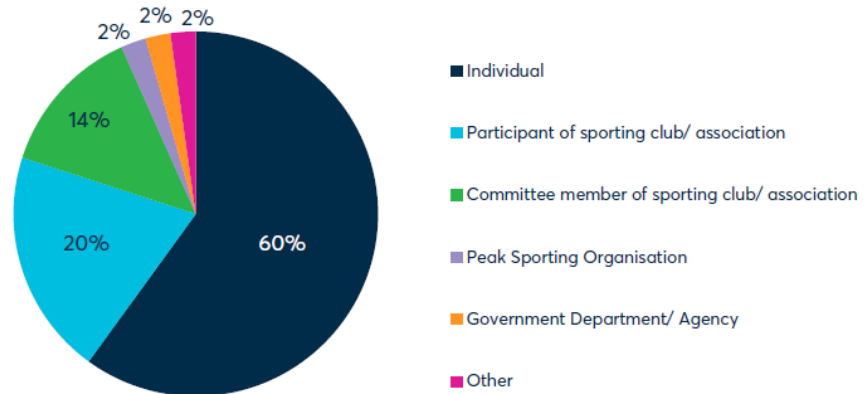
4.1. Online survey submissions

The online survey consisted of 21 questions. This survey included logic jumps so that questions could cater better to various types of organisations and individuals. The first set of questions asked about respondents' relationships with the City of Parramatta, their experiences and areas of interest in relation to sportsgrounds.

4.1.1 Are you providing feedback as an individual or as a representative of a particular group?

Twenty-seven (27) survey responses were from individuals, 16 from sporting organisation members/representatives and the remaining two were from government agencies/other.

Figure 1.



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Individual	60%	27
Participant of a sporting club/ association	20%	9
Committee member of sporting club/ association	13%	6
Peak Sporting Organisation	2%	1
Government Department/ Agency	2%	1
Other	2%	1

4.1.2 What is the name of the sporting club/organisation/association you represent?

Nineteen (19) respondents were shown this question with 17 providing answers. The key sports represented were hockey, netball, soccer, cricket, touch football, and rugby union and league.

4.1.3 Which sportsground/s does your club frequent within the City of Parramatta LGA?

Below is tagged data for sporting association members/representatives

Sportsgrounds visited by sporting association members/representatives

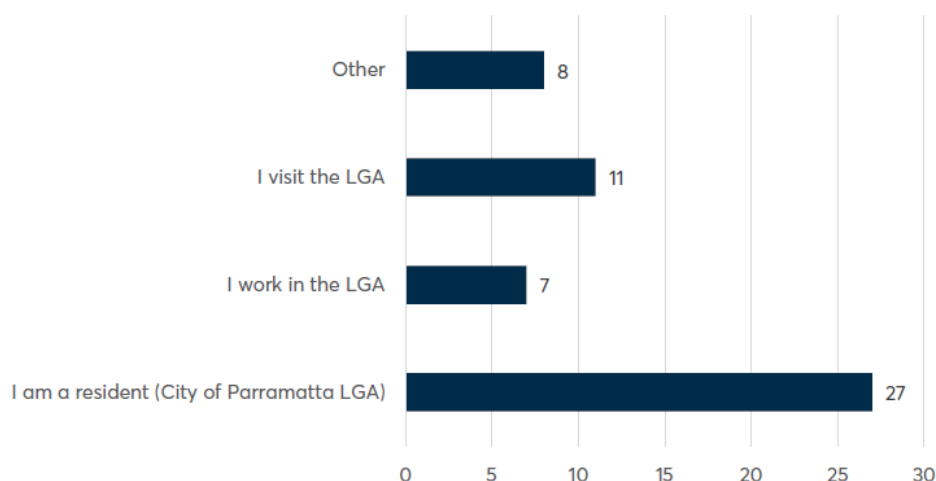


4.1.4 Suburb of residency

Answer choices	Percent	Count
North Parramatta	15%	6
Rydalmere	7.5%	3
Epping	5%	2
Wentworthville	5%	2
Beecroft	5%	2
Dundas	5%	2

4.1.5 Do you identify with any of the following groups

Figure 2.



Sixty-four percent (27/42) of respondents identified as a resident of City of Parramatta LGA, 17% worked in the LGA and 26% visit the LGA. Eight (8) respondents chose 'Other' and provided an explanation:

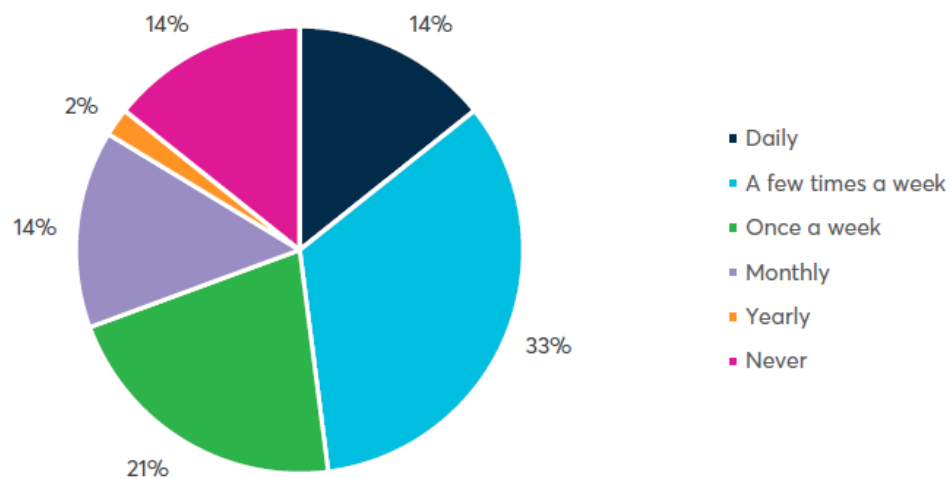
- I did live in Parramatta until we were annexed to Cumberland LGA, and I played hockey in Parramatta until the fields were given over to league;
- My son who has played hockey goes to university in Parramatta (WSU), daughter travels through Parramatta to play at Homebush;

- Play hockey in Parramatta LGA until 2018 when our field at Doyle Park was taken from our Association;
- Play sport;
- I administer the Parramatta District Cricket Association, currently providing cricket for 30 clubs & 280 teams, and growing;
- Organise sporting events in LGA;
- I currently work in CoP LGA as I have worked from home since March 2020. Pre-pandemic I worked outside the LGA; and
- Our netball club trains in the LGA.

4.1.6 How often do you visit one of Council's Sportsgrounds?

Sixty-nine percent (29/42) of respondents said they used City of Parramatta sportsgrounds at least once a week:

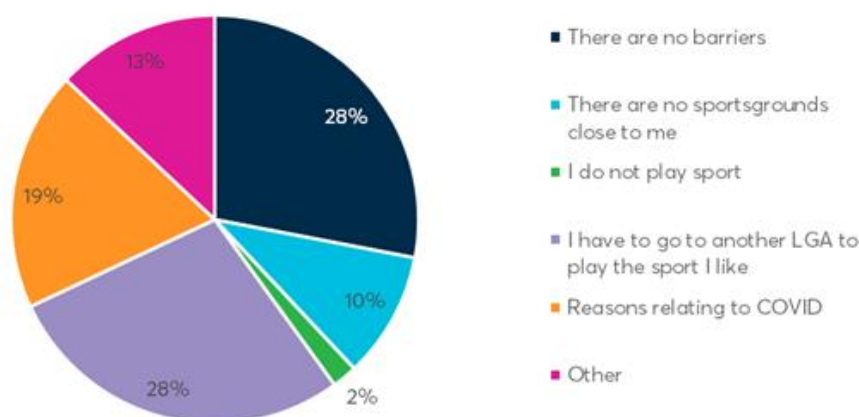
Figure 3.



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Daily	14%	6
A few times a week	33%	14
Once a week	21%	9
Monthly	14%	6
Yearly	2%	1
Never	14%	6

4.1.7 What are the barriers that stop you from visiting Council's sportsgrounds currently?

Figure 4.



Survey respondents who chose 'Other' provided these comments:

- The facilities and upkeep is "terrible";
- Maintenance of grass/cleanliness/facilities;
- Currently and for the last several years, there are inadequate fields to accommodate demand;
- Our club is not allocated any sporting fields and hence they need to participate in other LGAs;
- Hockey - From 24 teams it has been reduced to 0 playing in the Parramatta LGA; and
- No indoor sports facilities to play the sports I like.

4.1.8 Which of the following activities do you participate in when you visit the sportsground? Respondents were permitted to provide multiple answers.

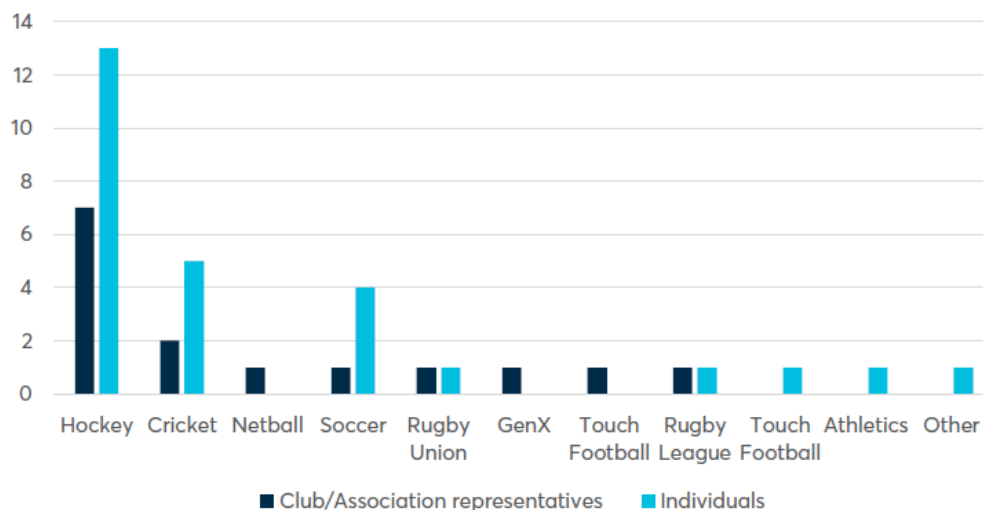
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Formal sporting activities	64%	27
Informal sport with family or friends	17%	7
General exercise/fitness	45%	19
Bootcamps	2%	1
Walking	26%	11
Cycling	12%	5
Relaxation	21%	9
Other	17%	7

4.1.9 Which sports are you involved with in the City of Parramatta?

Two (2) questions asked respondents which sports they were involved with. Q2 addressed sporting

club/association representatives and Q15 addressed the individual respondents. Hockey was strongly represented in this engagement accounting for 20 out of 42 mentions.

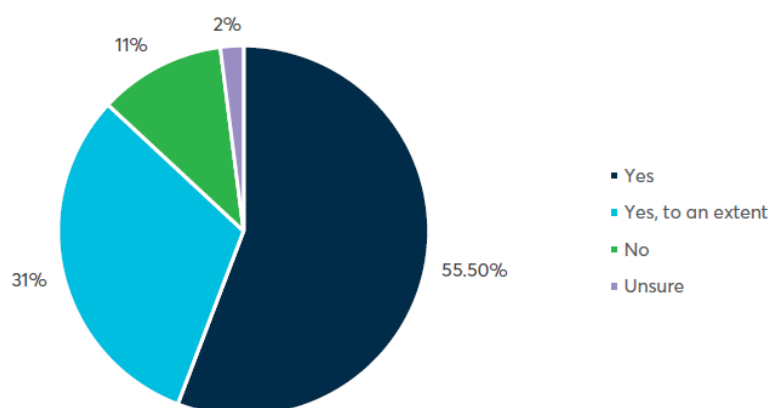
Figure 5.



4.1.10 How supportive are you of the recommendations in the draft Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan to address the current and future needs for sportsground facilities?

Eighty-five percent (39/45) of respondents said they supported the draft SSAP to some extent, and 11% stated they did not support the draft and a final 2% advised they were unsure.

Figure 6.

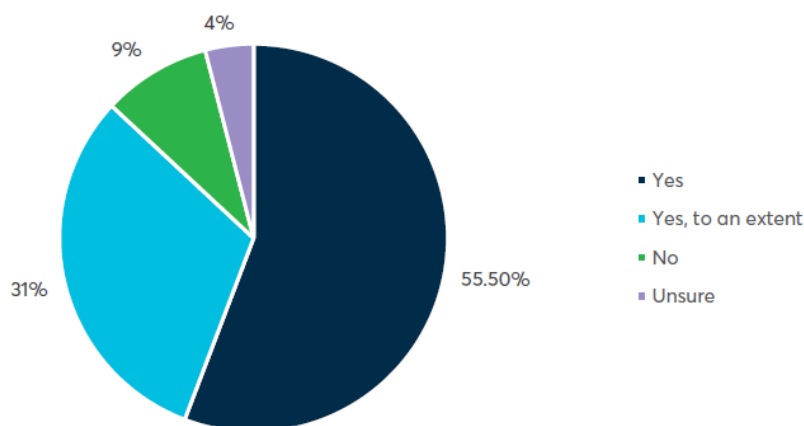


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	56%	25
Yes, to an extent	31%	14
No	11%	5
Unsure	2%	1

4.1.12 Overall, do you support the draft Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan?

Fifty-six percent (25/45) of respondents said yes, 31% said yes to some extent, 9% said no and 4% were unsure. Twenty-six (26) people offered a detailed comment and further suggestions.

Figure 7.



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	56%	25
Yes, to an extent	31%	14
No	9%	4
Unsure	4%	2

4.1.13 Do you have any comments about any of the recommendations in this report or any additional comments regarding our sportsground network?

Twenty-eight (28) respondents provided final comments and suggestions. The sentiment cloud below offers a snapshot of feedback to this question.



4.1.14 Survey respondents provided the following comments in support of the plan:

- I am concerned over altering Barton Park and how it will impact Athletics, considering it is the only such field in the area.
- I believe that it's important to upgrade the facilities of sportsgrounds that are over-utilised.
- Would like to see weed management included as a key policy within this strategy.
- There is very little about appropriate or increased parking. Esp (sic) for organised sport - so local residents have hundreds of cars and increased traffic conditions need to be addressed.
- I recommend a full audit of sportsground capabilities take place to ensure needs are fully identified.
- We need more and improved facilities due to people living in units.
- Upgrading specific facilities including Belmore Park, Upjohn Park and Doyle Ground.
- Growing local population is creating greater demands on the resources of the club and ground usage. An action plan will help us plan for our future.
- The use of synthetics would provide a vital resource.
- The recommendations are supporting the growth of that of not only community sport but the growth of the population. Our families, children and elderly need access to good sound fields.
- I don't support changing the use of Dan Mahoney Reserve to a sporting ground if it means the loss of some or all of the dog park.
- Parramatta is a growing area, particularly with high density developments, which require appropriate green space and sporting/recreational facilities.
- Because there are no sports fields for Newington/Wentworth Point/Olympic Park.
- Many of the projects that I think will make a material difference are only scheduled for completion in the medium-long term, i.e. how do we make change happen now!
- I think it's great that we are opening up more fields for use; however, it's not clear how this will open up more access for play.
- Particular to cricket, the issue is not enough fields and pitches, not so much the capacity of existing facilities. While there is some possibility of capacity increase, the constantly increasing demand outpaces that. Access to fields not owned by council is a positive in general, but again, specific to cricket - these facilities are not cricket pitches.
- Because the government & hence council do not make developers provide the facilities necessary for healthy city living. It is left to underfunded councils to do the best they can while developers laugh all the way to the bank.
- Another Hockey field would be great for paramatta (sic) and Sydney as a whole. I like the idea that there will be more astro turfs (sic) as this can incorporate hockey fields.
- We needed continual improvement to our sports grounds to enable residents to access them for many reasons.
- Better grounds would also encourage other sports clubs with the members to our community shops and retail.
- Sports should be encouraged more. We have seen during the lockdown how crucial it is to have these sporting outlets when available for interaction a skill development. So having the appropriate fields to play hockey means the sport can grow.
- We supporting (sic) multi-purpose facilities and sportsgrounds. It is wonderful for all communities to have a wealth of access to many and varied facilities which offer the space they require and importantly changerooms and toilets which are well maintained.
- It's great the Council is talking now and not leaving it til (sic) the last minute, they have identified some grounds and areas that need work. This isn't an overnight project and we want to work with the council to get the best out of the space provided.

4.1.15 Survey respondents provided the following comments that did not support the plan:

- We need green space for quiet, informal activities as well as sportsfields for formal sports. I do NOT agree that current park areas should be given over to sportsfields OR that new sportsfields should be created UNLESS there are also other park/ passive use green spaces ALSO created.
- Nothing substantial is proposed - this is all facelift stuff that is long overdue. Nothing innovative, nothing that is future thinking. Especially with regards to anywhere near Beecroft.
- More running and bike paths. More fitness equipment for adults.
- The draft strategy and action plan looks awesome but does not support common man. Even if more fields are available in the LGA, they will be offered to bigger historical clubs rather than support for other associations. This will not encourage smaller sports to provide better possible facility to the players and need to play under the monopoly of bigger clubs rules and regulations. Some of the sports are not been organised by bigger clubs and due to no support to smaller associations, the love for new sports will be lost.
- I can't support any new or replacement fields for synthetic turf, and similarly object to crumbed rubber playground material use.
- I agree with upgrades that do not destroy or impact upon remnant indigenous trees, roots zones or significant trees for new or expanded civil works, parking and facilities.

4.2. Webinar and stakeholder interviews

The purpose of the webinar and stakeholder interviews were to answer any questions that stakeholder and community members may have regarding the draft SSAP to enable them to then make a submission. The webinar presentation has been uploaded to the Participate Parramatta page. Many of the questions asked at both forums also formed the themes referenced in section 5 (Themes).

4.3. Written submission table

Organisation/ individual	Key themes	Issues raised	Council officer comments
Individual	Provision of sportsgrounds in high growth areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan needs to demonstrate an increase in the number of sportsgrounds planned for the Epping Ward, which are currently insufficient for the present population and will certainly prove insufficient for the Epping population of the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft SSAP supports Council to seek out opportunities and deliver new sportsground facilities to meet growing demand The draft SSAP advocates for the provision of adequate, quality, best practice sportsgrounds and associated facilities to meet population needs
Epping Civic Trust	Provision of sportsgrounds in high growth areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst we commend the plan being brought forward, and many of the actions it details, we question whether it will be sufficient to meet this demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft SSAP advocates for the provision of adequate, quality, best practice sportsgrounds and associated facilities to meet population needs
Individual	Provision of sportsgrounds in high growth areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sportsgrounds are valuable open spaces or all age residents to get outdoor exercise In the Epping area we have a poor level of planned expansion upgrade of sportsgrounds for Epping Ward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft SSAP supports Council to seek out opportunities and deliver new sportsground facilities to meet growing demand The draft SSAP advocates for the provision of adequate, quality, best practice sportsgrounds and associated facilities to meet population needs
Churches Cricket Association NSW	Support for the draft SSAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I support the plan and wish to make no further comments. I have appreciated the opportunity to work with the Planning Committee for Rydalmere Park and offer to contribute should further opportunities arise. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good governance; sustainable operations; and strategic facility planning and development.
AFL NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase AFL's provision and access to sporting fields within CoP Delivery of multi-purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted in the SSAP, there are no sporting fields in the City of Parramatta that are configured to deliver Australian Football in either the summer or winter season. It is vital that future planning considers the development of sporting fields that can be figured to support Australian Rules football. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good governance;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sportsground facilities Continue collaboration and partnerships between Council and AFL NSW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AFL NSW/ACT is supportive of the SSAP and we are keen to work closely with Council to unlock investment into projects that will support the growth of Australian Football in the City of Parramatta. For future sport fields, designs should be flexible and accommodating for multi-sport use – including appropriate amenities, lighting and field layout. AFL NSW/ACT would also welcome the opportunity to gain greater access to existing rectangular or synthetic fields to host our modified content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustainable operations; and strategic facility planning and development.
Dundas Valley Junior Rugby Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the draft SSAP Consultation of actions with existing sporting user groups as part of business case process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding Cox Park (Margaret Myhill Oval) Short Term B1. This has been the home of our Vikings Junior Rugby Club for more than 50 years. We have some environmental concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cox Park is built, on an old quarry, then filled in by a rubbish tip/council dump. How will the synthetic sporting fields maintenance affect the environment? Please consult with the community and our committee as the plans develop. We would not support any proposal with less than 2 fields. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good governance; sustainable operations; and strategic facility planning and development.
Hockey NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the draft SSAP Increase Hockey's provision and access to sporting fields within CoP Continue collaboration and partnerships between Council and Hockey NSW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hockey NSW is incredibly supportive of the draft Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan and recognises the positive impact sport can have on the health and wellbeing of local residents. We think Hockey has a number of very unique characteristics that make a multipurpose hockey facility a great fit for the City of Parramatta. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good governance; sustainable operations; and strategic facility planning and development.
Carlingford Cougars Junior Rugby League Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the draft SSAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank you for putting this document together, it was great seeing what the council is planning not just for now or the next 12 months but for the next 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our</p>

		10 plus years and knowing that it is super important that we get more kids outside being active but everyone outside and being active.	sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance; • sustainable operations; and • strategic facility planning and development.
Epping Eastwood Football Club		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epping Eastwood FC is excited about the proposed upgrade to Fred Spurway Reserve. • Boronia Park continues to be an extremely popular facility however a short-term improvement in the sportsground lighting is necessary to maintain its usefulness • In the longer term, we believe that Boronia Park is an ideal candidate for upgrading to an artificial surface due to its popularity for all types of activities (especially football) and the intense use it receives from the local residents. • Once again, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance; • sustainable operations; and • strategic facility planning and development.
Cricket NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the draft SSAP • Increase Cricket's provision and access to sporting fields within CoP • Continue collaboration and partnerships between Council and Cricket NSW • Consultation regarding the development of synthetic sporting fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support Council's intent to increase maintenance of sportsgrounds across the LGA to enhance usable capacity. The provision of new or improved drainage and irrigation will increase surface resilience to overuse and extreme weather events (such as extreme heat and droughts) • Whilst we understand the demands Council is facing, it is cricket's preference to play on natural turf fields and that any synthetic field developments are located where cricket won't be impacted. • As identified in the SSAP, CNSW acknowledges that there is an opportunity for greater collaboration between the major sporting codes 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance; • sustainable operations; and • strategic facility planning and development.

Roselea Football Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the draft SSAP • Maximising and allocating sportsground facilities • Equitable upgrades across the network • Provision of sportsgrounds in high growth areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We see the SSAP as a positive development to define, improve and guide both the development and use of such facilities • RFC appreciates the need to support less popular and more diverse sports, however we also believe Council hiring availability and sports ground allocation should more equitably recognise the community participation rates between sports. • We also recognise with frustration the in-equality of investment across the surrounding suburbs. We hope the draft plan will level the playing field and will continue to work with Council and other stake holders to achieve the aim of increased participation in healthy lifestyle choice and the growth of football in the local area. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance; • sustainable operations; and • strategic facility planning and development.
Parramatta Little Athletics Centre	<p>Opposition for action A1 listed in the draft SSAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a concept plan to investigate one full-size sporting field retaining athletics functions • Relocate throwing cages and extend gate for athletics' straight along southern track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On behalf of the Parramatta Little Athletics Centre (PLAC) committee and its members we would like to express our deep distress at seeing reference to the conversion of the centre of Barton Park Athletics Oval to a new central sports field. Parramatta Little Athletics Centre strongly oppose the proposal. • Parramatta Little Athletics submit the following points for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The integrity of the community engagement process ○ Insufficient usage data considered to base this proposal on ○ Regional significance of Barton Park ○ Logistics of hosting Friday night program ○ Safety and maintenance issues ○ Research around the safe management and best practice ○ The absence of provision of a single full size grass roots Athletics Facility in the whole LGA ○ The year-round athletics calendar ○ Application of an arbitrary "multi-use" facility policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ good governance; ○ sustainable operations; and ○ strategic facility planning and development. • The purpose of the draft SSAP is to recognise what provision of sportsground facilities are required to meet population projections for the City of Parramatta. The draft SSAP isn't detailing the number of types of specific sporting facilities required nor does it detail what facilities are allocated to which sport.

Little Athletics NSW	Support of Parramatta Little Athletics Centre's submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Athletics NSW (LANSW) would like to formally offer our full support to Parramatta Little Athletics Centre to retain Barton Park as a stand-alone athletics facility. • There are many factors that contribute to opposing the multi-use development of Barton Park, as outlined in Parramatta Little Athletics strategy feedback submission to Parramatta City Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ good governance; ○ sustainable operations; and ○ strategic facility planning and development. • The purpose of the draft SSAP is to recognise what provision of sportsground facilities are required to meet population projections for the City of Parramatta. The draft SSAP isn't detailing the number of types of specific sporting facilities required nor does it detail what facilities are allocated to which sport.
Football NSW	Support for the draft SSAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football NSW congratulates the City of Parramatta for embarking on a Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan. Our experience with local Council's that have completed a similar strategy is a vast change and improvement in maintenance and facility provision in the LGA. • With Football NSW and City of Parramatta strategic objectives aligning football can continue to grow and provide a safe, friendly, and competitive sporting environment for our participants. The five focus areas describe simply and succinctly what the City of Parramatta needs to work towards to ensure its residents have the best possible sporting infrastructure to participate. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance; • sustainable operations; and • strategic facility planning and development.
Western Sydney Local Health District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of sportsgrounds in high growth areas • Expand infrastructure considerations to 	<p>The CPH recommend that the Draft Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be used to strongly advocate for increased maintenance and upgrade funding, and significantly for new sportsground facilities. • Incorporate an overview of how the Strategy fits within Council's plans and targets relating to 	<p>The draft SSAP highlights opportunities exist for greater collaboration between Councils, different levels of government, and between sport and active recreation organisations and the non-government and commercial sector for the benefit of sport.</p>

	include supporting infrastructure for informal users	<p>public, green open space, including active transport corridors. Plus, have a greater focus on how sportsgrounds are used by recreational users outside of organised sport (informal use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the inclusion of data that looks at the cost of not adopting and implementing strategies; particularly in relation to the physical and mental health costs of inactivity and reduced social connection. 	
Parramatta District Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the draft SSAP Concerns with cricket suitability in using synthetic sporting fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth and demographic changes have meant that cricket is growing rapidly in popularity, not just amongst traditional playing communities but amongst women and migrants PDCC anticipates that based on our research, synthetic sporting fields are unlikely to be suitable for cricket It is pleasing to see another obvious opportunity is underutilised school grounds, often closed to the public on weekends. 	<p>The draft SSAP commits Council to work together with its sporting clubs, Sporting Organisations and State and Federal Government to ensure our sportsground network is able to respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities through supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good governance; sustainable operations; and strategic facility planning and development.
School Infrastructure NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing community access to sporting fields not owned by Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SINSW acknowledges the growing demand for access to high quality open space SINSW recognises the benefit of working with Councils to provide joint and shared use opportunities within the Parramatta LGA and is open to exploring these opportunities where there is a mutual benefit for the school and community. However, this is subject to timing, funding (via appropriate developer contributions) and appropriate legal arrangements. Development of educational establishments and their facilities is guided by SINSW's standards. SINSW recommends that 'safety and security measures' be added to the general matters list for Joint Use Agreements, outlined on Page 66 of the Draft Strategy. 	<p>The draft SSAP highlights opportunities exist for greater collaboration between Councils, different levels of government, and between sport and active recreation organisations and the non-government and commercial sector for the benefit of sport.</p>

4.4. Barton Park

As outlined in section 4.3 Parramatta Little Athletics Centre (PLAC) supported by Little Athletics NSW (LANSW) provided feedback regarding action A1 of the draft SSAP as provided in the table below:

Action	Sportsground	Potential upgrade	Purpose	Classification	Primary funding approach
A1	Barton Park Field 1/ Ph Jeffrey Reserve Field 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare a concept plan to investigate one full-size sporting field retaining athletics functions• Relocate throwing cages and extend gate for athletics' straight along southern track• Consider consolidation of buildings to serve both Barton Park and Ph Jeffery Reserve	Re-configuration	District	Developer Contributions

The key concerns from the organisations are regarding the investigation into a concept of one full-size sporting field within the athletics track and the negative impacts this would have on PLAC use of Barton Park and its functionality as an athletics venue.

Strategic context

Community Infrastructure Strategy

The Community Infrastructure Strategy (2020) first recommended investigation into re-designing Barton Park to accommodate an additional field within the athletics track given forecasted population growth and limited opportunities for new sportsground facilities over the next 20 years. In addition to athletics the site has been used previously for hockey training and competition but there are limited opportunities for alternative sport use due to the location of the throwing cages. At the time the CIS was prepared regarding formal sporting use the field was used for 9 hours per week in winter and 14 hours per week in summer.

Council met with sporting stakeholders including LANSW and invited sporting clubs to comment on the strategic document. No opposition to the proposed plan was received through the CIS engagement process.

Heart of Play Masterplan

Over a 12-month period, the Council engaged with the local community to develop the Heart of Play Master Plan (2021), which provides the blueprint for an outdoor sporting and recreation network across seven open spaces in North Parramatta, which included Barton Park.

Following round 1 of the engagement periods and leading on from the CIS, a rectangle layout within the athletics track was presented to the community. In round 2 of the engagement period most comments were unsupportive of the proposed field. The most common suggestions for changes or improvements included:

- Unsupportive of proposed full sized football field in Barton Park with many comments focussing on:
 - Expressed desire to retain Barton Park for athletics purposes only.
 - Barton Park is the only 400m athletics track and field facility in the Parramatta LGA, servicing the community, events such as school carnivals and zone competitions, and is home to Olympian athletes.
 - Athletics is an all-year round sport and cannot be a multipurpose space without limiting athletics functions.
 - Concerns about boot studs damaging the grounds. Some respondents also indicated there is poor drainage at Barton Park which would be further impacted by regularly use by football groups.
 - Existing athletics facilities in the middle of the park allow for athletics
 - Expressed concerns around conflict and safety between different user groups.
 - Concerns of proposed trees impacting line of sight between Barton Park and PH Jeffrey.
 - Concerns about safety between throwing cages and spectator seating.

During this time Council officers also were requested by the community to change the survey question so that it was clear that Council's intent was always to retain all athletics functions and that the proposal considers making the space slightly more multi-purpose. Some community members found the initial question to propose removing athletics functions from Barton Park.

The final adopted masterplan states: Barton Park - Retain all athletics functions. Locate athletics facilities to accommodate full-size field for future population growth.

Barton Park



List of actions

1	3m wide shared path to the perimeter of park
2	Additional canopy tree planting for improved shade
3	Existing fitness stations upgraded at end of life
4	New sports pavilion to service both fields. Existing Barton Park building retained until end of life.
5	Retain all athletics functions. Locate athletics facilities to accommodate full-size field for future population growth.
6	Formalise and upgrade car park to maximise capacity.
7	New picnic seating and BBQ spaces under existing trees on Gladstone St frontage, with lighting for early evening use.
8	Planting between carpark and street including shade trees. Water sensitive plantings to minimise water runoff (e.g. rain gardens).
9	Flexible use lawn spaces for athletics events, team warm-ups and casual use

Draft SSAP

Following on from the previous two strategic documents as per the below diagram which shows high-level intentions for action A1 the throwing cages could be moved (blue arrow) to accommodate the rectangle within the track. The action also considers extending the athletics track to make the straight longer (green arrow) and improve drainage to the site.



PLAC attended the online community webinar in which a number of questions and points were raised at this forum concerning athletic's opposition to the action. Following this forum the club, along with LANSW, were invited to a meeting with Council staff to discuss their concerns in further detail.

Council response

Council officers reviewed athletics questions prior to the meeting and had a good high-level understanding of their concerns with this action. Council officers emphasised to PLAC and LANSW that the actions in the draft SSAP are high level only and further work is needed to explore the feasibility of this action and that this will be done in consultation with PLAC and LANSW.

Council undertook further athletics analysis and benchmarking work to consider multi-purpose athletic facilities. The findings of this exercise are provided below:

Athletics Analysis

Club	Location	Ward	No. of fields	No. of players	Hours per week
North Rocks Carlingford Little Athletics	Peggy Womersley Reserve (Kingsdene Oval)	North Rocks	1	Approx. 500	Winter: 0 Summer: 10

Parramatta Little Athletics	Barton Park	Dundas	1	Approx. 500	Winter: 8.5 Summer: 13
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Council has two little athletics clubs that hire sportsgrounds facilities. Both of these organisations are affiliated to Little Athletics NSW. Both these club's primary seasons of hire is summer. There is also approximately 18 school carnivals held at Barton Park between May and August, on occasion there may be a school carnival held at Peggy Womersley. The extent of informal, unbooked use of the fields for athletic uses is not able to be quantified.

North Rocks Carlingford Little Athletics Club:

- Formerly under Hills Council prior boundary changes
- Saturday morning competition
- Only hires during summer and rugby union use Peggy Womersley during winter

Parramatta Little Athletics Club:

- Friday night competition also use PH Jeffrey Reserve for javelin, shot put and throwing cages
- Hosts a zone district carnival annually in December
- Also trains during winter two nights per week for some of the clubs representative athletes
- Provide support to school carnivals on occasion this may be in the form of equipment or building access (this is managed between the school and the club)

Benchmarking

A benchmark review was undertaken across metropolitan Sydney of little athletics facilities utilising Nearmaps and Little Athletics NSW Centre Locations, with the following data collected and some examples of multi-purpose facilities below that:

- Of the 53 listed facilities 12 are standalone athletics facilities and 41 are multi-purpose sporting facilities
- Of the 41 multi-purpose facilities 22 are used for soccer, 13 are used for rugby league/ union, 13 are used for cricket, 6 used for AFL, 1 used for baseball and 1 used for grid iron



PLAC and LANSW response

Following the webinar and meeting, PLAC submission detailed that the club strongly oppose the proposal, supported by LANSW. PLAC response is provided below:

1. *The integrity of the community engagement process has been questionable across the four HYS exercises run in the past couple of years. There has been no clear scope outlining the opportunity to meaningfully influence project outcomes for community and stakeholders. During each “consultation”, Parramatta Little Athletics have tried to have an onsite meeting or discuss in detail the flaws of pursuing the proposed plan to reduce Athletics facility*

provision in the Parramatta LGA. At each juncture any attempt to discuss actual layout has resulted in platitudes about looking at the detail at another juncture in the planning process. The overwhelming evidence points to Council intentions to progress with the proposal irrespective insights offered regarding the flaws. Outside of formal feedback avenues, Council have indicated their intention to proceed with reducing athletics provision via:

- Flood lighting plans designed around a rectangular field on Barton Park
 - Booked soccer training on Barton Park in winter 2000 and winter 2001 (despite an existing booking held by PLAC at the exact same time for the exact same venue). The integrity of the community engagement process has been questionable across the four HYS exercises run in the past couple of years. There has been no clear scope outlining the opportunity to meaningfully influence project outcomes for community and stakeholders.
2. *Insufficient usage data considered to base this proposal on. PCC have not accurately accounted for the social and self directed use at Barton Park for residents using Barton Park. School carnival use and impacts covid have had on formal booking numbers would also need to be considered.*
 3. *Regional significance of Barton Park. The logistics of hosting a Zone carnival for 1000+ athletes, with a field layout permanently rearranged removes capacity to deliver sprints and hurdles during circular events and reduces capacity of field facilities. Barton Park currently provides a unique combination of track, field, infrastructure, parking and spectator capacity which no other site in the area can match. Rearranging the field layout to accommodate winter sport will compromise Barton Park's ability to deliver larger carnivals such as the zone carnival or other events meaning some age groups may not get to participate or the event may not be able to proceed due to inability to schedule the events with reduced facility.*
 4. *Logistics of hosting Friday night program. With a field layout permanently rearranged, PLAC will have reduced capacity to deliver sprints and hurdles during circular events, and reduced capacity to conduct field events. This means under the proposed new arrangement, even during summer when Athletics is supposed to have full use of the facility, the club would be unable to meet the requirements of the weekly program across the age, ability and genders we currently provide for.*
 5. *Safety and maintenance issues associated with degradation around goal mouths, sidelines, and any section on training drills which ruins the running surface and in particular for High Jump take off. There are similar issues in reverse around soccer player safety running on a field pocked with throwing divots within sector lines.*
 6. *Research around the safe management and best practice of other venues where concurrent booking of circular track and balls sports are prohibited for safety. It is understood that team ball sports such as soccer can NOT be used at the same time as any athletics, effectively removing any capacity for athletics from the LGA.*
 7. *The absence of provision of a single full size grass roots Athletics Facility in the whole LGA from athletes, para athletics, social track runners, any throwers of javelin, discus, shot put etc. Barton Park is the only full 400m track and field facility in the LGA which Olympic athletes, club and community athletes train and compete on 12 months a year. For those with a physical preference for grass running for injury prevention, Barton Park is also the only full size grass facility for athletes in the LGA. The current field composition also provides protection for grassroots athletes without the means or maturity to be taken further afield to a synthetic track amongst elite senior athletes to pay for access and be trying to move safely amongst elite athletes.*
 8. *The year-round athletics calendar includes state, winter, racewalking and national championships at junctures across the 12 months of the year. Where other facilities are more conducive to being used flexibly between sports with similar features (rectangular layout, studded footwear), then an opportunity exists for people to use those facilities for casual or self directed use. Without access to an athletics facility, athletes cannot train ANYWHERE for shot put, discus, javelin, hurdles, hammer throw, high jump, long jump etc effectively ruling them out of participation in the competitions of the annual calendar.*

9. *Application of an arbitrary “multi-use” facility policy without genuine consideration of balance for a sport with 50years history, strong provision of female participation, strong provision of disability participation and predicted participation and growth into the 2032 home Olympic games [Brisbane and South East Queensland].*

Outcome

The intention of the draft SSAP is to prioritise investment into existing and new sportsground facilities to meet the functional requirements of sport as well as future population needs for formal and informal sport and recreation. The recommendations of the draft SSAP are not promoting what facilities should be used for which sport or changes in existing sporting users. The draft SSAP also recognises that it is subject to change as opportunities and constraints arise. Each action is required to go through its own feasibility or business case process for determination.

Council acknowledges that the scope for the Barton Park action could have been more accurately defined and given the CIS, HoP and draft SSAP were undertaken at different times and by different staff and stakeholders this has contributed to the confusion.

Given athletics comments relate to the component that sportsground facilities need to meet the functional requirements of sport, Council officers will remove the ‘investigate full-size field’ component from the action. The draft SSAP commits to a review every 5-years so the ‘investigate full-size field’ component can be revisited granted demand requires it (this may be detailed through separate strategic work or analysis) and Council works with athletics stakeholders to consider all items in their submission listed above and have undertaken a feasibility process.

Council officers were appreciative of the contributions from athletics stakeholders, as with contributions across all user groups. It is hoped that the spirit with which these conversations took place and the transparency within this report is received.

5. Themes

Several key themes have been identified through analysis of the engagement material which are to be used to inform any changes or provide guidance on future work required by Council:

5.1. Community feedback received via the community survey (45 respondents) are detailed in section 4 of this report (Key findings). In summary, the key themes and issues raised were as follows:

- Sportsgrounds are highly valued by the community and need to be available for not only organised sport but informal sport and recreation;
- There is low current and future provision for sportsgrounds in high growth areas like Epping and Wentworth Point;
- Parking is important for residents and sporting groups in the development of sportsground facilities;
- The need to ensure that the delivery of sportsground facilities keeps pace with the level of residential development;
- That some sportsground facilities were underutilised, in need of refurbishment, or both; and
- The view that sportsgrounds are not to be considered in isolation and that plans for other sport/ recreation and open space facilities is crucial.

5.2. Community feedback received via submissions on the draft SSAP are detailed in section 4 of this report (Key findings). Seventeen (17) submissions were received from residents, sporting organisations, interest groups and a government agency. The key themes raised were around the following:

- General support for the SSAP and its approach and recommendations;
- Concern with recommendations for Barton Park;
- Confirmation of the need for additional sportsground facilities that are required to meet the future population's needs;
- There has been inequitable resourcing and distribution of sportsground facilities;
- Consideration of a variety of sports and activities being available for the community to participate in and that there are different infrastructure requirements/ preferences for these;
- General support for best practice in the delivery of sportsground facilities including multi-purpose facilities, universal-design considerations, and private/ public partnerships;
- More than ever collaboration across sport, community and government is important in ensuring investment has a whole of life and whole of community benefit; and
- That some stakeholders support the delivery of synthetic facilities, others to an extent and for those that don't there are concerns raised on the environmental and heat impacts.

6. Conclusion

The feedback received confirmed the general approach taken to planning for the needs of growth outlined in the draft and also resulted in some amendments to the document.

6.1. The key changes from the draft SSAP are highlighted below:

Page/s	Key theme/ issue	Change/ addition
26-27	Innovative and new approaches to infrastructure provision	Reiterating research into infrastructure provision developed as part of Council's CIS which inform priority areas and principles of the SSAP
34	Valuing our green spaces	Calculated the value of the SSAP as requested by Western Sydney Local Health District
39	How we developed the draft SSAP	Updated to reflect timeline
40-41	Community engagement	New page highlighting trends found throughout the engagement period of the draft SSAP
50	Synthetic sporting fields	Change to focus area B to align with NSW Government Synthetic Turf Study in Public Open Space Report and subsequent guidelines Draft SSAP: <i>Install strategically located synthetic sporting fields to increase capacity and take demand off turf sporting fields</i> Final SSAP: <i>Consider the role of natural, hybrid and synthetic turf surface technology to increase field carrying capacity</i>
51	Process undertaken for delivering actions within the plan	New page elaborating on what the business case process might look like for an action or project and that it includes community consultation as part of this process
53	A1 action for Barton Park	Changed to: Upgrade field to improve drainage and remove the reference to creating an additional field.
59, 60, 61	Consider the role of natural, hybrid and synthetic turf surface technology to increase field carrying capacity	Changes to section which reflect revised priority area b: • Defining turf, hybrid and synthetic innovations • Referencing NSW Government Synthetic Turf Study • Updated language to reflect that Council will consider turf innovations in increasing the practical capacity of its sportsground network
68	Increase community access to sporting fields not owned by Council	Added: safety and security to framework as requested by School Infrastructure NSW
78	Review of SSAP	Addition of paragraph detailing how often document will be reviewed in response to achieving actions and new opportunities and constraints

6.2. The key areas stakeholders and the community would like further information and planning on:

- Each project action listed within the plan when it commences its feasibility/ business case process;
- Identification of additional sportsgrounds (and other facilities/ open space) in areas with low provision and high growth planned for example through acquisition and/or precinct planning with state government;
- Further detailed planning for sport and recreation facilities and open spaces in conjunction with sportsground facilities for example indoor recreation facilities, walking and cycling tracks, parks and bushland; and
- Further detailed planning for the number and type of sport and recreation facilities required to meet future population needs for example the number of basketball courts and/or the number of rugby league fields.