



2020 Vision, Community Strategic Plan

Councils are required under the Local Government Act 1993 to inform the community of particular issues that potentially affect their way of life. North Sydney Council is committed both in principle and in practice, to engaging on matters affecting the North Sydney community.

North Sydney Council undertakes a comprehensive review of the *Community Strategic Plan* (CSP) every four years following the local government elections. As part of this process, the community are given an opportunity to be involved in the review/development of the CSP.

1. Introduction

Between November 2012 and June 2013, Council will be renewing the CSP. This is a long-term plan (10 years plus) that will identify the community's main priorities and expectations for the future of North Sydney.

This engagement strategy outlines Council's approach for engaging the local community in the CSP review. Council has committed to working directly with the community/key stakeholders in developing the CSP to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Council is ultimately responsible for the adoption of the CSP; however the community have a role in recommending the priority areas for Council to target their resources. As is the case with any agency whether it is federal, state or local government there are a limited amount of resources available as well as certain legislative requirements which have to be met and Council in conjunction with the community will consider this along with what is important to the local community when allocating resources via its *Delivery Program* and *Resourcing Strategy*.

Council believes that meaningful participation by community and stakeholders in the development of the CSP will lead to more informed and robust decisions for all. Council is committed to providing opportunities for community and stakeholders to be involved in the development of this document and will communicate how that input was considered and included.

1.1 Council's Community Engagement Policy

Council's [Community Engagement Policy](#) (CL02-OG) states that it "will engage the community when issues involving decision making or policy formulation are deemed, by Council officers or the elected Council, to be of specific interest to the community, and/or arise that may have a significant immediate or long term impact on the local community."¹

¹ The Policy can be viewed at <http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/www/html/2210-policymanual.asp>

In accordance with this Policy a community engagement strategy has been prepared outlining the ways stakeholders can be involved in the decision making process. Community engagement opportunities will be provided across a range of ‘engagement’ levels.

Council uses the framework shown below in Table 1.1 to select the most appropriate level(s) of engagement for each project/decision type. This framework has been adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. Council uses this framework to ensure a range of engagement ‘levels’ are offered.

North Sydney Council Community Engagement Framework	
LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Inform	Providing balanced and objective information to help the community understand problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions
Consult	Obtain public feedback on alternatives and/or decisions
Involve	Work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution

Table 1.1 Derived from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

2. Background

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level plan that a council will prepare. The purpose of the plan is to identify the community’s main priorities and aspirations for the future and to plan strategies for achieving these goals. In doing this, the planning process must consider the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to achieve its aims and aspirations.

In 2004 Council developed, following an extensive consultation process that included public forums, surveys, submissions and workshops, its second North Sydney Strategic Plan, known as the ‘*2020 Vision 2004-2008*’, which set out directions and strategies for the future of the local government area.

Following the 2008 local government elections, a review of the *2020 Vision 2004-2008* began in December 2008, with a timeframe to adopt a new CSP by late 2009². This review provided Council the opportunity to review its corporate planning framework in line with the State Government’s then proposed Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

The review process sought to refine the issues raised in the previous plan and to identify new priorities and issues that emerged between 2004 and 2008, as well as identification of future priorities. The review also drew heavily upon findings and actions identified from other community consultations conducted by Council at the time, including consultations for *A Social Plan for North Sydney 2008-2012*.

2.2 Previous Engagement Strategy

To ensure as many community stakeholders as possible had the opportunity to contribute and participate in the previous review of the plan, stakeholders were grouped according to their

² The 2020 Vision, North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2009-2020 was adopted on 30 November 2009 and readopted following minor amendments on 21 June 2010.

roles and responsibilities. These were classified as councillors, and staff, government (Federal and State agencies), community (residents, ratepayers, students, non-resident users as well as Precinct Committees), business (chambers of commerce and developers) and reference groups (environmental, sport, leisure and culture, and education).

The community engagement process included:

Oct - Nov2008	Community Engagement Strategy prepared and promoted.
Feb2009	Publication of a 'discussion paper' that outlined the current and emerging issues underpinning each of the former Directions (10) and where Council wants to be by the year 2020 in addressing these issues.
Apr 2009	Publication and promotion of biennial progress report (2008) on achievement of the 2004-2008 plan.
Mar - Apr 2009	<p>Consultations held with the community, councillors and staff and key stakeholders on the discussion paper during; this included a blog, online feedback form, reply paid postcards, written submissions and a series of workshops for key stakeholders.</p> <p>Council heard from over 860 people, community groups and/or organisations, including Precinct Committees and over 260 interested parties subscribed to the 'keep informed' e-newsletter, receiving regular progress updates</p>
May - Jun 2009	<p>Development of 'outcomes papers' (2) that summarised the findings of the initial consultations. The papers were published in. Emerging priorities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserving our environment - Enhancing our suburbs/villages - Improving transport (including traffic and parking) - Promoting and improving the CBD - Focusing on wider business community - Expanding recreation opportunities - Enhancing sense of community and culture - Improving access to services and facilities - Improving infrastructure (old and new) - Promoting North Sydney's heritage and history - Promoting Council's governance and civic leadership role
Sep - Oct 2009	First <i>draft 2020 Vision, North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2009-2020</i> prepared based on the findings of the consultation processes which occurred from July - September 2009
Sep - Nov 2009	Further consultation on the first draft was held from 28 September to 3 November 2009, this included a public exhibition period and community information session, held on 16 October 2009. Council received 28 submissions during the public exhibition period.
Nov 2009	All feedback received during the exhibition period was incorporated in the final <i>2020 Vision, Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2009-2020</i> which was adopted by Council at its meeting of 30 November 2009.

Visit www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/2020vision to access the 'Summary of Consultation Outcomes - Part A: Raw Data' and 'Summary of Consultation Outcomes - Part B: Analysed Data'.

3. Community Engagement Strategy

3.1 Who are our community stakeholders?

The Community Engagement Strategy identifies the following groups to engage with in the local community:

- Residents/Rate payers (including Precinct Committees)
- Community groups and organisations including interest groups, support groups
- Hard to reach target groups e.g. young people, students
- Business community/Developers
- Government Agencies - Federal, State and Local
- Educational Institutions
- Media
- Members of Parliament
- Neighbouring councils
- Visitors/Tourists
- Councillors
- Council staff

3.2 Key Communication Messages

- The community engagement strategy meets Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation that NSW councils must adhere to. This coincides with the need to update a number of other Council planning processes that are also due for review and preparation of an Ageing Strategy etc.
- Review CSP Priorities - the development of the new plan does not dismiss the work that was done as part of former plan, however the document is due to be reconsidered particularly due to some significant issues affecting the community such as the demographic changes taking place in the community particularly in relation to our ageing population.
- Council values the community's participation in the development of the CSP. Council will be open and transparent with the community on how their feedback has been incorporated into the overall planning process; however the final decision on priorities and levels of service provision will be made by Council.
- The planning process is an integrated approach incorporating the environmental, social, economic and civic leadership factors affecting our community. None of these areas exist in isolation and the plan will reflect this.
- The CSP is a broad document that will consider the community's main priorities and expectations for the future and develop strategies for achieving these priorities.

Council is not the only agency responsible for working towards meeting these priorities and expectations. The role of other government agencies and the community will also be identified at part of the process.

3.3 Timetable

The CSP will be developed over a seven month timeframe commencing in November 2012, with adoption by Council in June 2013. During this period, activities undertaken by staff will be sequenced so that the final document prepared reflects aspirations and expectations of the community and is adequately informed by social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues.

Community and stakeholder engagement will occur at various times during this seven month period as information is shared and key directions provided. The phases of development of the CSP are outlined below:

Phase	Timing
1. Research and Scoping	November 2012 - February 2013
2. Identify aspirations and expectations; and prepare draft goals and objectives	February 2013 - April 2013
3. Developing, allocating and costing strategies	April - May 2013
4. Final Community Strategic Plan Preparation	May - June 2013

3.3.1 Phase 1 - Research and Scoping

During this phase information will be compiled that will answer the following questions:

- What do we know about our community? (2011 Census data)
- What could affect our community in the future?
- What legislative requirements including state and regional plans inform Council decisions?
- How will the community be informed?
- What principles will guide the Community Strategic Plan?
- What is the long-term timeframe of the Community Strategic Plan?

To do this we will undertake the following activities between November 2012 and February 2013:

Note: In accordance with Council's Community Engagement Framework described on page 2, the 'level of engagement' per activity is noted in brackets.

3.3.1.1 'Directions' Discussion Paper (Level 1)

A discussion paper will be developed based on the five Directions of the current CSP and the *End of Term Report 2008-2012* (August 2012). The paper will identify current and emerging issues, Council's current actions to address these issues, pose questions to consider for the future and offer suggestions for measuring progress.

Development of the paper will involve MANEX (Council's senior management team) and key staff. The paper will be published on Council's website and made available in hard copy at each of the other consultation opportunities as well as from the Customer Service Centre, Stanton Library, North Sydney Olympic Pool, Centre for Sustainability and Planet X Youth Centre.

During Phase 1 the community will be invited to make written submissions regarding the issues raised in the discussion paper. This feedback will be used in Phase 2.

3.3.1.2 Councillor Workshop (Level 2 and 3)

To introduce and engender ownership of the CSP, councillors will initially be involved a planning workshop. Led by an interdependent facilitator (as done in 2009) councillors will review the current vision statement and CSP framework, discuss their priorities as well as their role in the engagement process.

3.3.2 Phase 2 - Identify aspirations and expectations; and prepare draft goals and objectives

To gather input from the community three open-ended questions will be posed throughout Phase 2 of the engagement process:

- What do you value most about North Sydney?
- What would you like to see improved or changed?
- What would you like for the future of North Sydney?

These questions will be incorporated into all consultation related documentation including the Discussion Paper (refer 3.3.1.1) and promotional collateral. These questions will be asked all participants so that the current goals, objectives and strategies in the CSP can be reviewed and reprioritised.

Between February and April 2013 Council will offer various methods by which the can participate in Phase 2, including face-to-face and online, allowing the community to participate at times that best suit their needs and commitments.

At the conclusion of Phase 2 a summary of consultations outcomes (raw data) will be produced and distributed to participants and key stakeholders as well as posted on Council's website.

3.3.2.1 Focus Groups (Level 2 and 3)

To introduce and engender wide ownership of the project, a series of focus groups with target groups, including:

- Residents/Rate payers (including Precinct Committees)
- Community groups and organisations including interest groups, support groups
- Hard to reach target groups e.g. young people, students
- Business community/Developers

The aims of the focus groups will be to introduce the CSP review project to a representative sample of the key stakeholders; to seek feedback on the existing goals, objectives and strategies within the current CSP then to reprioritise these; to discuss desired levels of service, and to build collaboration with the community. Workshops will be held in various times and locations across the LGA. They will be facilitated by Council staff.

3.3.2.2 Postcard Feedback

Council will also produce reply paid postcards which will be distributed to every household in the North Sydney LGA, asking the community to provide feedback on their top three (3) priorities for the future of North Sydney. Postcards will also be made available from the Customer Service Centre, Stanton Library, North Sydney Olympic Pool, Centre for Sustainability and Planet X Youth Centre.

3.3.2.3 Online Panels (Level 1 and 2)

Council at its meeting of 13 August 2012 resolved to pilot a multiple panels program in 2012/13 for 12 months. The primary objective of the pilot is to determine the suitability of online community panels as a complementary mechanism to Council's existing engagement programs.

The pilot online panels program will be used as part of the engagement strategy for the CSP review. The multiple panels approach will align with the Directions framework of the CSP, whereby five panels will be established, one panel per Direction. Panel members could be recruited based on personal interest and assigned to the corresponding panel. Note: membership to more than one panel is permitted.

The pilot program will focus on the 'inform' and 'consult' levels of engagement. Panel members will be sent information about engagement opportunities (Level 1) and invited to participate in the other engagement opportunities, as well as will be requested to complete an online (Level 2) as well.

3.3.2.4 Facebook (Level 1 and 2)

Consultation for the 2009 CSP review included a blog, which allow the community to share their opinions and views with others in relation to the key priorities for North Sydney. As Council's Facebook page(s) have grown in popularity, this could be used as part of the consultation process instead of a blog. This is a public page and does not require Facebook membership to 'comment'. Comments will appear in newsfeed of the people who 'like' Council's Facebook page. Comments will be moderated.

Comments collated via Council's Facebook page will be used as 'vox pops' or quotes throughout the new document and/or accompanying *Delivery Program, Operational Plan or Resourcing Strategy*.

3.3.2.5 Poster Competition (Level 2)

Children, up to 12 years of age, will be invited to send artworks depicting either:

- i) What I like - or don't like - about living in North Sydney...

ii) When I grow up North Sydney will look like....

A public exhibition of the entries will be held as part of the launch event for the new CSP and included in the new document and/or accompanying *Delivery Program, Operational Plan or Resourcing Strategy*. This opportunity will be especially targeted to primary schools and childcare centres. Entrants will be credited on all artwork published.

3.3.2.6 Photographic Competition (Level 2)

Since 2010, Council has, via its website, invited community members to share images of North Sydney. By providing the photo, the sender agrees that she/he owns the copyright for the image, and gives approval for North Sydney Council to use the image on the “Snapped in North Sydney” section of its website, on Council's Facebook page(s) or in its community newsletter, North Sydney News.

As part of the development of the new CSP, Council will expand the “Snapped in North Sydney” project, inviting community members to submit images specifically for inclusion in the new document and/or accompanying *Delivery Program, Operational Plan or Resourcing Strategy*. Photos must be taken within the North Sydney local government area. Photos should be of good quality and provided in digital format. No photos in which children can be identified will be accepted unless the photo is accompanied by permission from a parent. The photographer will be credited on all photos published.

3.3.2.7 Telephone Survey (Level 2)

Council will engage the services of an external consultant to conduct its biennial Customer Satisfaction Survey, to determine community attitudes towards the services and facilities it provides. 400 local residents and 200 business customers will be contacted to participate in the telephone survey in early 2013.

The survey will seek feedback on the community's attitudes towards a wide range of Council related issues and services, including customer service, the environment, planning, roads and footpaths, parks and open space, community services and facilities, waste collection, and communication. Survey respondents will be asked to rank their satisfaction and importance in these areas. The findings will be benchmarked against Customer Satisfaction Survey findings. Priority areas identified through the survey will be considered and prioritised for attention in the new CSP and *Delivery Program*.

3.3.3 Phase 3 - Developing, allocating and costing strategies

Phase 3 process will involve the analysis of the raw consultation data collected in Phases 1 and 2 to form the basis for the development of first draft new CSP. The intention of the review is to build upon and improve the existing plan, i.e. not to ‘throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water’; thus based on Phase 1 and 2 feedback a SWOT analysis of the current plan will be undertaken.

During this phase all of the strategies that have been identified will be sorted according to which agencies have direct responsibility. Strategies that are not the responsibility of Council will be directed to other agencies. Resourcing will be identified for Council owned strategies

based on the identified levels of service, forming the basis for the review of the existing Resourcing Strategy.

During the analysis a list will be prepared of any customer requests that were identified during the first phase of community engagement. Specific and detailed concerns identified that could potentially be addressed more quickly than via a high level document like the 2020 Vision will be compiled and conveyed to the relevant work area of Council for consideration and appropriate action.

To do this we will undertake the following activities between April and May 2013:

3.3.3.1 Online Panels (Level 1 and 2)

The consultation data collected in Phases 1 and 2 will be checked and validated with Online Panel members.

3.3.3.2 Councillor Workshop (Level 2 and 3)

The consultation data collected in Phases 1 and 2 will be presented to Councillors at a workshop. The current goals, objectives and strategies as well as indicators will be reworked to integrate the new and emerging priorities identified in the previous engagement phases.

Councillors will also be involved in the review/development of the accompanying *Delivery Program* and *Resourcing Strategy*, including *Long Term Financial Plan*, *Asset Management Strategy* and *Workforce Strategy*.

3.3.4 Phase 4 - Final Community Strategic Plan Preparation

This Phase involves the finalisation of the CSP and accompanying *Delivery Program* and *Resourcing Strategy* provides Council the opportunity to obtain public feedback regarding the proposal.

To do this we will undertake the following activities between May and June 2013:

3.3.4.1 Communication Strategy and Branding

A communication strategy including branding will be developed in consultation with Councillors. Council has

3.3.4.2 Public Exhibition (Level 1 and 2)

The final Draft CSP, *Draft Delivery Program* and *Draft Resourcing Strategy* will be placed on exhibition for a minimum of 28 days, in accordance with legislative requirements, to allow the community an opportunity to provide feedback. During this period the documents will be available for viewing at Council's Customer Service Centre, Stanton Library, North Sydney Olympic Pool, Centre for Sustainability and Planet X Youth Centre. Submissions may be made in writing. For more information about how to make a written submission refer to Council's [Information Sheet: Making a Written Submission to Council](#).

3.3.4.3 Community Information Session (Level 1 and 2)

The Mayor and General Manager will host an information session (date to be determined). The session will include a presentation about the draft plan, and a Q&A session. The meeting will be open to the public. The meeting details will be advertised through the local papers, Council's website and to all participants in the other engagement activities. The presentation and Q&A summary will be published on Council's website after the meeting.

3.3.4.4 Councillor Briefing (Level 1)

Following the public exhibition period and prior to presentation of the final plan to Council for adoption, a Councillor Briefing will be held to present the key issues arising from written submissions received and via the community information session.

3.3.4.5 Launch Event (Level 1 and 3)

The final engagement step in Phase 4 will involve the promotion of the new CSP, once adopted. A launch event(s) will be conducted celebrating the involvement of staff and community/external stakeholders in the development of the new CSP.

3.3.5 General Promotion and Publicity

Community feedback and progress updates will be reported during the various stages of the engagement process. Promotion and publicity will be via the following methods:

3.3.5.1 North Sydney News (Level 1)

Articles will be included in the 'North Sydney News' newsletter distributed to all households and businesses in North Sydney. Articles will outline the review process, the five Directions of the current 2020 Vision and invite the community to have a say on the future directions of North Sydney via the consultation program, as well as will provide regular progress updates.

3.3.5.2 Council website (Level 1)

The 2020 Vision web page is to be updated to invite residents to participate in the review. It will include details of all engagement opportunities. The current CSP, End of Term Report, Community Reports and other related performance reports, as well as the Discussion Paper will be available for download. Feedback collected during Phase 1 and 2 will be collated and summarised on the website also.

3.3.5.3 Advertisements in local newspapers (Level 1)

Advertisements promoting the review of the CSP review and inviting the community to participate in the engagement process will be included in 'The Mosman Daily' and 'North Shore Times' newspapers.

3.3.5.4 Noticeboards (Level 1)

Advertisements promoting the review of the CSP review and inviting the community to participate in the engagement process will be displayed in Council's noticeboards.

3.3.5.5 e-Newsletter Subscriptions (Level 1)

Council coordinates several e-newsletters including Stanton e-news, Business e-news and Green events. Information promoting the review of the CSP review and inviting the community to participate in the engagement process will be promoted via the e-newsletter subscriptions.

3.3.5.6 Precinct Committees (Level 1)

Information promoting the review of the CSP review and inviting the community to participate in the engagement process will be distributed to all Precinct Committees and senior staff will be available to attend Precinct meetings to discuss the review process.

North Sydney Community Precinct System was established in the late 1970s, encouraging residents, workers, students and property owners to take an active role in providing input into the operations of Council. Precinct Committees are organised by the residents and are advisory. Precinct meetings are one avenue for informing Council of community opinion and maintaining two-way communication between community members and Council staff and Councillors.

4. Opportunity Cost/Rationale

There is a financial cost to Council to achieve a high quality process. If the process is robust and there is community ownership of the decisions made then long term savings will result.

Insufficient or poor quality engagement can result in poor long-term decisions requiring further resources to rectify. Aspirational objectives need to be informed by minimal levels of service that Council is legislatively required to provide as well as service levels expected by the community. There is a likely risk that the priorities identified in the CSP will be unachievable if engagement activities do not link aspirational objectives with realistic expectations.

The aim of a high quality community engagement process is about getting sustainable decisions. This means the community and Council finding common ground and making decisions for the benefit of both current and future generations. The process will help elected officials to understand and respond to their communities hopes, dreams, issues and concerns over the long term and not only for their limited terms of office.

5. Further Information

For further information please contact Council's Corporate Planning and Governance Manager, Jenny Gleeson:

Phone: 9936 8100
Email: council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au