

Community Engagement Policy

Policy scope

This policy outlines the purpose, principles and approach to community engagement to be taken by the City of Fremantle when engaging communities and stakeholders.

The policy will be applied by all employees and consultants appointed by the City when engaging those affected by and interested in decisions to be made by Council.

Policy statement

1. Purpose

The City of Fremantle is committed to providing opportunities for all members of the community to participate in civic decision-making processes. We recognise that our community is a source of knowledge and expertise, and this can be harnessed to help find solutions to local issues as well as complex city challenges.

Community engagement is a key part of our commitment to be a transparent and responsive organisation. Our objective is to make better decisions by bringing the voices of communities and stakeholders into the topics that are important to them and to lead a culture which respects and welcomes community input.

2. Principles

The City of Fremantle's approach to community engagement is guided by the following principles:

2.1 We clearly communicate why we are engaging and the community's role in the engagement.

From the outset, we articulate the purpose of our engagement and what will happen as a result of the information gathered. We explain what level of influence the community, stakeholders and Council have on the decision to be made, and any associated limitations or constraints. We consider the requirements for each project and its level of potential impact on the community to determine the required level and timing of engagement. We provide all information necessary so participants can make informed choices.

2.2 We carefully consider who to engage.

Before we begin engaging, we identify communities and stakeholders who are directly involved, or likely to be affected by the project. On major projects that set a direction or define a position for the City, we encourage broad community participation to ensure that a diverse range of views and ideas are expressed and considered. We also consider barriers that prevent or deter people from participating in engagement activities and consider ways to minimise them.

2.3 We explain the process.

We aim to be transparent, and make our decision-making process clear. We do this by explaining upfront the process to be undertaken, identifying where there is opportunity for the community and stakeholders to have input, and where the decision-points are.

Where possible, we build on the outcomes of previous engagement. If the engagement crosses over with a previous engagement process, we explain the outcomes, identify how they relate to the current process and why a new process is required.

2.4 We carefully consider how to engage and ensure our processes, venues and information are accessible.

We recognise people engage with civic life in different ways depending on a number of factors, such as age, background and ability. We aim to be responsive to this broad spectrum of needs, and ensure there are multiple engagement methods in various settings, to achieve appropriate community participation.

We ensure our engagement is accessible by providing information in clear and easy to understand formats, or is available in alternative formats on request. Our engagement events and venues are designed to be accessible whenever practical and achievable.

2.5 We design our engagement to be engaging.

The City of Fremantle is working to continuously improve how we engage, and design approaches that are creative, relevant and engaging. We are open to new and innovative engagement methodologies, and tailor our approach to draw people into the process and maximise the reach and impact of our engagement.

2.6 We complement our engagement with high quality communication.

We provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information, written in plain English, to stakeholders throughout the engagement process. Information about

our engagement is available on My Say Freo (mysay.fremantle.wa.gov.au) and through the City's communication channels.

2.7 We acknowledge contributions made during the engagement process and let participants know how their feedback was used in our decision-making.

We are transparent with the community about how their participation was considered, by reporting back what we heard from contributors and how their input has been incorporated in decision making. We share the results of engagement through My Say Freo - mysay.fremantle.wa.gov.au.

We also advise contributors when the matter is to be considered by committee or council so they may attend the meeting if they wish.

3. Approach

3.1 When we engage

The City will engage with the community when:

- Council resolves formally to engage.
- A decision or plan will substantially impact the community and there is some part of the decision or plan that is negotiable.
- Stakeholders or the community have expressed an interest, or could be interested in a decision or plan where there is a range of potential outcomes.
- Community input can enhance decision-making, project outcomes or future opportunities.
- There is legislation, policy or an agreement requiring community engagement or consultation.

3.2 How we engage

The level of engagement will vary depending on the nature and complexity of the project or decision and will be guided by the City of Fremantle community engagement principles in section 2.

Consideration is given to things like community and stakeholder interest, political sensitivity, opportunities for partnerships, the level of impact, legislative requirements, time, resource and budget constraints. These considerations will guide how and when in the life of a project or decision community engagement may offer the greatest benefit.

Quality community engagement is well planned and executed, inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.

At times Council will engage the community on issues that are of importance or interest to a specific part of the community, and engagement will be targeted towards this group.

The City’s engagement approach has four stages to ensure we deliver a consistent approach to engagement activities. This includes a process of planning (developing an engagement plan), doing (preparing and engaging), reporting (analysing information and providing updates on the engagement) and evaluating (both the process and outcomes).

The purpose of the engagement and the type of input that will assist with the decision to be made is reflected in the way community engagement is planned and reported. We carefully consider aspects of both qualitative input (such as trends and thoughts) and quantitative input (such as number of participants) when designing engagement methods and reporting back what we heard.

The following matrix is used to assist in determining the most suitable approach, relative to the likely ‘level of impact’ of a project, plan, service or action. As highlighted by the matrix, more than one level of engagement is generally required, as there is likely to be movement back and forth through the different levels as the engagement is implemented, except in the case of projects or issues with only a low level of impact of a localised nature or if there is a statutory requirement to consult (see 3.4).

Expected level of impact	Criteria (one or more of the following)	Engagement approach generally taken	Level of engagement generally required	Examples of engagement methods the City may use
High – City wide	<p>High level of impact on all or a large part of the City of Fremantle.</p> <p>Any significant impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the whole of Fremantle, such as the natural environment or heritage.</p> <p>Likely high level of interest across the City of Fremantle.</p> <p>Potential high impact on state or regional strategies or directions.</p>	<p>Early engagement with community and stakeholders.</p> <p>Involves a broad range of stakeholders and community members.</p> <p>Utilises a variety of engagement methods to give people who want to contribute, the opportunity to do so.</p> <p>Updates are provided to interested stakeholders and local community.</p> <p>Engagement plan developed in collaboration with the Community Engagement team and approved by Director.</p> <p>Budget allocated to deliver community engagement.</p> <p>Council briefed on engagement plan.</p> <p>Process is evaluated to</p>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Consult</p> <p>Involve</p> <p>Collaborate</p>	<p>Focus groups</p> <p>Workshops</p> <p>Working group</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Online tools on My Say Freo</p> <p>Face to face at engagement events</p> <p>Pop ups at community events and spaces</p> <p>Feedback and submission forms</p>

		<p>assess the quality and overall effectiveness of the engagement and assist the City's commitment to continually improve our engagement practice.</p>		
<p>High – Local</p>	<p>High level of impact on a local area, small community or user group(s) of a specific facility or service.</p> <p>Significant change to any facility or service to a local community.</p> <p>Potential for a high degree of community interest at the local level.</p>	<p>May range from seeking comment on a proposal to involving the community and stakeholders in discussion on proposed options.</p> <p>Comprehensive information is made available to the community to enable informed input.</p> <p>Uses a combination of face to face and online engagement methods to encourage broad participation at different levels.</p> <p>Feedback is collated and made available to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Updates are provided to interested stakeholders and local community.</p>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Consult</p> <p>Involve</p>	<p>Surveys</p> <p>Online tools on My Say Freo</p> <p>Face to face at engagement events</p> <p>Pop ups at community events and spaces</p> <p>Feedback and submission forms</p>
<p>Low – City wide</p>	<p>Lower level of impact across City of Fremantle.</p> <p>Level of interest among various communities or stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Potential for some although not significant impact on state or regional strategies or directions.</p>	<p>Approach may range from seeking comment on a proposal to involving the community and stakeholders in discussion and debate on proposed options.</p> <p>Ensures informed input through making comprehensive information available to the community.</p> <p>Uses a combination of face to face and online engagement methods to encourage broad participation at different levels.</p> <p>Feedback is collated and made available to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Updates are provided to</p>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Consult</p> <p>Involve</p>	<p>Surveys</p> <p>Online tools on My Say Freo</p> <p>Face to face at engagement events</p> <p>Pop ups at community events and spaces</p> <p>Feedback and submission forms</p>

		interested stakeholders and local community.		
Low - Local	<p>Lower level of impact on a local area, small community or user group of a specific facility or service.</p> <p>Only a small change to a facility or service at the local level.</p> <p>Low interest at the local or user group level.</p>	<p>Approach consists of advising the community or stakeholders of a situation or proposal or informing of a decision or direction.</p> <p>Communication strategy that provides high quality, accessible information to those affected by and interested in the change or decision.</p> <p>Communication channels relevant to the target audience are used.</p>	Inform	<p>Letterbox</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Signage</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Advertising</p>

3.3 When it is not effective or appropriate to engage

It is neither effective nor appropriate for the City to engage when:

- A final decision has already been made by council or another agency.
- Council cannot influence a decision by another agency or party.
- The decision to be made concerns a minor operational matter with minimal impact on the community or stakeholders.
- Implementing a project or decision that has already been engaged on.
- There is insufficient time due to legislative or legal constraints, or urgent safety issues to be addressed.

In these events, the City will inform stakeholders why the decision has been made.

3.4 Statutory engagement

In some instances, the City of Fremantle is legally required to consult with the community. In these cases, the City will treat the prescribed level of community engagement as the minimum standard.

The most common instance of this is in relation to development applications and other planning proposals. For planning proposals, the City relies on its policies, adopted under the Planning and Development Act 2005, for guidance in regard to consultation and will continue to be the basis on which the City engages with the community on planning matters.

Delivery of community engagement beyond legally required levels will depend on the decision to be made (or project or service to be delivered), the community's

interest to participate, the need for Council to understand the community's view, and the opportunity for the community to influence the decision.

3.5 Engagement with Aboriginal communities

The City's Aboriginal Engagement Plan (2015) guides dialogue between the City of Fremantle and the Aboriginal community on community, land and heritage matters and will be applied in conjunction with this policy.

3.6 Holiday periods

The City will not commence an engagement process between the last council meeting of the calendar year and the first council meeting of the new-year, unless there is a legal requirement, council direction or other unavoidable necessity to do so.

An additional 14 days will be added to any engagement period that falls between 15 December and 15 January and 7 days before and 7 days after Easter Sunday.

Definitions and abbreviations

Engagement – The practice of actively bringing community voices into decisions that affect or interest them, using a range of methods.

Consultation – Seeking and receiving feedback or opinion, usually on a proposed plan or decision, e.g. seeking comment on a draft policy or concept.

Community – A general term for individuals and groups of people not part of an organised structure or group. They may be a community based on geography, or interest, or both, e.g. residents of Beaconsfield, people impacted by proposed traffic calming measures, young people interested in skateboarding. The community is not restricted to ratepayers or residents of the City of Fremantle.

Stakeholders – People who are organised under the banner of a defined group or organisation, often providing representation to a broader group, e.g. Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, a local school or precinct group.

Engagement tools/methods – The things we use to activate community input, e.g. a workshop, an online survey, a community meeting.

Level of engagement – Refers to any one of five levels of engagement (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) defined by the International Association of Public

Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum to describe the community's role in any engagement programme. A complete description of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum can be found online at www.iap2.org.

Review information and related documentation

Reviewing officer:	Director of Strategic Planning and Projects
Policy adopted:	27 March 2019 - OCM FPOL1903-6
Policy amended:	
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Planning and Development Act 2005</i> <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972</i>
Delegations:	N/A
Related documents:	Relevant City of Fremantle Plans and Policies
Next review date:	March 2024