

RECREATION FACILITIES PROVISION FRAMEWORK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DRAFT RECREATION FACILITIES PROVISION FRAMEWORK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

July 2024

Executive summary: Overview and key findings

The City of Melbourne undertook community engagement to gather feedback on the Draft Recreation Facilities Provision Framework. The consultation was aimed at sports clubs and recreation users and the broader community. Feedback was received from clubs, facility users and general park users.

A total of 87 pieces of feedback were received through this engagement process. The feedback was provided in several ways and included 82 survey responses, two focus group sessions (12 participants including non-users), and five written submissions. The Participate Melbourne page received 1603 views and 1411 unique visitors, and the Framework was downloaded 182 times.

The engagement activities revealed that the majority of participants supported the guiding principles and prioritisation framework. There was a considerable level of neutrality. The key findings predominately related to the clarification of the priorities and weightings. The key themes are highlighted in this report.

Background and Methodology

The draft Recreation Facilities Provision Framework was presented to FMC on 21 May 2024, where Council approved commencing community engagement which was undertaken from 30 May to 5 July 2024.

Feedback was sought to inform the draft Recreation Facilities Provision Framework, in particular the Guiding Principles and the Prioritisation Framework.

Clubs and users of Council's Recreation facilities, and the community were able to access information about the project and provide feedback through:

- Participate Melbourne Survey,
- sending a question or email to the activemelbourne@melbourne.vic.gov.au inbox.
- Attending one of two information sessions.

Information about the Recreation Facilities Provision Framework and a link to the survey were promoted through a range of mediums including:

- emails and phone calls to sport and recreation clubs and operators,
- social media posts, including a paid targeted campaign promoting the Participate Melbourne Survey,
- promotion in sport and recreation facilities
- targeted outreach to approximately 90 clubs (50 community sports, 30 recreation and 10 leased and licensed clubs) as well as the community.

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Engagement findings

Feedback was received from 87 contributions through this engagement process. This included 31 survey responses from aquatic and recreation facilities and indoor facility users, 11 surveys from sports field users, and 40 surveys from parks and open space users (including 18 golfers). Five written submissions were received. An additional twelve people attended one of two information sessions.

The feedback provided overall support for the draft principles, and noted they support health, wellbeing and diversity of community. The majority of participants were supportive of the prioritisation framework. The feedback followed consistent themes. There were a number of responses that were topics of interest but not directly related to the principles or prioritisation questions.

The following section outlines more detail on the specific feedback relevant to the framework.

Overall, there was support for the draft principles and the prioritisation framework presented. Key themes that emerged through feedback, that can be addressed, included: overlap in principles and prioritisation, refinement of weightings, and simplification of language. Broader topics raised included: support for greater use of existing facilities, the need to acquire additional open space to address population growth and the need to prioritise recreation needs in development of new communities. Some also expressed concern at the lack of reference to 'passive recreation' and increasing capacity of existing sports facilities in parks.

Specific Feedback

Guiding Principles

- The feedback demonstrated overall support for the principles, and noted they support health, wellbeing and diversity of community. Questions were raised about the specific focus on women, and whether facilities reflect the community. A few responses noted that the challenge will be turning this into reality, and a further response would like to see an action plan. Partnerships were raised as important but to be successful the outcomes need to be clear. Affordability was suggested as an additional principle, however this related to user charges rather than facility provision. There was some concern that the principles were too broad or that the process may lead to less support for existing sports and facilities. Those disagreeing with the principles thought they were vague, there was too much focus on sport and active recreation, and that principles should include increasing overall facilities.

Prioritisation Framework

- The feedback demonstrated overall support for the prioritisation framework. Questions were raised about gender participation and why mental health and queer inclusivity is not more obvious. Suggestions were made to reframing percentages to include a higher weighting for asset condition or identified gap and deliverability and readiness, asserting that the focus should be on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities. Other suggestions were to lower the weighting on "participation growth potential", querying if potential can be achieved. One response was unsure that the prioritisation framework matched the principles, suggesting that gender equity should embrace First Nations, All Abilities, LGBTIQ+ and other diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as females. A further comment was that insisting on strategic alignment stops innovation. One respondent suggested weightings could be manipulated to give higher priority to vested interests, while another suggested prioritising existing uses over new uses. Those disagreeing with the prioritisation framework thought asset condition should carry a higher weighting, that the framework was vague, and consultation did not empower the community to support decision making.
- Responses that did not support the principles or prioritisation framework were primarily received from park users who expressed concern at increasing capacity of existing sports facilities in parks. This included specific objections to sports lighting. The sentiment expressed in responses was that additional land should be purchased to accommodate growth rather than increasing capacity of existing sports facilities.

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- A few respondents suggested that the limited reference to participation in passive recreation in the framework document could be interpreted that it is not important.
- Other broad sentiment within comments received included agreement that there is a clear need to plan for future facility provision, particularly given the population growth. The need for bike paths and facilities being open longer hours were suggested. Concern was expressed that despite significant growth in sports such as basketball, that facility provision is not matching participation.

The following recommendations and suggestions emerged from the consultation.

Recreation Facilities Provision Framework overall:

- Communicate clearly about the framework's use and purpose.
- Locate the principles and prioritisation framework earlier in the document.
- Simplify the language.
- Further clarify that Council values and supports participation across a broad range of unstructured and structured activities throughout the municipality.
- Include of a glossary of terms.

Guiding Principles

- Align the guiding principles to the prioritisation framework.
- Accessible participation to include the principles of Equity and Diversity.
- Accessible participation to use language consistent with the Fair Access Policy (eg 'Women and Girls')
- Change previous 'Equity and Diversity' heading to read 'Distribution' reflecting the geographical distribution (and therefore access to) facilities. Relocate 'opportunities for our diverse communities' to accessible participation. Relocate principles on 'universal design' to 'Capacity and Multi-use'.
- 'Quality and Capacity' to become 'Capacity and Multi-use' including replacement of the term *high standard to fit for purpose* facilities and addressing universal design in this section as the section describes principles about the way facilities will be used.

Prioritisation framework:

- Cluster the seven criteria to three categories being 1) Strategic alignment 2) Participation and 3) Facilities.
- Participation category has a total weighting of 50% and includes Participation Growth Potential, Social Equity and Accessible Participation.
- Facilities category has a total weighting of 50% and includes Asset Condition Or Gap in Recreation Facility Provision, Multi- sport and Adaptable and Deliverability and Readiness.
- Increase weighting on asset condition or identified gap in provision.
- Social Equity and Accessible Participation to reflect the broader aspirations of equity. Definition of equity is "the provision of fairness and justice to achieve equality. It recognises that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities to reach equal rights and outcomes. It means that some people might be given extra resources and opportunities to achieve outcomes equal to others".

Other responses

- The importance of passive recreation is described in the 'outdoor sport and public open space' section of the report and states that Council values and supports participation across a broad range of unstructured and structured activities throughout the municipality. It is noted that these activities take place across a variety of facilities, parks and the public realm. The 'response' section has been updated to strengthen sentiment expressed in the consultation. No further amendments are

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proposed as this framework has been developed to address the complex topic of recreation facilities not addressed in any other strategy, while support for passive or unstructured recreation are recognised in other strategies including the Open Space Strategy.

Next steps

The next steps of the project are to use the engagement feedback to inform the development of the final framework, which will be presented to the Future Melbourne Committee on 20 August 2024 for approval.