

Epping Central Structure Plan Engagement Summary February 2023



Introduction

Council is currently reviewing the Epping Central Structure Plan to ensure that Epping Central continues to grow as a liveable, diverse and thriving Metropolitan Activity Centre. The refreshed Structure Plan will be used to guide and manage future development in Epping Central to ensure it meets the current and future needs of the people who live work and visit Epping Central.

The Epping Central Structure Plan review is being developed in four stages.

STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW



Community consultation for Stage 3 of the Structure Plan review was undertaken between 24 October and 4 December 2022 and included both broad community engagement and more targeted discussions with key stakeholders on the draft refreshed Epping Central Structure Plan. The draft Structure Plan presented to community sets out the land use and development vision for Epping Central and will be used to guide and manage future planning and decision making over the next 15-20 years, subject to its adoption by Council.

The aim of the stage 3 community engagement was to inform and consult with the community on the vision, objectives and strategies contained within the draft Structure Plan to ensure that the activity centre continues to meet the current and future needs of the people who live, work and visit Epping Central.

Feedback received in response to the Structure Plan will be considered, and where appropriate, changes made to the Structure Plan.

How we engaged you

The Epping Central Structure Plan stage 3 community engagement was open for community comment from 24 October to 4 December 2022.

Community feedback was sought online through Council's Engage Whittlesea platform and through direct conversation and activities at community pop-ups and meetings with key stakeholders.

The project Engage page featured a survey, a voting tool for participants to identify their top three strategic directions and a poll on any of the nine precincts highlighted on the precinct map.

The project team hosted four community pop-ups in high foot traffic locations within the surrounding area. At the pop-ups, participants were encouraged to identify their top two out of the five key themes of the plan and make comment on anything within the precinct.

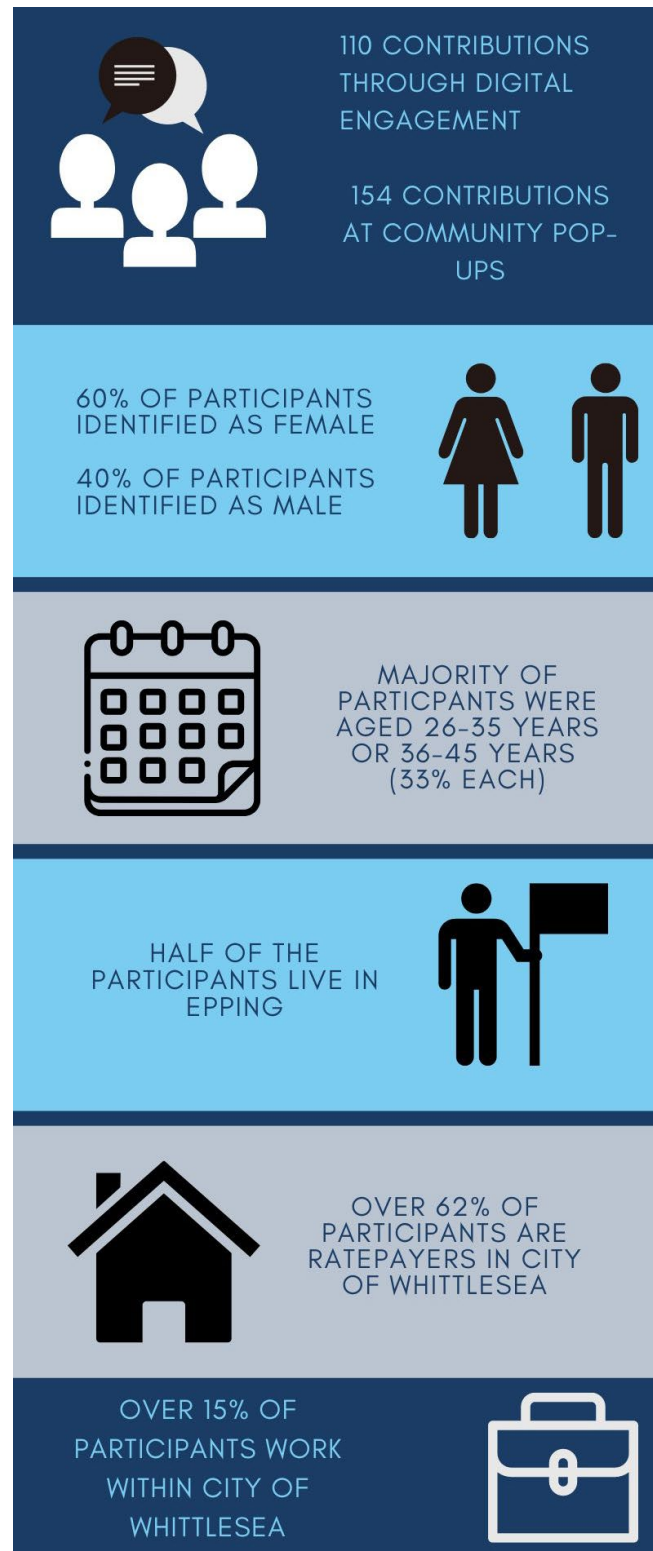
The community pop-ups held were:

- Epping Village (High Street) on Thursday 10 November from 11.30am-1.30pm
- Pacific Epping Saturday 12 November 2022 from 10am-12pm
- Pacific Epping on Thursday 17 November from 3.30-6.30pm
- South Morang Farmers and Makers Market on Saturday 19 November from 9am-1pm.

The community engagement was promoted through a range of tactics including:

- Council digital engage platform Engage Whittlesea
- Social media – we shared posts across Council's channels (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) seven times, reaching people.
- Direct mail to owners and occupiers of land within Epping Central – around 2,900 letters were dropped to surrounding owners and occupiers
- Email to key stakeholder groups including schools, kindergartens and aged care facilities – we emailed 80 stakeholders in this group
- Email to those that provided feedback during stage 2 engagement activities – we emailed 59 people that had previously provided feedback
- Notices to government departments/agencies
- Emails to business owners via Council's Business Newsletter
- Presentation to Councils Business Advisory Panel
- Meetings with key stakeholders – seven face-to-face meetings were held.

Participation



What we heard

We have separated what we heard through the digital engagement with what we heard through Community pop-ups and meetings with key stakeholders.

Digital engagement – survey



A total of 45 surveys were completed, with 78% of respondents identifying that they 'liked' or 'liked a lot' the shared vision for Epping Central.

Respondents were presented with the key themes below and asked to rank the importance of each of the sub items. What we hear through this exercise is presented in the tables below.



Urban Living

Diverse, Affordable and Attractive Housing



Movement and Transport

Accessible, safe and sustainable transport



Employment and Investment

Thriving and resilient local businesses and jobs



Community Facilities and Services

Community facilities that build and strengthen communities



Public Realm, Design and Natural Environment

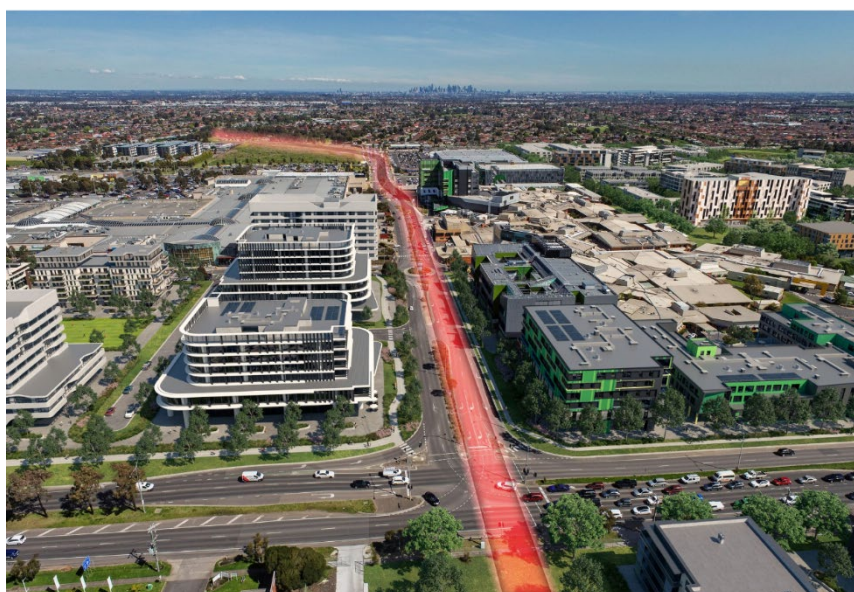
Connected and valued streetscapes, open space and creek networks

Urban Living rankings



Theme	Ranked as important %
Increase the provision and diversity of housing (including affordable housing)	62.22 % voted this as important
Directing higher density housing to locations close to the train station and existing services and facilities	60 % voted this as important
Provide frontages at ground level that add interest and encourage activation of the street	77.27 % voted this as important
Provision of new built form guidelines that encourage high quality development that provide an attractive outlook to the street and provide for landscaping	73.33 % voted this as important
Inclusion of New Epping (which is to be redeveloped for a mix of residential and employment activities) into the Structure Plan boundary	66.67 % voted this as important

Movement and transport



Theme	Ranked as important %
Planning that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport over private vehicle use	75.56 % voted this as important
Enhanced pedestrian paths between key destinations (Epping Station, Epping Hub, Pacific Epping and the Northern Hospital) with wider footpaths, seating, lighting and wide footpaths	95.56 % voted this as important
Provision of the Wollert Rail Corridor and new station within Epping Central	84.09 % voted this as important
Reduce the speed along High Street	26.67 % voted this as important

Employment



Theme	Ranked as important %
Support a broad range of business, industries and jobs.	80.00 % voted this as important
Support the centre's role as an expanded Health Hub building on the Northern Hospital	88.89 % voted this as important
Support the centre's role as an expanded Food Hub building on its proximity to Melbourne Markets.	64.44 % voted this as important
Ensure new development in employment precincts are well designed with high quality finishes	64.44 % voted this as important

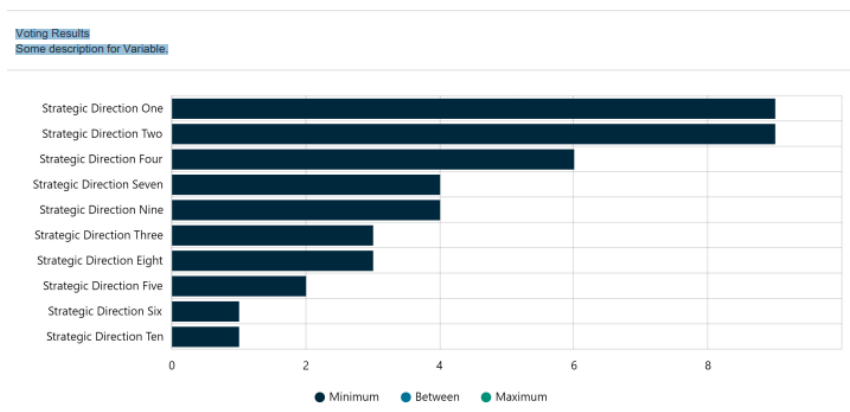
Public Realm



Theme	Ranked as important %
Provide new opportunities for open space and urban squares	77.27 % voted this as important
Encourage significant greening including planting of canopy trees along streets and as part of the re development of large privately owned sites.	84.44 % voted this as important
Provide public art and other artistic elements within open space and along the street.	52.27 % voted this as important
Ensure new development in employment precincts are well designed with high quality finishes.	66.67 % voted this as important

Digital engagement – Vote It

A total of 14 people that participated through digital engagement opted to contribute to the vote it tool. Participants were presented with the ten strategic directions contained within the plan and asked to identify which was most important to them.



Strategic Direction 1 - Supporting the 'urban core' by encouraging the intensification of development and a greater diversity of uses; and Strategic Direction 2 - Supports the development of an expanded health precinct anchored by the Northern Hospital, were the two direction that attracted the most votes.

Digital engagement – Quick Poll

A total of 37 participants contributed to the quick poll activity online. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they supported the ideas presented for each of the precincts identified in the plan and offered the chance to provide comment.

Precinct 1 – High Street Village

86% of respondents indicated that they're supportive of the ideas presented.

‘As a property owner in precinct 1 I would love to see the area become more developed and unused land bring more residential and commercial opportunities to liven the area. The urban square and added landscaping and pathways would shape the area into somewhere residents would spend more time and build connections with their local community’.

The only respondent that was not supportive of the ideas felt that *‘rather than scaling back mixed-use development along cooper street towards the Epping train line a further expansion of mixed use and building heights will be more appropriate and encourage development’.*

Precinct 2 High Street north

71% of respondents indicated that they supported the ideas raised. Respondents that weren’t supportive indicated a need for additional community facilities including a park, library and all ability swimming pool with women’s only pool facilities.

‘We strongly need a library here as the locals have to go Mill park or Lalor and is highly inconvenient. Wollert and Epping are Muslims majority areas, so we desperately need a swimming pool offering women’s only facility as we have to travel at least 15km to Preston just to suit a basic need of ours’.

Precinct 3 — Epping Station Hub

82% of respondents indicated they support the ideas presented for this precinct.

‘Encouraging 2-4 stories in the northern part of the suburb is a great way to ensure there’s opportunities for student housing, affordable housing and medium/high density housing options. A great way to provide inclusive housing’.

‘Definitely agree the Melb Poly and Epping Station Cooper Street intersection needs a grand spruce up to make it fully functioning for all’.

Respondents also offered ideas for the area *‘...White Lady Funeral Home, incorporates the original bluestone walls of the original farmhouse, I guess over 150 yrs old. This should be retained’.*

One respondent raised a previously shared concern around the high density planned for Guila Court, flagging concerns with parking and traffic congestion.

Precinct 4 – Regional demand

Of the seven respondents, six support alternative rail alignment and station location, sharing that it makes sense to connect the transport hub to the shopping hub.

Concerns raised in this precinct centred around the need to preserve the reserve to provide nature spaces for people and animals.

Precinct 6 -Employment & Precinct 7 – Epping renewal

The ideas presented were supported by all respondents. The only comment added was for Precinct 7

and related to the need to upgrade public transport options around the area to minimise the need to use a car before adding additional business and residential dwellings.

Precinct 8 – Dalton Road neighbourhood

Three people responded to this poll, with two supporting the ideas and the other indicating that they were undecided.

Precinct 9 – Childs Road employment

All respondents supported the ideas highlighting the need for the area to be made safer.

Key themes at the Pop Ups

A total of 154 contributions were made at the community pop-ups.

Participants at community pop-ups were presented with the five key themes and asked to identify the two themes they saw a priority.

The theme identified as the top priority by participants was Movement and Transport, followed by Community Facilities and Services. The full results of this activity are detailed below.

Theme	Pacific Epping	Pacific Epping	Epping Village	Farmers Market	Total Votes
Urban Living	7	18	12	4	41
Movement and Transport	10	29	10	12	61
Employment and Investment	6	11	14	5	36
Community Facilities and Services	13	19	10	9	51
Public Realm, Design and Natural Environment	8	7	7	9	31

Comments captured at the pop-up stalls

Movement and Transport – Many of conversations were general in nature and focussed on support for improved public transport, including more bus routes/services/infrastructure together with better road infrastructure. Several residents identified site specific transport improvements including the continuation of Memorial Street and provision of a round-a-bout at Houston Street.

Community Facilities and Services – Comments provided by the community indicate support for additional services, support and/or activities for older people in addition to younger people. Several people commented on the need to provide more affordable or free services for people who are financially disadvantaged such as young people or people with a disability. Providing opportunities for people to congregate within their community was also considered important. The provision of a library in Epping was identified as a specific need by several respondents.

Employment and Investment – whilst there was significant support for this priority, there were few comments attributed to this theme, although respondents supported the provision of more local jobs, so people don't have to travel as far to their place of employment.

Urban Living – housing affordability was mentioned in several of the comments. Ensuring high quality internal design with large living areas, located close to open space and which contribute positively to residents' mental health. Officers also had discussions with residents indicated past difficulties with getting the appropriate approvals for higher density development.

Public Realm, Design and Natural Environment - A variety of issues were captured in respect to this priority including the need for open space in walking distance of new housing, better pedestrian paths, better lighting in streets and provision of amenities at play area. At least one respondent indicated support for the retention of the green space in Coulstock Street being retained given the lack of open space elsewhere within the centre.

Next steps

Thank you again to everyone that participated in the community engagement by sharing feedback, completing a survey, voting or commenting on the quick poll.

Feedback gathered from the community is being used to finalise the structure plan. The structure plan will then be presented for endorsement by Council in mid-2023.

Should Council endorse the updated Structure Plan, the next stage of the project will include an amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to implement the Structure Plan. As part of this process there will be a requirement for the amendment to be publicly exhibited.

For further information on the project please contact the Strategic Futures Department on 9217 2556 or visit [Epping Central Structure Plan Review | Engage City of Whittlesea](#)

We encourage you to register and follow the project Engage page at <https://engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/epping-central-structure-plan> to keep updated on the project.