



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Phase 2 Community Check in Engagement Summary

29 November 2025 – 31 January 2026

Introduction

Each year Council develops a Community Plan Action Plan (CPAP) which is an annual supplement to the Community Plan. This action plan outlines the key actions to be completed over the next financial year to build towards achieving the Community Plan and ultimately our Whittlesea 2040 goals. These goals are for a Connected Community, Liveable Neighbourhoods, a Strong Local Economy, a Sustainable Environment, and a High-Performing Organisation.

Similarly, each year Council releases an annual Budget for the investment and delivery of critical services and essential infrastructure to support our rapidly growing community. We need to balance the delivery of ongoing services and programs while also building infrastructure and facilities to cater to our growing population.

The budget is developed to align to our long-term financial plan which balances our current spending on projects and services for the community and strengthens our long-term financial sustainability. Understanding what services and assets our community value most now and for the future helps us shape key documents that will guide Council's activities over the next five to ten years.

Throughout September Council undertook community consultation with people who live, work, study or visit the City of Whittlesea to understand community issues and needs across the municipality. As the municipality has diverse residents and needs, the consultation was designed to understand what is most important to the community and areas that they felt budget funding would be best allocated.

Contributions made from a diverse cross-section of our community through the first phase of community engagement told us that the top five priorities for our community across the municipality are:

1. Roads, public transport and footpaths
2. Community Safety
3. Ageing Well
4. Community Facilities
5. Parks, Playgrounds and Open Space.

Throughout December 2025 and January 2026, we shared the order of these priorities with the community and asked them if they agreed with the order, if they agreed with some of the order, and for any other comments. During this phase of community engagement, 211 contributions were received, with 86 participants attending community-based pop-ups and 125 participating online.

Further opportunities for community feedback are scheduled for phase three of community engagement, with community focus groups scheduled for February, and during the fourth and final phase of engagement when we share the draft documents with community for feedback. The opportunity to submit an EOI for the focus groups being held in phase three formed part of the promotion of this phase of consultation.

The feedback received will inform the 2026-27 Budget and Community Action Plan 2026-27 and Economic Growth Strategy 2026-36.

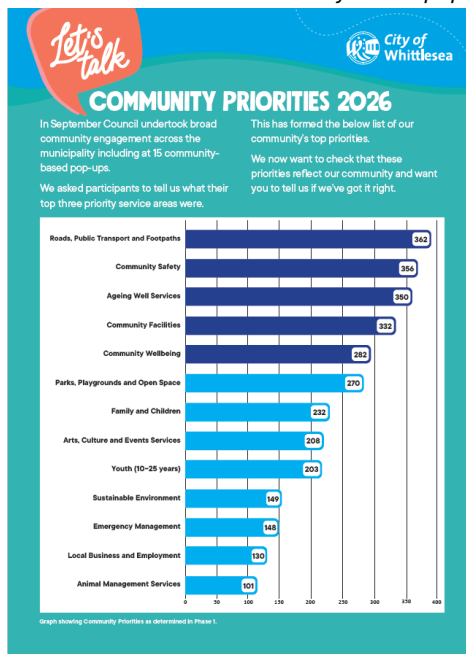
How we engaged you

To hear from a diverse range of community members and increase participation, the project team hosted three in-person engagement activities as below:

Date	Time	Where	Address/location
2/12/2025	9.30am – 11.30am	Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre	52-54 Main St, Thomastown
12/12/2025	5pm-9pm	City of Whittlesea Carol's by Candlelight event	Civic lawns, 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang
31/01/2026	6pm – 10pm	City of Whittlesea's Bundoora Beats event	Norris Bank Parkland, 135 McLeans Road, Bundoora

The Community Priorities project page on the *Engage Whittlesea* platform encouraged participants to agree or disagree with the order of priorities captured in the first phase of consultation. There was free text space provided for participants to add further comment as part of the additional questions. Visitors to the project Engage page were also presented with an opportunity to submit their interest in being part of a community focus group to be held in February 2026. The Engage Whittlesea platform utilises an accessibility add-on ensuring that it is as accessible for all users. The platform also has an in-built translation tool to mitigate any language barriers to participation, allowing the page to be translated into the fifteen languages most spoken within the municipality.

Below: boards and at community-based pop-up at Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre



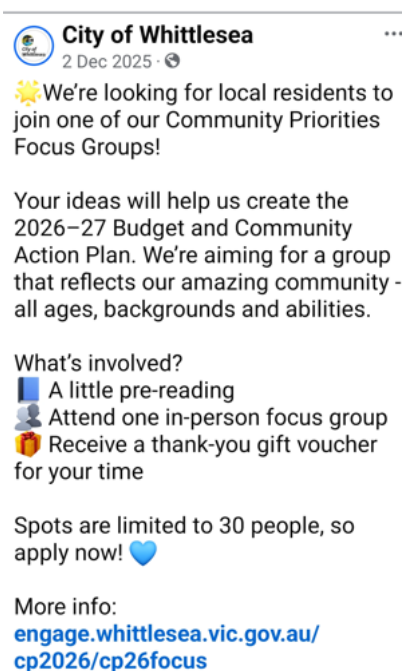
Below: L-R flyer used to promote the consultation and community participating in the consultation at the City of Whittlesea Carols pop-up



Project Promotion

The opportunity to participate in the community engagement as well as to submit an EOI to be a part of the Community Priorities Focus Groups was promoted through a range of channels to have a widespread reach across the municipality including:

- Council's social media channels
- *Engage Whittlesea* campaign to platform users were invited to participate
- Direct email-sent by project teams to their community networks.



Above: A social media post advertising for the Community Priorities community focus groups

Participation

In phase two 211 community members participated in the community engagement.

Snapshot of Community Participation

Highlights from the community consultation included:



3 community-based pop-ups



86 people participated in-person



125 people participated online



35% carers of and or people with a disability

Snapshot of Demographics

Below is a snapshot of the diversity of participation:

Gender Identity



55% Female, 39 % Male and 6% Preferred not to say

Age



23% aged 35-44, 18% 45-54 and 15% 55-64

Suburb



12% South Morang, 11% Bundoora and Lalor

LGBTQIA+ Community



9% of participants identified as member of the LGBTQIA+ community

CALD Community



26% spoke English as a second language

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



Seven participants identified as First People

What we heard

Community Consultation Results

We asked the 211 participants if they agreed with the top five priorities that were captured through the first phase of consultation. Below is what we heard:



Agree
61%



Disagree
39%

Key themes from Community feedback

Online participants were given the opportunity to share how they may order the priorities differently, whether we missed any priorities or add any other comments.

We have themed the feedback we captured for each of the questions below:

Do you agree with the top five Community Priorities?

A total of 43 people responded that they did not agree with the order of the top five priorities and suggested the below amendments:

- 24 thought Community Wellbeing should not be in the Top 5
- 18 thought Ageing Well Services should not be in the Top 5
- 16 thought Community Safety should not be in the Top 5
- 11 thought Community facilities should not be in the Top 5
- 6 thought Roads, public transport and footpaths should not be in the Top 5
- One person did not agree with any of the top 5 Community Priorities

Do you agree with some of the top 5 Community Priorities?

A total of 36 people responded that they did not agree with some of the order of the top five priorities and suggested the below amendments:

- 20 thought Parks, Playgrounds and open space should be in the Top 5
- 13 thought Youth (10 – 25 years) should be in the Top 5
- 11 thought Family and Children should be in the Top 5
- 10 thought Local Business and Employment should be in the Top 5
- 8 thought Arts, Culture and Event Services should be in the Top 5
- 7 thought Emergency Management should be in the Top 5
- 7 thought Sustainable environment should be in the Top 5
- 6 thought Animal Management Services should be in the Top 5

Do you have any other comments?

A total of 61 participants took the opportunity to provide additional comments, which have been themed below.

Twelve comments related to roads and footpaths. Improvement suggestions included installation of additional lighting and footpath repairs and repairs to potholes

Eight comments related to community safety in the municipality including community, schools and public spaces.

- *“Safety initiatives should prioritise inclusive public spaces, better lighting, and community-driven crime prevention”*
- *“Community safety is absolutely number one priority on the list”.*

Six respondents commented about community wellbeing and connectedness including stopping division in the community

- *“I think community connectedness through accessible connected spaces is important”.*

Five commented related to the delivery of community facilities.

- *“Build more facilities for all to enjoy and live a happy life. Better roads and walking paths, more sports grounds, more water play areas, and larger community centres for big events”.*

Four participants commented about the maintenance and upgrade of existing assets including facilities, roads, footpaths and parks.

- *“Regular maintenance and upkeep of public parks, gardens and infrastructure”.*

Five respondents commented about waste including concerns with the illegal dumping of rubbish.

Other comments related to Arts & Culture, lack of carparking, the need to provide more opportunities for youth, concern for the environment, need for more all-ability playgrounds and homelessness.

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who participated in the community engagement by completing our community priorities activity and/or registering their interest to be a part of our community focus groups. The priorities were supported by majority of participants (61%) with some amendments to the order suggested by participants.

The information captured through the different phases of consultation will inform the development of the 2026-27 Budget and Community Action Plan 2026-27 and Economic Growth Strategy 2026-36. The feedback captured will also help to inform the development of other key plans and strategies Council are working on to make Whittlesea *A Place for All*.

The 2026-27 Community Plan will feature as one of two activities in the upcoming Community Priorities Community Focus Groups scheduled for February 2026. The plan will also be presented to our Youth Council and Aboriginal Communities team for further feedback.

The community will be updated on further developments via the [Community Priorities | Engage City of Whittlesea](#). We encourage you to register and follow the page to be kept updated on the project.