

Community Priorities Pulse Check Engagement Summary November 2023

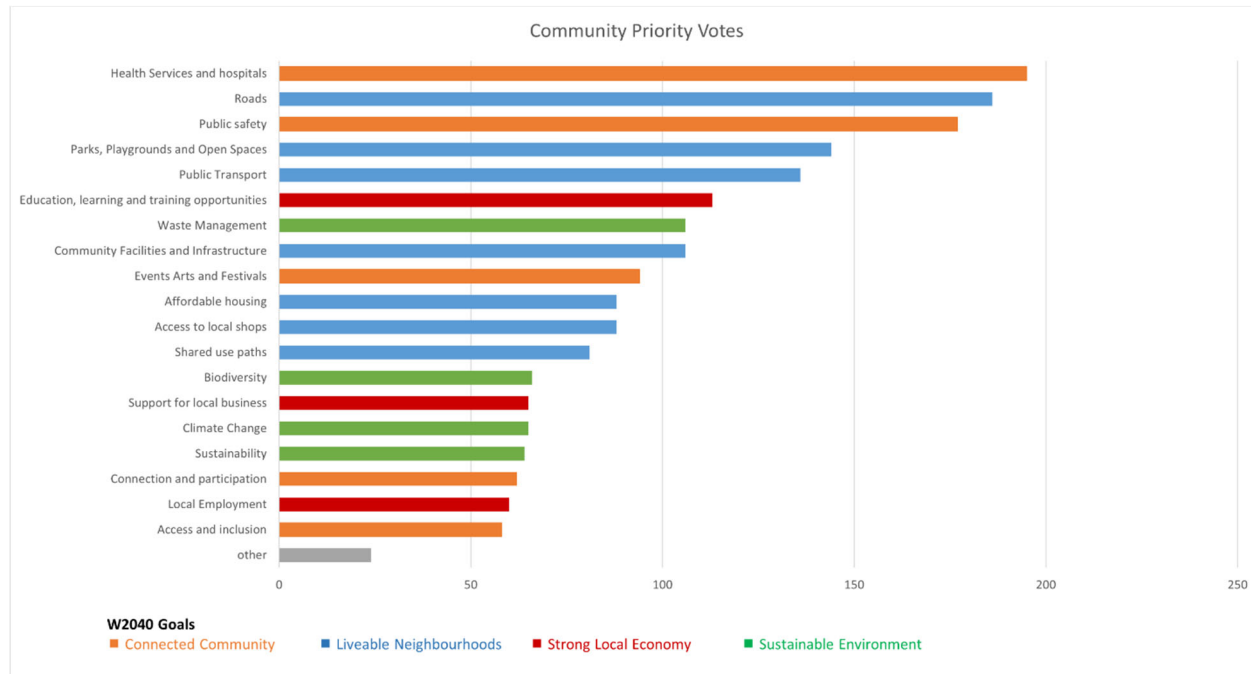
Introduction

Throughout July and August 2023, we asked the community to tell us what is important to them, to help us develop the draft 2024-25 Budget and 2024-25 Community Plan Action Plan.

Over 500 community members shared their thoughts with us online through the Engage Whittlesea platform or at one of the 14 community-based pop-ups held across the municipality.

We used this feedback to develop a list of our community's top ten priorities. During this pulse-check phase of engagement we shared this list to ensure what we heard was correct and was an accurate reflection of community sentiment. The top 10 priorities identified and shared through this phase were:

1. Health services and hospitals
2. Roads
3. Public safety
4. Parks, playgrounds and open spaces
5. Public transport
6. Education, learning and training opportunities
7. Community facilities and infrastructure
8. Waste management
9. Events, arts and festivals
10. Access to local shops

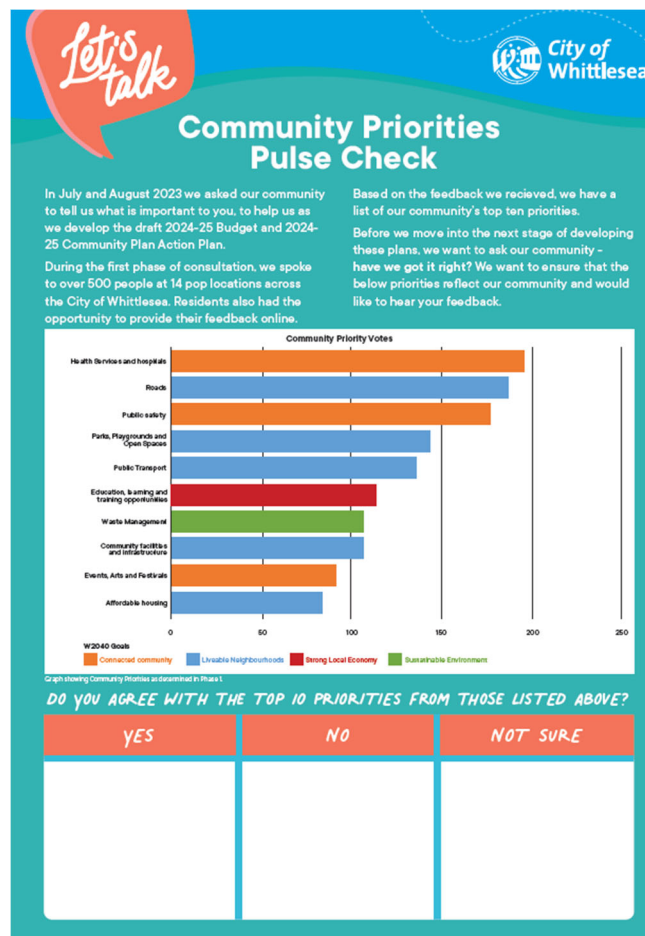


How we engaged you

Between 25 September and 29 October 2023 Council shared the top 10 priorities captured in phase 1 consultation and asked the community if they agreed with the top ten priorities we presented. Possible responses were yes, no or not sure. There was also the opportunity for participants to provide additional comments.

Feedback was sought online through the project Engage page and at seven community-based pop-ups through the use of a dot board activity.

The Engage Whittlesea platform utilises an accessibility add-on which enables users to easily switch to screen reader mode or easily adjust settings such as font size, contrast, dyslexia friendly options and more to improve the overall accessibility of the site. The platform also has a in-built translation tool to mitigate language barriers to participation, allowing the page to be translated into the top ten languages spoken within the municipality.



Above: information dot board activity used at the community-based pop-ups.

Key stakeholders and the wider community were informed of the project through a range of channels including social media posts, flyers and electronic direct mail to registered groups within the municipality through Council's various staff and networks.



Above: Project team engaging at the Mernda Village Community Activity Centre.

The seven community-based pop-ups held were:

- Thomastown Library on Thursday 5 October from 9.30 - 11.30am
- Citizenship Ceremony at Civic Centre on Monday 9 October from 11am – 12.30pm and 2 – 3.30pm
- Lalor Library on Wednesday 11 October from 9.30 - 11.30am
- Mernda Village Community Activity Centre on Thursday 12 October from 10.30am - 12.30pm
- Community Forum at Galada Community Centre on Tuesday 17 October from 6.15 - 7.15pm
- Whittlesea Services Hub on Wednesday 18 October from 10.30am - 12.30pm
- Mill Park Library on Monday 23 October from 11.30am - 1.30pm
- Kirrip Community Centre on Tuesday 24 October from 10am – 12pm

Participation

A total of 151 community contributions were shared during the consultation, with 69% of these captured at community-based pop-ups.

A snapshot of consultation activities and community participation is below:



8 community-based
pop-ups



105 in-person
contributions



215 visitors to the
project Engage page



46 digital contributions



58% Female, 39% Male,
1% non-binary 2% Prefer
not to say



27% aged 35 - 54
35% aged over 66
years



7% person living with a
disability



62% CALD community
members

What we heard

When asked if they were supportive, 88.7% of participants indicated they support the top ten priorities (full results below).



(88.7%)
Yes



(4%)
Not Sure



(7.3%)
No

Participants had the opportunity to provide additional comments, with 18 taking advantage of this opportunity online.

The main themes of online community comments were:

- lack of infrastructure
- support for green initiatives
- parks and garden maintenance
- road maintenance
- affordability
- order of the top ten priorities
- general approval of the top ten priorities.

Outer suburbs not having any character. Going anywhere on foot is not easy due to lack of footpaths. No shops nearby at all.

I think Climate Change should be number 1! Nothing else matters if this isn't attended to.

Parks, playground and open spaces and waste management are more important to focus on than health and roads, which are already adequately supported.

More public housing and community housing

Roundabouts & garden bed eg cnr Stockdale Way & Templeton Drive be maintained as they were when we moved to area 24 years ago. Just tall weeds, rubbish etc now & snakes during summer are seen on the corner as u walk past - tan bark instead of weeds

Next steps

The pulse check outcomes together with the feedback captured through phase one consultation will assist in developing the draft 2024-25 Budget and 2024-25 Community Plan Action Plan that will be presented to Council for endorsement in 16 March 2024. Once endorsed the draft 2024-25 Budget and 2024-25 Community Plan Action Plan will be shared with the community for feedback and budget submissions will be encouraged. This opportunity will be shared through traditional and digital communication channels, via direct contact with stakeholders and through updates on the project Engage page [Community Priorities | Engage City of Whittlesea](#)

Appendix 1

Below is the breakdown of the feedback captured at each community-based pop-ups and through the project Engage page.

Location	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Thomastown Library	18	0	1	19
Citizenship Ceremony	9	0	0	9
Lalor Library	14	0	0	14
Mernda CAC	17	0	0	17
Community Forum - Galada CC	5	0	0	5
Whittlesea Hub	14	2	0	16
Mill Park Library	16	0	1	17
Kirrip CC	8	0	0	8
Online	33	9	4	46
Total	134 (88.7%)	11 (7.3%)	6 (4%)	151

Appendix 2

Below are all comments received throughout the pulse check consultation period.

Lack of infrastructure

Outer suburbs not having any character. Going anywhere on foot is not easy due to lack of footpaths. No shops nearby at all. Council needs to invest more in roads, put footpaths where it's missing in Mernda. For example no foot paths near Gilson college on Bridge Inn Road. Mernda aquatic centre taking too long to even start. Unfortunately we feel Mernda is being neglected for other suburbs.

Support for green initiatives

Within estates, it would be great if planting flowers etc were consistent throughout rather than just in a few sections.

There is a huge gum tree, at Mitta Mitta Avenue, in front of my townhouse laden bare sadly. Native kangaroo paws and fruits would be a great showcase given the tree is protected under indigenous law. Why not accentuate it. There's a chair, facing the road which no one will sit on.

You have destroyed all the old trees from Bridge Inn Road. We would appreciate if our Whittlesea area looks more greener than being drab, just widening of roads and infrastructures. It would be nice to have trees on the centre median in Bridge Inn after completion of the construction of roads as well as in Plenty Road at Mernda area.

Climate change, sustainability and biodiversity. Should be the foundation and built in with everything mentioned above

Higher priority for Climate Change, Sustainability and Biodiversity.

I care about Parks and open spaces but not playgrounds.

Not so concerned about Events, more so Biodiversity

I think Climate Change should be number 1! Nothing else matters if this isn't attended to.

Protection of green corridors and wildlife habitat.

Parks and garden maintenance

I would like to add : I live in Stockdale Way Mill Park. On the corner of Stockdale Way & Templeton Drive is a small reserve which initially was maintained nicely along with the roundabouts in the immediate area. The weeds are now nearly as high as me and occasionally snakes are seen there. I have spoken to the council without any satisfaction. Can you please arrange for this area to be maintained. Thank you.

Roundabouts & garden bed eg cnr Stockdale Way & Templeton Drive be maintained as they were when we moved to area 24 years ago. Just tall weeds, rubbish etc now & snakes during summer are seen on the corner as u walk past - tan bark instead of weeds. Please 🙏🙏🙏🙏

Road maintenance

in case you have not noticed - access and inclusion is bottom of the list so stop pushing it. its not an issue. lets try fix potholes and try stop tobacco shops from burning down.

Would like to see the very rough surface on O'Herns road opposite Casa D'Abruzzo (east bound) repaired as soon as possible. So dangerous at the moment

Affordability

More public housing and community housing

Not overcharging on rates

Order of the top ten priorities
--

I would have put roads and parks/outdoor areas higher on the list and also there should be a focus reducing the amount of hooners on the road around here

Would put gardens and open green spaces as a higher priorities. Would love to see more trees planted along our streets and roads.

Parks, playground and open spaces and waste management are more important to focus on than health and roads, which are already adequately supported.
--

Approval of the top ten priorities

no it looks good to me

The List looks good. we need to have gated parks and a trainline
--