

STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
2 JUNE 2008 **GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE**

A9	IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	N/A
RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	SALLY CALDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT
AUTHOR:	JENNIFER STONE, COORDINATOR COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE
FILE NO.:	
ATTACHMENTS:	COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT – YEAR 1

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. There are four separate parts of the Community Plan, each containing strategic objectives and strategies. Programs and policies responding to these objectives and strategies have been implemented across a broad range of Council's operational areas.
- 1.2. Good progress has been made and the first year of implementation is providing a sound foundation to escalate participation and responsiveness both inside Council and externally - community organisations and constituents.
- 1.3. Current community debate on a range of Council decisions is influencing perceptions in the community about the Community Plan's capacity to influence Council planning and priorities. This context is likely to continue into the second year of implementation.
- 1.4. The purpose of this report is to report progress – no decision is required.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. The 2007-2017 Community Plan was endorsed by Council in September 2007 and the purpose of this report is to account for implementation and progress to date.
- 2.2. The planning and implementation framework of the Community Plan is premised on four core elements:
 - 2.2.1. **Working Together** - partnerships across community, Council, and other levels of government to achieve the community priorities identified in the Plan.
 - 2.2.2. **Neighbourhood Development** – fostering social connections and a shared sense of place through support for community-led projects that contribute a shared and mutual benefit.

2.2.3. **Community Leadership** – in the context of the Community Plan, the notion of community leadership embraces ‘active citizenship’ as fundamental to learning about and working through complex policy debates and taking action for positive change.

2.2.4. **Monitoring Progress** – tracking and reporting progress and assessing the impact of action taken.

3. PROGRESS REPORT

3.1. Working Together Action Plan 2007-2008

Significant progress has been achieved in implementing strategies responding to the fifteen priorities in the Community Plan. Some of the key initiatives implemented by Council in response to these priorities include:

- Additional bike racks and directions signage for pedestrians installed
- Sustainable Public Lighting Action Plan completed
- Community Bus route extended to Port Melbourne
- Restructure of Port Phillip Housing Trust completed and support given to community housing programs
- Interactive information web service development – first phase completed
- Community Leadership program – Phase 1 commenced with a series of forums on public policy issues and hosting of leadership development events for students
- Neighbourhood Development program established with matching grants program (Small Poppy Grants) initiative
- Linking Neighbours pilot program and Seniors’ Register
- Community Plan E-newsletter introduced to provide updates on progress of implementing the Community Plan
- Sustainable Environment Strategy completed including commitment to zero net greenhouse gas emissions and a 70% reduction in potable water use from council operations by 2020.
- Additional community environmental sustainability programs introduced (Challenge to Change and Climate Change 1000)
- Drought Management Strategy completed
- Stormwater Management Plan review underway
- Improved response time for clean ups after major events implemented
- Collaboration with police and others to address impact of late night entertainment precincts
- Fitzroy Street Taskforce time extension
- Footpath trading laws audit completed

Attachment 1 provides a full list of initiatives implemented by Council to respond to the objectives and strategies in the first year of the Action Plan.

3.2. Neighbourhood Development Action Plan 2007-2008 – Small Poppy Grants

A community matching grants program was identified as a key initiative for implementation in the first year of the Neighbourhood Development Action Plan. Council launched the ‘Small Poppy Grants’ program in December 2007 with the stated objectives of fostering community-led projects of shared benefit that support social connections.

A relatively modest commencement phase has allowed ‘road testing’ of program guidelines and administrative procedures, including feedback from applicants and staff working with other grant programs provided by Council.

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Recent changes to the selection criteria and guidelines more clearly enunciate the intent and rationale of the program, and sharpen the distinction with Council's other grant programs. The primary target group for this program is people who come together with an idea to do something achievable and of communal benefit who are unlikely to be formally organised or have access to other funding opportunities.

A key aim for the program was to establish simplified administrative procedures to encourage participation and to provide a prompt system of feedback, approval, and funding mechanisms. These procedures are working effectively and will be reviewed again at the end of the first year.

To date, 16 applications have been received; 6 have been rejected or withdrawn, 6 have been approved; and 4 are currently under consideration. Grant monies have ranged from \$750 to \$5,000.

Summary of projects funded to date:

Project name	Project Description	Neighbourhood
1. Raleigh Worm Farm	Residents install worm farm in a large scale public housing estate	St Kilda
2. Paint the Streets	Community arts project celebrating Elwood	Elwood
3. Succulent Garden	Parents and children building a vegetable garden at Skinners Playground	South Melbourne
4. The Street Garden	Nature strip improvement project	Elwood
5. Community@55-Plants, Passion, People	Sustainable garden project with renters in block of 30 flats	St Kilda East
6. Eden Communal Food Growing project	Sustainable garden project with renters in block of flats	St Kilda

Progress to date is very encouraging and the Small Poppy Grants program is anticipated to grow incrementally - in numbers of applications, in beneficial outcomes for neighbourhoods, and in community and organisational understanding of the program's purpose and administration.

3.3. Community Leadership Action Plan 2007-2008

This component of the Community Plan has a focus on promoting opportunities that increase knowledge and understanding of events and issues impacting on both local and global communities. The Action Plan commits to promoting active citizenship, participatory democracy, and learning more about contested policy issues and social impacts.

The program has commenced its first year with a strategy of raising awareness and promoting debate on issues of public policy and community interest through a series of community events:

- Sponsorship of a civic and human rights theatre production at Gasworks Theatre - "Haneef The Interrogation" (Feb/March)
- International Women's Day – (March) highlighting the contribution to civic life of four local women and attended by over 100 local women)

- Student leadership development forums organised by Council's Youth Services staff (May)
- World Environment Day - (June) – expert speakers addressing environmental sustainability issues

Feedback from attendees is very positive and a strategy is now in place to post a participants' evaluation report for each event on Council's website.

It is currently anticipated a further three forums will be hosted during 2008-09.

3.4. Monitoring Progress Action Plan 2007 – 2008

The Community Plan has significantly influenced the 2008-2009 Council Plan and as a result, Departmental Action Plans are now required to report how their work addresses the strategic priorities and objectives in the Community Plan. This is a significant change and is an indication of the progress being made in aligning Council planning with the strategic priorities in the Community Plan.

Establishing the mechanisms to be able to know if the Community Plan is making a positive difference is currently underway. Significant efforts have been made to improve how business planning and performance monitoring works in conjunction with reporting progress and outcomes of the Community Plan.

Over the next 12 months, collaboration between the corporate planning and community governance units will resolve an accountability reporting framework that will chart actions and outcomes. The Community Pulse program is currently being reviewed to strengthen its capacity to monitor progress and outcomes aligned with the community priorities in the Community Plan and this work is part of developing a unified approach.

Council has previously endorsed an annual forum of stakeholders to be conducted so that progress reports can be shared with the community. It was previously thought the forum would be held in November each year, but due to the Council election cycle this year in November, the forum is likely to be held in September. An additional strategy in place for reporting progress is the Community Plan e-newsletter which is sent to subscribers recruited from the Community Summit, community forums, and those visiting the website.

A challenge for the 2008-2009 year will be to increase the level of participation of, and partnership with, external agencies and community groups in responding to the strategic objectives of the Community Plan.

4. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

4.1. Internal

- 4.1.1. Staff, managers, and members of the Executive Team across the organisation contributed to the information provided in Attachment 1.
- 4.1.2. Manager, Community Development in relation to the Community Pulse project.
- 4.1.3. Manager, Corporate Planning & Performance in relation to progress reporting and business planning.

4.2. External

- 4.2.1. Feedback from Small Poppy Grant applicants has been incorporated in this report.
- 4.2.2. Feedback from community forum attendees has been incorporated in this report.
- 4.2.3. Current debate in the community contesting some Council's decisions is influencing perceptions in the community about the Community Plan's capacity to influence Council planning and priorities.
- 4.2.4. External agencies were not consulted in the preparation of this report but will be consulted with prior to planning the September progress review forum.
- 4.2.5. The participation of external stakeholders will increase significantly as the work focus moves to the role of external agencies and community groups in the implementation of the Community Plan.

5. COMMUNICATION

- 5.1. Progress updates are provided regularly through the Community Plan e-Newsletter.
- 5.2. A communication strategy will be developed to coincide with the September Community Plan review forum.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That the Strategy and Policy Review Committee recommend that Council resolve to:

- 6.1. Note the significant progress to date in implementing the Community Plan since its launch in November 2007.
- 6.2. Note the intention to host a forum for stakeholders in September 2008 for the purpose of discussing and reporting progress on implementation of the Community Plan.