

# Attachment 3

## West Oxford Street Precinct Plan – Peer Review of Community Engagement

Margaret Harvie – Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, University of Technology, Sydney – February 2015

### Executive summary

#### *Introduction*

Waverley Council should be commended and encouraged for continuing to engage the community through what has been a time consuming and costly process in developing a range of ideas and possible solutions to the issues surrounding the West Oxford Street Precinct. Council should also be commended for commissioning this review that demonstrates their desire to learn from the experience of this project and take these lessons into future planning processes. While the following is a critical analysis of the community engagement on one recent project this should not be taken out of context. Waverley Council actively engages its community regularly through 13 precinct committees. These meetings give residents open access to elected members of Council and presentations from Council officers on key topics of interest to their locality or across the Local Government Area. This process represents a greater level of collaboration with the community than is evident in many other Councils in NSW.

Local Government NSW in December 2014 produced a report titled “Involving Locals in Local Plan Making”<sup>1</sup>. This report details the challenge for Local Government of when and how to involve the community in local plan making. It suggests that how councils inform, consult, involve and collaborate with communities is improving and is likely to continue to do so in the future.

It further states, “Nevertheless, all councils wrestle with the vexed issue of ‘when to engage’ and the level of information communities need to be able to participate in a meaningful way. If councils consult too early, when issues are ill defined, the response level is usually low. When the plans are more concrete the response levels are usually higher. At what point and with what level of information, do councils apply best practice engagement methods?”.

Waverley Council is facing a challenge that is evident across local government.

#### *The aim/purpose of this report*

This report documents the findings of a peer review on the consultation process for the West Oxford Street Precinct Plan. In particular the report investigates:

- The evidence/ outcomes of the project related to the following criteria: Clarity of purpose/ Issue definition; Collaboration and commitment; Information and capacity building; Communication and transparency including feedback; Project

---

<sup>1</sup> Local Government NSW, Involving local Government in Plan Making, December 2014

staging; Timeliness and resourcing; Inclusiveness and accessibility; Measureable and Future execution of plans for the West Oxford Street Precinct.

- What was done well and what could have been improved including lessons learned.

### ***The procedure/methodology/analytical process***

The methodology for this review involved an extensive desktop review of all documentation that was made available and interviews with consultants and members of the Council team. The criteria applied to this review is based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) planning methodology and information from other documents as cited.

### ***Main results/findings***

From the perspective of some members of the community the project commenced badly and for some of the local community advocates the project was never able to recover from this bad start. The levels of mistrust were in place and the community felt disempowered. The key event that set this mistrust in motion was the initial report to Council that did not clearly articulate the community consultation that was to take place and indicated that the initiative for the redevelopment of the area had come from a local developer.

The first communication to the community about the project was a letter from three Councillors followed up by a letter from the Mayor and a letter from “Concerned Residents of Bondi Junction”. This communication occurred over the Christmas holiday period when Council staff are not available to reassure the community or make more concrete plans to engage the community.

The plan for engagement that the community wanted to see from the start might have included at what points they, as residents, would be asked to contribute to the development of the West Oxford Street Precinct Plan. The report that initially went to Council left them thinking the only people who would be asked to contribute to the plans for the future development of the area were more powerful State government authorities along with a handful of people who were the elected representatives of the Bondi Junction Precinct Committee. They did not have evidence that they, as residents of the precinct, would have any involvement.

### ***Conclusion/s (based on the results & discussion)***

With a different start to the project in terms of plans to engage the community it may have been that the Save West Bondi Junction advocates became active supporters and more involved in shaping the project direction. Some of those involved have now become active elected representatives in the Bondi Junction Precinct Committee demonstrating their high level of interest in civic issues and in contributing to the affairs of Council.

There is a need for Council to undertake careful planning from the outset and in some cases engage the public as early as possible but in all situations plan for the engagement of the public from the start of the project. In this case, the report to Council was the start of the project.

### **Recommendations.**

1. A risk/ benefit analysis related to community involvement should be integral to project planning for every Council project and especially those projects needing Council resolution.
2. If a project is assessed as requiring community involvement a Community Engagement Plan should be developed
3. Lead time and duration for community engagement should be carefully considered and included in the program for the project.
4. Plan for evaluation of the Community Engagement.

### **Description of Methodology**

This is a peer review undertaken with limited resources. While it has some outcomes and recommendations similar to those that may have arisen from a full project evaluation the methodology does not have all the components present in a rigorous project evaluation. A project evaluation would have had reference to residents participating or choosing not to participate in the range of engagement activities through interviews, focus groups or surveys. Project evaluations are also ideally planned to take place as the project progresses and have an element of observation. Evaluations do not always have to involve external parties, just mechanisms that allow the team to reflect on what was done well and what can be improved and ideally this occurs at each and every step along the way.

The brief for this peer review is to provide Council with lessons learned that will feed into improvement of their practice in engaging communities related to planning projects.

The methodology for this review included:

- Desktop assessment and review of each and every piece of communication that was available to the community, reports related to the plans for the West Oxford Street Precinct, council reports and briefing documents for the design teams.
- Desktop review of the communication from the community through their submissions to Council and communications through the precinct committees and their own social media presence.
- Interviews and meetings with the key people involved in the implementation of the consultation on behalf of Council including Elton Consulting, Newgate Market Research, Council Planners, Council's Urban Designer and Communications staff and also the Precinct Coordinator.

The reviewer is a community engagement practitioner with over 20 years experience and an Associate of Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). She is also a Faculty member and accredited trainer for the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and an Associate of the Civil Service College of Singapore. The IAP2 framework is widely used in local government throughout the world as the basis for planning to engage the community. In particular the IAP2 spectrum is used and this identifies possible levels

of engagement and suggests the need to be clear to the public on the level of influence that they have over the decision making at any point in the process.

In addition the IAP2 Core Values are

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

The assessment criteria used in this process and presented in the table below were established based on well-established standards and protocols in this area.<sup>2 3 4 5 6 7</sup> They reflect industry best practice and are designed to interface with the core elements that form part of the IAP2 planning framework.

This research complies with the UTS Human Ethics guidelines and the National Statement and is approved under the University's Human Research Ethics program.

## Statement of Assumptions

The information in this peer review is based on desktop assessment and information provided by Council officers and consultants engaged by Council. It is assumed that all of the key documents have been made available and reviewed. It is recognised that the community perspective may not be fully reflected in this review. This document forms a starting point for ongoing review and discussion about how to improve Council's processes for engaging the community alongside the key interested and engaged members of the public.

---

2 International Association for Public Participation Spectrum and material from the Foundations for Public Participation Training Program

3 Ideas for Community Consultation: A discussion on principles and procedures for making consultation work, NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning

4 Pratchett, L., Durose, C., and Lowndes, V. (2009) Empowering communities to influence local decision making, Evidence-based lessons for policy makers and practitioners

5 The International Conference on Engaging Communities 2005, The Brisbane Declaration

6 Ryan, R (2014) Innovative Community Participation to Create Public Value, University of Technology, Sydney

7 Ryan, R (2003) Community engagement in the NSW Planning System

[http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/community\\_engagement\\_handbook\\_part\\_1.pdf](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/community_engagement_handbook_part_1.pdf)

## The Outcomes of the Review

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
1. Clarity of purpose/ Issue definition	<p>Has Waverley Council articulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the current issues for West Oxford Street Precinct in a way that the community related to.</li> <li>the internal and external parameters to the decision making including the role of all parties.</li> <li>the project and engagement objectives considering the process, input and relationship needs of the public.</li> <li>the affected or potentially interested stakeholders relative to the range of issues for West Oxford Street.</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council started with a genuine intent to be proactive by thinking about and planning for the West Oxford Street Precinct and involving key State government stakeholders. Council made it clear that there were a number of decision makers in the redevelopment of this site. There is value to the community of a Local Government Authority (LGA) led planning process.</li> <li>Following the community reaction to the lack of consultation Council acted quickly and effectively to engage the immediately affected community through the park drop in session that had up to 200 people in attendance.</li> <li>There was some planning for the consultation as a result of the Elton proposal (24 January 2014) and a subsequent timeline of tasks dates 25 February 2014.</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved and the lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first communications about the project to the public should have been from Council and potentially before it was presented for resolution of Council in the form of a timeline of activities. The timeline was over a relatively short timeframe and stopped with the Charette that inferred to the community that this would be the final resolution of the future for West Oxford Street. The first that the public heard of the project was via a flyer from a group of Councillors that told part of the story. Distributed over Christmas it took Council time to respond, initially with a letter from the Mayor and then with communication to residents about how they might get involved.</li> <li>The communication about the plan for the project should have more clearly attributed the initiative to the range of interests. While the most recent trigger might have been an approach from a developer the precinct planning is in the interest of a range of stakeholders.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
		<p>The community may have perceived that the developer had the most to gain from this process. It is possible that the reference to the approach from a developer in the Council report and the Mayor’s letter fuelled initial and continuing mistrust in the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role and focus on key stakeholders (State government authorities) needed explanation to the public in the context of the complexity of the site and the input of these authorities being required. The public saw that they were powerless in the face of the list of State government authorities that were going to be allowed to decide the future for their area.</li> <li>• The project would have benefitted from the development of a comprehensive community engagement plan and development of such a plan should have been a recommendation of the initial report to Council or included with the report. As well as identifying the stakeholders including the residents of the area this could have usefully framed the issues in such a way to start to build a shared vision for potential improvements to the area. The chosen techniques would be matched to the engagement objectives. It should be recognised that while a community engagement plan was absent at the start more comprehensive plans were developed for Phase 2 and at various points along the way.</li> <li>• Related to the above more information needed to be available about the problems and issues to be solved by this planning initiative (in a way that the community perceives the issues) and the benefits to the community of creating this plan.</li> <li>• This project would have benefited from the development of key messages (just 3- 4), these are different from the project objectives (that were clear) in that they are designed to focus on what you are trying to tell the community about the need for the project, the potential benefits and how the public can have a say. The key messages need to be phrased such that the community can easily understand and relate to them. These messages are to be used consistently in all public presentations and information throughout the project.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
2. Collaboration and commitment	<p>Did Waverley Council adequately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with the community to understand their needs of the engagement?</li> <li>• demonstrate commitment to engage and modifying the process to meet the needs of the key stakeholders or participants or include others as required?</li> <li>• establish the structures, processes and resources for planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the engagement?</li> <li>• understand the nature of the relationship with the stakeholder groups and any history that might impact on this relationship.</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The formation of the Community Reference Group (CRG) in direct response to the communities request was a good initiative. While no limit was placed on the number of people participating the number tended to be stable at 10-12 people - an ideal size for such a group (to allow for adequate opportunity for all to have time to contribute)</li> <li>• The open communication between Council and the Save West Oxford Street group in that there was a link from Council's website to the presentation to the Charette – this provided information for other residents wishing to join or hear the views of this group. Similarly ongoing communication between Council's senior planning staff and this group through the CRG in particular.</li> <li>• The considerable effort to respond to the CRG members request for inclusion in the Charette process. Placing the condition that they keep discussions being undertaken during the Charette confidential was reasonable but concerns from the community about the Charette process were also reasonable as outlined below.</li> <li>• The high level of participation at all points in the process including attendance at events through to the high number of unique submissions indicates that people know about the planning project and believe that there is value in making Council aware of their views.</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved and the lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There needed to be acknowledgement from the outset that West Oxford Street does have a residential community, that community is worthy of a voice and consideration of the fact that they may have an opinion about how and when they are consulted and the matters over which they may want Council to allow them to have influence.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council could have provided early briefings to a range of community advocates and precinct committees - planning issues and the communities they affect are interrelated and with the advent of social media instantly and constantly connected. It is now expected that members from adjoining communities and potentially other communities will join up to influence decisions. The Save West Oxford Street group arose in direct response to this precinct plan. The leadership of this group reside in the study area. Others who are vocal in the Bondi Junction precinct also joined with this group and the new members of this Save West Oxford Street group are now elected to the Bondi Junction precinct committee.</li> <li>• The use of the term 'Charette' needed some further consideration. There is no patent on the 'how' of implementation of consultation techniques. It is acknowledged that Charette's were traditionally used as a technique for design team deliberations. They have more recently been used in Australia as a mechanisms to have representatives of the public work alongside the experts, using technical expertise to create on the spot designs taking into account public views along with the economic, technical, environmental, legislative, safety and social considerations. With this background there may have been context to the public's expectations for involvement and context to their uncooperative response to restrictions placed on the conditions for their involvement.</li> <li>• There could have been more consideration of flexibility around the Charette. Comparatively other mechanisms for deliberation and consultation were readily adjusted in their form and timing. The timing and format of the Charette seemed to be set however it is understood that from Council's perspective this was due to the logistics involved in coordinating the range of external parties involved.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
3. Information and Capacity building	<p>Did Waverley Council seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the information and evidence participants needed to effectively contribute to the process?</li> <li>• support the community to understand the information and evidence being presented, and was this explained by experts in a clear and accessible way?</li> <li>• articulate the information it needed from the community.</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quantity and depth of information provided on Council's website – the information catered for those who needed detail about the project.</li> <li>• The information (website information, updates and display material) was clearly presented with visual representation and there was support for the public to understand the information – evidence includes the Question and Answer session information.</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved including lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the public was expected to do with the information in terms of action or response was not clear at each and every point in the process. The public might have been confused about the expectation at various phases – for example the Fact Sheet produced in August 2014 requested the community to continue to give ideas but this was at the completion of the Charette process. At this stage the consultation might have usefully focussed on commenting on these ideas (as it did later through the production of the Have Your Say Update (October 2014) that included the 51 ideas.</li> <li>• The benefits and vision for the project could have been more simply presented in early communication. As one resident suggested “important to have an overall vision for the area which sets out the big picture of what the final outcome will be including how it will be used, by who, the benefits to users of West Bondi Junction and the key things to be avoided”.</li> <li>• There might have been more information provided around the relationship of development density to provision of services and development contributions.</li> <li>• The 42 short to medium ideas (or 51 as presented on the Have Your Say Update) might have been broken down to different levels with a short or summarised option for input across the themes for those with less time / less in depth understanding and a more detailed offering for input (such as the one used) for the more engaged. The number of ideas being presented to</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
		<p>the public was overwhelming to most people, especially for those who came into the process part way through.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The repetitive and interlinked ideas could have been refined prior to their presentation to the public through the Have Your Say Update however it is understood that the Council team were trying to do their best to represent the greatest range of ideas. Care needs to be taken in the compilation to not skew the results. People may have prioritised one idea and not all of the related ideas creating a 'split vote' if reported as a total number of responses. For example, a person might nominate under 'Traffic' 'Nelson street to become a shared zone with pedestrian preference' and another person under 'Public Domain' said that they wanted to 'Make Nelson street a shared zone for pedestrian amenity and traffic calming'.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Communication and transparency including feedback</p>	<p>Was it made clear to participants at all stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what information they could access and how this could be accessed</li> <li>what Waverley Council was engaging on, and why</li> <li>what and why they were being asked to contribute, and what they could influence through this contribution (IAP2 Spectrum)</li> <li>how Waverley Council</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All public information was made available on the website through a section dedicated to the project.</li> <li>The reports of the consultation were comprehensive in documenting who participated and providing extensive detail on the outputs. There was good reporting of all outputs of the consultation including the written submissions alongside the online submissions and all inputs. Sometimes it is a challenge to effectively report different inputs.</li> <li>There was a commitment to the generation of a range of creative and visionary ideas to improve the area and clearly members of the public responded positively to many of the ideas generated by the Charette.</li> <li>The design teams genuinely made effort to respond to comments from the community and Council through amending their concept plans. These responses can be seen in the Summary Report and Recommendations from the Design Charette in particular on pages 23, 27, 31. The Simpson and Wilson team in particular responded to community feedback in relation to</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
	<p>would use participants' contributions</p> <p>Has feedback been provided to participants and across the organisation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who has been involved in the process</li> <li>• the range of views expressed</li> <li>• the decisions that have been made</li> <li>• how engagement outcomes have been considered in making decisions, and why these inputs have been used or not used</li> </ul>	<p>housing on the bus depot site that was then removed as well as response to other documented issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Save West Bondi Junction group was invited to present at the start of the Charette and at the Town Hall Briefing on 18 June 2014 (post the Charette) with this information (with potentially counter ideas) subsequently accessible to all through the website.</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved including lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The context and purpose of each of the consultation mechanisms in terms of decision-making and the level of influence of the public could have been more clearly communicated. This is particularly the case for those activities not open to all members of the public such as the Charette, the survey and focus groups (proposed but not conducted)</li> <li>• How the community's input was going to be used at each stage could have been clearer in the written information provided. In particular the connection between the Charette and the information asked for prior to that event and the information presented immediately following the Charette. The initial consultation might have focussed on feedback on the objectives of the Design Charette. "Identifying community values for the area" may have been too open ended in the context of the timing of the initial consultation so close to the planned Charette. Note that the context of the suggestion about clarity of information is based on the written communications and does not have regard for verbal presentations at the various consultations.</li> <li>• There could have been clearer communication about the role of future consultation from now through to implementation.</li> <li>• The role of experts, especially those engaged for the design Charette could have been more clearly articulated through the communications to the community. Their value and credibility and ability to bring new and better ideas could have been communicated.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils desire to select representatives for the Charette from those put forward by the CRG could have been provided with better context, i.e., the desire to have people from various streets or part of the area, mix of ages, mix of men and women etc.</li> <li>• Planning for what we ask the community at each and every step through the consultations could have paid more attention to how this is to be presented in a report in a way that the public can clearly understand how their input contributed to finding a way forward.</li> </ul>
5. Project staging, Timeliness and resourcing	<p>In managing the project did Waverley Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and document the multiple stages of the project and the engagement relative to that project stage?</li> <li>• allow time for participants to effectively contribute?</li> <li>• clearly state the legislative and statutory/ policy requirements?</li> <li>• provide the right skills to develop and deliver the engagement process? (i.e., planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation)</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The generation of a range of valuable ideas as part of the Charette process.</li> <li>• Staff were responsive and provided the support required to the consultation for this planning process</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved including lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community needed these early stages of the project to go more slowly. They believed that a final design was imminent within six months (as per the report to Council in December 2013). The public considered that this was a significant project requiring more time for public input prior to seeing the concepts presented. As a result the community have in effect slowed the project to more realistically meet their timing requirements. Had more time been allowed from the outset there may have been cost savings with less expenditure on reacting to the community.</li> <li>• Linked to the above the Charette may have been better later in the process. That is it may have been the right technique but applied at the wrong time. The Charette could have been used to bring decision makers to the table alongside community representatives to create potential future design based on the potential constraints as they are known.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
6. Inclusiveness and accessibility	<p>Did Waverley Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and seek the involvement of stakeholders interested or impacted by the plan, and was the engagement appropriate to their needs and capacity to contribute?</li> <li>• make clear why and which participants were being engaged at different points in the process?</li> <li>• use engagement techniques and formats appropriate to the engagement objectives, and a selection of techniques that enabled a range of participants to contribute effectively?</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council commissioning a statistically valid representative survey to test the actual ideas generated by the design teams to get responses to all ideas to help rationalise and prioritise recommendations for feasibility testing demonstrated a commitment to actively seek out the views of the wider community in relation to the outcomes of the Charette.</li> <li>• There was a genuine attempt to engage the community and it is clear that there was no deliberate attempt to exclude interested stakeholders from the process. It is clear that once the consultation was underway in 2014 there was extensive distribution of information to all those residing or renting in the vicinity of West Oxford Street.</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved including lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to not presume how a community might react to any project. What might be a major issue for one community may not be for the next and visa versa. In this situation there was a presumption that the community would have only seen good news in the message from Council about the planning for this area. More testing of this assumption would be advisable in such situations.</li> <li>• More attention to documenting the details of who is to be communicated to in a plan in addition to the results of the communication including the discussions with key land owners.</li> <li>• There may have been consideration to naming the Charette a ‘design competition’ or ‘expert panels’ – the fact that they worked in three separate teams suggested a design competition. This may have meant that the public was more accepting of the fact that this only included the experts. The term ‘enquiry by design’ is also often used as it is more descriptive than the term “Charette” which has French origins.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a range of other potential techniques that might have been considered for this engagement process. Deliberative techniques may have been used to have the core group better appreciate different community perspectives and the technical perspectives.</li> </ul>
7. Measureable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the engagement process been clearly and adequately documented to enable review of the process?</li> <li>• Was there an evaluation process?</li> <li>• Are there organisational processes and structures to feed back evaluation outcomes into subsequent processes?</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council undertaking this peer review shows a commitment to reflect on what can be learned from the community engagement experience and to carry the lessons through to future projects. Council has a genuine desire to streamline consultation process related to planning issues in conjunction with the communications team, reviewing the ‘lesson learned’ with the intention to improve.</li> <li>• How Council engaged the public and details of the public input to the consultation has been clearly and adequately documented in the reports about the consultation.</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved including lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A detailed evaluation should be undertaken using a range of inputs including the response of the participants themselves. This peer review might be one input to a project evaluation.</li> <li>• As discussed there is a need to more rigorously document the objectives of the process from the outset in a community engagement plan. An effective evaluation could then assess the outcomes based on the project meeting its objectives outlined in such a plan. Techniques are applied to meet the objectives with the evaluation assessing the techniques for their ability to fulfil the objectives. This consultation as reflected in the council minutes was ‘technique led’ and the objective that the technique was trying to meet was not always clear. This makes evaluation of the success of the techniques difficult.</li> </ul>

Criteria	How to measure	Questions/ Evidence
8. Future execution of plans for the West Oxford street Precinct	<p>Does the community understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the outcomes of the consultation to date and how their input has been used and if not used why not</li> <li>the next steps including their role and capacity to influence future decisions</li> </ul>	<p>What was done well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report to Council on the West Oxford Street Precinct that is submitted with this report summarises the public feedback as result of exhibition of the West Oxford Street Design Charette Summary Report and Recommendations and how the input has been used in the direction for this project. This feedback was received either through the online survey, submissions or via the statistically valid survey.</li> <li>In addition the current report to Council outlines the future considerations for ways that the public might be engaged or kept informed of the future design and plans for West Oxford Street.</li> <li>The report also reiterates that any changes to the LEP or DCP will be placed on public exhibition for further community comment.</li> </ul> <p>What could have been improved including lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication throughout the process about the project stages beyond this immediate planning phase and importantly as part of this communication about the opportunities that will be provided to the public for further input and / or information that will be made available about future studies and or decision-making processes.</li> <li>Better documentation of the consultation phases and their context in terms of the public input and influence for the way forward for the project.</li> </ul>

## Recommendations for the future

- 1. A risk/ benefit analysis related to community involvement should be integral to project planning for every Council project and especially those projects needing Council resolution.**

In this situation a key question to ask internally might be. “What is the risk if we fail to consult the public?” Within Council there is a wealth of knowledge about the particular communities that might be impacted and how they might view planning initiatives such as this. Much can be gained by asking internal staff before forging ahead with plans and /or some key community stakeholders – in this situation potentially the Bondi Junction precinct committee.

- 2. If a project is assessed as requiring community involvement a Community Engagement Plan should be developed**

The level of detail required for this plan will depend on the complexity of the project from the perspective of engagement of the community. Complexity can result from the number of people impacted and the level of importance of the project to the community. A Community Engagement Plan includes:

- The issues for the public framed in a way that the public understand
- The purpose of engagement and level of influence that the public might have at different steps in the planning process
- A list of all stakeholders and the issues and information that might be important to these stakeholders
- The objectives of the consultation and the project and the techniques that are going to be used to meet these objectives.
- Key messages (what is most important for the public to understand about your project) including articulation of the need for the project, the potential benefits and how the public can have a say
- The various stages of the project and the decision makers at each step in the process
- Roles and responsibilities of the various staff involved in the implementation of the consultation.
- A plan to evaluate the community engagement

- 3. Lead time and duration for community engagement should be carefully considered and included in the program for the project.**

Attention should be on the time it may take for the public to understand the issues and which part of the planning process might be of greatest interest to the public. A key way to understand when the public might want to be involved is to ask them or selected community representatives.

- 4. Plan for evaluation of the Community Engagement**

This should be planned for from the beginning and take place during the implementation of the community engagement process with adjustments to the process based on the results of this evaluation.