

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

14 MAY 2024



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SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL 14 MAY 2024



Welcome

Welcome to this Special Meeting of the Port Phillip City Council.

Council Meetings are an important way to ensure that your democratically elected representatives are working for you in a fair and transparent way. They also allow the public to be involved in the decision-making process of Council.

About this meeting

There are a few things to know about tonight's meeting.

Only the items specified in the agenda will be considered. Each item has a report written by a Council officer outlining the purpose of the report, all relevant information and a recommendation. Council will consider the report and either accept the recommendation or make amendments to it. All decisions of Council are adopted if they receive a majority vote from the Councillors present at the meeting.

Public Question Time and Submissions

Provision is made for members of the public to speak to the agenda item(s) listed.

Members of the public have the option to either participate in person with COVID safe requirements or join the meeting virtually via Teams to speak to the item live during the meeting.

If you would like to address the Council and /or ask a question on any of the items being discussed, please submit a 'Request to Speak form' by 4pm on the day of the meeting via Council's website:

Request to speak at a Council meeting -City of Port Phillip





SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL

To Councillors

Notice is hereby given that a **Special Meeting of the Port Phillip City Council** will be held in **St Kilda Town Hall and Virtually via Teams** on **Tuesday, 14 May 2024 at 6:30pm.** At their discretion, Councillors may suspend the meeting for short breaks as required.

AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES
- 2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3 WELL GOVERNED PORT PHILLIP



3. WELL GOVERNED PORT PHILLIP



3.1	COUNCIL PLAN AND BUDGET (YEAR 4) INTERIM ENGAGEMENT REPORT: HEARING OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
EXECUTIVE MEMBER:	LACHLAN JOHNSON, GENERAL MANAGER OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
	JOANNE MCNEILL, EXECUTIVE MANAGER, GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE
PREPARED BY:	JACKY BAILEY, HEAD OF CORPORATE PLANNING
	KIHM ISAAC, CORPORATE PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE ADVISOR
	PENNY SMALLWOOD, CORPORATE PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE ADVISOR

1. PURPOSE

- To receive and hear community feedback on the Draft Council Plan and Budget (Year 4).
- 1.2 To inform Councillors of the feedback received to date (up to and including 9th May) on the Council Plan and Budget (Year 4), as context for the Hearing of Feedback from community members.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 An important part of developing the Council Plan and Budget (Year 4) is to seek feedback and input from our community.
- 2.2 Engagement on this project opened on 18 April and will close on 13 May 2024.
- 2.3 This engagement report summarises all feedback received up to and including 9 May 2024. Feedback received over the last few days of the engagement period will be included in the final engagement report to Councillors.
- 2.4 Feedback received at the 14 May 2024 Special Meeting of Council will be captured in the final engagement report to be tabled at 26 June 2024 Special Meeting of Council.

3. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- 3.1 Thanks the Community who have provided their feedback at the 14 May 2024 Special Meeting of Council as part of the draft 2024/25 Council Plan & Budget.
- 3.2 Notes the Interim Engagement Summary Report as included in attachment 1.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

4.1 The attached report summarises community feedback on the Council Plan and Budget (Year 4), up to and including 9th May 2024.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

5.1 Feedback from 200 community members, including 186 individuals and 14 organisations, has been provided thus far (up to and including 9th May). This includes diverse representation from people of different demographics and location.



6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Local Government Act 2020 requires councils to engage with the community. This interim report is one of the many ways we meet that obligation.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 The potential financial impact of community feedback and requests made via this process will be considered as part of the wider budget preparation process.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

8.1 Not applicable

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 This interim engagement report is designed to give Councillors insight into the community's views about the draft Council Plan and Budget. This will help inform decisions about the final plan and budget, which is due to be adopted at 26 June Council Meeting.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 Community engagement is a key part of the Council Plan and Budget development process.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 Community members will have an opportunity to speak directly to Councillors at the 14 May 'Hearing of Feedback' meeting.
- 11.1.2 A final engagement report, incorporating all feedback from the community on the draft Council Plan and Budget (Year 4) will be provided to Councillors to inform their decisions about the final Council Plan and Budget (Year 4).

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 We will 'close the loop' with the community by posting a final engagement report on the 'Have Your Say' page for this project.

12. OFFICER MATERIAL OR GENERAL INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS 1. Interim Engagement Summary Report





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Introduction

Project background

The Council Plan sets out the long-term vision for City of Port Phillip. It ensures that our key strategies, services, projects, and initiatives align with our community's priorities. It also addresses changing community expectations and needs, plans for population growth, and waste management.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to update their Council Budget each year.

The draft Council Plan and Budget (Year 4) and the proposed changes to local rates are open for community feedback from 18 April until 13 May 2024.

As this is the final year of a four-year planning cycle, no major changes are being proposed to the Council Plan. Instead, the focus is on developing an annual budget that responds to the dynamic financial environment and delivers existing initiatives and projects.

What we set out to achieve

The purpose of the engagement process was to gauge the level of support for the draft Council Plan and Budget (Year 4) and the proposed changes to local rates, in particular:

- a proposed average rate increase of 2.75 per cent in 2024/25 for Port Phillip property owners
- increasing rates for certain land types (derelict land, unactivated retail land, and vacant land) that have a negative impact on the amenity of Port Phillip and that are not consistent with Council Plan objectives.





About this report

This interim report provides an overview of how Council is engaging with the community, and a summary of the feedback that has been provided up to and including 9 May 2024. Feedback received after this date will be provided in the final report later this year.

Before reading this report

The following should be considered in reading this report:

- Participants were self-selecting. As such, the feedback may reflect only a limited proportion of the local community.
- City of Port Phillip strives to include diverse voices in our engagement activities. We acknowledge however that some people are likely to have experienced barriers to participation in the activities that are outlined in this report – including people with a disability, multicultural communities, older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others.
- The report summarises the feedback from engagement activities. While every effort is made to include the full breadth of feedback provided, not all comments, views or advice is shown in the findings of this report. Where appropriate, a mix of quotes, themes and metrics are used to convey community feedback.
- While efforts are taken to manage duplication, there is potential for doublecounting where participants have attended multiple events, and/or completed online activities via the 'Have Your Say' website.
- Detailed participant demographic data was not collected or mandatory across all engagement events and activities.
- The information in this report is a summary of the feedback from our community, and has not been independently validated. As such, some information maybe factually incorrect, unfeasible or outside of the scope of this project.
- This report summarises key feedback from participants and does not preclude the project team from considering community feedback in its original format.



What we did

Communication and engagement activities

Information was provided to the community via:

- the 'Have Your Say' website, including the draft documents for consultation, process and timeline information, FAQs, responses to questions submitted on the page, contact details (phone and email), and information for our Translating and Interpreting Service
- 'Neighbourhood Conversation' pop up events, where people could speak directly to a Councillor, the Chief Financial Officer, or a member of our engagement team
- social media posts on both Facebook and Instagram
- letters to the people who could be identified by Council as being potentially affected by the proposed changes to rates for derelict land, unactivated retail land, and vacant land
- hard copy fact sheets at St Kilda Town Hall.

The community was invited to provide feedback via:

- an online feedback form on the 'Have Your Say' website, including the opportunity to upload additional documentation
- hard copy feedback forms available to be collected from St Kilda Town Hall
- email to the Council Plan and Budget helpdesk
- 'Neighbourhood Conversation' pop up events.

Community members will also be able to share their feedback directly with councillors at a Council Meeting on 14 May 2024.





Participation

Participation to date

Up to and including 9th May, we had heard from nearly 200 participants, including individuals and organisations. A summary of attendance to the Neighbourhood Conversation pop-up events and online participation is provided in the figure below.



Online and in-person interactions

Groups or organisations that provided feedback were:

- Carlisle Street Traders Association
- City of Port Phillip Older Persons
 Advisory Committee (OPAC)
- The Stokehouse
- GLOWING STAR PTY LTD
- Riverlee
- Emgra Pty Ltd
- One Ball
- Quad Equities

- Elwood Toy Library
- Coles Group Property
 Developments
- Elwood Park Tennis Club (EPTC)
- Port Philip EcoCentre
- Stage Works Pty Ltd T/A TechniStage
- BalletLab Association Inc.





Participation per activity

Our 'Have you say' website is the primary way in which community members have engaged with us thus far. Full detail of participation up to and including 9th May is provided in the table below.

Activity	Reach	Approach
'Have your say' website	2,022 views 1,054 visitors 122 contributions 113 contributors 1,741 downloads	Council's dedicated engagement website, 'Have your say' included a page for this project, with information on the process, a timeline, contact details, and opportunities to engage.
	18 questions asked and answered	Community members could ask questions and receive a response using the online Q&A tool on the 'Have Your Say' page.
Online Q&A	8 emails received	We established a Helpdesk - Council Plan and Budget email account, which was advertised on the 'Have Your Say' page.
Emails		
- QZ	98 online 1 hard-copy	Online and hard copy feedback forms asked participants some specific questions about the draft documentation, and also had free text boxes and an option to upload additional
Feedback forms		documentation, for general feedback and suggestions.
Neighbourhood conversations	85 participants 22 Albert Park/Middle Park 21 Elwood 29 South Melbourne 9 St Kilda / St Kilda West 4 Ripponlea	This project was featured at neighbourhood engagement popup stalls in Albert Park/Middle Park on 20 th April, Elwood on 20 th April, South Melbourne on 24 th April, St Kilda / St Kilda West on 4 th May and Ripponlea on 8 th May. Feedback from three additional popups in Balaclava/St Kilda East, St Kilda Road, and Port Melbourne will be incorporated into the final report.



Who we heard from

Demographics

We spoke to a wide mix of people, with more than 200 participants sharing their feedback with us on this project, online and in person, up to and including 9th May. **We collected demographic details from approximately 170 participants**. The following explores those demographics.

Gender

In total, 169 participants provided their gender, 59 per cent of whom identified as female. There was a higher proportion of female participants online (63 per cent) compared to the neighbourhood engagement pop-ups, which had a more equal gender representation at 54 per cent and 45 per cent women and men respectively. Overall, the higher proportion of females is in keeping with the gender balance across the municipality (51 per cent female and 49 per cent male).



Woman or female Man or male Prefer not to say Non-Binary





Age

In total, 169 participants provided their age through surveys and at our pop-up events. There was strong participation from community members between the ages of 35 and 84 which is consistent with previous engagement age data of those most engaged with the City of Port Phillip.





Participant age profile by enagement method

Residential suburb and ward

The pareto chart below clusters the suburbs with the greatest representation. The line on the second axis indicating that approximately 85 per cent of participants came from the top four locations: South Melbourne, Elwood, Middle Park and St Kilda.



Residential suburb



P PHILLI

By ward, Canal Ward had the strongest participation, followed by Lake then Gateway Ward. Participation by ward was consistent across both engagement channels, however there was slightly more online participation from Canal ward residents.



Participants by ward



Property ownership

Of 98 respondents who provided this information, sixty percent (59) own a home in the City of Port Phillip and pay rates. Nine per cent of respondents are renters in the municipality.

Five per cent of responses (5) were from people who believe they may be directly impacted by the proposed changes to unactivated or vacant land. No respondent advised they may be impacted by changes to derelict land and only one respondent was a retail business owner.

A relatively high proportion of respondents did not fit a category provided for property ownership (16 per cent or 16 responses). This data was not collected from in-person participants at the Neighbourhood Conversations.



Property ownership



Diversity

Approximately 50 per cent (132 of 267) respondents identified with one or more of our diversity indicators. Of these, 61 per cent (82) preferred not to say and there were several smaller groupings as depicted in the chart below.



Representation

88 per cent of participants were responding on behalf of themselves. A small proportion were responding on behalf of a group or organisation. The organisation types included one property developer, and the remainder were local community organisations.

This data was only available for online respondents and was not collected from inperson participants at the Neighbourhood Engagement pop-ups.









What we heard

Summary of issues raised

The following thematic analysis summarises all feedback received via the engagement process, up to and including 9th May. A number of key themes have emerged to date.

The inputs we received could be classified as either requiring further definition (eg what does 'unactivated' mean?), clarification (eg is my property impacted?), a request for funding, or general feedback. The tree diagram below, shows the breadth of the issues that have been raised.

The topics that garnered the most interest were: unactivated retail land, our rating strategy, ageing and accessibility, and the Elwood Foreshore, with ageing and accessibility forming the bulk of direct funding requests.

Topics raised by the community via this engagement											
Unactivated retail land	Rating Strategy	Parking						ration o ^E Council d Budge: (proces		Vacant land	
		Request, 1	Clarification question, 1	Requ	Clarifica lest, 1 questic				2		
		Childcare centres	Disability		Social h	ousing	Socia	al meals	Street cleaning		
		Clarification question, 1	Request, 1		Request,		Requ	iest, 1	Request, 1		
Definition, 6	Definition, 4	Community engagement and support		In Our Backyard Strategy Clarification question, 1				draft		t Council	Victorian Interfaith Networks
Clarification question, 1	Clarification question, 1	Request, 1				Request, 1		Budget n/a, 1	Festival Request, 1		
Ageing and accessibility	Elwood foreshore and surrounding area	Community facility		Reducing pollution/		<u> </u>				ut Farm serve	Gasworks Arts Park
		Request, 1	plastic waste Clarification question, 1		Clarification		Clarificat lequest, 1 question		Request, 1		
	Clarification question, 2	Community festival	Share the F (STF) prog		Tree trir	mming	a	sparency round iciency	Temperance Hall		
Request, 5	Request, 1	Request, 1	Request, 1		Clarifica questio		Clasi	សែងថ្លួត សេរាត្រ stion, 1	Request, 1		



Feedback on proposed changes to local rates

We asked people how much they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to increase rates for Port Phillip property owners by 2.75 per cent in 2024/25, noting that this change would be:

- in line with the rate cap set by the Minister for Local Government
- lower than the increase for the 2023/24 financial year
- less than forecast inflation.

Overall, 41 per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed rate increase; and 35 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposed rate increase. 23 per cent provided a neutral response.



How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed rate increase?*

*only 70 of 98 online respondents answered this question



More respondents online gave positive feedback, whilst those attending the face-toface sessions provided more negative feedback on the proposed rate increase.



How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed rate increase?

Survey respondents who disagreed with the proposal to increase rates by 2.75 per cent were asked why. A summary of the 20 responses provided by community members can be found the table below. Almost half of these responses disagreed to the proposed increase because they wanted rates to be higher.

Please note, when reading this table summarising comments and similar tables later in this report:

- The 'number of comments' is included for each theme/topic, however as some people may have provided feedback in multiple ways (i.e. the survey and in person at pop up events) this number may include some duplication.
- At pop-up events, we transcribed community members' feedback, so some comments are paraphrased.
- Comments provided are only some of those received/transcribed and are not intended to represent all the feedback received.



Торіс	Summary of the feedback
Need more efficient focus on core services (11 comments)	Some respondents felt that existing resources are wasted or not used efficiently. Others referenced the need focus on core services for local government, and to finding savings before raising rates. "Council wastes money on all sorts of projects and consultants" "You need to find savings in your budget, no core services should be cut and no pet projects should be paid for that's what the council should be concentrating on. Core services only, not state or federal areas"
Want increase to be higher (9 comments)	30 per cent of these comments were also critical of past decisions to set rates below the rate cap. "With a lower rate base, council won't have sufficient income to invest in services. This previous decision is now amplified by rising costs of inflation." "We will have to spend lots in future years to adapt to climate change, and we need to start now." "I believe rates should be allowed to increase by a higher amount. We want more services from CoPP, not less. I understand this is the maximum level set by the state government, and it is they who should change their policy position."
Other (9 comments)	A range of other comments were provided. Most prominent among these was that rates are already excessive. <i>"Our rates are higher than other councils and they should be brought in line."</i>
Cost of living pressures (8 comments)	Cost of living pressures were raised as a concern. "With increases in daily living costs, land tax and increases in rates, it's not sustainable to stay in the suburb that I love now that I'm retiring." "I appreciate that costs of everything has increased so the maintenance and provision of services is more expensive but that means it is much harder for residents and retailers and owners to pay the ever increasing rates"



Feedback on proposed changes for certain land types

We sought feedback from the community about the degree to which they agreed with the proposed increases to rates for derelict land, unactivated retail land, and vacant land. The following charts show responents' views on the proposed changes for the new land types. The majority of respondents strongly agreed with the proposed rate changes for these land categories.



For each of the three land categories, over 70 per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed increase of rates for derelict, unactivated and vacant land.







Derelict Land







Vacant land





Respondents who disagreed with any of the proposals to increase rates for derelict, unactivated or vacant land were asked for more information about why. The 18 responses are summarised in the table below under key themes. Community members' comments have been included to illustrate the feedback received. Many respondents pointed to factors that were out of their control.

Торіс	Summary of the feedback
Factors out of landowners' control (17 comments)	Respondents cited delays caused by Council planning process, regulatory hurdles, and economic and market conditions – including building costs and difficulties finding suitable tenants. These factors were associated with a perception that the proposed changes are unfair. <i>"Economic factors, market conditions, regulatory hurdles, or personal circumstances could all contribute to the decision to leave land unused."</i> <i>"it could be a case of an elderly person been put into a nursing home and the families unable to sell or act on behave of these people, as the courts wont allow them to in our case we have vacant land that we have made 3 attempts to start building. All put on hold either due to major surgery, covid, and the impact covid has had on our source of income. Also the governments inability to see they are driving up the cost of construction We are paying the same level of rates with little or no service provided to our property."</i>
Changes will not achieve positive or desired outcomes (7 comments)	While some respondents agreed with the general policy intent of the changes, they doubted that they would be realised. "While the intention may be to incentivize landowners to develop or activate their properties, imposing punitive rate hikes is a counterproductive approach that could exacerbate existing challenges rather than addressing them effectively." "Appreciate that Carlisle Street in particular is challenging at the moment but if you raise the rates how can owners then afford to find decent tenants at decent rates It's counter intuitive."



Торіс	Summary of the feedback
Other	A wide range of additional comments were received. Some
(21 comments)	focused on the need for clear definitions and processes for the
	identifying properties falling into new categories, others felt the
	changes were motivated by the desire to generate revenue
	and that Council does not have the "right to tell people what
	they can and cannot do" with their properties and this change
	may increase financial hardship. A few comments proposed
	incentivising development instead.
	" it's essential for the council to ensure that definitions of
	derelict, unactivated, and vacant land are clear, fair, and
	accurately reflect the circumstances of each property."
	"for those people just sitting on their vacant land, it is their
	choice to do so"
	"Punishing these landowners with significantly higher rates ma
	only serve to compound their financial burden"
	"A more constructive approach would involve offering
	incentives, support, and resources to landowners This could
	include streamlined planning processes, grants or subsidies for
	redevelopment projects, or assistance in navigating regulatory
	requirements."



Additional feedback

Community members were given the opportunity to provide any general feedback or comments about the draft Council Plan and Budget (Year 4), and to upload or send in any supporting documentation or additional information they may have. Responses are summarised in the table below under key themes. Community members' comments have been included to illustrate the feedback received. The Port Phillip EcoCentre featured in over 75 per cent of the 79 responses received.

Торіс	Summary of the feedback			
City of Port Phillip EcoCentre	All 60 comments supported the continued or increased funding of the EcoCentre, and 25 referenced the new weekend hours.			
(60 comments)	There was consistency in the sentiments expressed, especially regarding the positive impact on community (13 comments) and for school children (10 comments). "The Eco Centre is an extremely important local community. With an active interest in the environment, our foreshore, science, teaching, students Extended hours over the weekend will allow more locals to attend a range of events." "As a school organisor for finding rich learning opportunities for kids, the schools I work with highly value the Marine/ Sustainability focused learning days the Centre offers it's the only service around that I know who does this work." "The EcoCentre is a shining example of a community centred, education and empowering hub and resource. Not only due to the obvious sustainability credibility it brings to Port Phillip, but as a home for many community members to build connections, relationships, experiences, learning, skills and a sense of belonging."			
Other	A diverse range of other comments focused on individual			
(23 comments)	 locations or specific issues were received, spanning: sport and recreation facilities (x4) social housing and housing support (x3) waste management (x2) markets (x2) child care (x2) libraries (x2) Roads, crossings and paving (x2). 			



How to find out more

Further activities/Next steps

Council Meeting (Community hearing) - 14 May 2024

Community members can attend a Council meeting to talk about their feedback for the draft Council Plan and Budget (Year 4), as well as proposed changes to local rates.

Council Meeting - Wed 26 June 2024

We will compile all community feedback into a final report to inform changes to the draft Council Plan and Budget (Year 4), as well as proposed changes to local rates. Following this meeting, the report will be made available to public.

More information about the Council Plan and Budget process and the draft Council Plan & Budget (Year 4) can be found here: <u>Council Plan & Budget (Year 4)</u> 2024/2025 | Have Your Say Port Phillip.

How this report will be used

Councillors will receive this interim engagement report (summarising all community feedback up to and including Thursday 9 May) on Monday 13 May, prior to the Council meeting on 14 May.

The report will then be updated with feedback submitted from 9-13 May to produce the final engagement report for the Council meeting on 26 June.