



Draft Plans of Management for Parks & Reserves

Prepared October 2020

Councils are required under the *Local Government Act 1993* to inform the community of issues that potentially affect their way of life. North Sydney Council is committed both in principle and in practice, to engaging on matters affecting the North Sydney community.

The purpose of this Community Engagement Strategy is to outline the ways stakeholders can be involved in the review and preparation of Plans of Management for parks and reserves in North Sydney. Opportunities will be provided across a range of 'engagement' levels.

1. Introduction

This Community Engagement Strategy outlines the steps Council will take to engage the community in reviewing and preparing its draft Plans of Management for all parks and reserves in North Sydney that are either owned or managed by Council. Council is committed to engaging the community to ensure all Plans of Management reflect the community's open space and recreation needs and wants.

Plans of Management set out how North Sydney's parks and reserves will look, be used and be managed over the next 5-10 years. They are broadly drafted to enable flexibility of use by Council and the community. They examine a range of issues associated with the relevant parks and reserves in a comprehensive and holistic manner, set out objectives and identify and prioritise works to be carried out in coming years. The Plans of Management clarify management policy and direction, both for Council staff and the community.

1.1 Council's Community Engagement Protocol

This strategy has been prepared in accordance with Council's *Community Engagement Protocol*. The Protocol is used to determine the level of 'level(s) of impact' applicable to this project/decision (proposal). This proposal has been determined as:

LEVEL OF IMPACT	LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT
Low/LGA Wide	Inform/Consult

Relevant Legislation:

- NSW Local Government Act 1993
- Crown Land Management Act 2016
- Native Title Act (Cwlth) 1993
- NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Council used the framework shown overleaf on **Table 1** to select the most appropriate 'level(s) of engagement' for this proposal to ensure an appropriate range of engagement 'levels' and methods are offered:

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Inform	Providing balanced and objective information to help the community understand problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions

Consult	Obtain public feedback on alternatives and/or decisions
Involve	Work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution

Table 1 derived from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

2. Background

Plans of Management provide an overall framework for management of Council-owned and managed parks and reserves in coming years. Specifically, they have been prepared to:

- Meet Council's obligations regarding public land management under the requirements of Section 36 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*
- Ensure the requirements of the *Native Title Act 1993* for the management of Crown land are addressed (where the Plan of Management includes Crown land)
- Enable Council to renegotiate or enter into leases, licences and other use agreements

North Sydney Council's Plans of Management are updated cyclically, approximately every 5 to 10 years, and entirely new Plans of Management are prepared, as required. Council's current suite of Plans of Management are available on Council's website and listed out below:

Generic Plans of Management - these incorporate various parks and reserves with similar characteristics and/or uses:

- Bushland
- Foreshore Parks & Reserves
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Playgrounds
- Sportsgrounds

Significant Area Plans of Management - these are prepared for some of North Sydney's most important parks:

- St Leonards Park
- Cremorne Reserve
- Bradfield Park
- St Thomas' Rest Park
- North Sydney Oval
- Forsyth Park
- Smoothery Park
- Tunks Park
- Anderson Park

2.1 Structure of the Plans of Management

Plans of Management are divided into six parts.

- *Part 1* examines what a Plan of Management is, outlines the Plan's scope, purpose and core objectives and explains the link between the Plan of Management and

Council's land management goals. It details the importance of community involvement in the planning process and examines the issue of leases and licences.

- *Part 2* indicates the location of the land covered by the Plan of Management. It examines the characteristics and the function and use of the land.
- *Part 3* identifies and examines the major planning issues and discusses current management policies and practices.
- *Part 4* is the philosophical basis for the Plan of Management. It details the significance of the land and establishes the overall directions and objectives of management that guide policy development and formulation of the action plan.
- *Part 5* is the implementation and performance component of the Plan of Management. A matrix sets out the objectives, actions and performance indicators for each issue, and each issue is given a priority rating. An indicative works program further details the staging of all works and actions.
- *Part 6* contains the appendices.

3. Community Engagement Strategy

3.1 Who are our community stakeholders?

The Community Engagement Strategy identifies the following groups to engage with:

- Local residents
- Local businesses and Precinct Committees
- Known stakeholders - these will vary from Plan to Plan but may include:
 - Bushcare groups
 - Local schools and educational institutes
 - Sportsground/court user groups
 - Community gardeners
 - Individuals who have expressed interest in particular parks and reserves
- Council's Sport & Recreation Reference Group
- Adjoining Councils
- Councillors
- Council staff
- NSW Government (all Plans of Management that contain Crown land)
- NTSCORP (all Plans of Management that contain Crown land)

3.2 Key Communication Messages

- New draft Plans of Management are developed cyclically for all parks and reserves in North Sydney, and Council seeks public feedback to ensure the new Plans reflect the identified recreational needs of the community and users.
- Plans of Management set out how North Sydney's parks and reserves will look, be used and be managed over the next 5-10 years. They clarify management policy and direction, both for Council staff and the community and identify and prioritise works to be carried out in coming years.
- The Plans are available to view online or in person at Council's Customer Service Centre (upon request). The public exhibition period for each draft Plan of Management runs for a minimum of 42 days.

- Once all feedback is received, it will be collated, analysed and reported to Council. It will be integrated into the final Plan of Management where appropriate.

3.3 Timetable

Community and stakeholder engagement will occur at various times during the development of new draft Plans of Management. The key project development phases are outlined in the following table:

PHASE	TIMING
1. Preparation of new draft Plans of Management	Approx. 3 months
2. Public Exhibition of draft Plans of Management	Minimum of 42 days
3. Finalising Plans of Management	1 month from Council adoption

3.3.1 Phase 1 - Preparation of new draft Plans of Management

This phase involved a comprehensive review of the previous Plan of Management, as well as other relevant documents developed subsequently e.g. Council's *Recreation Needs Study*, *Small Watercraft Storage Strategy*, *Bushland Rehabilitation Plans* etc. Recent correspondence from the community and stakeholders is also considered.

3.3.2 Phase 2 - Public Exhibition of Draft Plans

Prior to public exhibition by Council, all draft Plans of Management that include Crown land must be sent to the NSW government for approval to publicly exhibit.

Each draft Plan of Management will be publicly exhibited for a minimum of 42 days. The following methods will be used to inform the community that the document is on public exhibition:

METHOD	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	PURPOSE
Webpage	All	Inform	Provide information about the draft Plans of Management and direct people to have their say Link to Engagement HQ project page for each draft Plan of Management
Media release	All		
Social media (Facebook/Instagram)	All		
E-news	Existing subscribers: Council E-news		
Posters (In the park and/or on community noticeboards)	Site user/visitors The local community	Inform	Promote the opportunity to provide feedback and direct people to how to have their say
Memo/Email	Precinct Committees Sport & Recreation Reference Group Councillors (via Bulletin)	Inform	Encourage Precincts and other groups to promote engagement to their members

METHOD	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	PURPOSE
	All staff Known stakeholders (various, may include Bushcare groups, community gardeners, sportsfield users, local schools and childcare centres) NTSCORP (all Plans that contain Crown land)		
Submissions	All	Inform/Consult	Via feedback form on Engagement HQ (link to project page on Council's website) Free form feedback accepted by email, phone or posted letter

Note: In accordance with Council's Community Engagement Framework, the 'level of engagement' per engagement method is indicated.

3.3.3 Phase 3 - Finalising the Plans of Management

This Phase involves reviewing community feedback and reporting to Council, along with recommendations about whether the feedback can appropriately be incorporated into the final Plan of Management. Should feedback received result in substantial changes to the Plans of Management, Council may choose to re-exhibit prior to adopting the final document.

4. Opportunity Cost/Rationale

Some financial cost may be involved in engaging the community in the Plan of Management process and achieving a high-quality engagement process. If the process is robust, community ownership of the decisions made will ensure efficient outcomes. Insufficient or poor-quality engagement can result in poor long-term decisions requiring further resources to rectify. The aim of a high-quality community engagement process is to make sustainable decisions. The engagement process will help Council staff and/or Councillors to understand the related recommendations rationale.

5. Further Information

For further information contact Megan White, Council's Landscape Planner, Open Space and Environmental Services Division:

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