



COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

 City of Ryde



Lifestyle and opportunity
@ your doorstep

Introduction

The City of Ryde recognises that effective communication and engagement is vital for successful planning and decision-making.

Council is committed to communicating with our community on projects, planning matters, initiatives and events that Council delivers in the local government area.

Where possible and appropriate, Council will create meaningful consultation opportunities whereby community feedback is sought and considered as part of the decision making process.

Due to the diverse nature of Council's business, the way we communicate and engage with the community can vary. However, the results are the same; to inform and consult.

This Strategy is designed to provide the community with an understanding of Council's approach when:

- Keeping our community informed
- Consulting with our community to obtain their feedback



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What is Council trying to achieve?



To **communicate** by **informing** our community



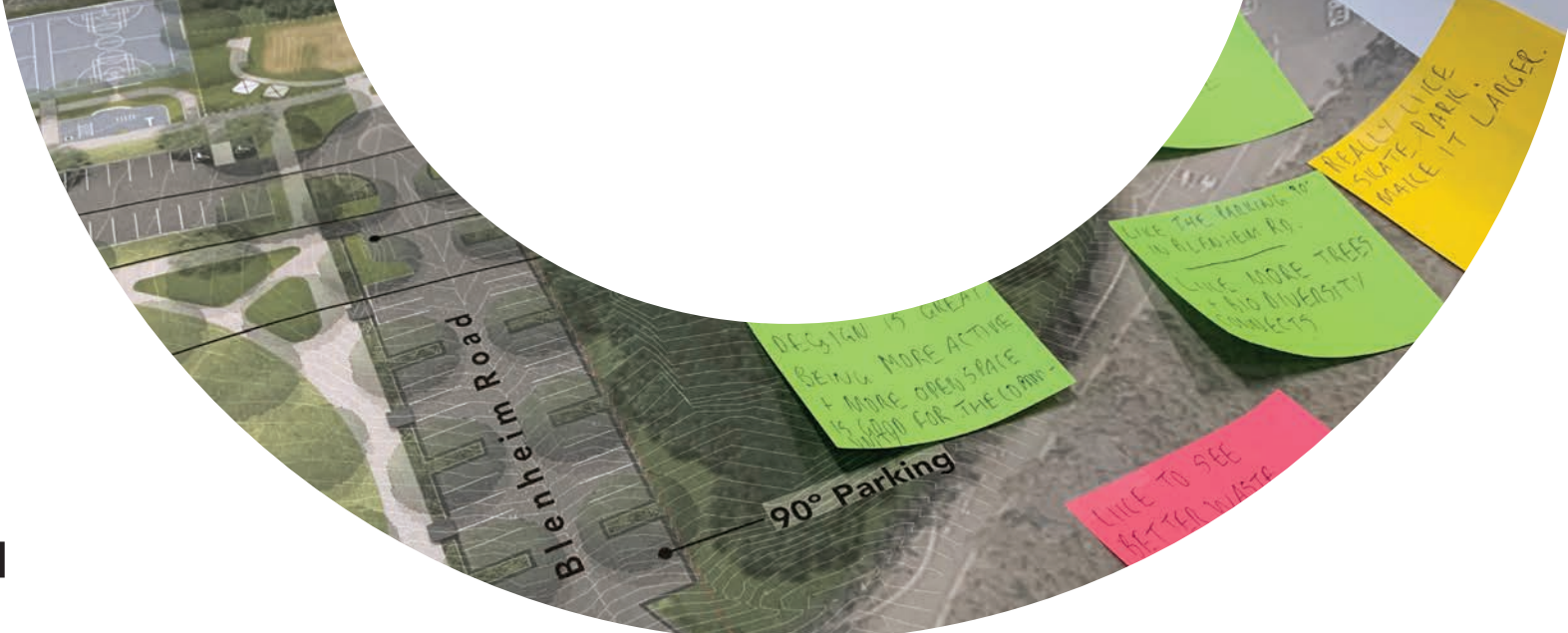
To **engage** by **consulting** with our community



To **engage** by **collaborating** with our advisory committees and reference groups



To **communicate** by **advocating** on behalf of our community



What can you expect from Council?



Our communications and engagement is planned, proactive and fit for purpose



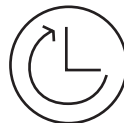
Our approach is creative and engaging and acknowledges existing input/information



Our language is clear, customer friendly and where possible translated



Our community interactions are genuine, respectful, inclusive and accessible



Our delivery is timely, targeted, cost-effective and where possible sustainable



Our process is transparent, consistent, strategic, accountable and regularly reviewed

How does Council undertake communications and engagement?

Process

Every project is different. As each project may vary by target audience/stakeholders, level of impact and resources available. Every project needs to be planned individually, as issues and impacts may change during the project and the approach may need reviewing.

However, all projects follow the same process as outlined below:



We realise that sometimes, despite our best efforts, people may not be happy with the options or solutions available. The Communications and Engagement Procedure provides a framework to ensure that all communication and engagement is handled in an appropriate, effective and systematic way.

Separately, the engagement process for development applications and plan making documents is defined in Council's Community Participation Plan.

The Community Participation Plan outlines how and when Council will engage with the community on planning matters and reflects the community participation requirements in planning legislation, including mandatory consultation time-frames.





What does Council communicate and engage with you about?

Projects, planning matters, initiatives and events that Council delivers, has a community impact or would generate community interest.

If you have provided feedback to Council, you will be kept informed of either how it has been considered, when the project goes to Council and/or when a decision has been made or when a project is being built.

Who does Council communicate and engage with?

Where possible:



Council will always contact groups that are directly affected



Council will at times contact groups that are in close proximity, or that are indirectly affected



Where appropriate contact groups who have shown an interest



How does Council communicate and engage with you?



Written correspondence through letters, newsletters, email, rates notices, flyers, publications, fact sheets, our Annual Report, legislative reporting and other published information.



Face-to-face interactions through our centres, meetings, door knocks, community consultation and feedback sessions, events, workshops, advisory committees and reference groups.



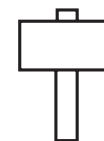
Online through our website, social media, webinars, online meetings and surveys.



Over the phone through customer follow up and phone surveys.



Media through briefings, press releases and advertising.



Signage through signs, posters and banners.

What are Council's challenges when communicating and engaging with you?



From time-to-time there is a limitation on the funding, resources and/or timing available for Council to communicate or engage with the community. This requires Council to effectively manage expectations on each project and/or service that affects the community.



Council acknowledges that often stakeholders have differing views and needs to be considered. It may not be possible for Council to satisfy all of the views. All feedback received will be recorded, which may assist in future decision making.



Due to our diverse community there may be times where information is not available in a community language. However, Council provides access to the Translating and Interpreting Service and has staff trained as Language Aides to assist with the interpretation of some languages other than English.



There may be times where Council is unable to communicate or engage with the community, such as when there is a safety issue and/or an urgent issue arises.



As part of Council's role in making decisions in the best interests of the community, it will require Council from time-to-time to make difficult decisions that not all community members will agree with. However, Council's commitment to the community is to provide a consistent and transparent process in its decision making to provide the community with clarity.



Sometimes Council is also required to act on behalf of an external group, agency and government body, but are not the responsible authority and are unable to change a decision. In some cases where there is community interest, Council may advocate to these external groups, agencies and government bodies on the community's behalf.



Council is bound by legislative requirements, objectives, strategies and decisions made by external groups, agencies and government bodies.

Council will communicate and engage with our community the best way we can within our constraints.

How can you communicate and engage with Council?



In Person at our Customer Service Centre located at 1 Pope St, Ryde



Phone Council on 02 9952 8222
Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450



Email cityofryde@ryde.nsw.gov.au

Post Att: General Manager
City of Ryde
Locked Bag 2069
NORTH RYDE NSW 1670



Fill in the feedback form on our **website**
www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/feedback



Attend an event, Council facility, community consultation drop-in session, info session, or participate in a survey or workshop on a specific project



Get social and connect with us on our social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram



Make submissions on the Council's Four-Year Delivery Plan including its One-Year Operational Plan or on its 10-year Community Strategic Plan. You can also make a submission on other projects or notified consents that are consulted or advertised throughout the year

Please note petitions submitted to Council as part of a community consultation are reported however, are separate to the consultation results as this information was not collected by Council.



Arrange to **speak at a meeting**



Vote for Councillors every four years through the local government election for the City of Ryde



Write to or phone elected members of the Council

What Council expects from you

Council acknowledges that often stakeholders have differing views and Council makes difficult decisions that not all community members will agree with which can be frustrating.

However, we ask that our community:



Are respectful towards staff and others



Do not seek to disrupt processes or deny the right of others to communicate and engage with Council

Any aggressive, abusive, offensive and intimidating behavior will not be tolerated.

Most customers abide by this, and we would like to thank you for being one of them.





Definitions

Project

Means a project, issue, document/s, payment, expenditure, program or service.

Inform

To provide the community with balanced and objective information on the projects, initiatives and events that Council delivers, has a community impact or generates community interest and/or to assist them in understanding any problems, alternatives and/or solutions.

Consult

To work directly with the community and obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or a decision to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered when making decisions.

Collaborate

A partnering relationship between our community and Council to develop a project or consider advice in making decisions.

Advocate

Supports Council and/or the communities' cause with external groups, agencies and government bodies.

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