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## RYDE CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT ENTERS NEXT STAGE

The New Heart of Ryde is one step closer to completion, with Council's contractor, Nova Civil undertaking site establishment works to prepare for construction of the civic and community hub. The works are expected to take place until 30 May 2023.

At its Council meeting held on 27 September 2022, Council acknowledged the pressures facing the construction industry globally and voted to revise the design to ensure that the project would now be on budget, while still meeting its core aims. Since the inception of the Ryde Central project, construction costs have increased significantly due to a range of factors including higher prices for building materials, skills shortages and rising inflation.

The new design still delivers on the promised multi-purpose community facilities, as well as public meeting rooms, Council offices and chamber facilities, and on-site parking. The New Heart of Ryde also delivers a larger plaza and more open space, while allowing for the realisation of a previously unaffordable dedicated performing arts space at Macquarie Centre. Council remains committed to retaining 100 percent ownership of the site and not reducing essential services or increasing rates to fund the project.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also provided opportunities to reduce office space required for Council staff participating in a hybrid working environment, thus saving more money for ratepayers.

The revised design will go on public exhibition once a development application is lodged for the project.

City of Ryde Chief Executive Officer, Wayne Rylands, said Council's decision to revise the design was made after careful consideration of the needs and concerns of the community. "Through effective value management Council has been able to address significant global challenges that are affecting the construction industry and local government."

"This new design will still allow us to meet the key community requirements that have been promised and bring Council staff back to The New Heart of Ryde while we remain economically sustainable, without burdening our ratepayers or having to reduce any of our services, programs or other projects."

City of Ryde Mayor Cllr Sarkis Yedelian OAM voiced his support for the progression of The New Heart of Ryde.

"This new phase for The New Heart of Ryde project will ensure the sustainable delivery of much-needed community and civic space," he said.

Further information about the project can be found at [www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/rydecentral](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/rydecentral).

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