

Thursday 9 July 2020

COUNCIL INVESTS IN RYDE'S RECOVERY

The City of Ryde has endorsed its 2020/21 Budget and Capital Works Program, which details how Council will take a leading role in the City's economic recovery while maintaining a balanced bottom line.

The budget – referred to as the One Year Operational Plan 2020/21 – outlines a range of key public infrastructure projects Council will undertake over the next 12 months. These include:

- Redeveloping the Ryde Civic Centre site to deliver a four-fold increase in community space
- A new multi-level car park in Rowe Street East in Eastwood
- The missing link of the Ryde River Walk along the Parramatta River foreshore
- A new regional playground with water play elements at Meadowbank Park
- An upgrade of the public domain at Coxs Road in North Ryde
- A new Eastwood to Macquarie Park cycleway
- An upgrade of the town centre at Ryedale Road in West Ryde
- Enhancing library facilities and digital services
- Commencing work on the new Catherine Hamlin Park in Macquarie Park
- Renewing playgrounds at Marjorie and Jennifer Parks, as well as improving accessibility at playgrounds throughout the local government area
- Lighting and infrastructure upgrades, including field renewals, to key sports fields such as ELS Hall Park, Ryde Park, Gannan Park, Westminster Park and Pidding Park
- Brand new amenities buildings at ELS Hall and Meadowbank parks.

Total capital expenditure for 2020/21 is budgeted at \$80.64 million, an increase of almost \$30 million on the previous 12-month period. Council is forecast to maintain a working capital balance of \$4.5 million at the end of 2020/21.

In addition to capital works, Council has also budgeted for significant support to local residents and businesses. Approved Jobseeker and Jobkeeper applicants will be eligible for a \$400 council rate rebate, while eligible pensioners will receive an extra \$150 voluntary pensioner subsidy to supplement the \$250 statutory pensioner subsidy they already receive.

Further, Council will waive more than 40 different fees and charges for the next six months and provide assistance such as rental relief to commercial tenants that have suffered a downturn in trade.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said Council's strong financial position meant it could forge ahead with large projects and not go into deficit despite the serious challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

"This budget is all about supporting job creation, investing in public infrastructure and getting the City of Ryde back on the road to recovery," Cllr Laxale said.

"The projects we have identified in the budget will all go to achieving this, while also providing support to those who need it most, including financial relief for ratepayers and local businesses experiencing financial hardship. By endorsing this budget, Council is not only assisting in Ryde's recovery but also investing in its future."