

2026 guidelines for community identified Placemaking projects in the public space.

Building Communities and Creating Places outlines a plan of action to guide communities and Council in creating vibrant, caring, creative, and sustainable public places across the Waikato District. These guidelines provide the foundation for a positive and proactive approach to placemaking and support collaboration between Council and the community.

What is Community Placemaking?

Community placemaking projects transform public spaces into creative, interactive places that reflect local identity and encourage community connection. These projects take place in public open spaces and involve partnerships between Council and community groups or individuals.

Successful placemaking relies on collaboration, shared responsibility, and open communication. Council's CLD team supports communities by providing guidance, coordination, and advice throughout the project lifecycle.

What is Public Space?

- Public spaces are administered by Council on behalf of the community and include:
- Road reserves
- Reserves and esplanades
- Playgrounds
- Walkways and cycleways
- Community facilities
- Town centres

Projects cannot occur in sensitive areas such as cemeteries, wāhi tapu, or protected historic sites unless explicitly approved by Council.

Creating a Project Plan

It is expected that community groups will lead and deliver the majority of the project, with materials sourced wherever possible using reuse and upcycling principles.

Project Development Steps

1. Identify your project idea and contact a member of the CLD team to discuss and refine it.
2. Form your community group (volunteers) to brainstorm and develop a draft project plan. The CLD team can assist with this process.
3. Prepare a draft project plan with sufficient detail for the CLD team to understand the scope and identify any Council staff support required.
4. Demonstrate how the wider community has been engaged or feedback collected
5. CLD team and Council review
 - You may be asked to present your project to the assigned Council team.
 - The team will provide guidance on any identified issues, such as safety, height restrictions, or location constraints.
 - Consultation with other parties (e.g. the local community board) may be required.

- Health and Safety requirements will be assessed, with CLD team support provided to address any gaps.
6. Final approval
 - CLD team will confirm approval in writing, outlining the agreed project scope and conditions.
 7. Project commencement
 - Once all parties have accepted and signed off on the project scope, work may begin.

What to Include in Your Project Plan

The attached template will assist you in developing your plan. Consider the following:

- Materials (upcycled and/or new)
- Durability and construction methods
- Estimated costs and funding sources
- Ongoing maintenance responsibilities
- Health and safety considerations (for both workers and the public)
- Removal or dismantling (for time-limited projects)
- Visual impact and overall aesthetic
- Community sensitivities
- Location suitability
- Volunteer labour (“worker bees”)
- Weather vulnerability
- Local support or opposition
- How the project reflects and enhances the community
- Accuracy and authenticity of information (for commemorative projects)
- Timeframes and milestones
- Stages of development, if applicable

Moving forward

The Community Led Development Team has been appointed by Council to support and enable community-led initiatives. By considering these guidelines early, projects can be progressed efficiently and established in a timely manner.

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