

## Council Ombudsperson Process

Every month, one Councilmember is assigned to serve as Ombudsperson, responding on behalf of the Council to inquiries directed to the Council via email. The Ombuds schedule is set biannually at the year's first Regular Business meeting in odd years.

Within the [Council Rules of Procedure](#), the following definitions and boundaries are provided around the Ombuds process and Council communications:

**Definition:** An Ombudsperson is an official appointed to investigate individuals' complaints about City services and administration, especially that of public authorities.

**Communications:** No Councilmember shall send correspondence from a City email account that purports to represent the views of the Council, unless the Council has, by majority vote, established the same as the Council's position. Councilmembers may use City email accounts to state the position of the individual Councilmember as long as it is made clear that the position is that of the individual Councilmember and that the Councilmember is not speaking on behalf of the entire Council.

The document below outlines the Council's expectations for how the duties of the Ombudsperson shall be administered and how responses shall be coordinated with the Mayor's Office when messages are addressed to both the Mayor and Council.

### Legislative Coordinator Support

#### General Practice

The Ombudsperson should contact the Legislative Coordinator at the beginning of their month of duty to coordinate assistance with answering messages.

The Legislative Coordinator can:

- Monitor [Council@redmond.gov](mailto:Council@redmond.gov) and [MayorCouncil@redmond.gov](mailto:MayorCouncil@redmond.gov) and route to the appropriate staff, when needed, to gather answers to constituent questions.
- Provide the Ombudsperson with a drafted response when requested.

#### [Council@redmond.gov](mailto:Council@redmond.gov)

The month's Ombudsperson manages messages sent to this inbox.

#### General Practice

1. The Ombudsperson will reply to address the constituent concerns received and cc [Council@redmond.gov](mailto:Council@redmond.gov).
  - a. Event invitations and solicitations do not require an Ombuds response.
  - b. If **all** the Councilmembers are individually addressed on a single email thread, the Ombudsperson should respond.

2. The Ombudsperson will send, at minimum, an acknowledgment of receipt to the constituent within four days (96 hours) using one of the standardized response suggestions at the bottom of this document and cc [Council@redmond.gov](mailto:Council@redmond.gov).

*Emails Addressing a Specific Councilmember*

1. The Ombudsperson will coordinate with the Councilmember on who should respond and cc the Legislative Coordinator.
2. The person who responds should copy [Council@redmond.gov](mailto:Council@redmond.gov)

*Replies Continuing Beyond the Assigned Ombuds Month*

1. To avoid OPMA violations, the Councilmember should remain the point of contact for as long as reasonably manageable.
2. If necessary, the Councilmember can email the Legislative Coordinator to request a formal pass-off to the Mayor's Office.

*Individual Communications and Opinions by Councilmembers*

1. It is the duty of the Ombudsperson to respond on behalf of the Council with information that reflects the Council's position, not personal views.
2. Should the Ombuds or any councilmember wish to share a personal view with a constituent, they may email that constituent directly, provided they clearly state it is a personal opinion.

[MayorCouncil@redmond.gov](mailto:MayorCouncil@redmond.gov)

The Mayor's Office manages messages sent to this inbox.

*General Practice*

1. The Mayor's Office will email a response to the constituent on behalf of the Mayor and Council and will cc [MayorCouncil@redmond.gov](mailto:MayorCouncil@redmond.gov) after appropriate research time.
  - a. If the Mayor and **all** the Councilmembers are individually addressed on a single email thread, the Mayor's Office will respond.
  - b. Should the Ombudsperson choose to reply directly to a constituent email that is ambiguously addressed or addressed to both @Mayor **and** @Council, the Councilmember should cc [MayorCouncil@redmond.gov](mailto:MayorCouncil@redmond.gov) on the reply.

*Emails Addressing Only Council*

1. The Ombudsperson should reply and cc [MayorCouncil@redmond.gov](mailto:MayorCouncil@redmond.gov).

*Emails Addressing a Specific Councilmember and copying MayorCouncil*

1. The Ombudsperson will coordinate with the Councilmember on who should respond and cc the Legislative Coordinator.
2. The responsible party should cc [MayorCouncil@redmond.gov](mailto:MayorCouncil@redmond.gov) on their response to the inquiry.

**Standardized Response Suggestion Guide:**

Situation	Suggested Response
There is not a question to answer in the email.	Thank you for emailing the Redmond City Council. I am responding as Council Ombudsperson for the month of <<Month>> to let you know your message has been received. We appreciate your feedback, which helps us in our ongoing efforts to improve our service to the community.
Research time is needed to provide an answer.	Thank you for emailing the Redmond City Council. I am responding as Council Ombudsperson for the month of <<Month>> to let you know your message has been received. We appreciate your patience as we dedicate the appropriate time to research and respond to your concerns. We will get back to you as soon as possible with an answer to your inquiry.