

We The People

Program 144

Gold Coast Draft City Plan 2015



Gold Coast City Council has released a draft of the new City plan 2015 which claims it will revitalize the Gold Coast. I have taken some time to ask questions and go through some of the documentation and that's no mean feat as it's voluminous. I called the Council's town planning department on a number of occasions and went along to their briefing session at Mudgeeraba and I'm pleased to report that I was treated with courtesy at all times. In general this is in stark contrast to the past where one was made to feel as welcome as a pork chop in a mosque.

In contrast some years ago a new up market estate near Robina Woods Golf Course called the Gallery was developed. This was a carefully planned beautiful estate with an approved Council master plan which specified one home per block. There were many people constructing lovely homes for themselves and their families relying on the master plan and Council for certainty. However what no one knew was that a group of senior town planners in the Council had formed a company and bought a block and gained approval for units by exercising a loophole in the planning laws and knowingly frustrated the approved master plan. The new residents were all aghast and devastated. I will save the rest of the story for another time but needless to say it conclusively revealed corrupt practices at a high level in Council which at the time remained brutally silent. In the end Andromeda Parade amenity in the Gallery at Robina was ruined by unit development, congested streets and inadequate parking. It was unfair and morally reprehensible. This is just one reason it's difficult to trust town planning and the Council in general.

Now back to the new draft plan for the Gold Coast. There is an array of information on the internet and it takes a lot of reading but it is a good reference. The Council will now accept submissions on any matter until August 20 and I suggest you to take a keen interest. I encourage you to research your property and its land use zoning and what changes if any, have occurred. Read about the philosophy of the plan and read the various statements made by Mayor Tate and others. I find some of the activity and statements made by the mayor difficult to follow at times and perhaps conflict with previous utterings. He has the figurehead leadership role and so what Tom Tate says potentially impacts our future and quality of life but perhaps not always beneficially for we the people. I don't think the mayor has always done a good job when it comes to listening to the people and that's not hard to demonstrate. So in this context let's take a look at a few matters just to test the veracity of what is said and what is asked for. It begs the question, can we trust them.

On the current rates notice it says.....**"Council is committed to delivering the services you expect at a price all rate payers can afford"**.....really.....the current rating system is divisive and completely unfair with people paying vastly different rates for exactly the same services. Further, Council has now budgeted \$2.8 million toward the management of the cruise liner terminal after telling us it won't cost the rate payers anything, The mayor had an electoral platform of reducing debt but his own departments costs have skyrocketed and now the Council is borrowing another 45 million dollars. On top of this the bureaucracy wants another \$190 million more for their failed IT system and that's madness. The Mayor wants another \$241,000 dollars to rejoin the Council of Mayors group when previously he said it was a just a waste of his time and he would rather save the money. The previous Mayor Ron Clark says, in Tom Tate's election campaign he promised to reduce the bloated administration by at least 20% in the first year. Let's not forget the \$500,000 red dot or the signature policy of turning left on a red light. So as we build a picture of the Council leaders and administration, it looks like a spendathon to me using rate payer's money and so the debt just keeps rising along with thought bubbles and endless clichés. In my view this is the **Council of Clichés** because it's not the Council of Courage and Transparency.

While the new City Plan has merit it is based on the dubious assertion that more growth, more population and more debt is good. There are many intelligent minds now around the world who challenge this notion and that the exponential free enterprise approach to building cities makes us slaves to power, to banks and to egos. The Gold Coast needs consolidation and not unbridled growth. It needs harmony and not social decay. It needs a careful compassionate hand and to treat the residents with kindness and respect and not trickery and deceit. Sure Council will gain more ratable properties but the extra revenue will not even come close to dealing with the extra costs and trouble in paradise. This is the weakness in the new City plan which asserts all growth is good. Now that's just another cliché without proof, substance, benefit or logic. **Until next time this is Kent Bayley**