Working for our future – today

Best Practice Research Report

"Our Land Use Future"

Gold Coast City Council

"Our Land Use Future"

Best Practice Research Report

prepared by

Strategic & Environment Planning & Policy Branch

Planning Environment & Transport Directorate

for the

Bold Future Advisory Committee

Disclaimer:
This report was prepared for the use of the Bold Future Advisory Committee (BFAC) only, no guarantee is given as to its suitability for any other purpose. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the views of Gold Coast City Council

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The best practice research reports are intended to act as literature reviews/ discussion papers that provide sufficient relevant background information to the Bold Future Advisory Committee (BFAC) to enable an informed discussion about the future of the Gold Coast.

Each report has a specific theme focus and will address key issues and subjects relevant to the theme. Wherever possible the specific relationship of each issue to the Gold Coast will be identified.

These reports will also present a number of best practice examples of organisational response to the issues identified in the report. These best practice examples are intended to inform the discussion and guide the committees recommendations with respect to each theme.

Conceptually the role of these reports could be represented as a pyramid. They provide a base of background information on a suite of topics relevant to the theme. On top of this sits a number of best practice examples to characterise possible responses. These examples then support a number of recommendations for the committee to consider and refer to council where appropriate.

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Prepared By:

Christopher Wake
Senior Project Officer – Research and Analysis
Gold Coast City Council

Kim Campbell
Coordinator Regional Planning and Urban Design
Gold Coast City Council

Reviewed By:

Sharon Boyle
Principal Planner
Parsons Brinckerhoff

Dr Darryl Low Choy
Associate Professor
Urban Research Program
School of the Environment, Griffith University

Distributed to the Bold Future Advisory Committee Members:

Mr Jim McKnoulty (Chair)
Professor Paul Burton
Ms Courtenay Cameron
Ms Deb Daly
Mr John Howe
Mr Michael Kerry
Mr Barry Lee
Dr Sally MacKinnon
Ms Stephanie Toft
Ms Kerrie Young
Ms Margaret Spriggs

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1 INTRODUCTION

"We yearn for real communities, for places to live and work that are worthy of our affection."

Source: James Howard Kunstler

Worldwide, cities and towns are facing problems of growing vehicle use, suburban sprawl, loss of landscapes and ecosystems and rising social inequities resulting from population growth and development.

In Australia, and Queensland in particular, the sea change phenomena describes the explosion of population growth occurring along the coast with consequential impact on coastal communities. This impact is heightened in coastal South East Queensland (SEQ) which is experiencing population growth of more than 1500 new residents a week.

However, experts suggest that Gold Coast, like other cities in Australia and overseas, has reached a turning point. The land-consuming development sprawl of the past cannot be sustained and change of some form is essential. The release of the SEQ Regional Plan which created a consensus on directing urban growth and protecting significant regional landscape and productive rural areas, sets out a way forward.

One of the emerging issues for the future is climate change. Along with various influences on liveability, access to quality public transport infrastructure and services – cutting down greenhouse gases by reducing private car use - is among the key drivers of managing urban development into the future.

The Gold Coast has experience in managing the impacts of population growth through land use and infrastructure planning. The city's diverse housing and experience with mixed use and higher density residential development, including tall buildings along parts of the coastline, provide a strong foundation for the future.

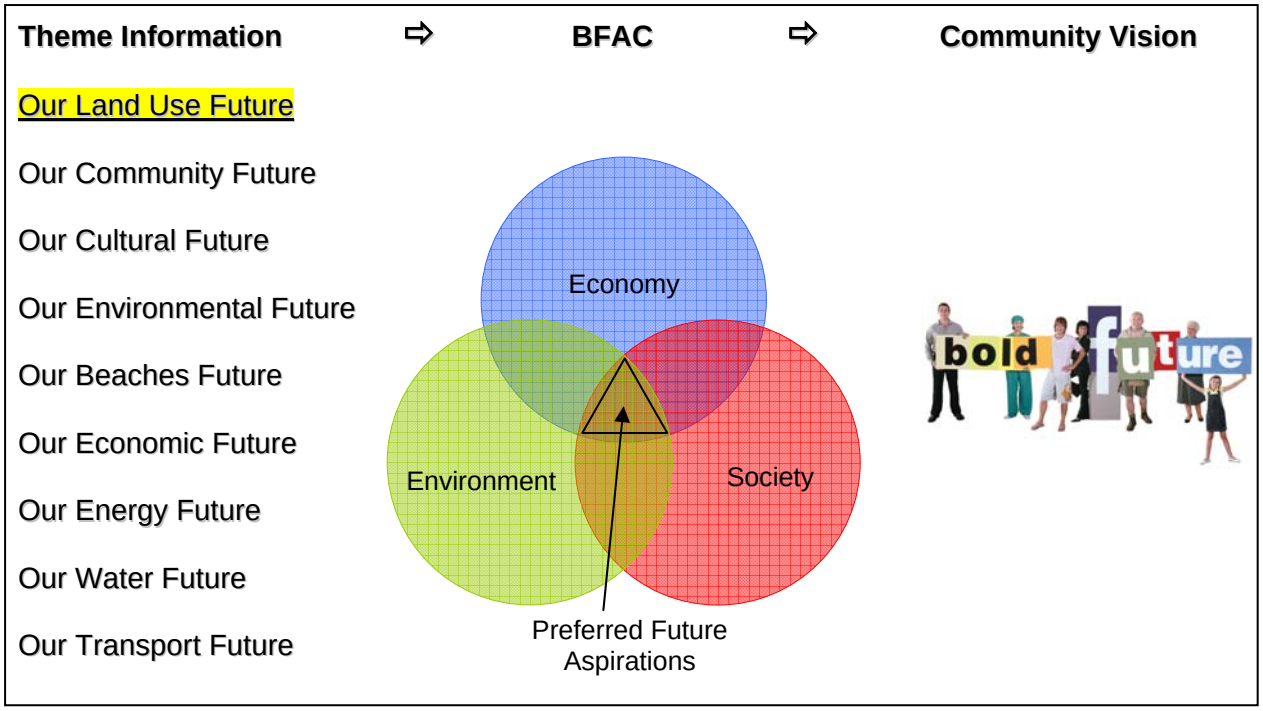

Figure 1: Conceptual model showing key themes considered by the Bold Future Advisory Committee (BFAC).

Land is the primary resource underpinning the local environment, society and the economy and has the ability to influence all of the other Bold Future themes. The following report will provide an overview of the current context and local situation with respect to land use before going on to address the key aspects of land use in terms of its environmental, economic and social implications.

The structure of this report is as follows.

Section 2, provides background to land use planning on the Gold Coast. It outlines existing and preferred land use pattern, and major documents guiding land use planning.

Section 3, discusses key environmental, economic, and social issues and challenges associated with land use planning.

Section 4, provides examples of known best practice in land use planning.

Section 5, draws conclusions.

Section 6, provides a list of references.

Appendix A provides a detailed overview of major land use planning documents.

2 LAND USE CONTEXT

2.1 Land use planning

Planning and management of land use on Gold Coast is governed by a number of statutory plans and strategy documents. A brief outline of key land use planning documents is provided below. Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between these documents. A more detailed overview of land use planning documents is provided in Appendix A.

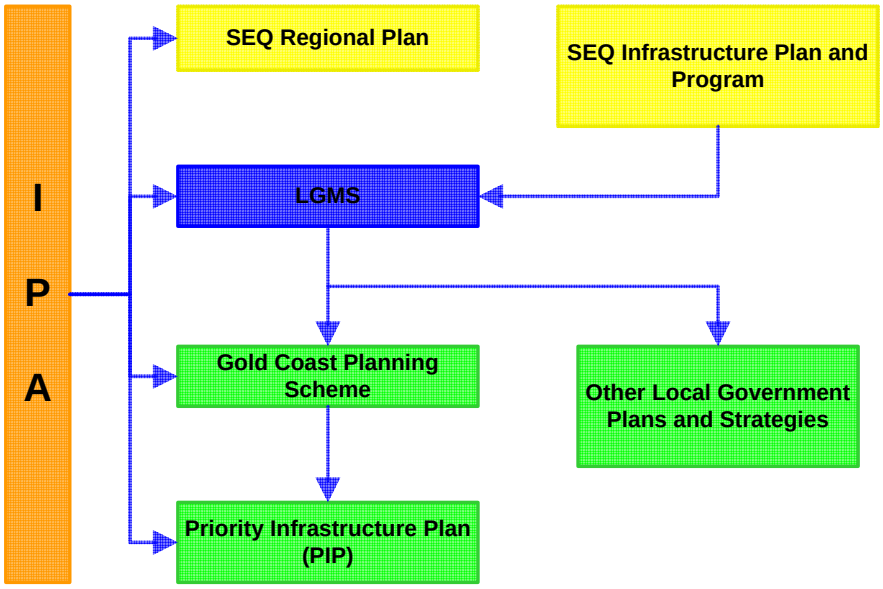

Figure 2: Key land use planning documents
Source: Office of Urban Management, Queensland Government, 2006

Integrated Planning Act 1997 (IPA)
The Integrated Planning Act 1997 (Qld) (IPA) forms the foundation of Queensland's planning and development assessment legislation. The purpose of IPA is to balance community well-being, economic development and the protection of the natural environment by providing a framework for managing growth and change within the State.

South East Queensland Regional Plan (the Regional Plan)
The South East Queensland Regional Plan (the Regional Plan) is a statutory document that establishes a sustainable growth management strategy for the SEQ to the year 2026. The Regional Plan promotes a compact form of urban development with clearly defined boundaries to urban growth (the Urban Footprint). This strategy requires achieving an efficient use of land and greater integration of land use and transport. The State Government recently commenced a review of the Regional Plan including development of the SEQ Regional Plan 2009-2031 due to be completed for release in July 2009.

Local Growth Management Strategy (LGMS)
The purpose of the Local Growth Management Strategy (LGMS) is to provide detailed local guidance on the preferred land use pattern, nature and timing of development within the Gold Coast Urban Footprint, consistent with the policies of the Regional Plan.

Our Living City Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme)
Our Living City - Gold Coast Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme) has been prepared under the provisions of the IPA.

The Planning Scheme manages land use and regulates development through establishing:

- strategic policies such as Desired Environmental Outcomes that underpin the formulation of the scheme, and
- regulatory provisions such as place codes (Local Area Plans and Domains), specific development codes, constraints codes and other criteria for development assessment.

An important feedback mechanism associated with the Planning Scheme is the *Our Living City Report*. This report provides an assessment of progress towards the sustainability objectives identified by Council through the Planning Scheme and the Corporate Plan.

Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP)
The purpose of the Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP) is to define the scale, type, timing and location of growth in the Gold Coast in order to plan future trunk infrastructure and to determine the charges required to fund it in a timely fashion. Infrastructure Planning is recognised as an important part of land use planning, and has a major influence on creating sustainable communities.

In summary, the documents outlined above provide key planning principles and guidance for planning and management of land use on Gold Coast for the short to medium term, to the year 2026. Amendment processes allowed under the legislation, afford a scope for review of these key guiding principles in line with emerging best practice.

2.2 Existing land use pattern

The Gold Coast has a distinctive urban form without a single central and dominant urban centre. It is a strongly linear city, with a close alignment to over 50 kilometres of coastline, the Pacific Highway and the Hinterland mountain ranges. The city's unique natural character and scenic amenity is afforded by kilometres of continuous spectacular beaches set against the backdrop of the Hinterland mountain ranges.

Less than 35 percent of the city is defined as urban, with urban areas including a combination of higher density residential and tourism accommodation along the coastline and predominantly low-density detached housing elsewhere across the city; industrial areas; a number of commercial activity centres and developing knowledge precincts.

Non-urban resources include World Heritage National Parks, state forests, and extractive resources, areas of agriculture, wetlands and waterways.

The existing transportation system on the Gold Coast is characterised by large distances and limited connectivity between residential and employment areas, low frequency and connectivity of public transport services, and, as a consequence, predominant reliance on private vehicles as means of transportation.

2.3 Preferred land use pattern

The Gold Coast LGMS outlines the preferred land use structure for the city based on the policy direction of the Regional Plan. The key features of the future land use structure (Figure 3) include:

- a clearly defined network of activity centres and employment areas, with the focus on opportunities for learning, innovation, collaboration and creativity.

- integration of land use and transport systems, including the construction of a rapid transit system along the high-density coastal spine and potential future extensions to

this network, the extension of the passenger rail line south from Robina to Gold Coast Airport, enhanced local and feeder bus services integrated with other transport modes, an expanded and upgraded arterial road network, a possible water-based transport system of ferries, and purpose built pedestrian and cycle paths within activity centres linking to the urban open space network

- a broad range of housing stock including higher density and mixed-use development within Regional Activity Centres and along major transport corridors, as well as areas of lower density and detached housing.

- key biodiversity corridors protected within the Urban Footprint which form part of the city's urban open space network.

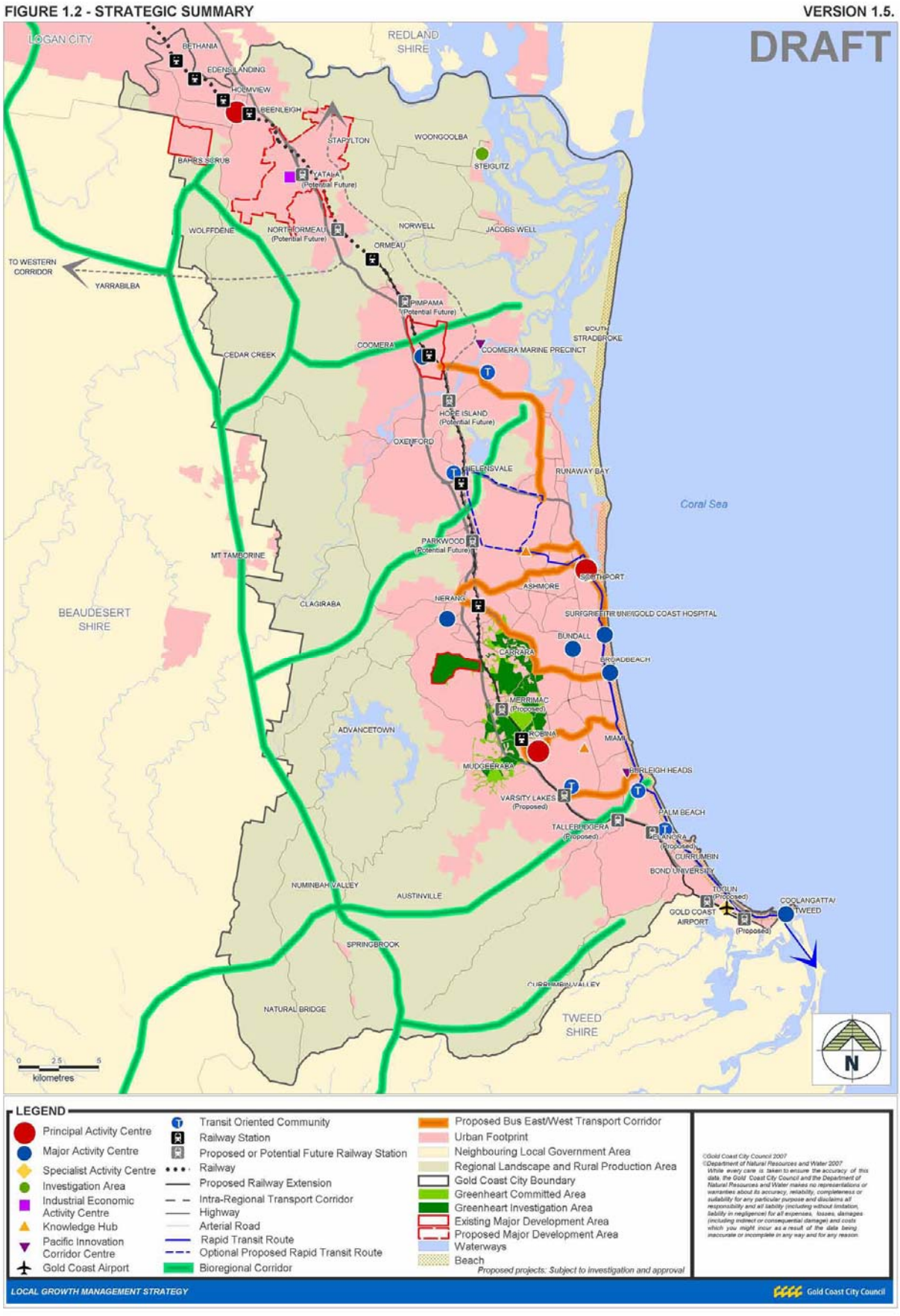

Figure 3: Preferred Land Use pattern

3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF LAND USE

3.1 Key issues and challenges

3.1.1 Nature conservation network

The city of Gold Coast is an area of high biodiversity value, containing approximately one third of all regional ecosystem types currently identified in the SEQ bioregion within only 2.2% of the region's area. Currently, just under a half of the city area (63,910 hectares) is covered by native vegetation, of which 8,697 hectares (14%) occurs within the Urban Footprint.

The most immediate pressure on the natural environment is the conversion of land from its natural state for urban purposes, such as housing and infrastructure.

Some of the city's most important natural assets are already protected from development due to their status as Natural Parks, Conservation Areas (i.e. South Stradbroke Island) and World Heritage Areas.

However, some of the city's significant ecosystems are primarily located within the Urban Footprint (e.g. endangered Blackbutt ecosystems). Urban Footprint remnant vegetation also provides major east-west linkages (wildlife corridors) between the large habitat systems of the hinterland and coast and thereby helps maintain viability of the entire system. One of the most significant impacts of urban development is the fragmentation of the natural habitat that affects the ecological viability and health of natural areas. Protection and restoration of an ecologically viable network of habitats and corridors in the Urban Footprint is critical for the biodiversity of the city and the South East Queensland region.

Figure 4 shows the identified ecological corridors for Gold Coast City based on the Environmental Protection Agency's bioregional corridors (State) and the Gold Coast City Council Conservation Strategy Plan (Regional and Local). These corridors represent the key linkages for wildlife within the city.

Inside the Urban Footprint, where development pressure is considerable, biodiversity areas need to be precisely mapped in order to justify strong provisions to protect them. Biodiversity network mapping also needs to consider the habitat requirements of high mobility fauna, as well as identify synergies with other planning constraints such as bushfire, steep slopes and scenic amenity.

Protecting urban biodiversity and habitat networks is an urgent issue due to the fast pace of development within the city. Assessments of vegetation loss indicated that from 2001 to 2005, 923 hectares of vegetation across the city were cleared, of which 774 hectares were cleared within the Urban Footprint.

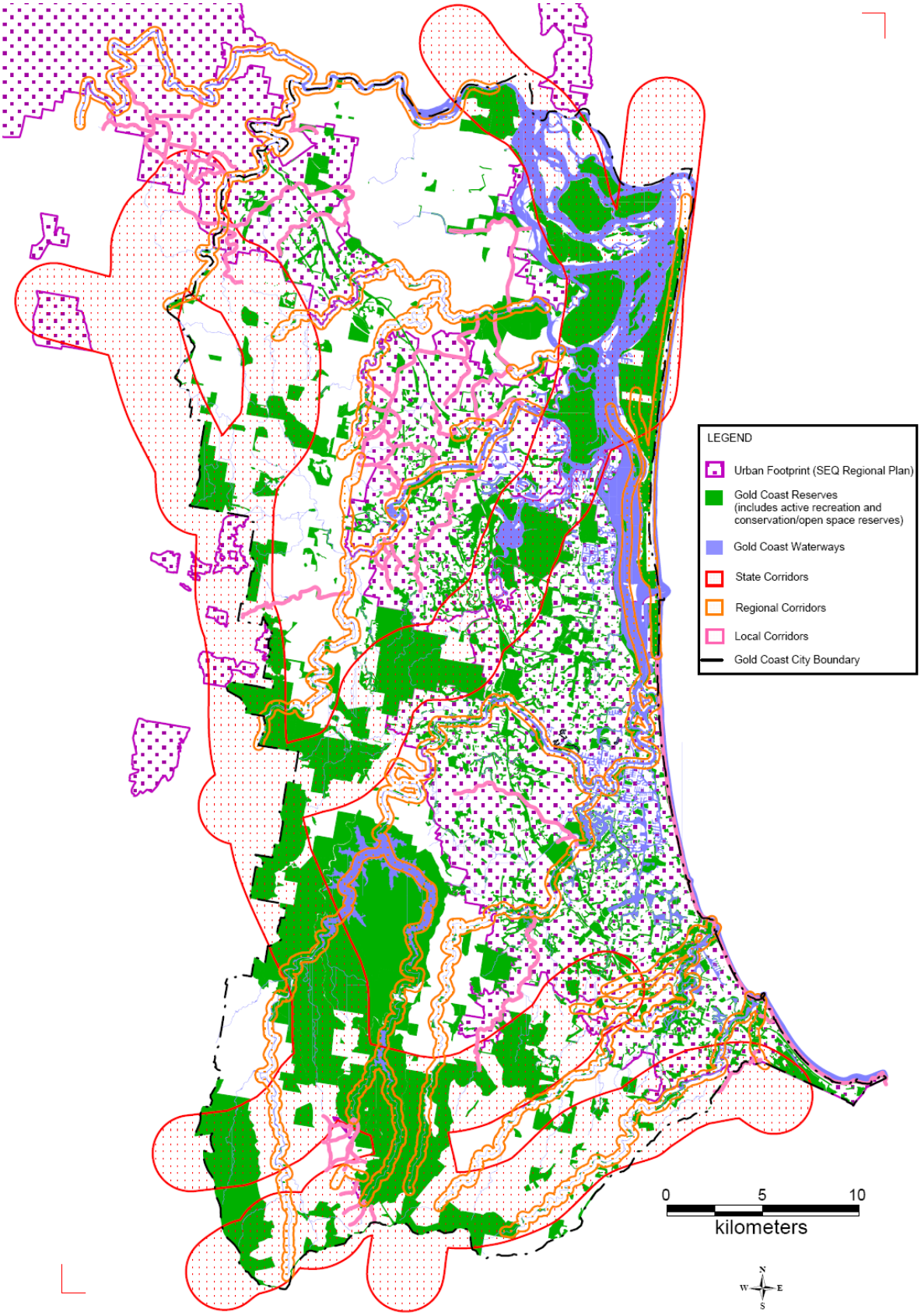

Figure 4: Ecological Corridors

3.1.2 Catchment, waterways and water cycle management

The Gold Coast region is blessed with stunning beaches, extensive estuaries and other tidal wetlands, huge sand islands, and many kilometres of freshwater streams, which often meander through urban areas. Some of these areas, such as coastal wetlands are recognised as being of international ecological significance (RAMSAR convention on wetlands).

Significant pressure is being placed on these natural waterways through rapid population growth and associated land use changes. Urbanisation can have significant detrimental impacts through changes to the natural hydrology of local catchments and through increasing levels of pollution to local streams as a result of urban runoff.

Traditional water cycle management has generally followed the principle of efficiently moving water, including stormwater and wastewater, away from urban areas directly to receiving waters including freshwater, estuarine and marine environments. Generally this involved little or no treatment or detention, resulting in significant impacts on the health of receiving environments as a result of the changes to the character of runoff and discharges in volume, velocity, physical and chemical properties.

With increasing development pressure and population growth in the city, continued implementation of traditional urban water systems will result in increased pressure on natural water systems and degradation to Gold Coast waterways and beaches. Compounding these issues are drought conditions which have created issues in the delivery and assurance of a sustainable water supply.

Over the last decade, there have been an increasing number of initiatives to manage the urban water cycle in a more sustainable way. These initiatives are underpinned by sustainability principles of water conservation, waste minimisation and environmental protection. Integration of urban water cycle management with urban planning and design is known as Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD). WSUD is a holistic approach to the planning and design of urban development that aims to minimise negative impacts on the natural water cycle and protect the health of aquatic ecosystems. It promotes the integration of stormwater, water supply and wastewater management at the development scale. Figure 5 shows how WSUD integrates the elements of the urban water cycle with both the urban design and built form components of land developments. To this end, WSUD requires careful consideration of the urban water cycle at the land use planning stage to ensure all possible opportunities for application of best practice water cycle management solutions can be realised.

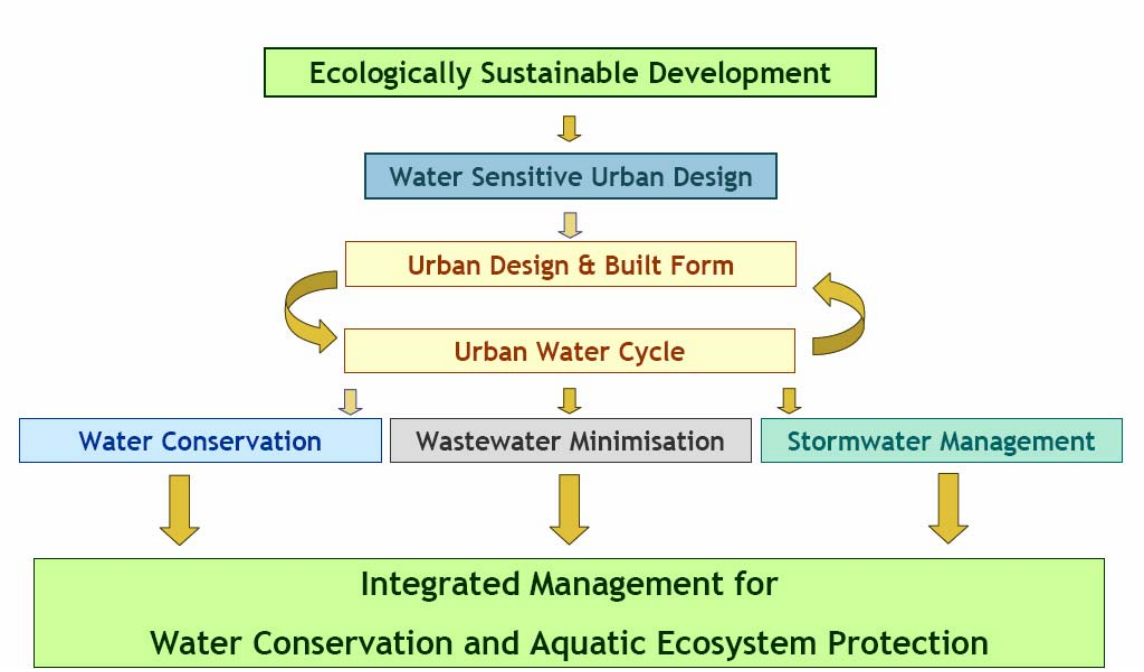

Figure 5: Water Sensitive Urban Design process
Source: Adapted from Ecological Engineering 2003 in Engineers Australia 2006 cited in GCCC, 2007

3.1.3 Urban open space

Urban open space is part of the regional landscape and as such represents an important element of the natural environment within the urban setting. Urban open space may provide for a range of values, including water quality, nature conservation, scenic amenity, ecosystem services, landscape heritage and outdoor recreation.

Population growth and associated urban development is placing increased demand on the availability and sustainability of urban open space. Urban open space planning brings with it the opportunity to integrate high quality, well-designed public and private open space into new urban developments and re-development sites and make strong connections to the regional open space network within and outside the Urban Footprint.

Expansion and enhancement of foreshore parkland as key outdoor recreational infrastructure for Gold Coast residents, tourists and visitors from other parts of SEQ will maintain and improve the quality of the recreational experience and better protect foreshore areas from erosion caused by major cyclone, flooding and storm surge events.

3.1.4 Scenic amenity

One of the less tangible environmental resources is scenic amenity. The scenic amenity of the Gold Coast is one of the city's greatest assets. It contributes significantly to economic drivers of the city such as tourism and it plays an important role in the lifestyles, overall quality of life and spiritual well being of residents. It is considered that the Gold Coast is one of Australia's most popular tourist destinations "with most visitors choosing it as a destination largely to enjoy its scenic amenity, in particular, the beaches and waterways" (Gold Coast Waterways Management Group, 2002, reported in Our Environment, Bold Future report, 2008, p.24).

The Gold Coast's scenic amenity is largely associated with its special landscape character and open spaces, ranging from the continuous beaches, coastal plains, rivers and canals to

the world heritage uplands and subtropical rainforests, its significant visual landscape features, and important view corridors.

Scenic amenity is an important factor that needs to be considered when deciding the best use of land and the nature of development. It is also one of the factors that has historically been given a lower priority in decision-making.

3.1.5 Natural hazards management

Various parts of the Gold Coast City area are at risk from natural hazards such as flood and storm tides, bushfires and landslides. Land use planning has a significant role to play in the mitigation of risks associated with these natural hazards. It ensures new development minimises the risk to people and property and mitigates the cost of recovering from natural disasters.

Flooding
Population growth, lifestyle changes and increased economic activity are generating pressures for development in areas prone to natural hazards, in particular along the coast and waterways. Further development in these areas exposes the community to the risk of flood and storm tide events.

At present, Gold Coast City Council has different methodologies for identifying flood hazard management areas for different catchments within the city. The SEQ Regional plan looks toward having a consistent approach for the region not only individual catchments.

New development often involves changes in topography that have influence on the movement of floodwaters throughout the city. Council has a series of hydraulic models that route floodwaters through the city to determine flood plain planning levels. Update of Councils models is continuously required to incorporate these changes and ensure appropriate information on which to base decisions.

Landslip and bushfire
In general, development in the hinterland areas of the Gold Coast is exposed to some degree of landslide and bushfire risk.

The risk posed by landslide is assessed for a 1 in 100 rainfall event. Significant risk is posed to people living on slopes >25°. Areas with unstable soil types will be more susceptible to landslides. Significant blockage and/or destruction of roads can be expected.

The major threats of bushfires are in the rural and rural fringe areas, including rural villages such as Springbrook.

Council's Bushfire Management Strategy outlines a range of measures to reduce the risk of severe fires to life and property. It also examines the impact of fire on biodiversity and recommends design, construction and management measures to reduce the existing potential fire hazard for bushland areas.

The Planning Scheme aims to ensure that with the growing population, future urban development planning will be done in such a way that when natural disasters occur, they will be manageable and the loss of life and property will be minimised. Guidelines for Control of Slope Instability within the city of Gold Coast were developed by Council to encourage good hillside practice to be included in building design. The Planning Scheme also provides hazard-rating information on development on steep slopes and unstable soils.

3.1.6 Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Climate change has been identified as having a definite effect upon community safety on the Gold Coast in future years. Major effects of climate change will be associated with sea-level rise and an increase in storm-surge hazards and possible changes in the frequency and/or intensity of extreme events, such as bush fires.

Current coastal management and planning frameworks may not take account of the vulnerability of key systems (i.e. location of development and infrastructure, water and power supply) to changes in climate and sea level or long lead times for implementation of many adaptation measures. Ensuring that the city is able to mitigate and adapt to these effects of the climate change is becoming an important part of land use planning.

A report produced by the Intergovernmental Program for Climate Change (IPCC, "Climate Change 2007 – Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability", 2007) argued that most promising approaches to mitigation of and adaptation to climate change are those that capitalise on natural synergies between climate protection and development priorities to simultaneously advance both objectives. Many of these synergies are in energy demand (e.g., efficiency of land use) and some in energy supply (e.g. renewable options). To this effect, the report referred to a direct relationship between the strategies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change and achieving sustainable development.

Greenhouse gas emissions are considered main contributors to climate change. Currently, the Gold Coast City's dispersed settlement pattern and limited public transport hinder the opportunities for a significant citywide reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the majority of existing buildings are not designed to the highest energy ratings and current planning frameworks are not necessarily supportive of green building practices and behaviours.

Achieving an efficient settlement pattern and built form, reducing the overall energy consumption and greenhouse gases emissions are essential steps in the process of mitigation of climate change.

As stated in the IPCC report: "*Climate outcomes are influenced not only by climate specific policies but also by the mix of development choices made and the development paths that these policies lead to. The choice of development policies can, therefore, be as consequential to future climate stabilization as the choice of climate-specific policies"* (p.17).

4 ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF LAND USE

4.1 Key issues and challenges

4.1.1 Location of employment

Gold Coast does not have a single central and dominant commercial centre. Much of the city's economic activity occurs in various nodes of commercial or industrial activity.

Consolidation of business activity, predominantly into activity centres and activity clusters, will help facilitate a more efficient urban form that maximises benefits for the community, economy and the environment. The further strengthening of a citywide framework of centres will enable commercial and employment-generating development to occur in a logical and planned fashion providing economic and social benefits to residents.

Activity clusters are concentrations of specialised businesses that are largely production-based and located to meet business sector requirements, such as the Marine Precinct. These clusters contain a group of activities that functionally support each other and benefit from co-location, interactivity linkages and collaboration in marketing, research, product development and delivery. They are integrated mixed-use business areas with a need for supporting community facilities (e.g. open space) that make them attractive places in which to work.

Significant falls in the unemployment rates in the city over recent years, whilst following national trends also suggest that activity centres and clusters are working as an economic development concept for the Gold Coast.

The GCCC has identified nine key industries to support economic growth, growth in prosperity and employment, increasing global competitiveness and the overall performance and quality of the city. These industries are:

- Creative
- Education
- Environment
- Food
- Health and medical
- Information and communications technology
- Marine
- Sport
- Tourism

In addition, the Pacific Innovation Corridor encapsulates several key projects designed to transform Gold Coast City into a globally connected innovation, technology and knowledge "hotspot". Such diversification of the City's economy is critical given the existing over reliance on tourism, construction and service industries.

All PIC projects focus on promoting the clustering of related industry sectors in the following geographical business precincts including; Beenleigh, Yatala, Coomera, Oxenford, Southport, Surfers Paradise, Nerang, Robina, Burleigh and Coolangatta (Figure 6). As well as this PIC projects support the city's global competitiveness through the capacity of telecommunications infrastructure and in the uptake and adoption of resulting technologies.

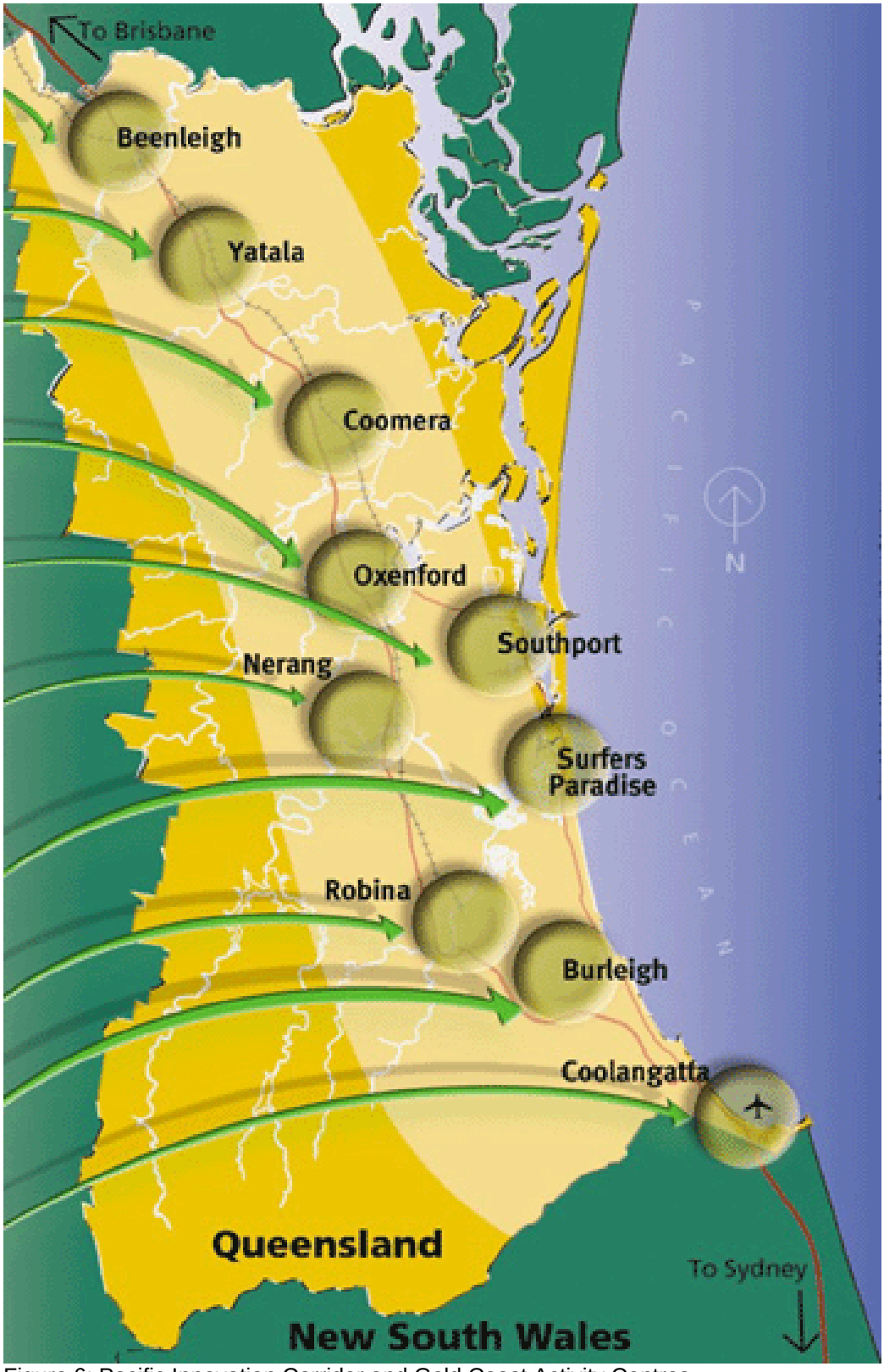

Figure 6: Pacific Innovation Corridor and Gold Coast Activity Centres

GCCC supports the SEQ regional activity centres network. Gold Coast City pro-actively supports three principal activity centres as outlined in the SEQ Plan, these are Beenleigh / Yatala, Robina and Southport. These are supported through the current PIC program.

The future of activity centres within the city will be driven by a number of factors including the availability of relatively cheap sources of transportation fuel, the finite volume of suitable residential land, demographic and population trends, increasing community desire for convenience and global and regional environmental concerns.

Given the development pressures affecting the Gold Coast, there is a need to ensure protection of key areas of land such as the Griffith University Knowledge Precinct land in Southport as these areas provide unique opportunities to address complementary aspects of knowledge based workers and employment. This will ultimately help to ensure the long term suitability of employment provision and growth - skills and well as labour pool. These sorts of examples further illustrate the critical need to assess future land use with economic (as well as environmental/social) outcomes to create balance and maximise potential economic value from land use.

Integration of business and residents

The integration of business and residents will enhance employment and investment opportunities. The majority of employment within the city is concentrated in activity centres and activity clusters with workers commuting from predominantly residential areas. The benefits of greater integration between business and residents include a reduction in commuter trips and distances travelled, social and economic advantages in working from home, strengthening the immediate catchment base for business centres, facilitating more vibrant public areas within centres, and safer streets resulting from increased surveillance, particularly after business hours.

The LGMS aims to increase self-containment of employment through higher density residential development within Regional Activity Centres.

4.1.2 Supply of industrial land

Identifying, protecting and developing appropriate sites for industrial and economic use is essential for the continued economic growth across the Gold Coast. There is an emerging imbalance of small lot industrial opportunities across the city as industrial land supply is fully taken up in central and southern areas. This can only be partly addressed at Yatala. Additional land/opportunities will be required for service industries to support population growth across the city, located in proximity to population centres. A key outcome for Yatala is the need for retention of larger industrial lots from both a city and regional context. Key implications are the need to review land supply and infrastructure provision to support future employment in key economic sectors.

Availability of land for tourism development, particularly large-scale development such as theme parks, resorts and other attractions, is important for the continued growth and prosperity of the tourism industry on the Gold Coast. An analysis of suitable sites for future large-scale tourism developments will be undertaken as part of the Gold Coast Regional Tourism Infrastructure and Investment Plan. The outcomes of this analysis will inform the planning requirements to ensure that the tourism industry remains a sustainable industry in the city.

4.1.3 Infrastructure provision

Efficient and effective infrastructure underpins economic activity and is fundamental to a prosperous local economy. It includes 'physical infrastructure' (e.g. roads, rails, seaports and airports) and quality 'community infrastructure' (e.g. recreation, leisure, cultural and community services and facilities). Together these types of infrastructure should offer good physical and functional links that support social, cultural and economic activity of the Gold Coast.

Infrastructure was recently identified as a key factor in the development of the city. There is a need to focus on bringing forward infrastructure plans to meet the growing demands associated with the attraction of new business and business relocation to the city. Telecommunications and transport systems are identified as key factors for consideration.

5 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF LAND USE

5.1 Key issues and challenges

5.1.1 Housing choice and affordability

As the population of the Gold Coast continues to grow, demand for additional housing will also grow. However, the challenge in addressing future housing demand goes beyond just meeting targets for dwelling numbers, and requires careful consideration of appropriate dwelling types to meet the needs of a changing population.

Some specific issues associated with housing availability on the Gold Coast include:

- the requirement to double existing housing supply by 2031
- a lack of diversity in household types which detracts from much of the character of localities
- difficulty for low to moderate income households to locate in areas with good access to services such as schools, child care, medical and public transport services
- reduced accommodation opportunities for tourism and hospitality workers, and other service workers, who are forced further afield and may be less able to travel to employment.
- a mismatch in dwelling stock to housing need which shows in oversupply of 3-4 bedroom dwellings and undersupply of 1-2 bedroom dwellings (of approximately 28,000)

Some of the strategies to ensure housing choice and affordability are listed below.

Housing choice
One means of addressing housing need is by providing a more diverse range of dwelling types in new development. The focus of this measure on the Gold Coast would be on reducing the proportion of larger separate houses in favour of smaller semi-detached dwellings or flats, units and apartments.

Consolidation
In addition to increasing housing choice for smaller households, consolidation of urban development through increased density also offers a range of indirect benefits to the community by providing efficiencies in the provision and utilisation of infrastructure, and by making more efficient use of diminishing land resources. The majority of new housing on the Gold Coast, therefore, is planned to be located at Principal and Major Activity Centres in areas well supplied with high quality transit opportunities, access to employment and community services.

Affordability
Mechanisms that would assist with sustaining and increasing the supply of affordable housing include: encouraging all major new development and redevelopment to incorporate affordable housing, such as housing for the entry-level buyer and low-income housing markets; and retaining existing affordable housing options (i.e. boarding houses, caravan parks) through planning mechanisms.

5.1.2 Transport and accessibility

Transport is a key factor in the liveability of a city affecting the experience of residents, businesses and visitors. High quality transport systems enable people and goods to be moved around the city efficiently and safely with convenience, choice and affordability.

A more compact pattern of development integrated with a significantly improved public transport system and improved network of walking and cycling opportunities are required to resolve the transport issues for the Gold Coast.
Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) are widely viewed as an effective tool for curbing sprawl and the car dependence it produces, creating more walkable, mixed-use centres with good transit connectivity.

TOD principles represent a move towards best practice in sustainable land use planning and a superior urban design outcome. Principles for quality TODs include:

- mixed-use development
- encouraging higher density
- high standards of urban design
- walkability
- pedestrian/cycle friendly
- set on major public transport node with high frequency public transport services
- local traffic management and parking strategies
- self-contained with good access to local goods and services, and
- access to neighbouring destinations.

5.1.3 Location of social infrastructure

Sustainable communities must be supported by easily accessible community services, such as education, health and emergency services. Activity centres and TODs provide key opportunities for effective provision of community facilities and delivery of human services to the catchment's population, with potentially all daily needs provided within a walking distance of most residents.

5.1.4 Lifestyle and liveability qualities

Lifestyle qualities, such as natural environment, landscape and scenic amenity, have been identified as primary drivers for the on-going population growth on the Gold Coast. An increasing rate of development may threaten those primary lifestyle qualities to the detriment of economic prosperity and ultimately overall sustainability of the City.

Lifestyle qualities need to be included as primary values within the existing and future planning frameworks for the City. Implementation of such planning principles as high quality Urban Design, would assist in safeguarding the lifestyle and liveability qualities of the Gold Coast.

6 BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The following best practice examples highlight practical options and resources to assist the Gold Coast City Council to further its current efforts in addressing key issues and challenges associated with land use planning.

6.1 Environmental aspects of land use

Table 1: Best practice examples: environmental aspects of land use

Environmental Offsets	Lessons and Opportunities for the Gold Coast
The increased need for housing and infrastructure to support development can often conflict with retention of natural areas as some impacts of development are unavoidable. In these cases environmental offsets can be used to mitigate the damage. An environmental offset is an action taken to compensate for a negative environmental impact that might result from an approved activity or a development. Examples of the type of offsets used in Queensland include: **Offset for clearing of vegetation** The developer may undertake land management actions, such as rehabilitation, that satisfy the State's requirements to improve non-remnant vegetation. This would be complemented by protection of the rehabilitated land under a binding agreement, to prevent future clearing. **Offset for loss of marine fish habitat** The developer could balance a proposed loss of fish habitat (e.g. from clearing of mangroves) through actions such as rehabilitation of another site to return fish habitat and fisheries values. The rehabilitation site would need to contain degraded (mangrove) fish habitat; be of equivalent or greater area than the impact site; and be located near the impact site. The rehabilitation project could involve removal of an artificial embankment and restoration of tidal flushing to the site to allow natural colonisation of mangroves. **Offset for loss of koala habitat** The developer could replant a cleared area between two vegetated blocks of land to further enhance koala habitat by providing a strategic corridor. Such planting would enable koalas to access larger areas of connected habitat and thus aid their movement through the landscape. This would need to be at a location near the site of impact.	Offsets (when properly implemented) can allow a compromise between outcomes (e.g. development vs conservation), and in some cases they can even result in a net gain of environmental, social and/or economic value. Offsets should generally be applied in a triage approach of: ▪ avoid adverse impacts ▪ minimise impacts by careful planning, design and management ▪ if damage must occur, then it must be offset. Gold Coast City Council has been working to identify priority offset areas within the city. State and Commonwealth Government agencies have/are also developing offset strategies/policy and there may be opportunities to build synergies between the levels of Government if an agreed priority approach to offsets can be formulated.

Noosa Biosphere Reserve http://www.noosa.qld.gov.au/noosabiosphereserve/index.shtml	Lessons and Opportunities for the Gold Coast
In 2007, Noosa was awarded as status of a Biosphere Reserve within the framework of UNESCO's Program on Man and the Biosphere (MaB). Biosphere Reserves are established to promote and demonstrate a balanced relationship between humans and the Biosphere. The biosphere reserve concept can be used as a framework to guide and reinforce projects targeted at achieving environmental sustainability. UNESCO recognition can serve to highlight and reward such individual efforts. The Noosa Biosphere Reserve is the first in Queensland. The program is managed by six Community Boards, addressing the following themes: Cultural, Economic, Environmental, Social, Education, research and development, and Noosa tourism.	Similarly to Noosa, Gold Coast contains a great variety of unique landscapes and ecosystems that are inherently under threat from the development. Biosphere reserve programs allow ▪ raising awareness on the interplay of environmental and development issues; ▪ involving the community in the management of the Biosphere Reserve program; ▪ providing learning sites to showcase various approaches to sustainable development that are relevant to local development; ▪ attracting additional funding for conservation efforts from different sources.
Urban Forestry Biodiversity Program (UFBP) *http://www.urbanforest.on.net/main.htm*	Lessons and Opportunities for the Gold Coast
The Urban Forest Biodiversity Program was set up to enhance the environmental sustainability, amenity and quality of life or urban areas in Southern Australia. The Program has several Project Officer positions situated in Councils around Metropolitan Adelaide, working to protect native vegetation and biodiversity. The program argues that applying biodiversity planning to urban areas is a new approach to achieving the goal of a sustainable future that conserves the region's unique biodiversity. One of the major tasks for the program are to map priority conservation areas and to improve and extend existing conservation areas by including private land, waterway corridors, council reserves and other open space. The program's goal is to involve all levels of government and the community in cooperating for biodiversity conservation, and to incorporate these considerations into planning and land management in the metropolitan area. Another objective of the URBP is to influence organisational change and public knowledge through education, training and communication.	The UFBP ▪ provides an opportunity for cooperation between different levels of government and community organisations regarding planning and management of various biodiversity conservation programs. This allows application of biodiversity conservation efforts at a regional scale (e.g. biodiversity mapping). ▪ influences organisational change and public information about biodiversity conservation ▪ provides resource to support conservation efforts of community groups (e.g. planting guides).

The Intergovernmental Program for Climate Change report "Climate Change 2007 – Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability" http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/index.htm	Lessons and Opportunities for the Gold Coast
Climate change is a very complex issue: policymakers need an objective source of information about the causes of climate change, its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences and the adaptation and mitigation options to respond to it. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of how climate change is affecting natural and human systems, what the impacts will be in the future and how far adaptation and mitigation can reduce these impacts.	The Gold Coast City Council is currently actively developing and implementing strategies to ensure reduction of greenhouse gases emissions and more energy efficient operation of both the Council and the City. The IPCC report considers the relationship between climate change and sustainable development. The report's findings should be considered in forming the City's response to challenges associated with climate change adaptation and mitigation

6.2 Economic aspects of land use

Table 2: Best practice examples: economic aspects of land use

Pacific Innovation Corridor (PIC), Gold Coast http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au	*Lessons and opportunities for the Gold Coast*
The Pacific Innovation Corridor (PIC) is one of the Gold Coast's signature economic development projects. The PIC Strategy seeks to cluster development in globally capable industry centres, supported by telecommunications infrastructure. There are a total of ten PIC locations creating a powerful and united corridor of innovation on the Gold Coast.	The PIC is considered to be best practice in economic development. However, some important issues to be addressed in order to successfully implement this strategy include diminishing land supply, timing of infrastructure provision, potential encroachment from competing land uses and opportunities for redevelopment and enhancement of centres.
North East Gold Coast Strategic Land Use, Economic Development and Infrastructure Study, Department of Infrastructure and Planning	*Lessons and opportunities for the Gold Coast*
The study is currently underway to determine the most appropriate option for land use and economic development within the North East Gold Coast area.	The findings of the study will support the Gold Coast in identifying and protecting land for future economic development. This study also signifies cooperation between State and Local Governments, critical for successful implementation of economic development strategies.

6.3 Social aspects of land use

Table 3: Best practice examples: social aspects of land use

Liveable Neighbourhoods, A Western Australian Sustainable Cities Initiative, October 2007 www.wapc.wa.gov.au/Publications/26.aspx	*Lessons and opportunities for the Gold Coast*
Liveable Neighbourhoods is an operational policy for design and assessment of structure plans and subdivisions for new urban development in both infill and Greenfield sites. Liveable Neighbourhoods addresses both strategic and operational aspects of structure planning. The document focuses on creating urban structure of walkable, mixed –use neighbourhoods, with underlying objective of reducing care dependency and becoming more energy and land efficient.	The Liveable Neighbourhoods aims to achieve safe, sustainable and attractive neighbourhoods, promoting an integrated approach to achieving environmental, economic and social sustainability.
Implementation Guideline 5 Social infrastructure planning, *http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/guidelines/seq-regional-plan-implementation-guidelines.html*	*Lessons and opportunities for the Gold Coast*
The Guideline No5 provides guidance of social infrastructure planning, including how to: ▪ Determine what social infrastructure is needed ▪ Develop locally appropriate levels of service ▪ Deliver appropriate levels of infrastructure through integrated social infrastructure planning process.	Guideline No5 identifies a number of challenges associated with provision of social infrastructure in a context similar to the Gold Coast. The guideline also discusses options for addressing these challenges.

Housing, Social Impact Assessment and Safety by Design – a discussion paper for Gold Coast City Council	*Lessons and opportunities for the Gold Coast*
Major statutory planning measures aimed at improving affordable housing outcomes in Australia include: ▪ Removing barriers to development of specific low cost housing forms, such as secondary dwelling boarding houses and crisis accommodation ▪ Providing incentives, such as gross floor area bonuses, Council rates and development application fee removal, reduced infrastructure contributions, fast tracked approvals and guaranteed sales. ▪ Retention (via Social Impact Assessment mechanisms) and replacement of low income housing to mitigate the impact of overall stock loss ▪ Requirement to include a minimum of 10%of all dwellings to be designed in accordance with Australian Standard – Adaptable Housing. ▪ Requirement of 2 for 1 replacement of existing single dwellings in Greenfield areas.	Strategies considered most suitable for the Gold Coast context in the short term include removing barriers, providing incentives and adaptable housing requirements.
Gold Coast Housing Company *http://www.gchousingco.com.au/*	▸ *Lessons and opportunities for the Gold Coast*
The GCHC seeks to proactively address issues of housing need and increase affordable housing stock on the Gold Coast by: ▪ Developing partnership arrangements with private development, State and Local governments ▪ Undertaking high quality housing developments with private developers and/or State and/or Local governments ▪ Providing a diverse portfolio of housing that complements Public Housing provision ▪ Operating a business model that incorporates a discounted market rental structure that will ensure affordability for tenants.	The GCHC runs a number of programs in cooperation with Local (Gold Coast) and State Governments that represents an effective model for coordination of policy and implementation efforts of different stakeholders.

7 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Land is the primary resource underpinning the local environment, society and the economy and has the ability to influence and be influenced by all of the other Bold Future themes. The future of the Gold Coast is dependent on the development and improvement of land use management practices that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, promote social cohesion and are socially acceptable.

Managing population growth to ensure a sustainable balance between conserving the environment, achieving better integrated land use and transport for all development, and ensuring the infrastructure and services to match population growth are key challenges for the future of Gold Coast.

Currently, there are a number of planning documents that provide strategic guidance for growth management and land use planning on the Gold Coast in the short to medium term, with the Regional Plan and LGMS timeframe currently to 2026. The Bold Future process provides an opportunity to extend the planning horizon to 2037 and ensure that sustainable growth management objectives influence the policy makers beyond the existing timeframes. It will be critical to ensure that strategic directions identified in current policy documents are translated into the development approval process as part of the Gold Coast Planning Scheme.

Our Land Use Future Vision

Environmental, economic and social qualities of a city are ultimately embedded in the city's land use structure. Community aspirations for the Gold Coast to develop, as a sustainable, adaptable local economy will hinge upon successful integration and implementation of the land use planning principles discussed in this paper.

The preferred land use and settlement pattern, as identified in the Local Growth Management Strategy, will be critical in shaping the Gold Coast to manage population growth in an efficient and sustainable way and to support the city's efforts in mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change.

The city will be developed based around a network of activity centres and corridors that will allow economic and population growth to occur with minimal negative impacts on the natural environment and character of the Gold Coast.

Natural resources of the city will be protected to result in "no net loss" of protected areas.

Integration of land use and transport planning, resulting in concentration of greater residential densities around regional activity centres and public transport infrastructure, will ensure a more efficient utilisation of both land and transportation resources.

Activity centres will be developed as centres for business, shopping, working and leisure. Most will also contain community infrastructure, including education, health and emergency services. They will also be important locations for the development of different types of housing to support housing choice and affordability in the city.

Possible Outcomes

- Key biodiversity corridors, which form part of the city's urban open space network are protected within the Urban Footprint

- A clearly defined network of activity centres and employment areas, with the focus on opportunities for learning, innovation, collaboration and creativity.

- Integration of land use and transport systems, including the construction of a rapid transit system along the high-density coastal spine and potential future extensions to this network, the extension of the passenger rail line south from Robina to Gold Coast Airport, enhanced local and feeder bus services integrated with other transport modes, an expanded and upgraded arterial road network, a possible water-based transport system of ferries, and purpose built pedestrian and cycle paths within activity centres linking to the urban open space network.

- A broad range of housing stock including higher density and mixed-use development within Regional Activity Centres and along major transport corridors, as well as areas of medium density and detached housing.

- An urban development pattern that has the capacity to adapt to climate change impacts.

- All planning instruments are integrated and aligned to a common set of principles and desired outcomes encapsulating the city's social, economic and environmental aspirations.

Key Questions

1. How can we ensure the strategic policy directions from Bold Future, the LGMS and other policy documents are incorporated into development controls (i.e. the planning scheme)? How can we ensure that the city's preferred land use pattern is supported/identified through all other policy decisions (i.e. economic development, environmental management, social planning)?

2. Inadequate infrastructure provision will, among other negative effects, be detrimental to the economic development and social wellbeing of the city. How can we ensure all new development areas are supported by timely and adequate infrastructure provision?

3. Continuous cooperation with State Government and other stakeholders will be important for economic development in the city (i.e. location of future employment, type of industries, infrastructure provision and timing). How can we ensure timely identification, protection and provision of land for industrial and employment purposes?

4. Development control and management strategies around land use will be essential to the achievement of "no net loss" for protected natural areas. What sorts of mechanisms should be considered (e.g. offsets)? How might we achieve viable ecological linkages for the city?

5. What local and regional infrastructure (i.e. water supply, power supply, coastal development) may be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change? What is the role of sustainable development in climate change mitigation and adaptation? How can we build adaptive management practices into our plans and policies?

6. The lifestyle values of the Gold Coast have consistently been identified as a critical element in the city's future. How can we include lifestyle qualities as primary values within the existing and future planning frameworks for the city?

7. How will advances in technology impact on a range of land uses (e.g. potential impacts of on-line shopping on retailing, working from home on commercial development)?

8. There is a fundamental relationship between the efficiency and effectiveness of the city's transport system and the city's land use pattern/development density. Do we need to reconsider/redefine current transport and land use hierarchies?

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summary of Statutory Influences

Since 1998, Council has developed strategies to manage growth and respond to the challenges of change. Initiatives include:

- a new planning scheme, Our Living City which promotes ecological sustainability through the development assessment process
- a Priority Infrastructure Plan which integrates land use and infrastructure planning, and sequences new development within planned infrastructure network areas
- a draft Local Growth Management Strategy which sets out how Gold Coast will accommodate future growth and deliver outcomes under the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

Detailed information on the purpose of each document is provided below.

Integrated Planning Act (IPA):

The Integrated Planning Act 1997 (Qld) (IPA) forms the foundation of Queensland's planning and development assessment legislation. The purpose of IPA is to balance community well-being, economic development and the protection of the natural environment by providing a framework for managing growth and change within the State.

The Integrated Planning Act's stated intent is to seek to achieve ecological sustainability by -

A. coordinating and integrating planning at the local, regional and State levels; and
B. managing the process by which development occurs; and
C. managing the effects of development on the environment (including managing the use of premises).

Ecological sustainability is defined under IPA as a balance that integrates -

A. protection of ecological processes and natural systems at local, regional, State and wider levels; and
B. economic development; and
C. maintenance of the cultural, economic, physical and social wellbeing of people and communities.

IPA imposes requirements on State and Local Government through the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS). IDAS aims to co-ordinate and integrate the assessment and conditioning powers of government agencies responsible for administering a range of legislation dealing with development approvals.

South East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Plan:

The primary purpose of the Regional Plan is to provide a sustainable growth management strategy for SEQ to the year 2026.

The South East Queensland (SEQ) region is Australia's fastest-growing region, attracting on average 55,000 new residents each year over the past two decades. The region is also experiencing rapid employment growth and is emerging as a significant economic hub with national and international recognition.

The South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005 - 2026 (the Regional Plan) was implemented to help manage this growth and associated change in the most sustainable way and to protect and enhance the quality of life in the region. This strategy encompasses:

- determining appropriate developable land to meet future population growth;
- providing timely and cost-effective infrastructure and services;

- establishing sound urban development principles that support a compact, well serviced and efficient urban form;
- protecting and enhancing the region's natural environment, biodiversity and natural resources;
- maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for the existing and future communities; and
- supporting a viable and diverse economy with well-located employment opportunities and economic activity centres.

The Regional Plan represents an agreed Queensland Government position on the future of SEQ. The Regional Plan is the pre-eminent plan for the SEQ region and takes precedence over all other planning instruments. Under the IPA, the Regional Plan prevails where there is any inconsistency with any other plan, policy or code, including any other planning instrument made under state legislation, that have effect within the SEQ region. Any plans, policies and codes that relate to the SEQ region being prepared or amended by state agencies must reflect and align with the Regional Plan. The Regulatory Provisions of the Regional Plan are required to be taken into account in planning and development decision-making processes, including:

- Queensland Government plans and polices;
- local government planning schemes and other plans and policies;
- planning and development process under the IPA; and
- development applications made under the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) of the IPA.

Where local government planning schemes materially contradict the Regional Plan, the planning scheme must be amended to ensure alignment.

Local Growth Management Strategy:

The purpose of the Local Growth Management Strategy (LGMS) is to provide detailed guidance on the preferred nature and timing of development within the Gold Coast Urban Footprint and to identify enhancements to the city's planning scheme and other key policy documents to ensure appropriate integration at the local level of the South East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Plan.

The LGMS has regard to Gold Coast's regional context. The LGMS sets out strategies for managing growth and development in the city to 2026 which:

- further defines how development will occur within the city's Urban Footprint (34.2 per cent of the total city area) identifying serviceable lands to cater for growth to 2026
- identify the city's growth areas to accommodate 136,193 new dwellings from 2004 to 2026, being
- 69,758 new dwellings through redevelopment/infill of existing urban areas
- 66,408 new dwellings through development of greenfield areas within the urban footprint
- coordinate the timely development of essential infrastructure to achieve sustainable urban development within the city
- provide for approximately 120,000 new jobs predominantly through the network of centres
- provide for an average of 80,000 visitors per day;
- provide for an increase in international and domestic visitors to the city (there are currently over 10 million visitors per year)
- promote a settlement pattern that provides for efficient and cost-effective urban services
- support a highly accessible city underpinned by an efficient and safe road network, quality public transport services, and a network of cycle and pedestrian paths
- build strong communities that are inclusive, connected, safe and have the capacity to plan and direct their future
- promote best practice development principles to achieve a sustainable and liveable city

- elevate the importance of Gold Coast beaches, foreshores and waterways as key elements of regional sport and recreation infrastructure
- reinforce the significance of the urban open space network throughout the Urban Footprint and good connection of corridors between the urban coastal areas and the Gold Coast hinterland
- protect and manage ecological assets and areas of landscape significance strategic view corridors and areas of high scenic amenity within the Urban Footprint to ensure development recognises these values and responds appropriately
- value, maintain and protect the landscape character and significant heritage places in the place making, planning and designing of new and changing urban areas
- provide for an accessible and interconnected high quality environment in all existing and new developed areas through new and revitalised existing open space and well designed civic places
- establish a framework to respond to the emerging challenges of growth management in the face of climate change impacts

The LGMS is based on the strategic policy direction and commitments contained in various planning documents, including:

- the SEQ Regional Plan
- State Government infrastructure planning, funding and service delivery programs in particular the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2007-2026 (SEQIPP)
- the planning, funding and delivery of Government provided infrastructure including key services identified in the Gold Coast Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP)
- the Gold Coast Planning Scheme
- Directional strategies, plans and policies including Council's corporate and operational plans

The LGMS provides the strategic framework to undertake planning activities in the Gold Coast including:

- the integration of State Government and Council budget and capital works programming for infrastructure planning, funding and project delivery
- collaboration with adjoining local governments to secure integrated land use and infrastructure outcomes
- the preparation of structure plans for the designated Major Development Areas of Bahrs Scrub, Coomera Town Centre and Worongary
- the preparation of a structure plan for a proposed Major Development Area at Yatala
- the prioritisation of master planning and local area planning activities
- the review of the Gold Coast Planning Scheme
- the review of the SEQ Regional Plan

Priority Infrastructure Plan:

Effective planning is vital in high growth areas such as the Gold Coast and can significantly reduce infrastructure costs to the community as a whole. Infrastructure Planning is recognised as an important part of land use planning, and has a major influence on creating sustainable communities.

Council has prepared the Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP) to accommodate the projected population growth, and to ensure that infrastructure services the City in an efficient and sustainable way.

The purpose of the PIP is to define the scale, type, timing and location of growth in the Gold Coast in order to plan future trunk infrastructure and to determine the charges required to fund it in a timely fashion.

Queensland State Government requires all councils to have a PIP in order to plan for and fund the infrastructure to provide sewerage, stormwater drainage, transport, recreational facilities and land for community facilities.

The Integrated Planning Act (IPA) requires integration of land use and infrastructure planning to allow infrastructure to be supplied in a coordinated, efficient and orderly manner. This enables sustainable development and encourages urban growth in areas where adequate infrastructure exists or can be provided efficiently.

Infrastructure planned for initially includes:
- Stormwater infrastructure (drainage and water quality)
- Transport infrastructure (roads, cycle and pedestrian paths)
- Local community infrastructure (public parks and land for local community purposes such as libraries and community halls)

Water cycle infrastructure (including water supply and sewerage) will be included at a later stage. Contributions from developers towards the water supply and sewerage networks will continue to be collected under Council's current Infrastructure Planning Policies.

Our Living City Planning Scheme
Our Living City - Gold Coast Planning Scheme applies to the whole of the gazetted Local Government area of the City of Gold Coast including all premises and internal waterways.

The Planning Scheme has been prepared as an instrument under the provisions of the Integrated Planning Act 1997 (IPA). The Planning Scheme regulates the following aspects of development as defined by the IPA:

A. Building Work;
B. Operational Work;
C. Reconfiguring A Lot; and
D. Material Change Of Use.

The Planning Scheme seeks to effectively manage the development process in the following manner:

A. by providing a range of suitable and desirable development options in the tables of development assessment for the domains and LAPs that is consistent with the intent for the development of the various parts of the city;
B. by facilitating reasonable opportunities for exempt, self assessable and code assessable development, having regard to the likely impacts of such development;
C. by ensuring that where development activities are likely to have a significant impact on the environment or where they otherwise warrant specific community input, those activities are retained as impact assessable development; and
D. through the formulation of development assessment codes that provide clear guidance to applicants and that reflect best practice development solutions.

The Planning Scheme seeks to manage the impacts of development on the environment in the following manner:

A. by providing place codes, specific development codes, constraint codes and other criteria for development assessment that reflect ecological sustainability, as advanced through the strategic policies underpinning the formulation of the Planning Scheme;
B. by ensuring that the Planning Scheme's provisions complement the suite of local laws, regulations and other administrative mechanisms used by Council and other authorities;
C. by facilitating, through the IDAS process, expert advice from state agencies and other suitably qualified persons to assist in decision making;

D. by providing appropriate performance criteria and acceptable solutions for self assessable and code assessable development;
E. by ensuring that potentially harmful activities are retained as impact assessable development in the various domains and LAPs; and
F. by refusing applications that cannot satisfactorily demonstrate the mitigation of harmful effects on the environment.

An important feedback mechanism associated with the Planning Scheme is the *Our Living City Report*. This report provides an assessment of progress towards the sustainability objectives identified by Council through the Planning Scheme and the Corporate Plan. It has been developed as a sustainability report for the whole city, including the community and industry.

Sustainability reports, such as Our Living City, bring a range of social, economic and ecological data together from a range of sources to improve understanding and communication of environmental issues between all levels of government and within the community.

Gold Coast City Council
PO Box 5042 Gold Coast MC Qld 9729 Australia
Email: gcccmail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au
Web: goldcoastcity.com.au

Gold Coast City Council