

FRASER COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL  
ORDINARY MEETING NO. 10/22

WEDNESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2022

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**SUBJECT:** HERVEY BAY ESPLANADE MASTERPLAN  
**DIRECTORATE:** DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY  
**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY, Gerard Carlyon  
**AUTHOR:** OPEN SPACE PLANNER, Paul Rice  
**LINK TO CORPORATE PLAN:** Lifestyle  
A safe, active and healthy community  
Manage an appropriate number of recreational facilities

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**1. PURPOSE**

This purpose of this report is to present the Draft Hervey Bay Esplanade Masterplan to Council for noting as a guiding document and outline the proposed next steps to progress individual components of the project.

**2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Since commencement of the Hervey Bay Esplanade Master Plan project in July 2021, consultants Lat27 and associated partners have made significant progress in developing a draft master plan document which is now presented for Council's consideration and noting.

While the Draft Masterplan contains a range of exciting and forward looking design ideas and concepts, a range of the proposals detailed at masterplan stage will be challenging to implement or may not be fully supported by either Council or the community.

In order to finalise this portion of the masterplanning it is proposed that Council only note the entire masterplan document at this stage and resolve to move to a more detailed stage of design for a section of the overall masterplan area, being from Parraweena Park to the entrance of Pines Playground at Pialba.

This area has been specifically chosen given it contains far fewer constraints and challenges than the more business orientated village areas and would allow Council to test a range of masterplan concepts, for example new concrete footpath treatments, wider and separated pedestrian and wheeled pathways and new street designs without causing significant interruption to higher traffic areas of the Esplanade.

Technical review and feedback of the Draft Master Plan has identified benefits in such a staged implementation due to the fact that the masterplan draft as currently configured includes many aspects which are either impossible to implement or which require significant additional design work to be reworked into feasible design outcomes.

At present, given the challenging budget environment Council is in and with the project outcomes unfunded in Council's 10 year financial plan it appears appropriate to reduce the scale of the ambition of the project and focus on developing up 1 smaller section of the plan to

an implementable stage and complete the rest of the project to a broad concept plan which could be progressed to more detailed planning should funding become available at some stage in the future.

### **3. OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

That Council resolve:

1. To note the Draft Hervey Bay Esplanade Masterplan Issue G as a guiding document for future detailed design projects across the Hervey Bay Esplanade. (attachment 1).
2. To endorse the preparation of a more detailed design for a first stage of the Esplanade between Parraweena Park, Point Vernon and the entrance driveway to The Pines playground at Pialba which would form the basis of community consultation for the project which can be completed within the current budget and contract for the project.

### **4. BACKGROUND & PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION**

The Hervey Bay Esplanade Master Plan project commenced in earnest on 1 July 2021 with the awarding of the development of the master plan to Lat27 and associated partner agencies.

#### **Tasks Completed to Date**

To date, Lat27 and their associated partners, have completed the following tasks to inform the development of the master plan document:

- Reviewed all relevant council strategic documents to inform the development of the master plan;
- Completed a systematic desktop analysis to understand the site;
- Participated in multiple site visits for familiarisation and project development purposes;
- Assessed best practice examples from international, national, regional and local contexts;
- Undertaken meetings with internal council subject matter experts to ensure understanding of technical requirements that will influence master plan deliverables;
- Provided a project overview and consultant introduction to Councillors at the Informal Councillor Briefing session on 26 July 2021;
- Undertaken initial engagement, including face to face meetings, with key external stakeholders;
- Undertaken initial engagement, including a day long bus trip, with representatives of Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC) to gain their feedback and understand elements of importance associated with the Esplanade;
- Prepared an opportunities and constraints analysis to guide the development of the master plan;
- Presented preliminary draft master plan concepts to Councillors on 24 August 2021 at an Informal Councillor Briefing session for feedback;
- Engaged traffic consultants to investigate vehicle movement, parking and enhancement of active travel modes along the Esplanade and surrounds, including pedestrian crossings;
- Informal Councillor Briefing Note 7 February 2022;
- Wayfinding consultants Dot Dash have completed the way finding and interpretive signage component and incorporated this into the draft Master Plan;
- Consultants Creative Move have completed the Public Art component and incorporated this into the draft Master Plan;

- Bitzios Traffic Consultants have completed an analysis of the active travel corridor indicated in the Preliminary Draft Concept Masterplan, confirming capacity to support the active travel corridor concept, which maintains vehicle flow, parking within close proximity, and safety improvements;
- Issued an Informal Councillor Briefing Note 13 June 2022 providing an update on the project;
- Technical review of the draft Master Plan with approximately 50 internal stakeholders completed in August 2022, detailed feedback provided to consultants Lat 27;
- Fee proposals were sought from project consultants for an Activation Program and an Education initiative designed to provide information to the community about the benefits of the concept design options, and how the space could be invigorated by activities that encourage the community to engage with it in meaningful ways. Review of the fee proposals received determined that it would not provide value for money. Further consideration of these components confirmed that they will be beneficial to the project, and as such will be undertaken internally by project team members;
- A half day Esplanade bus tour was conducted for Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team on 12 August 2022 and feedback noted;
- Economic Analysis of the project by consultants Bull & Bear Economics to benchmark the existing status and better inform potential benefits in quantifiable terms commenced mid-August 2022;
- Feedback from the internal technical review and Councillor bus tour has been collated and provided to consultants Lat 27, identifying that a recommendation will be made to Council to amend the scope of the project and resultant changes to the draft Masterplan document to make it more suitable for community engagement, including:
  - Reduced detail of proposal concepts for the overall project footprint
  - More detailed concept for first stage area (Point Vernon)
  - Preliminary cost estimate for the proposed stage 1 of the project.

### **Master Plan Challenges**

A range of challenges were identified during the internal technical review. Approximately 50 internal staff participated in the review from a range of multidisciplinary teams across all Directorates. The below highlights some of the key challenges identified:

- Limited consideration for the implications of coastal hazards, increasing reliance on protection measures
- Addressing conflicts between built and natural environment
- Identifying ways to effect activation without capital funds
- Cost of implementing and maintaining an embellishment-centric concept
- Impacts and management of alternative traffic routes, including service vehicle access
- Extent of reduced speed limit and active travel corridor
- Consideration of a broader catchment of access connection routes and infrastructure
- Active travel corridor concept requires review in context of rapidly evolving design criteria
- Need for strategic pedestrian crossing locations
- Lacks prioritisation and implementation strategy
- Impacts on beachside caravan parks
- Lack of opportunities identified to reduce pressure from the Esplanade by relocating non coastal-dependant activities to other parts of the open space network
- Alignment with the City Centre Masterplan

These challenges were discussed in detail with Councillors on the Hervey Bay Esplanade Master Plan bus trip on 12 August 2022 and Councillor feedback suggested that Councillors in attendance were supportive of the following key design concepts articulated in the draft masterplan.

- Priority focus on pedestrian connectivity and capacity building
- Separation of faster moving personal mobility devices and wherever possible widening pathways
- Re-prioritising to focus on people over cars
- Emphasis on vegetation protection, retention and enhancement as a key principle, but not at all costs – E.g. if mature trees need to be removed to widen pathways that would be supported.
- Acknowledgement and education of Butchulla significance
- Social and wellbeing benefits of activation.

## 5. PROPOSAL

Having consideration for the internal stakeholder technical review and Councillor feedback, Issue G of the Draft Hervey Bay Esplanade Masterplan is not suitable for adoption and implementation but is suitable for Council to note at this stage so that the community is aware of the current stage of the project.

Whilst the overarching principles and concepts are sound, some concepts like the active travel corridor and relocation of car parking are not able to be considered further without first undertaking detailed traffic analysis of impacts on surrounding street networks. Other concepts such as removal of significant infrastructure at Dayman Park, and detailing embellishments in locations of high-risk coastal hazards are not supported by officers or Council and are unlikely to meet with community support.

Accordingly, it is proposed to note the draft Hervey Bay Esplanade Masterplan as a higher-level concept and principle-based document to be considered in future detailed design projects.

Additionally, it is proposed to use the remaining contract value available with consultants Lat27 to move to a more detailed concept design for a section of the Esplanade from Parraweena Park, Point Vernon to the driveway of The Pines playground, Pinalba. This more detailed design would then form the basis of community consultation and subject to future budgets first stage implementation.

It is acknowledged that there are economic benefits to implementing first stage concepts in a business node. However, there are significantly more challenges to address in these areas and it is arguably more prudent to target less high risk areas in the first instance to gain confidence and community support for the project before tackling more difficult components.

This approach will allow for more experimentation and trial of a range of components suggested in the plan.

## 6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Hervey Bay Esplanade Masterplan project is funded as a Special Project under Open Space and Environment's 2022/23 Operational Budget. Implementation of Issue G of the Draft Masterplan has not been costed at this time. There is no budget allocation for implementation of initiatives identified by the Draft Masterplan in Council's 10 year Capital Budget.

As per comments, feedback and discussion held on the Councillor bus tour, the project has significant financial implications for future budgeting, which could be likened to the City Centre Masterplan/Council Administration building project. The project is in addition to business as usual for one full time employee and is equivalent to 25% of project loading for this employee and is inconsistent with resourcing of a project of this significance and value.

The remaining contract costs available for use on the project \$89,170 will be deployed to more detailed design of the Parraween Park to the Pines section of the project and to support community consultation on the project should Council endorse this approach.

#### **7. POLICY & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

#### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

The viability of some concepts need further investigation and further technical studies are required to test the credibility of aspects of the plan and it would be imprudent to endorse the plan at this stage. At this stage those additional projects are unfunded.

Given the budget challenges Council is currently facing there is a risk that Council can't implement the Esplanade Masterplan project in the foreseeable future and given these risks it is prudent to scale back the ambition of the project and move forward with reduced scope focusing on a target area.

If a version of the project isn't completed and released for community consultation that creates reputational risk as the community has been expecting this project for a number of years since completion of the associated Esplanade Deliberative Democracy Project.

#### **9. CRITICAL DATES & IMPLEMENTATION**

The project was originally forecast to be completed within 12 months, being by 30 June 2021. Re-evaluation of the project identified that significant value could be added by lengthening the project timeframes to allow a broader scope and more thorough background studies to be undertaken, enabling a higher quality, more robust and contestable project outcome. Given there is no capital budget for implementation, the delay is not a critical impediment.

Based on the low level of staff resourcing and budget committed to the project (0.25 of one full time equivalent staff member) and the quantum of other key corporate projects underway, no further timeframes have been committed at this stage.

#### **10. CONSULTATION**

Extensive consultation has occurred with internal stakeholders and subject matter experts, bus tour with Councillors, targeted meetings with special interest groups and Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation. Broad community engagement has not yet been conducted however, the Esplanade Deliberative Democracy project which underwent significant community engagement was the base project used to develop the draft masterplan. Councillors have been involved with the project in the following ways:

- Project briefing and consultant introduction to Councillors at the Informal Councillor Briefing session on 26 July 2021

- Presented preliminary draft master plan concepts to Councillors on 24 August 2021 at an Informal Councillor Briefing session for feedback
- Provided project status updates via Informal Councillor Briefing notes on 7 February and 13 June 2022
- Conducted a bus tour of the Esplanade with Councillors on 12 August 2022 to obtain feedback

#### **11. CONCLUSION**

Internal technical review and Councillor feedback on Issue G of the Draft Hervey Bay Esplanade Masterplan indicates that significant additional work would be required before the document could be formally adopted. Given the lack of budget for implementation and competing workloads it is proposed that the document be noted as a principle-based document across the project footprint, with a more detailed design concept prepared for the section of the Esplanade from Parraweena Park, Point Vernon to the driveway of The Pines playground, Pialba which will then form the basis of community consultation and stage 1 implementation.

#### **12. ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Esplanade Masterplan Issue G [G](#) [↓](#)