

## **Draft Kurilpa Master Plan – A Legacy Worthy of Debate**

Brisbane has a rare opportunity at Kurilpa Point, an inner city area of some 25ha stretching along the Brisbane River and ripe for renewal. This area is evolving from its industrial past to an urbanised future, allowing more people to live close to the city where they can work, access services and play. At Kurilpa Point, Brisbane has the opportunity to create remarkable legacy, one that sets Brisbane on course for the kind of urban future modern cities must embrace to adapt to our changing climate, economic circumstances and social needs.

Transforming this area makes good planning sense. However, how this is done matters greatly. The Draft Plan proposed for Kurilpa Point suggests there is much to be concerned about. This Plan seeks to concentrate 11,000 residents and 8,000 employees on a land-locked peninsula already experiencing high through traffic, limited open space and 'at capacity' community facilities. The proposed 'cramming in' of people pays little regard for the needs of those who would live there, the community-held values for the area, or strategies to manage the impact on the many small businesses and social services likely to be affected and even displaced. Developed by Brisbane City Council, primarily in consultation with the development sector, this Draft Plan poses the risk of delivering a poor outcome indeed. Such a radical plan demands broad discussion about the kind of legacy that should be created in this unique city precinct.

The redevelopment of inner industrial areas is an old and ongoing phenomenon accompanied by a rich body of knowledge and experience on how to renew in ways that work economically, socially and environmentally. The Draft Kurilpa Point Master Plan overlooks much of that experience, instead proposing over-development, under-servicing and catering to the well-heeled. Take for example the absence of planning for an increased school population or the absence of attention to affordable housing.

The Draft Plan lacks the qualities needed for a city of the future. Development has a long life so show we develop at Kurilpa will affect communities living there for the next 70 years and more.

*Cities of the future are inclusive and plan for all their citizens – providing housing for the not-so-wealthy and the wealthy; services and facilities for diverse cultures and age groups, including children and teenagers; and open space so important to our health and wellbeing. Inclusive cities have been shown to be more attractive to business investors; they have citizens who are healthier and better educated; and enjoy less crime and greater harmony. The Draft Kurilpa Point Master Plan has overlooked these aspects of planning along with a key aim of the Brisbane City Plan, 2014 which ‘seeks a city that is inclusive to all’ and that ‘provides housing for all’.*

Housing affordability is a growing issue in Brisbane. Over the past two decades there has been a steady flow of low income households from the increasingly expensive inner suburbs to the outer suburbs. Experience elsewhere has shown this becomes an economic problem for growing cities – not just for the households on the fringes (who now have greater travel costs, less time and less access to services and facilities) but also for businesses. For many years now developers in the City of London have been required to contribute to affordable housing when the loss of affordability also led to the loss of an available workforce for key inner city services and businesses. Other Australian cities understand this – Sydney, Adelaide and Perth have all adopted initiatives to integrate affordable housing into their renewal areas. Brisbane is not immune to this economic trend - we need to plan for it too.

It’s not just about workers though. The inner city offers many specialist services and facilities that support people of all ages, incomes and cultures, including people who are homeless. Centrally available, affordable housing means these services can be accessed by anyone, not just the wealthy. Good planning would see Council and the State government being proactive in ensuring a supply of affordable housing in Kurilpa. No such foresight is evident in this Draft Plan.

*Cities of the future plan for the facilities communities need to sustain them - access to health, education, community and recreational services and facilities is fundamental to the economic and social well-being of any community. While the West End and*

South Brisbane host a range of regionally significant infrastructure (such as the State Library, TAFE and South Bank), it also caters to local community needs such as child care, schools, churches and local parks. The 11,000 new residents and 8,000 new employees to be accommodated at Kurilpa will outstrip the capacity of many of these local facilities. Brisbane State High School already struggles to cater for its local population and the West End State School (primary) is operating at capacity. Both are on land-locked sites with no capacity for expansion. The Draft Master Plan proposes no measures to address these essential needs. Additional population growth in neighbouring Highgate Hill and West End (estimated to be another 12,500 people) will add to this demand. The additional population proposed in the Draft Plan can be expected to generate demand for expanded schools, new child care centres, ageing services and at least one new community facility (where residents can join in local groups and activities). Social infrastructure is difficult to achieve at the best of times and the Draft Plan makes no provision for any of these.

*Cities of the future recognise the importance of green space and plan for it* – the type and role of open space changes in higher density neighbourhoods. These spaces become the outdoor living room for apartment dwellers. They need to be close to home and diverse in whom they cater for (including teenagers, children and older people). In Kurilpa they must also cater for the high volumes of people visiting from wider Brisbane enjoying the markets, riverside parks and amenities, as well as sporting and cultural events. While Kurilpa has the advantage of the River's edge and the opportunity for some street closures to increase the supply, the open space proposed in the Draft Plan falls well short of what is likely to be needed for the expected population.

At present the supply of open space in the West End is limited with only 1.7ha of open space per 1,000 people, low when compared with Kangaroo Point at 2.6ha or Brisbane Council's preferred rate of 3.5ha (even after making allowances for higher density). To maintain West End's current (very low rate) of open space the Draft Plan would need 19ha of open space; to match Kangaroo Point, 29ha would be needed. The Draft Master Plan proposes only 13ha to support the increased population. Volume

matters – even the best designed open spaces can become overcrowded and contested.

*Cities of the future engage with their stakeholders* - recognising the need to plan with and for the many interest groups that dwell in them. Great vision can come from a collective of minds with differing viewpoints, allowing an understanding of what people truly value about a place to emerge and opportunities to be captured. A shared vision can also have stakeholders working together, not pulling apart.

*Cities of the future plan for the reality of climate change* - and take seriously the need to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to extreme weather events (including heatwaves, flooding and severe storms). The UN has identified city design as playing a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Cities across the globe are innovating. In Australia, Sydney has recently embarked on a bold and visionary initiative in its 6ha Central Park renewal area where leading edge technologies will reduce electricity demand by more than a third, and design includes a tri-generation energy plant, onsite water collection and recycling and a car-share super-pod (supported by more flexible Council parking requirements for apartment buildings).

At Kurilpa, Brisbane City Council also has an opportunity to lead the way through showing how the City's future population growth (to be largely accommodated in higher density neighbourhoods) could be housed using the most advanced technologies and urban design to build our resilience to rising energy prices and a changing climate, while at the same time creating a high quality neighbourhood that is affordable for a range of people, wealthy and poor, young and old, with access to the services and facilities they need to function well. Now that is a legacy worth pursuing.