

Policy areas and statements

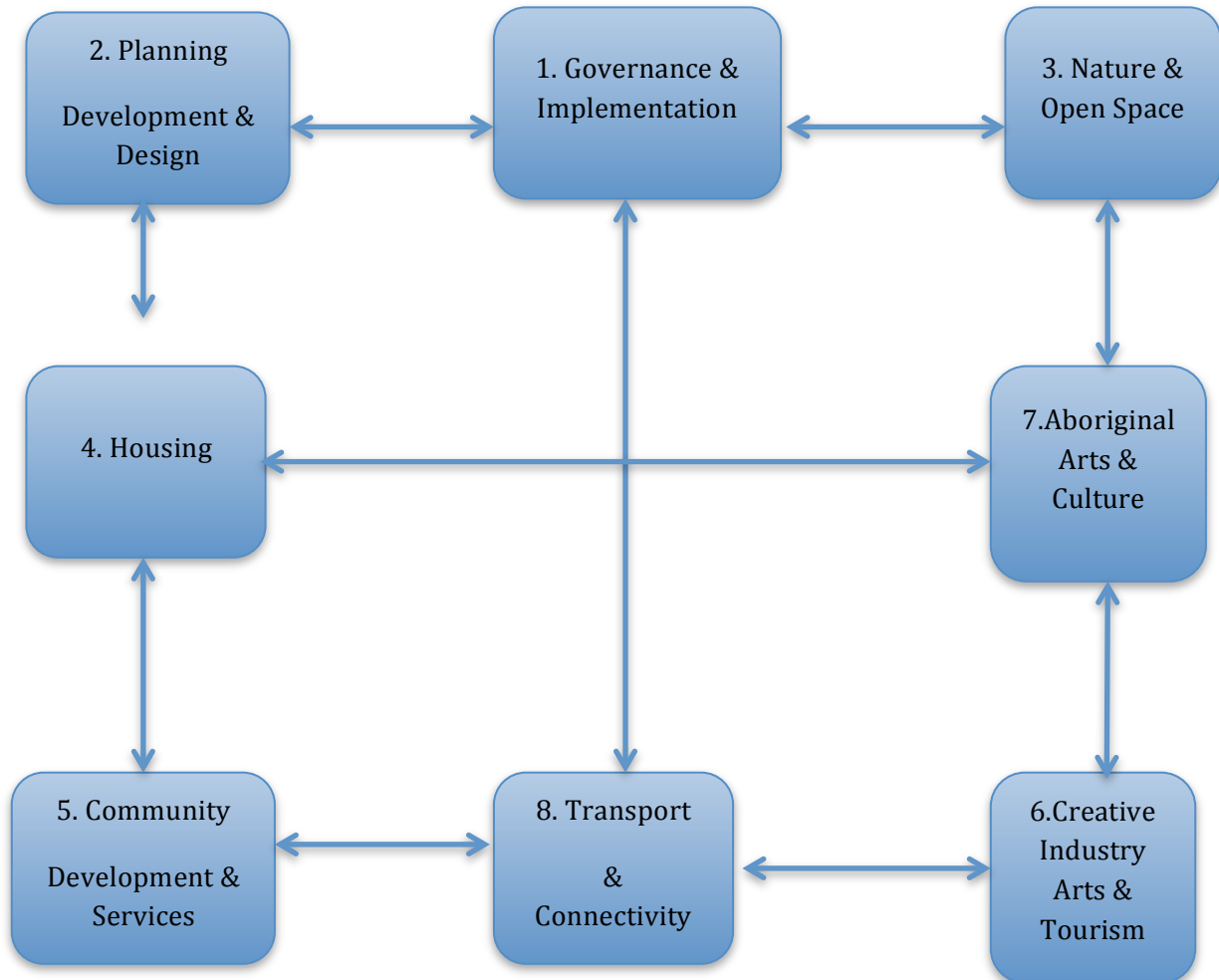


Diagram 1: Policy areas and statements

The following section develops recommended policies for each of the eight areas identified in Diagram 1, Policy areas and statements. These have been derived from the analysis of ranking of focus group goals and objectives, listed in Table 2, in Appendix C and span a wide range of the issues involved in developing the area. They go beyond land use designations to include connectivity and transport; community development and services; governance and implementation; housing; and nature and open space, because all of these aspects will need to be included to ensure a successful new neighbourhood.

1. Governance policy objectives and policies

The two most important governance issues concern powers: first to acquire sites for the most beneficial long term uses, and second to regulate their long term development and management in the public

interest. Land assembly will involve investigating acquisition and relocation options for the Parmalat and ACI sites. Best long term outcomes would be favoured by establishing a single publicly accountable authority to oversee development on these key public interest sites, building on such models as the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority and the Brisbane South Bank Corporation.

Such a body would be well suited to involve the wider community in planning and oversight of management, including the City Council, potential developers, and special interests like arts and environmental groups. Kurilpa is also an ideal testing ground for the more innovative and effective community participation to which the government is committed in its current planning reform of the Better Planning Act, currently in its consultation phase. New methods could well build on the innovative and effective techniques of community engagement, which the Kurilpa Futures Campaign Group has recently developed, including the Conversation and Ideas Forum processes. Further new voluntary approaches could include a collaborative Community Planning and Development Panel with rights to information and funding for consultation.

Housing affordability generally and provision of affordable community housing could build on the successful 'Common Ground' model, in Hope Street, which resulted from collaboration between the Bligh Government and the Community group, Micah. Further development could call upon the established capacities of such not-for-profit bodies as Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) and Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities (BRIC).

State Government insistence on an inclusive provision of affordable housing in Kurilpa– possibly set at 30%- would go a long way to prevent the area becoming an enclave of intermittently occupied investment apartments, but instead include accommodation for low paid city centre workers and their families, in a delightful garden setting. Incentives of the sort offered by the National Rent Affordability Scheme could assist this process.

2. Planning, development and design objectives, and policies

Key planning and development issues concern the density, height, and bulk of new apartment blocks in the area. While being intense enough to extend the advantages of inner city living to significant numbers of people, these should also be carefully designed to ensure liveability and promote well-integrated communities. It is also important to ensure that these key riverside inner city areas makes their full contributions to the lives of the surrounding city centre, South Brisbane and West End areas, involving the provision of significant areas for open space, nature conservation and preservation of industrial heritage, described in more detail later.

The sensitive and farsighted development of the area will require broad based and sustainable community planning. Widely held and long lasting

values of amenity, nature, justice, access and equity, which are currently frustrated, should influence development to ensure that changing activities and land uses are selected to create a better city.

This kind of beneficial community planning will depend upon honest and open communication and participation in involving local communities in decisions directly affecting their lives, whether by the Brisbane City Council or another designated responsible governmental agency. Various models for this type of engagement can be found in community councils (as in The Netherlands, New Zealand and India) or government collaboration with neighbourhood associations (as in Oregon USA, Vancouver Canada, UK, and Thailand).

Community participation needs to be accessible, easy, accountable and rewarding. Although information technology can improve access, face-to-face events and meetings remain important if grass roots community engagement is to survive and thrive. Community forums of the sort recently conducted in West End offer the capacity to bring government and development professionals into contact with well informed and motivated community members to produce collaborative policies to guide more detailed later design solutions.

3. Nature and open space

Inner city riverside areas being freed from obsolete land uses by technological change, such as South Bank, Kurilpa and Teneriffe, should not have their future decided by the same destructive forces which created their original unhealthy, incompatible, and polluting land uses. Market forces, well suited to encourage the rapid adoption of new technologies, and are nevertheless ill suited to decide distributional or spatial concerns, which remain the province of representative and participatory governance.

In this instance, such decisions need to take account of the absolute lack of public open space and natural environments in Brisbane's inner city and city centre. As with the South Bank at least half of the newly available space should be dedicated to rectify these deficiencies. Land needs to be set aside for a Kurilpa Nature Park, to be run in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council by the responsible Kurilpa management agency, with an extent of about four hectares occupying one sixth of the site and connected by biodiversity corridors to all parts of the new development.

Even more space needs to be dedicated to the open space and play needs of the future residents of the new garden apartments and to those of the existing occupants and users of surrounding areas of the city centre, South Bank and West End. Informal grassed areas for flying a kite and kicking a ball, eating lunch, and holding a weekend family BBQs are required both as riverside space and also as settings for the new apartment blocks. Spaces akin to the over-committed Orleigh Park and the Old Botanical (or City) Gardens are required. Walking, jogging,

fitness, and bike paths are required linking spaces for informal play, dog walking, viewpoint sitting, and informal family gatherings.

4. Housing

Its attractive location, convenient access to the city centre, excellent views, and closeness to the surrounding cultural and entertainment opportunities make Kurilpa well suited for inner city living. Modern building techniques now make possible densities that would have seemed bizarre for a subtropical garden metropolis fifty years ago, though these remain very expensive to build. The draft Kurilpa Master Plan proposed putting 11,000 residents and 8,000 office workers on this site, which now accommodates fewer than 500.

Gross daytime densities would thus have approached 800 persons per hectare, and net residential ones well over 1,000 per hectare, allowing for circulation, services and open space. 54 tower blocks varying in height from 12 – 40 storeys (before relaxations had been applied) would have occupied well over half the site, separated by insufficient space to allow proper access to sunshine for open space and occupants of many lower floors. Views both from and across the site to and from the river, City centre and mountain backdrop of Mount Coot-Tha and the scenic rim would have been lost for anyone other than people with apartments with river frontage. Existing problems of congestion on the roads, in schools and in open space would have been compounded and an opportunity for attractive development would have been lost.

If proper provision for open space, river access, nature and habitat conservation, circulation space and essential health and education services are made, we calculate that 20% of the site or four hectares remains available for apartments. They should not exceed eight storeys or 30 metres in height and should be separated by open spaces equivalent to their height, making for a medium density maximum of 200 dwellings per hectare. This would provide for a total of 1,000 dwellings, initially accommodating about 2,000 persons, which would be likely to rise to as many as 2,500 as children are born and other family members are added. A life cycle approach should be adapted to residential planning and this will mean that a mix of housing sizes should be encouraged.

It is important that this key inner city site preserves social equity and meets real social and human needs. Costs of land development involved in the original proposals and the intended very high structures meant that occupants would have been limited to wealthy buyers (increasingly retirees), renters and property investors from overseas.

By contrast, the aims of social justice will require government intervention. Collaboration with community housing providers can be achieved both by setting aside some sites for social housing and encouraging mixed community-private developments with bodies such as BHC and BRIC. The target of 30% social and affordable housing can be achieved by a mix of specific schemes, such the existing 'Common

Ground' and the use of incentive arrangements of the sort introduced to Australia by the National Rent Affordability Scheme.

5. Community services

This substantial population increase proposed above of more than 2,000 new residents (25% of West End's existing population) will demand not only open space and play areas but also education, health, and community activation. In land use terms, this will involve designing and integrating spaces for co-location of these human services with attractive open space, play and sitting areas and meeting spaces for all age groups with networks of active and public transport. In particular West End's State School is already over stressed to provide space for its rapidly growing clientele, and a new primary school will be required. Special attention needs to be devoted to strengthening the voice of diverse communities of minority groups, including social housing and Aboriginal Housing Corporation tenants, and other minority groups, possibly within the framework of the Community Planning and Development Panel.

6. Creative industries, arts and tourism

Kurilpa is naturally endowed with unique access to the cultural and creative arts hub of the Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art, the State Library and Museum, the Performing Arts Centre, the ABC South Bank studios, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, and Griffith University's Conservatorium of Music, together with the South Bank Gardens cultural resources of the Nepalese Pagoda, rain forest walk, Maritime Museum and riverside walk and dining areas. All of these activities combine cultural, creative arts, entertainment, and tourism capacities. The Kurilpa Master Plan needs to make provision for continuous creative arts spaces and activities in the northern part of the site, adjacent to these activities and making full use for the opportunities for the recycling of the area's important industrial heritage buildings.

In addition the area has strong Aboriginal heritage and connections and spaces for shared production, display, and sale of creative art and industrial items should include a focus on Aboriginal art, with links to the Musgrave Park Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

7. Aboriginal culture and arts

Both the riverside and the nearby Musgrave Park are places of special Aboriginal significance and these need to be incorporated in the Kurilpa Master Plan, by promoting meaningful and respectful engagement with Aboriginal people, both via the Community Planning and Development Panel (CPDP) and through promotion of the cultural and commercial potentialities of Aboriginal art.

Aboriginal art trails can connect the waterfront to the Cultural Centre in Musgrave Park, along Melbourne and Manning Streets. The use of place names and narratives both in physical plaques and on the Kurilpa website can reinforce living Aboriginal associations. Designated spaces will enable the continuous promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities.

8. Transport and connectivity

Connectivity— within, through, to and from Kurilpa to the rest of the city—emerges as a key requirement for the new Kurilpa. The cul-de-sac nature of the West End peninsula makes the area more suitable for active and public transport than for promotion of the use of private vehicles. There is a need to innovate, integrate, and upgrade public transport with enhanced links to the Art Gallery busway and the South Brisbane rail stations, and the introduction of a City Cat ferry terminal to promote water transport. An integrated local area transport plan (ILTP) is required for these purposes.

Both attractive streets for walking and separate bikeways are required, linked into city's wider movement systems. Opportunities should be taken to improve foot and bike access to and from the neighbouring areas of South Brisbane and West End through the site, to the water front, and to the city centre by continuing the fine grain of the surrounding street pattern in the new foot and bike circulation system.

In order to preserve a human scale and pace of movement, road and lane widths will be restricted, and priority will be accorded to public transport. Connectivity will be encouraged by developing links to South Bank, including a green corridor over the railway line.