

ORDINARY MEETING 23 NOVEMBER 2011	7
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BABINDA PROJECTS STEERING COMMITTEE – UPDATE ON
ACTIVITIES – DIVISION 1

Peter Boyd and Fiona Wilson: 8/27/3: #3375535v1

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the report and:

- a. supports the refurbishment of the short term RV grounds at Rotary Park to provide additional capacity for the 2012 tourist season; and
- b. supports in principle the use of Council freehold land at 87 Munro Street for the establishment of the Babinda Mill Memorabilia Hall subject to:
 - i. the assessment of any future development application for Material Change of Use; and
 - ii. the submission of an asset management plan detailing the ongoing operational and capital costs of the facility.

INTRODUCTION:

Following the closure of the Babinda Mill in February 2011 Council has been working with the Babinda Community and Maryborough Sugar Factory Ltd as part of a Babinda Projects Steering Committee to progress issues arising from the closure of the Mill and other related issues and opportunities impacting the community. This report provides an update to Council on the activities of the Committee since the August report to Council and seeks resolution on the use of Council freehold land at 87 Munro Street for the establishment of the Babinda Mill Memorabilia Hall.

BACKGROUND:

The closure of the Babinda Mill in February 2011 has been the driver for the establishment of the Babinda Projects Steering Committee. The Committee is comprised of representatives from Council's Planning Strategies and Economic Development & Innovation branches, Babinda Taskforce, Maryborough Sugar Factory, Babinda Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

COMMENT:

The following is a summary of the activities undertaken since the last August update to Council.

Babinda Business Expansion and Retention Program

The Business Expansion and Retention Program is jointly funded through Council's Economic Diversification Fund and by Maryborough Sugar Factory Ltd and supported in-kind by the Babinda Task Force. The focus of the program is to support business growth and identification of new business opportunities in Babinda. Cummings Economics have been commissioned to undertake a business survey and report on the findings. It is planned that the program will be completed by end of December 2011.

Master Plan Concepts for the Ex Mill Site

Planning for the redevelopment of the Mill site is currently in the master planning stages, with investigation into suitable industry sectors being investigated by MSF. It is still proposed to retain the existing houses on separate lots, with this component of the re-development being delivered prior to the balance of the development. The primary focus to date has been around the establishment of employment generating land uses.

Additional Self Contained RV Area

Through the Committee it was previously identified that land owned by MSF could be used as an additional, temporary, RV use area. Through further investigation of this site it was identified that the existing site at Howard Kennedy Drive (Rotary Park) had opportunity for further expansion over land currently included within the recreation reserve.

The use of this land has since been investigated and plans are currently being developed with the intention that the area be operational for the 2012 RV season. The Rotary Park has advantages when compared to a new site as the site already has a dump point and is marketed throughout caravanning networks and will soon have hot showers.

CONSIDERATIONS:**Corporate and Operational Plans:****Goal 3: Delivering Integrated Planning**

Objectives: To take an integrated planning approach to development that creates a sustainable region reflective of our uniqueness and tropical lifestyle.

3.6 Prepare integrated local area plans across the region using a place based planning approach.

Goal 5: Creating a Prosperous Region

Objectives: To increase the region's capacity for long-term economic growth by supporting opportunities for local businesses and local employment.

5.1 Support more diverse urban and rural economies.

- 5.3 Plan and make financial capital decisions with the state of the local economy in mind.
- 5.4 Encourage self containment of communities through the integration and co-location of employment opportunities with residential development and public transport.

Statutory:

The future redevelopment of the Babinda Mill site will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, be it a development application or change in planning scheme provisions as part of the preparation of the new planning scheme for the Cairns region.

Policy:

General Policy 1:05:02 states that Council recognises that there is value in Council supporting specific initiatives or projects that will have significant economic benefits for all or parts of the local government area. The redevelopment of the ex Babinda Sugar Mill Site and the BEAR program for Babinda are identified as priority local economic development programs within Councils 2011-2012 Economic Development & Innovation Delivery Program.

Any development application over the site will be considered in accordance with the applicable provisions of CairnsPlan.

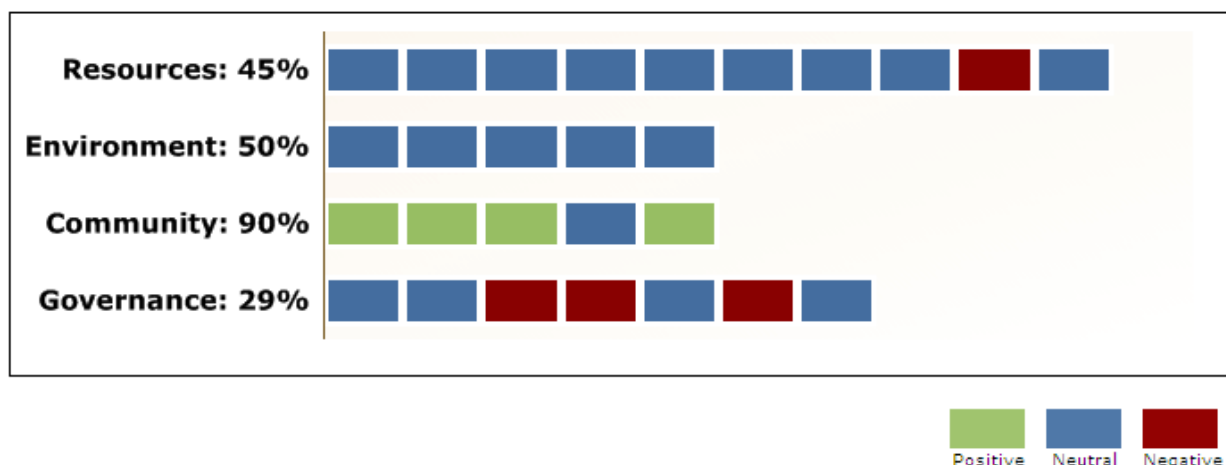
Financial and Risk:

Works associated with the Rotary Park improvements and relocation of material stockpiles will need to be sourced from the 2011/2012 operational and capital budget to provide additional capacity for the 2012 tourist season.

The ongoing capital and operational costs associated with the Babinda Memorabilia Hall are yet to be detailed to Council.

Sustainability:

The proposed use of Rotary Park for short stay, self contained RV use has been assessed against the Sustainability Assessment Tool. The project is generally balanced, with the negative indicators arising as project not contained within existing budget or operational plans for 11/12.



CONSULTATION:

Consultation to date has occurred within Council via the Commentary on Property Group which includes representatives from all Departments (response from various departments are yet to be finalised as the item is set for the 21/11 agenda); the Babinda Projects Steering Committee which includes representatives from the Babinda Chamber of Commerce, the Babinda Taskforce and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation along with Council officers and the Divisional Councillor.

Through these networks it is understood that the provision of additional short stay self-contained RV parking has been discussed through a number of existing forums within the Babinda community.

OPTIONS:

That Council notes the report and:

- a1. supports the refurbishment of the short term RV grounds at Rotary Park to provide additional capacity for the 2012 tourist season; or
- a2. does not support the refurbishment of the short term RV grounds at Rotary Park to provide additional capacity for the 2012 tourist season;
- b1. supports in principle the use of Council freehold land at 87 Munro Street for the establishment of the Babinda Mill Memorabilia Hall subject to:
 - i. the assessment of any future development application for Material Change of Use; and
 - ii. the submission of an asset management plan detailing the ongoing operational and capital costs of the facility; or
- b2. does not support the use of Council freehold land at 87 Munro Street for the establishment of the Babinda Mill Memorabilia Hall.

CONCLUSION:

The redevelopment of the Babinda Mill site presents both opportunities and challenges for the Babinda community. The establishment of the Committee is considered to be a positive form of engagement between MSF, Council, DEEDI and the community through the Babinda Taskforce and Babinda Chamber of Commerce. The opportunity to provide facilities for self contained RV travellers in close proximity to the town at the existing, well used site is considered a significant opportunity for Babinda.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – locality and site map
Attachment 2 – Rotary Park photos

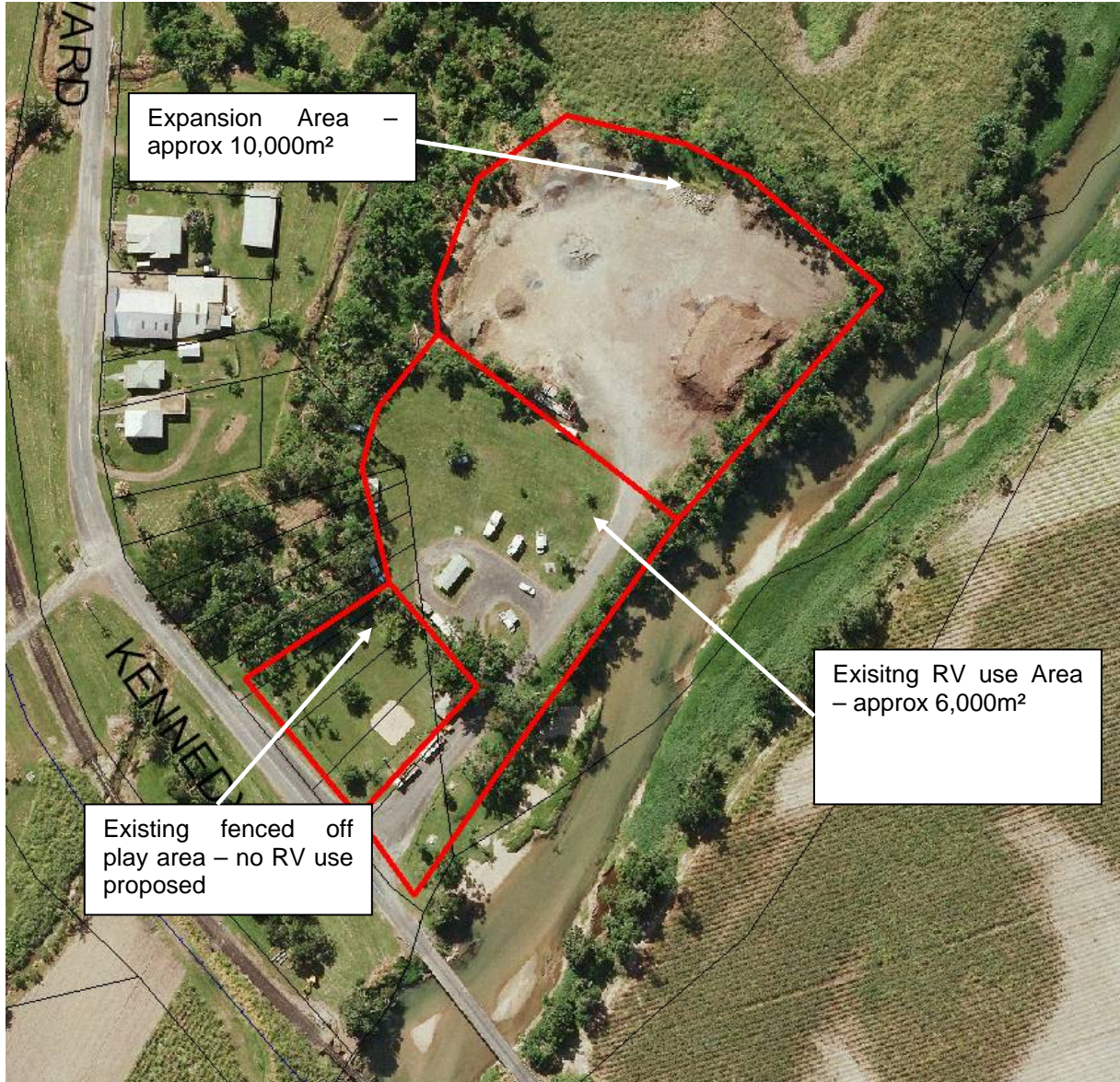
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Appendix 1 – Locality and Site Map





Appendix 2 – Rotary Park photos



Figure 1 – Existing dump point facility



Figure 2 – Looking north toward area of stockpile



Figure 3 – Looking north across RV use area toward stockpile



Figure 4 – Stockpile area – note no camping permitted in this area.



Figure 5 – Looking west from edge of stockpile area



Figure 6 – Looking southwest from edge of stockpile area



Figure 7 – Looking south