

<b>ORDINARY MEETING</b> <b>24 AUGUST 2011</b>	<b>16</b>
--	-----------

**BABINDA PROJECTS STEERING COMMITTEE - UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES - DIVISION 1**

Peter Boyd and Fiona Wilson: 8/27/3: #3266214v1

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council notes the report and provides in-principle support for the proposed temporary and short term RV use of the land owned by Maryborough Sugar Factory on Golf Parade, Babinda subject to further details of the proposed arrangement reported back to Council.**

---

**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 and seeks resolution on the use of land owned by Maryborough Sugar Factory (MSF) for short term, self-contained RV use.

**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 Strategic Planning 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 both prior to and since the inception of the Committee.

### ***Community Workshop***

Following meetings with the Babinda Task Force and Babinda Chamber of Commerce Peter Kenyon (Bank of Ideas) was invited to facilitate a community forum with the Babinda community in March to explore the community's wishes and plans for the future of Babinda. Approximately 160 people attended the workshop and follow up work is now underway with the Taskforce and Chamber to take forward ideas from the evening. Outcomes from the workshop included the proposal to run a Business Expansion and Retention Program in Babinda.

### ***Memorandum of Understanding***

Council's partnership work on the redevelopment of the ex Babinda Sugar Mill site is supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Council and Maryborough Sugar Factory Ltd.

### ***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. The engagement of the program coordinator is currently underway and it is planned that the program will be delivered between September and December 2011.

### ***Master Plan Concepts for the Ex Mill Site***

Future planning and redevelopment of the Mill site is currently in the early master planning stages, with existing areas zoned for industry uses being tested against market considerations. It is currently 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 areas for industry uses are being kept intentionally broad to enable alternate activities and projects (including those raised in the community forum) to be considered within the areas as part of any future development. It is intended that these areas will include employment generating land as one of the priorities.

### ***Additional Self Contained RV Area***

Through the Committee it has been identified that land owned by MSF on Golf Parade could be used as an additional, temporary, RV use area (see attachment 1 for site location) as the existing short stay site at Babinda is often at capacity forcing visitors to leave the locality sooner than desired or to bypass Babinda altogether. As an opportunity for Babinda, MSF have agreed in principle to the use of land on Golf Parade for short term self-contained RV use. Although details are yet to be fully explored, it is proposed that the site would be leased to Council (peppercorn lease) and operated in a similar manner to the existing Rotary Park facility on Howard Kennedy Drive.

The establishment of the site for short term RV use has been discussed within Council through the Commentary on Property group. Additional detail has been discussed through the Committee which recently held a teleconference with the Caravan Motor home and Camping Association of Australia (CMCA). Through this engagement with the CMCA, it is understood that issues raised within Council can be addressed. The issue of infrastructure required is limited to an onsite dump point facility and water connection, with both requisite infrastructure networks being available on site.

The CMCA has agreed verbally to provide the required dump point through the CMCA / Kea Campers Dump Point Subsidy Scheme. This Scheme requires Council to contribute to the facility by providing the connection of the dump point system to Council sewer. Although costs are yet to be sought, it is understood that this is not a significant cost.

On the basis that initial concerns raised within Council's Property group are addressed, it is recommended that Council supports the proposed temporary and short term RV use of the land owned by MSF on Golf Parade in-principle, subject to further details of the proposed arrangement being explored by Council officers and reported back to Council.

The Committee is mindful that potential RV use of the proposed site should not be considered detrimental to existing business in or near Babinda. For this reason, it is recommended that the use be considered short term in the same way the existing facilities in the locality are, to ensure long-term stays occur in commercial facilities. The Committee is also determined to discuss such proposals fully with commercial facility operators in the Babinda area.

### **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:

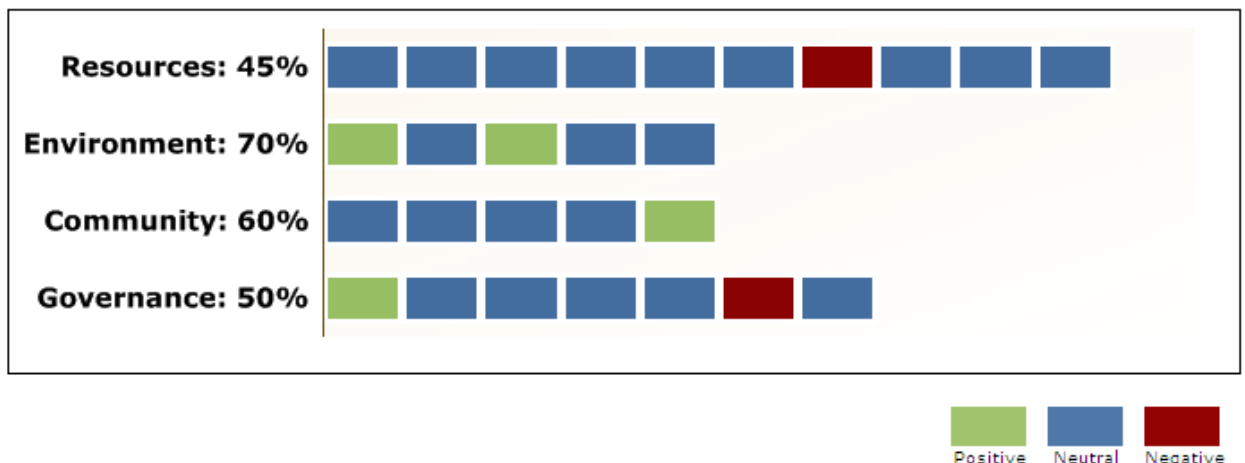
Despite MSF offering a peppercorn lease to Council for the Golf Parade site for the purpose of short term self contained RV parking, the costs to Council are expected to be:

1. Installation of dump point infrastructure
2. Annual maintenance for lawn mowing and rubbish collection

It should be noted that this project has not been budgeted for within the 2011/2012 financial year.

Sustainability:

The proposed short stay, self contained RV use has been assessed against the Sustainability Assessment Tool. The project is generally balanced, with the only negative indicators arising through the materials for the infrastructure connections and the project not being 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; 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.

Public notification and broader community consultation will be required as part of any future development application on Mill land that triggers Impact assessment.

**OPTIONS:**

1. That Council notes the report and provides in-principle support for the proposed temporary and short term RV use of the land owned by Maryborough Sugar Factory on Golf Parade, Babinda subject to further details of the proposed arrangement reported back to Council.

Or

2. That Council notes the report and does not support the proposed temporary and short term RV use of the land owned by Maryborough Sugar Factory on Golf Parade, Babinda.

**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 is considered an opportunity to be further explored and reported back to Council.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 – locality map

Attachment 2 – Golf Parade site photos

Peter Boyd

**Manager Planning Strategies**

Fiona Wilson

**Manager Economic Development & Innovation**

Peter Tabulo

**General Manager Planning & Environment**



**Appendix 1 – Locality Map**





**Appendix 2 – Golf Parade site photos**



Image 1 - Site viewed from the west, on the Golf Parade / Angus Street intersection



Image 2 - Golf Parade in front of site, looking west toward houses on Angus Street



Image 3 - Site viewed from the corner of Golf Parade, looking west, near intersection with unnamed road into Mill site.