

Sippy Downs and District Community Association Inc

Developing a sustainable future

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Submission on the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's Palmview Position Paper by the Sippy Downs & District Community Association

The Sippy Downs & District Community Association is the only residents' organisation in the Sippy Downs area. Its mission is to help ensure that the Sippy Downs area provides an optimum lifestyle for those who live and work there; to create a community that is socially and environmentally friendly and sustainable; and to give all stakeholders a voice in its future development.

The SDDCA broadly supports the Vision and Key Principles set down by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council for development at Palmview. However, we have a number of serious questions and concerns about how the council's strategic directions are to be met, particularly with reference to the potential impact on the existing Sippy Downs community.

Our comments are provided below, addressing the individual strategies identified by the council in the Position Paper.

Development Intents & Strategies

2.5.2 Residential

The fast-tracking of Palmview is in response to the state government's requirement for additional affordable housing to be made available on the Sunshine Coast. We note that the strategy is targeting 'low to moderate income earners' (p.9) but there is no definition of what would constitute affordable housing for these income groups.

Our understanding is that \$240,000 for a house and land package is considered to be affordable. We believe analysis should be provided that demonstrates how many properties in Palmview would meet this criteria, given the enormous costs associated with providing infrastructure for a Greenfield site, many of which will be borne by the developer and passed on to the buyer.

Further, given the demands made elsewhere in the Position Paper for sustainability, we believe that more detail is required to demonstrate that this affordability goal can be met, given that it is the basis for development to proceed in the short term.

The strategy refers to provision of housing targeting 'low to moderate income earners' (p.9). We agree that further investigation needs to be done in regard to the types of employment

that will be available locally, without requiring people to commute long distances. It is important that employment opportunities will match people's needs.

There is also reference to provision of alternative housing types, including social, emergency/crisis housing, special needs, relocatable homes/caravan parks, boarding houses etc. We suggest that further consideration needs to be given to the availability of additional services (e.g. health) that may be required to support special needs housing.

We fully support the pre-conditions for development (p.10), particularly the provision of essential infrastructure and appropriate sequencing. (See below for more detailed comments on specific infrastructure.)

2.5.3 Centres and Employment

The SDDCA notes that the intent is for Palmview/Sippy Downs to provide local employment in order to promote 'self containment' and 'self sufficiency' (p.11). We further note that a pre-condition for the Palmview Town Centre is that it will not compromise the primacy of the Sippy Downs Town Centre (Major activity centre).

The Sippy Downs Town Centre (and associated business/commercial enterprises) and the Kawana Town Centre are yet to even commence construction and given the current status of the Sippy Downs Town Centre it is unlikely to be completed in the short or even medium term. Until these employment centres are operational, it is impossible to predict with any certainty what job opportunities will be available in the local area – or when.

Should residential development be allowed to proceed at Palmview before these employment centres are completed, it will become just another dormitory suburb, with residents forced to commute to other parts of the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane. This will not only reduce the affordability of living at Palmview, but also increase vehicle use and traffic congestion.

Given the very limited local shopping facilities available in Sippy Downs, we believe it is essential that the Palmview Town Centre and neighbourhood centres are developed in conjunction with residential land. We recommend that this should be a pre-condition for the residential development, in order not to place additional pressure on local infrastructure in Sippy Downs.

If home-based businesses are to be encouraged in Palmview, consideration needs to be given to appropriate road design (including parking).

The lack of direct access to the Bruce Highway may be a disincentive to setting up business in Palmview, particularly for any type of enterprise that requires road access e.g. for delivery of materials, despatch of goods etc. This in turn will impact the range of employment opportunities.

2.5.4 Open Space

The SDDCA supports the strategies outlined for the provision of open space in Palmview. Given the problems that have occurred elsewhere in the region, including the Chancellor Park lake network, we believe it is essential that the further investigations identified (p.14) be rigorously pursued. This relates particularly to the financial impact on council and ratepayers of maintenance and potential rehabilitation of open space features and infrastructure.

2.5.5 Integrated Transport

While the SDDCA supports the principle of the integrated transport network, we believe there are a number of issues that will impact the ability to deliver this, particularly in the short to medium term.

The proposed public transport network is reliant on the broader Sunshine Coast public transport system, including CAMCOS (via the Kawana Railway Station). This would require considerable additional investment and commitment to rectify the deficiencies of the existing transport network – to cite just one example, the Maroochydore bus interchange is operating at capacity and needs to be re-located. According to the latest state government projections, CAMCOS will not be delivered before 2026 and the Multi-Modal Transport Corridor is still only at the planning stage and has not had funding allocated for construction.

The problems inherent in providing an effective public transport network that will service not just the immediate Palmview neighbourhood but provide access to other parts of the Sunshine Coast and beyond, will impact on the ability to achieve reduced private vehicle use. This in turn will directly impact traffic management and the road network.

While creating a more public transport-oriented community is a worthy goal, it can only be achieved when **all** the necessary elements of an efficient, effective (and cost-effective) public transport network are available – not just in the Sippy Downs/Palmview area, but across the Sunshine Coast. We believe these elements should be specified in more detail in the pre-conditions for Palmview.

The SDDCA's main concerns about the proposed Palmview development are represented in the areas of further investigation identified in 2.5.5 (p.16), ie:

- the route and design of the Greenlink
- road network infrastructure – we believe the issues relate not just to sequencing, but the overall road design.

We note that council states: 'no undue pressure is placed on existing networks, particularly those which are already at or near capacity' (p.16) and that 'access to inherently compromised sections of the Sippy Downs road network' (p.15) should be avoided. We believe that neither of these aims is met by the current plan.

Greenlink

The SDDCA made a submission to the previous Caloundra Council in response to the Local Growth Management Strategy, in regard to the inappropriate location of the Greenlink. Unfortunately the current Position Paper has not recognised those concerns.

The proposed route for the Greenlink would have a massively detrimental impact on the Chancellor Park estate. This would run counter to the Position Paper's strategy that Sippy Downs/Palmview should form an integrated, cohesive community.

Our objections to the Greenlink route are:

1. It would effectively cut Chancellor Park into two halves, impacting the amenity and lifestyle of residents across the estate.
2. The route crosses all the major internal roads within Chancellor Park (University Way, Fitzwilliam Drive and Albany Street). As the Greenlink is designed to carry a 'fast and frequent' (p.16) public transport services, buses using it would need to be given priority, creating major disruptions to traffic flow on those local roads.
3. To run a public transport corridor of this nature through a residential estate presents significant safety risks to residents, particularly young children and the elderly. This would apply not just to the intersections with local roads, but along the Greenlink itself, given its proximity to houses and parkland.
4. The Greenlink is intended to utilise the existing Energex easement. This easement runs through the centre of the residential estate. It provides some of the relatively limited green space available in Chancellor Park, facilities like skateboard bowls for young people and is immediately adjacent to quiet residential streets.
5. The route crosses lake 3, which would require a vehicular bridge to replace the current small pedestrian bridge. This would destroy the lake's environs and amenity.
6. The Greenlink would reduce the value of lakeside homes whose owners paid a premium for their location (and who pay higher council rates than non-lakefront residents). Potentially, the value of many homes across Chancellor Park would be affected due to the impact of the Greenlink on traffic, amenity and safety.
7. A frequent bus service on this route would be detrimental to air quality due to emissions and would also create noise pollution that would affect a significant part of the Chancellor Park estate.
8. The Greenlink enters the University of the Sunshine Coast in an area of environmentally sensitive wetland. A major investment has been made by the university to relocate plantings from Bundilla, including the endangered *acacia attenuata*.

While Sippy Downs is under-served by public transport (as is the entire Sunshine Coast), we do not believe this Greenlink is the answer.

The SDDCA recommends that other options, including an alternative Greenlink route, be canvassed before the plans for Palmview proceed further. The current option is creating a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety for Sippy Downs residents, particularly those who may be considering selling their homes.

Given the extent and timing of the infrastructure required to support the Greenlink (ie the wider public transport network and the Sippy Downs and Kawana town centres), we believe an alternative proposal should be provided as a matter of urgency.

Road network

The SDDCA has long been arguing that additional development south of Chancellor Park should not be allowed to rely on the existing local road network. We have already made several approaches to the state government in regard to the need for an interchange with the Bruce Highway at Palmview.

The Position Paper provides for Springhill Drive and Claymore Road to be key roads for access to Palmview and we believe this is inappropriate unless viable alternatives are also provided, including appropriate access to the Bruce Highway.

The SDDCA's objections are:

1. Springhill Drive is a 50 kph road that provides the only access for a number of homes (Edgewater Place, Northlake Crescent and the streets off Northlake). It is already carrying additional traffic due to the development of the Bellflower estate and this will increase with the extension of Springhill Drive to accommodate the next stages of Bellflower. It is not designed to carry the substantial extra traffic Palmview will generate, but will be the most attractive route for many residents, as it is the most direct way to shops, schools and services in Sippy Downs – and to the Sunshine Motorway.
2. Substantial additional traffic on Springhill Drive will also impact University Way, particularly the intersection of the two roads. We note that the plan requires an intersection upgrade which would presumably mean replacement of the existing roundabout with traffic signals. At peak times, this will impact local traffic utilising Springhill Drive and Scholars Drive. The council is well aware of the traffic issues on Scholars Drive. We believe that the Department of Main Roads has previously advised that traffic signals could exacerbate the existing gridlock, unless school traffic has an alternative exit point (ie via the 'jade link' into Columbia Street).
3. Traffic in this area will be further increased if children from Palmview are attending Sippy Downs schools (both Chancellor State College and private schools).

4. Claymore Road is an appropriate access road for Palmview, as it provides access to the Dixon/Claymore Road interchange (carries less traffic than the Sippy Downs interchange), the University of the Sunshine Coast and the Chancellor State College Secondary campus. However, to carry significant extra traffic it would need to be expanded to accommodate four lanes, which may present issues with the national park being adjacent.
5. The proposed road to be built from Palmview south to Caloundra Road will do nothing to decrease traffic needing to access the Sippy Downs Town Centre, university and other parts of the Sunshine Coast located to the north of the development.
6. The Position Paper specifies that there will be no direct access to the Bruce Highway, but that there will be service roads running parallel to the highway north to the Sippy Downs interchange and south to the Caloundra interchange. We question whether either of these interchanges has been designed to meet the additional demand, without significant upgrades.
7. Without a proper interchange with the Bruce Highway, north-bound traffic from Palmview will use the Sippy Downs road network as a more direct and convenient route to the Sunshine Motorway.
8. The SDDCA has been advised by the Main Roads Minister that there has been no application for federal funding to even commence planning for an upgrade of this section of the Bruce Highway. This means that any road works are a number of years away. It is also impossible to make informed comment on the proposed service road configuration and Palmview access, without the department's plans being available.
9. The Palmview Position Paper Information Sheet #3 notes that DMR opposes an interchange due to the impact of local traffic on the Bruce Highway. This suggests that the department anticipates a significant volume of local traffic which supports our concerns about the impact when that traffic is forced on to the existing local road network.
10. The department also claims that a Palmview interchange would be too close to existing interchanges. This is despite the fact that the Dixon/Claymore Road interchange is closer to the Sippy Downs interchange than the Palmview one would be.
11. The service road option will be a deterrent to businesses operating in Palmview that require any form of road access from outside the development (including such basic transport as food delivery vehicles).
12. Should the Wet 'n' Wild water theme park proceed at Aussie World, there will be a considerable increase in traffic on this section of the Bruce Highway, a further reason to provide a full interchange.

The SDDCA recommends that:

- No planning approvals should be given for Palmview until a full plan, including timing and funding, is provided by the state government for this section of the Bruce Highway, including the Sippy Downs and Caloundra interchanges and proper public consultation on that plan is undertaken.
- No development should be allowed to proceed at Palmview until an appropriate connection to the Bruce Highway is constructed and available for use.
- If Claymore Road is to be a major route for Palmview, access to it must also be available before any residential development begins.
- Further detail should be incorporated into the Position Paper in regard to what upgrades would be required to Claymore Road to enable it carry the additional traffic. This should include consideration of the noise impact on local residents.
- Access from Palmview to Springhill Drive/Bellflower Road must be either prevented or at least very tightly restricted through whatever traffic management measures are required.
- The full upgrade of Sippy Downs Drive must be completed before development commences at Palmview.

2.5.6 Infrastructure

The SDDCA supports the council's position on infrastructure provision, particularly the need for it to not create a financial burden for existing ratepayers. As already noted, we believe this must apply to ongoing maintenance costs as well as initial construction. There must be no compromise on the grounds of 'affordability'.

We were very concerned by the information provided by a resident at the public meeting we conducted on 4 March, which suggested that engineering earthworks carried out as part of the Bellflower development had created potential flood problems affecting the Bruce Highway. We believe council should investigate this issue and provide feedback to the community as a matter of urgency.

While we appreciate that the Palmview plan takes into account significant biophysical constraints, including flooding, we seek assurance that existing developments will not be adversely affected.

Recent media coverage revealed that new technology mapping demonstrated that areas of the Sunshine Coast previously considered safe from Q100 flood levels would in fact be subject to flooding in a severe weather event. We ask that the same mapping information be provided for both Palmview and Sippy Downs as part of the Position Paper.

The infrastructure strategy demands that all homes and businesses in Palmview will have access to the best telecommunications and information technology available. With basic ADSL technology not available to every household in Sippy Downs due to lack of capacity, we believe that an upgrade of telecommunications should be required for Sippy Downs as part of the Palmview development approval.

2.5.7 Community Wellbeing

The SDDCA supports the council's aims for community wellbeing, but stresses that the wellbeing of Palmview residents should not be achieved at the expense of existing residents and ratepayers in Sippy Downs.

The Council requires that Palmview will provide 'high levels of environmental health and amenity' (p.19). As already noted, the proposed Greenlink will have a negative impact on the environmental health and amenity of Sippy Downs residents. This needs to be addressed as part of the Palmview strategy – including appropriate mitigation measures.

The provision of specific community facilities is identified as an area of further investigation. It is worth noting that these facilities are currently virtually non-existent in Sippy Downs and must be incorporated into the Sippy Downs Town Centre.

2.5.8 Character and Identity

The SDDCA supports the council's intent and has no specific comments at this stage.

2.5.9 Sequencing

The SDDCA agrees that appropriate sequencing of development at Palmview is essential, particularly in regard to the provision of infrastructure.

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