

## Brisbane City Council Indooroopilly Centre Neighbourhood Plan

Indooroopilly is a Brisbane suburb, located 7 km west of the central business district. The suburb has a population of approximately 11,000 people, and is roughly 7.5 km<sup>2</sup> in size.

The suburb is supported by a strong commercial, office and retail presence, including the largest shopping centre in the western suburbs, Indooroopilly Shopping Centre. Indooroopilly is also home to a large number of students as the main University of Queensland campus is situated in nearby St Lucia.

While the suburb is serviced by both buses and trains, traffic congestion and access to parking remain key challenges for the growth of Indooroopilly.

Although the Indooroopilly community was the primary audience for this neighbourhood planning activity, the Plan itself focused specifically on the Indooroopilly Centre area (see above image).

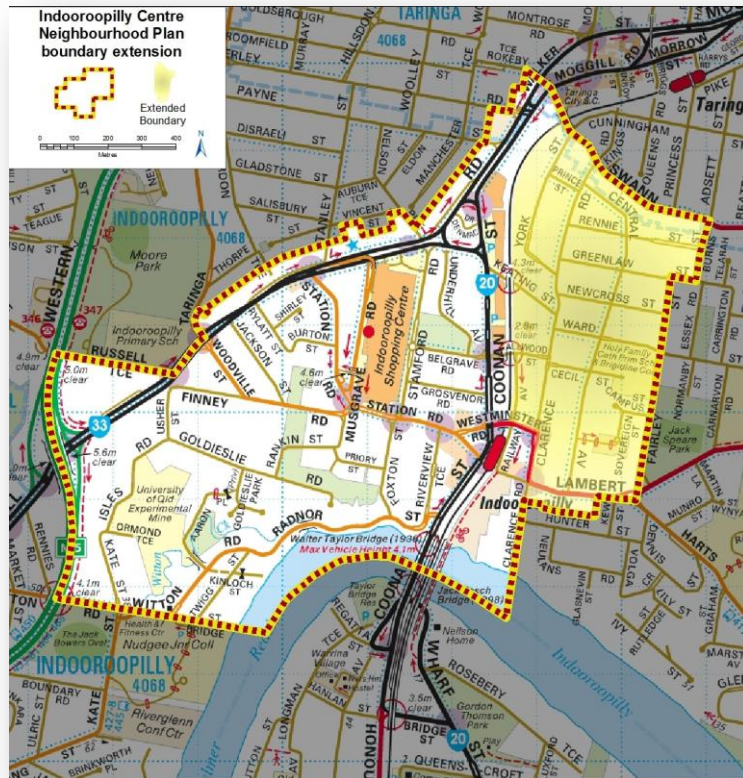
### Objectives

Indooroopilly is one of four Principal Regional Activity Centres (PRAC) identified in the 'SEQ Regional Plan, 2009 – 2031'. Therefore, significant growth is anticipated for this area over the coming years, particularly within the business centre.

If left unplanned, this growth has the potential to erode the lifestyle and suburb qualities that attract residents to Indooroopilly.

For this reason, Brisbane City Council has been working with the local community since October 2009 to plan and manage the growth of the Indooroopilly Centre through sustainable and responsible development.

The overall objective of this activity was to draft a Neighbourhood Plan for Indooroopilly Centre that will guide the significant growth and change expected over the next decade.



While many residents recognised the need to accommodate growth in this area, Brisbane City Council had to juggle the inclusion of higher density residential and commercial developments with the need to protect areas with residential character or environmental value.

## Approach

### Internal engagement

A Council team consisting of four core staff was assigned to the project, supported by representatives from internal branches of interest. The relevant Councillors were also informed of the activity prior to the commencement of any external engagement.

### Research

The project team conducted a number of research activities to ensure any issues or impacts to the engagement activity would not come as a surprise.

This included examining the social needs of the areas (community profiling), existing and projected traffic network capacity, current development applications, environmental impacts, and the heritage and/or character of the area.

Site visits to the area were also essential to ensure the project team had a solid understanding of the Indooroopilly area prior to any engagement with the community.

### Community Engagement Techniques

Brisbane City Council believes it is important to consider the views of a community when making decisions about projects that affect their local area or the city as a whole. Therefore, Brisbane City Council has a Community Engagement Policy which clearly outlines the purpose, principles and outcomes for each activity.

While Council uses an array of techniques to engagement with different sectors of the community, below is a small sample of some of the activities that were utilised during the Indooroopilly Centre neighbourhood planning project.

#### Community Planning Team

An advisory panel of approximately 15 – 20 people, consisting of various community representatives. The CPT is formed through an application process to ensure a wide variety of residents are included, and the group is kept to a workable size.

#### Community Workshops

A series of community workshops were held in the Indooroopilly Centre area. These workshops gave all residents the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the drafting process. Council adopted a 'triage' system to ensure all attendees had an equal opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. Through the 'triage' system, a Council officer/s greets attendees and directs each resident to the best Council person to discuss their concerns. Workshop activities are conducted in groups to ensure discussions are focused and facilitated.

### Business Breakfasts

A number of business breakfasts were held to ensure the needs of the business community were considered. These forums were held before business hours to ensure representatives from the commercial and retail sectors were able to attend.

### Information Sharing

A number of communication methods were adopted to ensure the community was receiving information that was accurate and up-to-date. This was delivered in a variety of methods such as online/social media, newsletters, fact sheets, information sessions and shopping centre displays.

### 3D Modeling/ Artist's Impressions

A digital representation illustrating what the changes proposed for the Indooroopilly Centre area may look like upon completion.

## Challenges

There were a number of challenges facing Brisbane City Council when engaging with the community regarding the Indooroopilly Centre area.

Like most communities, the Indooroopilly community was wary of what future changes might bring. However, through Council's efforts to understand their needs and concerns right up front, this smoothed the way for an effective engagement process.

It was also essential for the Indooroopilly Centre Neighbourhood Plan to accommodate for significant growth over the next ten years. Therefore, a notable increase in housing density would be required to support this growth.

Incorporating higher density housing into an established suburb can be a contentious issue for a number of residents. Council addressed these concerns by using visual representations (artist's impressions, 3D modeling) to positively demonstrate what higher density housing will look like in the area.

Traffic and parking congestion was also a key concern for Indooroopilly residents. The impact of these issues was alleviated through a number of techniques, including thorough explanations of proposed transport/movement improvements in communication material and deliberations with the Community Planning Team.

In addition to this, residents were provided with the opportunity to discuss and raise questions with the Brisbane City Council planning team through the community workshops. Therefore, any concerns or misconceptions could be resolved through a one-on-one discussion.

An outstanding challenge for most councils is the time delays and loss of momentum caused when a draft plan is sent to the State Government for State Interest Reviews. Although this issue remains mostly out of the control of Council, it is important to ensure the community is made aware of the required process and kept informed where possible.

## Conclusion

Overall, the Indooroopilly Centre Draft Neighbourhood Plan Strategy was well received by the community as a result of a thorough and structured community engagement process.

Through Brisbane's experiences with this and other neighbourhood planning activities, the following community engagement lessons have been learnt:

- Internal engagement is required before any community engagement activity can commence,
- The best way to gain support and involvement from other internal branches is to highlight how the objectives of the plan will impact branches of Council further down the track,
- Local knowledge is expert knowledge; therefore groups such as the Community Planning Team are essential to the engagement and planning process,
- Communication material should be kept to a reasonable length and written in plain language,
- Incorporating identifiable suburb landmarks and features into an artist's impression will help the community to better connect with the image,
- Be mindful of community exhaustion, and ensure you are aware of any other areas of Council communicating with or working in that area, and
- Ensure staff are trained and supported to deal with difficult situations, have regular debriefs following events and celebrate the 'wins' throughout the process.

Brisbane City Council is currently waiting for approval from the Queensland Government to formally adopt the Indooroopilly Centre Neighbourhood Plan for its inclusion in *Brisbane City Plan 2000*. However, further information on the plan is available from the [Brisbane City Council website](#) or by contacting Edna Alexis, Engagement Officer, Neighbourhood Planning on (07) 3403 6657.