

12. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

12.1 Explanation

“Community Facilities” cover health, education, personal, community and family support measures provided by various governmental, private and voluntary agencies. It also includes planning strategies which affect the community’s access to facilities or which influence the well being of communities and consequently their need for greater support.

12.2 Key Issues

Community facilities are in most cases not provided by Council. In its traditional role as a land use planning mechanism, the Planning Scheme has little control over their siting and establishment. However, planning strategies can assist in foreseeing the need for various facilities and, given good planning practices, alleviating some of the causes of demand for some facilities. The Priority Infrastructure Plan assists in the better provision of facilities. The key issues forming the basis for a Community Facilities strategy include:

- the existence of few centres which provide an appropriate range of accessible community facilities including meeting places for community groups or individuals;
- a characteristically high unemployment rate (relative to the Queensland average), indicating a need to facilitate employment opportunities and to increase accessibility to employment nodes;
- health services which have not kept pace with the rapid population growth;
- the demographic profile of the Shire which requires that particular attention be paid to social services for the young and the elderly;
- the lack of an adequate public transport service; and
- the Shire’s attractions influencing demand for community facilities by introducing substantial tourist populations and a non-typical socio-economic profile (including a high incidence of aged and unemployed people, etc).

12.3 Community Facilities Strategy

The following outlines the planning strategy developed to address the issues raised above:

- (1) Underlying the Community Facilities strategy is the belief that urban form can influence the need for community facilities by planning for dispersed or concentrated facilities and affecting accessibility and community interaction. To this end:
 - residential premises of a higher density, concentrated around retail and commercial nodes, thus increasing accessibility is encouraged;
 - a greater mix of uses in the retail and commercial nodes is supported (within the physical limits of the designated or referenced centres) to encourage greater industry and business opportunities and consequently greater employment opportunities; and

- there is an increasing emphasis on providing for public transport, pedestrian and cyclists as well as increased accessibility for motor vehicles, in turn increasing accessibility for residents to facilities.
- (2) The Strategy aims to address unemployment through the designation of adequate supplies of land for industrial, commercial and retail activities and through the development of a strong tourism strategy.
 - (3) Access to employment nodes by a variety of means, will be pursued through the transport strategy (see Section 13). The role of transport infrastructure, particularly public transport, is recognised as being intrinsic to the successful implementation of a community facilities strategy. Appropriate steps are to be taken under the urban and transport strategies.
 - (4) There is a view that an adequate delivery of appropriately located and timed social and community infrastructure can not be effectively achieved without the planning of such facilities being an integral component of the land development process. Therefore, the emphasis of the Strategy is on addressing this issue through the development process and in conjunction with the development or redevelopment of sites located within Regional, Sub-regional, District, Village and Local Centres and larger sites being developed for predominantly residential purposes. The Priority Infrastructure Plan is also a part of the strategy to provide for improved availability of community facilities to newly developing areas.
 - (5) Such a strategy, however, relies on the preparation of a social infrastructure plan or other assessment to determine an appropriate range of social and community facilities, their optimal locations and delivery dates or population thresholds.
 - (6) The designation of land for community purposes under the relevant provisions of the Act is also part of the strategy.

12.4 Preferred Dominant Land Use

12.4.1 Special Purpose (University)

The proposed site of the Sunshine Coast University College at Sippy Downs has been identified by the preferred dominant land use of 'Special Purpose' with a symbol to identify the particular purpose. The development of the land for this purpose will extend to activities on the land which are considered to be related to a university and will also have a significant influence on the planning of the surrounding area.

12.5 Objectives and Implementation Measures

12.5.1 To Produce Needs Assessment Criteria for Community Facilities

To plan for a satisfactory community facilities network, the Council must have an understanding of the inter-relationship between community types and sizes and their needs. It is expected that criteria should reasonably pre-determine the level of local services required by planned communities, the contribution towards demand made by smaller subdivisions and the need for and location of district or regional level facilities on the basis of population growth in a vicinity.

Implementation

(1) Council is committed to consulting with community facilities providers to determine needs for facilities on a basis which will assist in their translation to requirements or guidelines for the supply of facilities on local, district and regional levels.

12.5.2 To Incorporate the Provision of Community Facilities into the Development Process

By nominating the location and size of facilities, it is possible to optimise accessibility and minimise the need for service providers to undertake the complex and costly procedure of acquiring available land, which may not be eminently suited to the proposed purpose or the good of the community. The Act provides a formal "designation" process to assist in this regard.

Implementation

- (1) In assessing relevant development applications which relate to the establishment of residential communities, the Council will have regard to the implementation criteria relating to Objectives 3.5, 3.6 and 11.0 of this Strategic Plan and to the following criteria:
- with respect to applications relating to communities of a size which, according to the needs assessment criteria, should desirably be provided with certain facilities, whether adequate provision has been made for such facilities;

- with respect to other applications, whether the proposed community contributes towards a demand for facilities on the basis of it being part of a larger community; the Council may require that provision be made for certain facilities or that an infrastructure charge be made towards their provision as set out in the applicable infrastructure charging instrument;
- whether all proposed community facilities, including shops, schools, churches, child care centres, community meeting places, social welfare agencies and emergency services, are provided in a single, adequately accessible location which acts as a local community focus. Consideration will be given to whether such an arrangement is appropriate to the subject proposal; and
- whether the proposal facilitates appropriate standards of accessibility to community facilities for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists;

- (2) Due to the small size and intended role of Local centres, Council accepts that the ability to encourage a full mix of community facilities and other non-commercial or retail uses may not always be achievable.
- (3) Council may seek a report assessing the social impact of the proposal and its capacity to generate demand for social and community facilities.
- (4) Any social impact report must be prepared by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional.
- (5) If after assessing any social impact report, Council is not satisfied that the proposal can be adequately supported by the existing and proposed community facilities, it may not support the application.

12.5.3 To Facilitate Community Interaction

It is recognised that the need for some community facilities arises out of social dislocation and generally inadequate community structures. Social conditions can be improved by ensuring that communities have good access to facilities and are encouraged to interact at accessible and thoughtfully planned community nodes, which may centre on local shopping centres.

Implementation

- (1) In assessing relevant applications for development in established or proposed community activity nodes, the Council will have regard to the implementation criteria in Objective 12.5.2 above and to the proposed design. The design should ensure that the community is afforded efficient, safe and user-friendly pedestrian access between facilities in the node and that development in the node is conducive to community interaction.

- (2) In assessing applications for community facilities and local retail facilities which are not in community activity nodes or defined Local or Village centres or which erode the function of a satisfactory existing node, Council's position is that the community would be better served by the proposal's establishment in such a node or centre, having regard to the principles espoused in the need assessment criteria.
- (3) In considering applications for the establishment of residential communities, the Council will have regard to the criteria relating to Objective 3.5 of this Strategic Plan. Favourable consideration will be given to applications for comprehensively planned residential communities which incorporate measures for improving social interaction. Measures may include innovative street layouts and treatments, appropriate house to street interfaces, innovative approaches to improving pedestrian and cyclist accessibility and the creation of relatively high density communities centred on community activity nodes. Council may vary its standard development requirements to facilitate such proposals.
- (2) Council in assessing applications will have regard to the visual character of a development to ensure that the character of the particular Planning Area, the immediate amenity and the historical and cultural character of the area in which it is located, has been considered. The visual character of a development will also integrate any associated infrastructure which must be designed as part of the total visual presentation.

12.5.4 To Encourage the Design of Buildings and Landscapes which Relate to their Physical Context and are User Friendly

Building design can produce a more livable building if the design has regard to local climate, effective use of passive (low energy) design principles, the appropriate use of native landscapes and the physical relationship to adjoining buildings or potential buildings. The visual character of the building is important if it is to be reflective of the Sunshine Coast and respect the immediate amenity in which it is to be located. The building design must not lose sight of its purpose and its accessibility to its users.

Implementation

- (1) Development is designed to be in accordance with Council's Planning Scheme codes to ensure that:
- Site layouts, including building and landscape designs address local climate, and topography including such issues as the use of space, effective use of passive (low energy) design principles and site excavation;
 - Landscape works appropriately incorporate the use of endemic and non-native species, and shade planting;
 - Pedestrian, disabled and vehicular access, vehicle parking and service areas are adequate, functional and do not unduly compromise other aspects of the development; and
 - the intended character, Statements of Desired Precinct Key Character Elements (in Volume 3) and the role of Local centres is not compromised.