



Date: **9 October 2009**

Attn: **Urban Renewal Brisbane**

Fortitude Valley Project Team
City Planning Branch
Brisbane City Council
Reply Paid 1434
Brisbane Qld 4001

Via Mail and Email urban.renewal@brisbane.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: SUBMISSION TO DRAFT FORTITUDE VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
THE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

INTRODUCTION:

The Valley Chamber of Commerce (Valley Chamber) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of its members in relation to the Draft Fortitude Valley Neighbourhood Plan (Draft Plan). The Chamber reiterates its strong support for Urban Renewal's vision for the Valley, expressed through the Draft Plan's Development Principles. In particular:

- for the Fortitude Valley to be a nationally recognised destination catering for a range of people and uses;
- the retention of the Valley's rich tapestry of new and old buildings, streets, laneways, cultures;
- for renewal through growth and economic development, as the Valley provides a supporting role to the City Centre; and
- for the Valley to firmly establish as a significant contemporary, creative, cultural precinct for the City.

The Valley Chamber does wish to draw attention to some detailed matters contained in the Draft Plan, which will have the potential to affect the achievement of these outcomes.

GROUND OF SUBMISSION:

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS:

The Valley Chamber is supportive of increasing the building height within the Valley Heart, but believe that with regards to built form and yield potential, the plan falls short in recognising the role of the Valley Heart and the broad area as "*the commercial centre and entertainment activity centre for the inner northern suburbs.*" By promoting a taller building height throughout the Valley area, and more and not solely in the Special Context Area, it allows Council to achieve additional design incentives that will be of benefit to all users of the Valley. For example, in turn for increasing building heights, the ground floor plane and podium footprints may be reduced. This will still facilitate the required density sought for the Valley, but gives rise to greater opportunities to create vistas, cross-block linkages, laneways and active ground floor planes and breezeways (as sought by the draft Neighbourhood Plan). This approach is also respectful of the intent of the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031 targets by encouraging higher density development in an area, which is within immediate proximity to a range of services, community facilities and public transport.

The Valley Chamber also supports Council's desire to encourage the redevelopment of amalgamated sites, particularly within the Special Context Area. However, given the current development pattern of this area, it is considered unlikely that these smaller parcels will be redeveloped in isolation. The rationale that the concentrated area of smaller parcels within the Special Content Area will be limited to a maximum of 3 storeys, while adjoining parcels may be developed for buildings of up to 12-20 storeys, is illogical and will result in an overall design outcome which will be contradictory to Council's objectives.

Recommendation

The Valley Chamber recommends an increase in the maximum building height provisions over the whole of the Special Context Area.

PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS:

The Valley Chamber also expresses concern that restrictions that naturally apply to redevelopment of sites containing heritage buildings also has the potential to be an impediment to redevelopment, and the associated economic growth, of sites in the Valley. The Chamber is interested to ensure that buildings with heritage values are not left to decay, due to limited or economically unfeasible development potential.

Potential solutions to these issues include:

- Introduction of Transferrable Development Rights, as existing in the CBD, to enable owners of heritage buildings to get some financial return from their land to fund renovation and/or maintenance works;
- Setting building height bonuses based on the sliding scale of maximum building heights (Table 1 of the Draft Plan) for redevelopment of land that incorporates heritage buildings. For example, promoting the integration of heritage building within the development site would provide a mechanism for the heritage values to be dealt with as part of a development application. This in turn would provide for an economically feasible redevelopment opportunity, and for the refurbishment and long term retention of heritage buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Recommendation

The Valley Chamber recommends the introduction of Transferrable Development Rights within the Plan area or further bonus building height for development that proposes to preserve, manage and integrate with heritage buildings. These options will provide land owners within the Neighbourhood Plan area with an effective mechanism to preserve and manage heritage buildings over the life of the plan.

LANEWAYS, CROSS BLOCK LINKAGES:

The Draft Plan has a strong emphasis on the retention of existing laneways (including for shared access and service vehicle access), and provision of Cross Block Links, and Small Scale Spaces. The Valley Chamber supports these initiatives, but suggests that guidelines need to be prepared to ensure appropriate night time management of these spaces is achievable, within the context of the form of development being envisaged for these urban spaces.

Recommendation

It is noted that Acceptable Solution for P9 seeks to address this by requiring assessment of proposals against the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CEPTD) Planning Scheme Policy, and requiring that active frontage uses adjoin these spaces. The Valley Chamber strongly supports inclusion of these Code requirements. Ensuring that designs provide for easy management and the safety of these spaces will be critical to the Valley continuing to establish as a significant cultural destination for the City.

SMALL SCALE SPACES

Map C of the Draft Plan illustrates Council's desire to promote the creation of 'small scale spaces' in and around the Special Context Area. The purpose of these spaces is to improve the quality of the public realm and encourage pedestrian movement through the Valley along with improved landscape and streetscape treatments. These spaces will also provide setbacks to buildings and active frontages that will create wide footpaths and reinforce street legibility and amenity.

The Valley Chamber supports the creation of these spaces and they are considered to be integral to the establishment of exciting urban spaces that with further promote dynamic and active areas contributing to the character of the Valley's daytime and nighttime economies.

It is however noted that the creation of these spaces will limit the redevelopment opportunities of those sites that are nominated to incorporate these spaces with no clear compensation being provided to the land owners.

Recommendation

The Valley Chamber seeks for Council to consider providing development bonuses (i.e. increased building height) to land where a 'small scale space' is nominated on their landholding. Furthermore, the Draft Plan could be amended to provide confirmation that where this developable gross floor area is sacrificed to the public realm, the development can incorporate 'pop up' bonus storey(s) to allow the equivalent GFA to be reclaimed within the proposed redevelopment of the site.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY:

Proposed minimum footpath widths, pursuant to Performance Criteria P4 and Tables 3 and 4 are welcomed. The Valley Chamber strongly supports the provision of increased footpath widths in the Valley. Maintaining a safe pedestrian environment is vital to ensuring the Valley's continued success as a music and entertainment precinct.

The Valley Chamber is also supportive of the strategic public domain planning work that has been undertaken in analysing the requirements for pedestrian movement and public space. The Valley Chamber will be working with Brisbane City Council and the State Government to prepare and implement a Pedestrian Safety Management and Operational Plan as a result of this work already undertaken. The plan will be used to promote a 24/7 connection between the principle nodes of the Fortitude Valley (being the Valley Heart, James Street Precinct), the new RNA redevelopment area, the ULDA Bowen Hills Area and the Valley Entertainment Precinct.

Recommendation

The Valley Chamber seeks inclusion of minimum lighting level requirements in the Neighbourhood Plan Code. Minimum pedestrian lighting levels equal to or better than those required for CBD footpaths are sought.

CAR PARKING

It is acknowledged by the Chamber and its members that the Draft Plan seeks to adopt car parking rates based upon those used in the Brisbane Central Business District. We would like to provide our support for Council adopting this approach.

OTHER MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Management Plans

Valley Chamber of Commerce recommends a three year trial period for an Event Management Plan for the Valley Entertainment Precinct with the active participation by the Federal, State and Local Government to work collaboratively with Valley Chamber and other stakeholders.

The purpose of the management plan is to address anomalies that exist between town planning requirements and the interface of licensed premises with public space management and Liquor Licensing.

The Fortitude Valley area, in particular, the entertainment precinct is also considered to be one of the key elements that define the character of the Valley. As the Draft Plan seeks to promote the entertainment values of the area, we are also of the view that a traffic and transport management plan should also be prepared to assist the functioning of the Valley given the land uses being promoted through the Draft Plan.

HERITAGE

Valley Chamber Property Owners Group is establishing a Heritage Commercial Property Owners Group and seek Council's support to work with the group to address matters associated with the presentation of heritage buildings, explore permissible uses, use of sustainability initiatives, education program for heritage owners, issue management & short term community benefit initiatives to assist with the interface of heritage buildings and public space.

The aim of the group is to ensure heritage owners enhance their properties and limit deterioration. The implementation of Transferable Development Rights is seen as one mechanism to achieving the goals of the group.

SUMMARY:

The Valley Chamber strongly supports the following provisions of the Draft Plan:

- The provisions of the Draft Plan relating to the Special Entertainment Precinct, specifically Performance Criteria P22 to P27.
- The proposed changes to the Area Classification designations. We support the promotion of a mix of land uses within the Draft Plan area. Mix use development will support a day and night time economy within the Valley and will create a place which promotes safe public spaces and a diverse local community.
- The further preparation and implementation of a Cultural Plan for the Fortitude Valley area.
- The promotion of increased areas capable of accommodating mixed used development to promote the day and night economies of the Valley.

Further to the requirements of the Draft Plan, we would also like the opportunity to contribute to the preparation of the Streetscape Improvement Plan for the area, once it is available to the public. There are many contributing factors which define the characteristics of the Valley, and we would appreciate the opportunity to be involved with the implementation of other initiatives which result from this Neighbourhood Planning process.

The Valley Chamber also believes it is important for Council to recognise that increased buildings building heights will have land tax implications on property owners. Careful consideration is therefore required when property owners are being faced with increased land tax along with the cost of managing a site listed for its heritage values.



We trust this information is sufficient for your purposes, however should you require any further details or wish to arrange a meeting to discuss the matters raised, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,
VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INCORPORATED

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