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Submission for the 2013 Brisbane City Council Town Plan for the Mt Coot-tha Area

Introduction:

This material is submitted after a prolonged period of liaison with the Brisbane City Council, The Qld Police, Members of the MCRG and some Local Residents.

During this period we have pleaded with both the Qld Police and the City Council to solve the joint problems of unlawful activity in the area.

As far as we know all our attempts to get the Police and Council to jointly discuss these attached issues has failed.

The Importance of Mt Coot-tha to Brisbane:

For many people, the Mt Coot-tha area is the second most popular tourist destination in Brisbane (after South-Bank). It provides the only panoramic view of Brisbane from Bribie Island, to Tambourine and out to Ipswich and Cunningham's gap.

The tourism industry employs many thousands of people and government departments employ staff that focus solely on promoting Brisbane Tourism.

The Current Situation:

Mt Coot-tha is known to the Qld Police as their primary SEQ "intel" areas.

This is because it is a zone of night time total darkness that is conveniently located close to the city centre just off the freeway system that connects Brisbane to the western urban areas.

Because of the total darkness at night it is impossible to be effectively policed because vehicles cannot be effectively identified.

Our Residential Experience:

The area is an extremely popular zone for Hooning at night. The main focus is the section of Scenic drive (SD) between Mt Coot-tha road (MCR) and the Legacy Way Car Park (LWCP).

(This being the area where Hill Climb events were conducted by Car Clubs in the past.)

Based on evidence of discarded drug consumption equipment, we know that it is also a popular area for drug activity and is centred on a section of SD half way up towards LWCP.

It is our opinion that the hooning and drug activities are strongly connected because of visible vehicle skid marks, discarded drug equipment and unusually well-worn dirt areas.

Hooning is common late at night, mostly after local residents are in bed. The most common nights are Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Police Activity:

The Police cannot be on SD all the time. In fact it would be fair to say that they are only present for less than one tenth of a percent of the time. Hence the area is virtually unpoliced and excessively feral for criminals.

The Police provide a hooning phone line 13HOON. However this facility is not used for the following reasons: Mostly residents are in bed at the time, the phone call procedure outcome is unknown and the line is answered by a machine (instead of a person). Hence it gives the impression that no immediate action, or indeed any action at all, will result.

Our Town Plan Submission Theme:

We believe that there are many compelling reasons why the status of Mt Coot-tha unlawful activity be elevated to the highest possible importance level.

The primary problem is that there is no street lighting on SD, plus there are other important areas that are totally dark at night.

These include most of Sir Samuel Griffith Drive (SSGD) and Slaughter Falls (SF).

In particular the area of SSGD in the region of the old Chip Factory and the SF entrance is totally dark at night.

This zone is only 100m from the Stuartholme Girls School and indeed the Chip Factory precinct is now owned by this girl's school and is used as an educational facility.

The School is home to female students from both Australia and Overseas, plus there are no vehicle access barriers or visible security deterrents of any kind.

There needs to be a consistent 50kph speed limit over the entire area with 40kph limits outside all school facilities.

PLEASE - End The Continual Buck Passing:

The Police cannot police the area because it is too dark. Hence they believe that the unlawful activity is a City Council issue (as it is in all areas of the state without street lighting).

The council does not do police work; hence they believe that is not their problem. "State Police do crime policing".

Our Town Plan Submission:

We submit that Street light be installed in these areas:

1. The section of SSGD between MCR and Simpsons Road.
2. Tourist friendly street lighting be installed:
 - a. On SD between MCR and LWCP.
 - b. On Slaughter falls entrance road and parking areas.
3. On MCR down towards the botanical gardens.

We also submit that the current speed limit on MCR be reduced from 60kph to 50kph.

1. We have in the past provided significant valid reasons for doing this and have proposed this several times in the past as an essential traffic calming solution. Each time our reasons have been ignored.
2. The entire areas on SSGD and Simpsons Road are all 50kph and have similar gradients.
3. The area of MCR has ever increasing numbers of cyclists who reach and exceed the current 60kph speed limit. This is on the muddy or dusty area at the BCC quarry entrance; however their thin high pressure road-bike tyres have almost no stopping power especially whilst they are flying down the road towards the Gardens.
4. The BCC Botanical Gardens parking regularly overflows onto MCR causing vehicles to be parked partially on both sides of the road, with families and young children forced to walk on the road down towards the gardens and through the quarry industrial access point.
5. There is no footpath or bike lane at all. Recent rain events have washed out what little road shoulder that there originally was and trees grow over the shoulder. Yet it is an extremely popular area for cyclists, joggers and walkers.
6. There is minimal street lighting on MCR.
7. There is no pedestrian crossing leading into the Gardens adjacent to the quarry industrial zone.
8. The BCC Quarry is an industrial precinct with heavy noisy and dusty trucks regularly entering and leaving the area.
9. The increased 60kph speed in this area causes increasing amount of airborne quarry road dust which settles on residential houses, rainwater and solar energy catchments, thereby reducing their efficiency and increasing costs.
10. Hoons travelling down SD regularly gun their vehicles when they reach the MCR 60k zone section. Reducing the speed limit to a consistent 50kph will prevent this and generally increase safety for all users.

The Council response to this request in the past has been to dismiss it by stating that "Reducing the speed limit on MCR to 50K will cause congestion".

1. We now know that this is completely untrue.
2. For the last month the MCR-SD-SSGD intersection upgrade road-works has had traffic control with a speed limit of 40kph with extensive road barriers and a restricted road width. During this time the reduced speed limit has not caused any congestion. This can be verified by asking the Traffic Control officers (as I do each morning). Has there been any traffic congestion today, I ask. The answer is always NO.
3. The only disadvantage to motorists is the loss of approximately 2 seconds of their time. However when compared to the massive time-wasting congestion at the two western freeway roundabouts plus the extensive 50kph speed limits elsewhere (indeed all the way back to Bowman Park in Bardon), this tiny delay is insignificant.

Summary:

Hence our Town Plan Submission is to: Upgrade the importance of Mt Coot-tha Crime Reduction and Personal Safety through the following means:

1. Add street lighting as noted on the attached map.
 - a. Full Street Lighting on SSGD and MCR as indicated.
 - b. Tourist friendly Street Lighting on SD and Slaughter Falls as indicated (similar to that currently in use at the Mt Coot-tha Lookout).
2. Allocate a consistent 50kph speed limit throughout.
3. Assign a 40kph speed limit outside the Stuartholme School Owned Land and Facilities.
4. Create a Pedestrian Crossing outside the Botanical Gardens.
5. Apply all possible measures to reduce the Crime and Drug Activity in the Mt Coot-tha area.
6. APPLY ALL POSSIBLE INCENTIVES FOR THE STATE POLICE TO IMPROVE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

FINALLY:

The BCC has indeed provided the perfect location for covert criminal interaction and steps need to be taken to minimise this.

The BCC has also caused Safety issues on MCR with the Gardens and Quarry, which they ignore. For obvious reasons, previous similar submissions to the BCC have met with the approval of all local residents surveyed.

It is our belief that almost every Brisbane resident would want: All Possible Steps to be taken to ensure that this well-known Police "Intel" area is made Considerably Safer.

Submission compiled by Phil Best – 3 Sir Samuel Griffith Drive, Mt Coot-tha, Toowong.

We have studied and FULLY support all Town Plan Submissions made by the MCRG.

