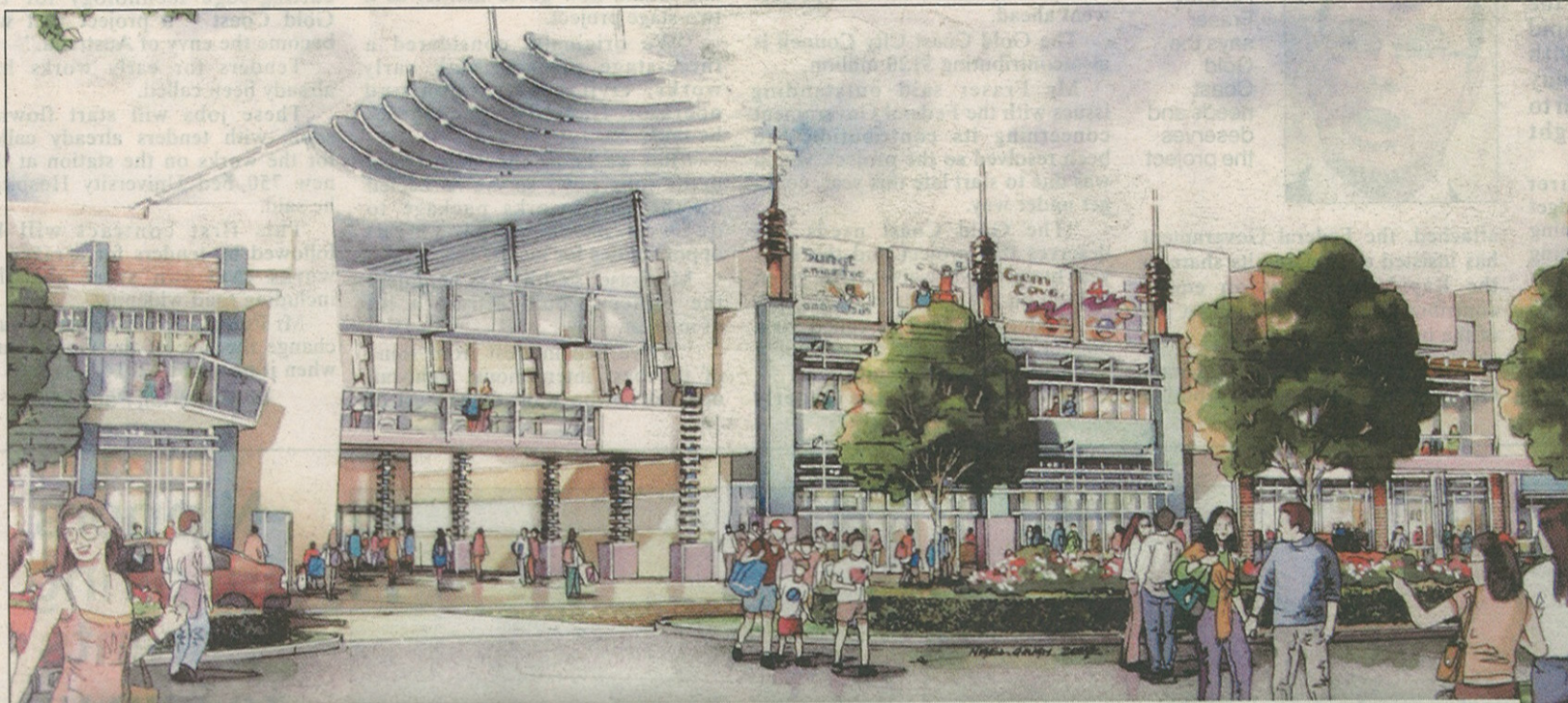


# State set to fast-track Coomera Town Centre



## PLAN TIMELINE – A snapshot of tumultuous dealings

- 1989** Japanese firm Hokoijitsugyo secures 384ha of land at Coomera for \$22.5 million.
- 1995** Gold Coast City Council earmarks Coomera for a town centre in an area that was earmarked by the council in 1995 for shops, offices, shopping centre, service station and ancillary facilities.
- Late 90s** State Government buys 9ha of central Coomera land as part of a wider plan to stage a World Expo at Coomera in 2002 before the bid was rejected by the Paris-based World Expo organising body.
- 2001** Coomera Town Centre concept proposal first sent to State Government for checks.
- 2004** Hokoijitsugyo submits masterplan for development of a \$500 million town centre to the council.
- 2005** Macquarie Leisure Trust lodges plans with the council to build a 39,000sqm shopping centre called Citywalk at Coomera on a site between the theme park and Foxwell Road. The council opposed the plan, insisting the main retail component of the town centre should be located north of Foxwell Road.
- 2006** A proposed \$31m TAFE college set to open in 2007 is stalled due to hold-ups in the town centre plans.
- 2006** Macquarie Leisure Trust takes the council to court over refusal to allow the development of a shopping centre half the size of Pacific Fair on the Foxwell Road site next to Dreamworld.
- 2006** The council sends the draft structure plan to the State Government.
- 2007** Queensland Investment Corporation and Westfield buy a 35ha parcel designated to become the CTC retail and commercial hub for \$44 million from the Coomera Resort.
- 2008** Coomera Resort sell a 8.5ha light industrial parcel in the precinct to Becton Property Group for \$11 million.
- 2009, January** State Government signs off on the council's master plan for the Coomera Town Centre precinct.
- 2009, September** The proposed Westfield shopping centre appears stalled after the council flags an infrastructure bill of more than \$165 million.
- 2009, October** Myer announces it will build its third Gold Coast outlet in the town centre shopping precinct.
- 2009, October** Dreamworld sells 50ha link in the project for \$16.5 million to Queensland Investment Corporation after a year of negotiations.

by Leah Fineran

**THE** Gold Coast's super city is set to explode after years of ticking away like a time bomb.

Under a new State Government reform, plans to build the Coomera Town Centre, which will create 10,500 homes and 20,000 jobs and the Gold Coast's largest shopping quarter, have been doused with rocket fuel and the development could now be completed within four years.

For the past 14 years the \$1 billion project has been mired in paperwork, inter-government clashes and commercial stoushes, leaving it lagging behind the population spike in the northern Gold Coast corridor.

That could all change with Infrastructure minister Stirling Hinchliffe expected to make an announcement this month of a reform to cut through bureaucratic red tape and unleash a storm of overdue development.

## Doughnut suburb's saving grace

A MASTERPLAN for Coomera could be the saving grace of the northern suburb, according to a Gold Coast property expert.

Gold Coast Urban Development Industry Association vice-president Stephen Harrison (pictured) said unlocking the Coomera Town Centre and surrounds would stimulate jobs opportunities and improve land values in the growth corridor.

"At the moment, Coomera is a doughnut – there's plenty of development surrounding the town centre but no central services, social or community infrastructure for residents

Council preparations are already under way, anticipating the minister's bombshell which will declare Coomera as Queensland's first 'master-planned' region under the new Sustainable Planning Act which comes into effect from December 18.

The reform will force the Gold Coast City Council to



create a single powerful masterplan within six months to allow developers to fast-track their applications and start construction sooner.

Mr Hinchliffe remained tight-lipped on his announcement this week but said he supported 'expedition' of the Coomera Town Centre and would be working closely with

on the fringe," he said. "A masterplan could bring certainty back to the regional centre."

But not all have welcomed the prospect of further State Government involvement in the future of the Coomera Town Centre.

Former deputy mayor and planning consultant David Power said continued state interference with Coomera had caused the majority of hassles with the town centre's development.

"There is no doubt the constant change in the planning rules has delayed the project more than necessary," he said.

the council to have plans finalised for the precinct as soon as possible.

Once approved, Coomera is expected to boom with a population of 83,000 by 2016 and 100,000 by 2026.

A Westfield shopping centre, a civic town centre and Coomera Rail Station will form the heart of the centre

surrounded by high-density residential development and social infrastructure which could include a hospital, university, courthouse and library.

The Bulletin understands the masterplan option was touted by the State Government after frustration over 11 months of holds-ups at the council level.

Despite the pending good news, lead developer Westfield maintained a cautious position and refused to comment this week.

Council's Sustainable City Future committee boss Councillor Peter Young said a masterplan completed by July would open the door for developers to have their applications finalised in 2011.

"The earliest I believe we can expect something substantial to be built at Coomera is 2013," he said.

But local councillor Donna Gates said she hoped the public would see official openings in 2011 or 2012.

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