

DARWIN CBD MASTER PLAN PROJECT

Master Plan UPDATE - July 2013

What makes a city tick? What social and economic settings will make it purr like a finely-tuned Swiss watch with just the right mix of shops, offices, apartments, cafes and parks?

What defines a city's soul? If we could paint the canvass of a city so special that people would love ambling along its streets, what sort of place would it be?

If Darwin's population were to double in 20 years, where will all those people live and work? Where will they park? Will they arrive by light rail from Palmerston or by ferry from the Cox Peninsula?

Will they pop up in the CBD from a tunnel? Or will they park outside the CBD and catch a free city shuttle bus to work or live in towers above their offices?

Will they walk under cool canopies of trees or along a solar air-conditioned mall to enjoy the unique shopping and the buzzing cafes, as they rub shoulders with tourists from around the world?

These are just some of the questions the Darwin CBD Master Plan is trying to answer through techniques ranging from story-telling to computer modelling of how people move through the city.

The answers will guide where schools and new roads should go, when light rail might be viable and the best spots to invest in residential, tourism and commercial development.

As Darwin evolves from a small country town to a larger city, the Darwin CBD Master Plan will be the road map that guides the city's transition into a city for the twenty-first century.

A key element of the Darwin CBD Master Plan is public feedback. We invite you to visit the project webpage and send us ideas, fill in the survey or register to attend public workshops that will start in August.

Go to www.darwin.nt.gov.au/cbdmasterplan

unlocking the potential



Lord Mayor Katrina Fong Lim interviewed on the project by Channel 9

Did you know?

Did you know that the land mass of Darwin's CBD is more or less the same size as Sydney or Melbourne?

That means there's plenty of room for growth but it also creates a risk of ad hoc, unconnected development.

What's more, unlike Sydney and Melbourne, we're on the end of a peninsula, literally on a road to nowhere.

So how do we give people a reason to spend their time and money in the city?

Do we just have to work a bit harder to entice them - or do we have some natural assets that might just do the trick?

www.darwin.nt.gov.au/cbdmasterplan

Retail consultant

Mike Cullen from Urbacity is an urban planner and retail economist who has helped design new towns and cities across Australia including the town of Gunghalin, north of Canberra.

He will gather economic, retail and demographic data and talk to traders to get a feel for how Darwin's CBD is performing and what could make it work better.

The quality of space is a major factor in a city's social and economic life, Mike says. So he looks for "buildings behaving badly" as well as walkability, spatial continuity and intimacy.

"Streets that interact well with shops generate improved economic activity and greater social engagement," he says.

"If you have lots of vacancies and under-performing retail, there is a perception that the whole city is struggling. So retail largely defines the willingness of people to invest in things other than retail."



Retail Consultant Mike Cullen with traders Elena Gomatos of Elements and Karen McLean of the Bungalow

Mike will also analyse retail, rent and land values and catchment areas for city retail. He will look at the performance of the mall and make suggestions for how the experience of shopping in the CBD can compete with large shopping centres such as Casuarina.

His view is that the CBD needs to develop value monopolies that the suburbs cannot match and that firmly set the cultural bonds that tie the city to its people.

If you're interested in catching up with Mike, he will be back in August to chat to groups of traders around the city.

Movement analysis

So, you reckon a computer can tell you where to put your shop?

Yes, says Professor Tim Stonor, a London architect in demand around the world – from Beijing to Christchurch – for his company Space Syntax Limited's modelling of movement in cities.

People tend to get to places by the most direct route, so modelling vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle movements gives a pretty good idea of the best connected parts of a city ... and the busiest corner in town is usually where you'll find the department store and takeaway food store.

No surprises then that the computer's red lines intersected to define a hot spot on the corner of Knuckey and Smith Streets.

The modelling provides insights into places that need to be opened up to increase pedestrian traffic, where new development is best plugged in and quiet places that are more suited to residential development.

During his recent visit to Darwin, Tim was struck by how spread out Greater Darwin was, with pieces of development strung out around the airport.

He was particularly taken with the potential of the CBD and what is left of its 'Goyder grid'.

And, yes, there's more to it than a computer! That will be explained when Tim presents his findings at a workshop in Darwin in August.



Tim Stonor and Steve Thorne in Cavenagh Street

Landscaping

Clouston Associates has been appointed to do a landscape strategy and street tree master plan for the project.

Clouston Associates has 25 years' experience of landscape and urban design projects in the Northern Territory including the Cavenagh Street upgrade, Darwin Entertainment Centre and Holiday Inn Forecourt, the former council streetscape strategy, Pandanas and Jacana House.

The landscape strategy will establish an open space network incorporating parks, the coastline, creeks, drainage lines and streets. These elements are the basis for outdoor recreation and will provide a landscaped framework for development. They are also integral to a city with excellent cycle and pedestrian connectivity.

The street tree master plan will help establish quality streets that are cool, well-shaded and attractive. In combination with footpath enhancement, weather protection and improved planting techniques, tree planting will create a distinctive character for the city streets that supports diverse social, commercial and retail activity.



Michael White, Leonard Lynch and Tony Cox of Clouston Associates with Steve Thorne

Active frontage

There aren't too many nooks and crannies in Darwin that Steve Thorne hasn't poked around in, despite the fact he lives in Melbourne.

Steve is an architect and town planner who has worked all over the world. He was Principal Urban Designer with the City of Melbourne and Director of Urban Design in the Victorian Government during the years when that city was revitalised by encouraging people to live, work and play in the city.

In 20 years, Melbourne's residential population grew from five people to more than 100,000, with up to 4500 cafes and coffee shops bringing Melbourne's streets and laneways back to life.

Over the years, Steve has been a regular visitor to the Territory to work in Palmerston, Alice Springs and as Chair of the Urban Design Advisory Panel.

As part of a design audit for the master plan, Steve has worked with government and council planning staff to map the active frontage of every property in the city.

He has walked every street, the old Goyder grid, potential transport corridors and public spaces, photographed the city's trees and searched out old maps, tracing the evolution of Darwin's CBD through wars, cyclones and population fluctuations.

Steve has been fascinated by some of the old planning documents that envisaged how Darwin might grow.

"There's not too much that hasn't already been thought of," he says. "And not too much I'd disagree with."



Cindy Robson (City of Darwin), Drosso Lelekis (City of Darwin), Paul Rajan (Department of Transport) and Mark Meldrum (Department of Lands, Planning and Environment) at a project planning meeting

Did you know?

Did you know that one of the most famous of the cafes and takeaways operating in Darwin in the 1930s was Zero in the Tropics, run by the Kafkaloudis family on the corner of Bennett and Cavenagh Streets. It is renowned for selling the first icecream in the Territory.

Darwin's Greek Town developed in 1915-16 on the Esplanade around what used to be the Travelodge (now the Hilton).

(From 'Remembering Territory Families', Department of Arts and Museums, www.territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au)

The stories of Darwin

Stories say a lot about the character of a place but also bring people together, says community engagement consultant Jane Munday.

Jane and project manager Steve Thorne, of Design Urban, have been meeting with people since earlier this year to hear their stories about the city, their hopes for its future and their concerns.

This includes stories of the city's original inhabitants, the Larrakia people, who largely welcomed the newer arrivals and showed them where to find fresh water springs around the city at places such as One Mile Dam.

"What is unique about Darwin is the relatively small number of families who built this city and their continued influence on the CBD," she says.

"Darwin used to have a distinct Chinatown and Greek town and the people who built the CBD are largely its early Greek, Italian and Chinese settlers.

Listening to people's stories is also a key element in defining what is special about Darwin and issues to be addressed.

Do you have a story about the families who contributed to Darwin's unique history?



The changing face of Darwin: when do you think this photo was taken?

For more information

For more information on the Darwin CBD Master Plan project, see the website at www.darwin.nt.gov.au/cbdmasterplan that includes a summary of the project and its terms of reference.

The Darwin CBD Master Plan has been funded by the Australian Government, under its Liveable Cities Program, the Northern Territory Government and the City of Darwin. The project team reports to the Capital City Committee, headed by the Lord Mayor Katrina Fong Lim and the Chief Minister Adam Giles.

The draft master plan will be finished by the end of 2013.



Area covered by the project

The study area takes in the CBD and adjacent areas such as the Waterfront and old tank farm area but also looks at a broader 'zone of influence' that takes in the broader peninsula including Stuart Park, the One Mile Dam area, Larrakeyah and Cullen Bay.

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