

CIVIC CENTRE: NO



MORE THAN RETAIL: The Noosa Plan earmarks land adjoining Noosa Civic for a shire business centre, not just shops.

PHOTO: GEOFF POTTER

Outside the plan

AT the heart of opposition to the Noosa Civic retail expansion for a new discount department store, two supermarkets and more specialty stores and eateries is the Noosa Plan.

This application by Civic owner Queensland Investment Corporation flies in the face of the designation for this land as a shire business centre that has a vision of a diverse mix of retail, commercial and “knowledge economy” ventures.

The plan designates the shire business precincts for technology-based research and development, education-based businesses, as well as “environmental R&D”.

Under the forced amalgamation, the new Sunshine Coast Council reviewed the business centre planning and chose to largely stick with Noosa Council’s aims of a centre that would not be swallowed up by commercial and retail space.

councillor Russell Green in May 2009 said: “On the whole, the community was supportive of council’s direction to limit retail expansion.

“Council is committed to helping the Noosa business centre to evolve into a vibrant, creative and sustainable mixed-use centre with adequate transport and employment opportunities to support the region.”

The reborn Noosa Council on September 2014 refused QIC’s application, which is now the subject of an appeal to the Planning and Environment Court.

The top five reasons for refusal were:

1: The development conflicts with the South East Queensland Regional Plan’s desired regional outcome for employment because it will not diversify Noosa’s economy and sterilises land to be retained for long-term non-retail opportunities.

2: The development fundamentally conflicts

with the Noosa Plan’s intent for the site to provide for long-term non-retail employment growth and diversification.

3: The development will have undesirable economic impacts on existing commercial centres.

4: The applicant has not demonstrated an economic need for additional retail development in the shire business centre.

5: The development will

have unacceptable impacts on traffic safety and traffic operations on Noosa’s road network.

The expansion would roughly double the size of the existing Noosa Civic.

One senior Noosa planner told councillors the proposal “would be highly undesirable for the development to impact on Noosa Junction, in particular to an extent that it hinders its revitalisation”.

Ratepayers: No thanks

THE NOOSA Civic retail expansion is not supported by the local ratepayers’ association and the Noosa Parks Association, and has been rejected as part of a Noosa business survey

Back in January 2015, the Noosa Shire Residents and Ratepayers Association was among the first to voice public opposition to the plan, saying the applicant’s claims the centre’s potential market population would grow to almost 90,000 in the next six years was “wildly ambitious”.

NPA’s submission to the council says the Noosa Civic proposal involves “unacceptable conflict with the desired and planned form and function of the Noosa business centre and fails to provide a range of uses, including a substantial amount of non-retailing development for employment opportunities”.

In a poll conducted by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland’s Noosa branch, 53% of respondents rejected the plan and 39% supported the current development application before Noosa Council.

And the CCIQ Noosa said there was a similar response from the 164 businesses polled in one month as to whether they thought the proposed expansion would be good for the Noosa economy.

A chamber representative said most of the small business owners objected to the proposal on the grounds it did not conform to the town planning scheme, would negatively impact current retail businesses and was not supported by the business community.