

Save Our Brisbane Suburbs

Part of the Australia wide *Save Our Suburbs* network

Factsheet #1

Why do our Councils have policies which destroy local community and urban amenity?

Why do local authorities promote community development and community participation yet impose unwanted development? This increasingly obvious paradox results from the failure of local authorities to include community decision making processes in their planning schemes. The problem is arguably worst in Brisbane where each Councillor has a "community" of up to 28-30000 people but no ability to generate community decision making processes ... decisions are made in City Hall irrespective of local need. What kinds of issues confirm this problem?

Roads and traffic Local residents are usually very aware of traffic problems eg speeding traffic, dangerous crossings or unsafe routes eg to school or to catch a bus. However, authorities inevitably favour regional need over local need. Reduced speed limits are sought but rejected along with requests for safer walking or cycling conditions eg to allow children to walk or cycle to school, play or shops. Why promote fast traffic over local amenity or safe walking?

Flooding Locals are inevitably aware of previous floods. Why then are developments being allowed in areas which are both flood prone and also serve as "storage" so flood heights are minimised. Examples include floodplains being filled for development including housing. In the future, it is the occupiers of flooded premises which loose while the costs are born by those who insure for other risks. The cost of predictable flooding should be met by those approving development ... local authorities. High risk areas are known ... they should never be approved for development especially not for housing! Why approve development in flood zones?

Creeks, local flooding and stormwater runoff Increased development reduces ponding and soakage thus rapidly increasing the rate of runoff which inevitably increases the amount of debris. The result is a rapid increase in local flooding caused by the inability of the normal piped system to cope. Why do Councils approve increasingly intensive development which reduces the area for soakage and ponding and increases the proportion of our suburbs under roof or paving? Despite concerns about "restoring" creeks and wetlands, these areas cannot withstand the intensity of flow generated by rapidly increasing runoff rates.

Trees and greenery While Councils frequently promote bushland retention and "protect" trees, approvals to subdivide and intensively redevelop suburban land creates conditions where trees cannot be retained and, after the necessary driveways and other paving, there is no space for large trees and large areas of greenery. Why then do they promote protection but approve development which makes the protection unworkable? Why have policies which conflict?

Character and housing People choose where they live for many reasons. Perhaps the most important is the combination of needs being met and certainty the area will improve or remain as is. The certainty is threatened by developers. Council planning processes are so biased towards development, local community is often prohibited from "having a say". Why is this?

Local community and urban amenity Local communities are surprisingly clear on what they want. That is why people are there! Why then do Councils promote themselves as protectors of both local community and urban amenity ... but have policies to approve their destruction?