Centre Improvement Program

Like the Place Making Projects, these are large capital upgrade projects that have been identified in a precinct master plan. They are funded in partnership with owners of commercial property in a centre and are subject to a high level of community consultation.

The Centre Improvement Program (CIP) represents an exciting new phase in the growth of our city. The Gold Coast currently has a population of over 500,000 people, which is expected to double over the next 20 years.

It is essential to manage the ongoing expansion of our dynamic city by providing clear direction for the future growth of the many centres. Our changing community is seeking more from the city’s centres, as places to do business, shop, meet friends and enjoy the surrounds. The primary aim of the CIP is to help centres meet these needs.

What is the Centre Improvement Program?

View the 'Centre Improvement Program' video transcript below

The CIP links into the new Gold Coast Planning Scheme, and aims to facilitate the physical, economic and social revitalisation of Gold Coast centres.

The CIP partners with property owners, businesses, the development industry and the community to achieve a shared vision.

The CIP aims to transform the city's centres into:

- attractive, vibrant places where people want to be
- places which embrace community needs and aspirations
- comfortable convenient places with improved personal, traffic and pedestrian safety
- places of unique identity celebrating local character
- successful business and community destinations

CIP community consultation

Community consultation is a key component of every centre improvement project. A Project Reference Group is formed at the instigation of every project with membership comprising commercial property owners from the project area, traders and relevant members of the local community.

Scope of works

Each Centre Improvement Program seeks to build on local characteristics, culture and history to enhance its identity. This is achieved by using a distinctive palette of streetscaping elements such as coordinated street furniture (seats, rubbish bins, street lights, bollards and bicycle racks), landscaping, and upgraded pavements using a range of different materials.

Many Centre Improvement Programs incorporate public art. Local artists are commissioned to generate designs for unique street furniture, mosaics, murals and so on, which help to reinforce the special qualities and unique characteristics of individual town centres.

When designing a Centre Improvement Program the following issues are addressed:

- walkability – creating spaces for pedestrian traffic
- accessibility – creating spaces which are easily accessible
- views and vistas – providing clear sight lines
- visual amenity – creating attractive places to walk, shop, eat and relax
- kerbside allocation – providing built-outs for dining and gardens, footpath widening
- landscaping and irrigation – upgrading planting and pavements
- public art – designing and installing art works to enhance the centre's individual character
- street furniture – installing seating, shelters, bins, bicycle racks
- parking – balancing the need for efficient traffic circulation and provision of parking
- lighting – providing feature lighting and street lighting
- safety – ensuring the improvements provide a safe environment for all future users of the centre

A partnership program

The Centre Improvement Program provides an opportunity for the City of Gold Coast, commercial property owners, traders and the local community to work together to achieve a better outcome for each local centre.

Commercial property owners have the opportunity to maximise the potential gains to their private properties by undertaking upgrade works in partnership with the works undertaken by the City.

The City is happy to provide guidance on colour schemes, planting plans, character elements and signage to commercial property owners who wish to undertake similar improvement works to their own properties during the delivery of the Centre Improvement Program.
By working together, the City and commercial property owners have the potential to attract new business, increase rental or lease returns, and improve capital values within centres.

Shared funding

All commercial property owners within a proposed Centre Improvement Program area are given the opportunity to vote on whether they would like a project to proceed in their area.

If commercial property owners vote to proceed with a Centre Improvement Program for their centre, the City will provide two thirds of the cost of the project and commercial property owners will be required to contribute one third of the cost of the project.

The City will initially pay the full cost of each project. One third of the cost of the project is then repaid to the City by commercial property owners over a ten year period, through the City’s rates process.

No interest is charged to commercial property owners for their component of the project cost and no repayment will be required until after the completion of construction of the project.

Economic benefits of the CIP

An assessment of the economic benefits derived from the CIP (with respect to value for money and return on investment) was undertaken by an independent consultant, RPS Australia East Pty Ltd. The consultant’s report revealed that there has been a tangible economic benefit derived in each of the three centres, Burleigh Heads, Paradise Point and Chevron Island, assessed. Individually, they have produced positive financial returns to the community and delivered new employment opportunities.

The consultant found that “the CIP is a unifying element which provides maximum benefits when applied to main street precincts with multiple owners. These precincts have the capacity to change over time because of the multiplicity of owners, sites and tenants that can individually respond to new opportunities.” The consultant also identified that the “greatest benefit is achieved when the precincts are multifunctional and cater to a diverse range of needs of their target catchments...the benefits of the CIP are distributed amongst a range of businesses and their customers.”

Whilst a centre may produce a positive performance over time, the introduction of a CIP effectively brings forward future benefits that may be achieved in a centre with a modest increase in investment and performance in the two years after a CIP project is completed, followed by a substantial improvement in performance (employment and expenditure) in two to five years, with a reducing rate of improvement after the fifth year.

The additional benefits of the CIP can be summarised as follows:

- Every dollar invested by the landowners generates a return of $25 in additional rent (on average) over the 10 year assessment period;
- Every dollar invested by the landowners generates a return of $24 in additional profit (on average) to traders over the 10 year assessment period. (This improvement in trading performance is triggered by new investment undertaken by traders);
- The CIP budget ($5.5 million) for the three centres evaluated has produced an additional 1,350 person years of employment to date.

The process

Centre Improvement Program projects generally have four key phases:

1. Consultation

   - Initial consultation with commercial property owners.
   - Commercial property owners vote to determine whether a project should proceed in their area.
   - The Project Reference Group is formed.

2. Planning and design

   - Site analysis is undertaken and design concepts are developed in consultation with the Project Reference Group.
   - Design solutions are presented to the Project Reference Group for discussion and resolution.
   - Construction documentation is undertaken.

3. Construction

4. Ongoing maintenance

   - A high level of ongoing maintenance is undertaken by the City to ensure the lasting value of the works.

What’s coming?

CIP is preparing a new, five year capital works program. Further information will be available once the program is finalised.

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For more information please view the CIP videos via our YouTube page.

Related information

- Centre improvement project showcase
- Centre improvement project testimonials

Key information

External links

View the 'Centre Improvement Program' video on YouTube.