Urban design studies

The City of Gold Coast has developed urban design studies to support our vision of sustained growth and economic development. The studies also aim to provide research into quality design that complements the natural landscape and unique Gold Coast lifestyle.

Urban Tree Canopy Study

Urban trees are part of the solution to some of the key challenges that face our urban areas. Such challenges include:

- heat wave vulnerability
- physical inactivity
- sustaining economic prosperity, liveable neighbourhoods and social health and wellbeing.

Effective and ongoing urban tree canopy monitoring enables the City to stay informed of changes and trends. This helps to create beautiful streets and public spaces for the health and wellbeing of everyone.

The Study used 2009, 2014 and 2018 airborne Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data. The study:

- mapped tree canopy cover at two height classifications, 3m and 15m and
- provided percentages of tree canopy cover by
  - suburb
  - land use zones
  - road reserves
  - active travel routes and environmental critical corridors.

The Study documented where tree canopy cover has changed between 2009 and 2018. It identified trends, challenges and opportunities for improvement.

The Urban Tree Canopy Study won the Landscape Planning category award at the 2020 QLD Landscape Architecture Awards.

Download the

Place Analysis Studies

The City of Gold Coast is committed to protecting areas on the Gold Coast with a particular local identity, natural resource base or development character. The Place Analysis Studies aim to ensure character elements are appropriately considered in future development decisions at the activity centres along the Southern Gold Coast Strip.

While the major tourism and lifestyle destination of Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach, Burleigh Heads and Coolangatta have largely shaped perceptions of the city, activity centres of the Southern Gold Coast including Mermaid Beach, Nobby Beach, Miami, Burleigh Heads, Palm Beach, Tugun and Kirra deliver essential local amenity and offer a community-focused layer of social richness to the City.

Each centre has grown in response to a myriad of local influences that include topography, settlement patterns and historic land use with the Place Analysis Studies developed in consideration of the future of these special qualities.

Download Place Analysis Studies

Building Height Study

The Building Height Study was established in partnership with Urbis to deliver an approach to city image based on city shape values and building height principles. This research was conducted in response to the expected population increase of 351,100 by 2041 and set out to capture the values that define the Gold Coast as a young and maturing city.

As a city recognised for its golden beaches, world-class surf breaks and iconic tall building skyline, the Building Height Study aims to inform future urban design based on building height principles appropriate to the city’s context. These principles seek to retain the Gold Coast’s admirable lifestyle through balancing the need to protect its natural environment whilst encouraging sustainable investment and growth in the right locations.

The Building Height Study includes two volumes:

- Building Height Study Volume 1 focuses on research and analysis of independent urban studies that explore the context, capacity and ambition of the Gold Coast.
- Building Height Study Volume 2 provides the building height strategy with the future intentional city shape vision, design principles and recommendation for implementation.

Download Building Height Study

Landscape Character Study

The Gold Coast Landscape Character Study provides a detailed assessment of landscape character and landscape heritage across the Gold Coast, defining the city’s distinctive identity and sense of place. From long stretches of beaches and coast headlands to the distinctive high-rise strip, canal estate and backdrop of mountains, the study advocates strategies to preserve and enhance this unique landscape and promote city growth.
This work will also inform the way that the Gold Coast landscape is planned and managed by government and the private sector. The study aligns with and supports the Corporate Plan Gold Coast 2022, the City Plan and the Culture Strategy 2023. At the citywide level the study maps and assesses the whole of the Gold Coast, while a limited number of local focus areas have been initially assessed at a greater level of detail. The study will be updated as additional focus areas are mapped over the coming years.

The nine Landscape Character Types identified and mapped in the study at the city-wide level, are outlined below:

1. Watercourses, estuary and ocean
2. High rise development
3. Coastal headlands and beaches
4. Bay Islands and Spit
5. Lowlands
6. Coastal plains and low hills
7. Foothills
8. Distinct valleys
9. Mountains

Download Gold Coast Landscape Character Study

**Gold Coast Rapid Transit Corridor Study**

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit (GCRRT) Corridor Study provides recommendations for future directions for the 2,000 hectares (approximate) of the city surrounding the new light rail system. The study aligns with City of Gold Coast’s vision for leading the way towards a bold future capable of sustaining growth and economic development while retaining a lifestyle that is uniquely Gold Coast.

The study will also inform the planning scheme to meet the future needs of the community and provide better buildings, better streets and better places. A key recommendation of the study is to improve the streets and public spaces of the Gold Coast.

Download Gold Coast Rapid Transit Corridor Study

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