

**Ray Miller's Response to Staff Report
Draft 2015-2022 Housing Element
Planning Commission Meeting of March 12, 2015**

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Comm. Dev. Dept. Brisbane

Though I am pleased that the Staff Report presents and analyzes alternative scenarios for the housing overlay configuration, I am unhappy that the Report misconstrues my alternative, thus making some of the arguments against it of the "straw man" variety.

My suggested alternative was to only remove the warehouse at 145 Park Lane (the most westerly) from the high-density housing overlay. The two warehouses at 105-115 and 91-99 Park Lane would both continue in that overlay while the two properties along Park Place would change from mixed-use to the residential overlay. The property known as 125 Valley Drive would go back to being mixed use as it was in the previous Housing Element. I believe that configuration lowers the minimum densities required and negates the argument that 91-99 Park Lane would be isolated.

The Staff Report argument about roadway pollution and noise seems to presume that housing would be built along Bayshore Blvd. and Valley Drive. That was not my presumption; I imagined housing being clustered along Old County Road and that zoning restrictions would require that housing not be built too close to heavily traveled roadways.

The issue of air pollution has an interesting history. The Staff Report says that there will not be a health problem. The expert studies that were prepared several years ago for the freight forwarding application at 325 Valley Drive came to the same conclusion. However, a significant segment of the community, including some health professionals, was not convinced. They were worried about the proximity of Lipman school. The Council agreed with them, and denied the application. Since 145 Park Lane is at a similar distance from 325 Valley Drive, a high-density apartment building could expose children 24 hours a day to truck-generated air pollution. During the discussion on the freight forwarding application, Council member Waldo pointed out that an ordinary warehouse could conceivably create as much truck pollution as a freight forwarder. My concern about the air pollution implications respects the community expression that was voiced at that time.

The replacement of viable commercial warehouse property with dense housing also concerns me. Replacing the warehouse at 145 Park Lane with dense, multi-unit

housing represents a significant intrusion into Crocker Park. It raises a variety of incompatibility issues. Crocker Park is by far Brisbane's most successful business area. As the representative of the owner of the warehouses on Park Lane has several times stated: "As soon as residents are introduced, they will want restrictions on the adjacent business activity." For years Brisbane fought to get rid of the Quarry trucks traveling on Quarry Road, San Francisco Avenue, and Old County Road. We didn't really succeed until Crocker Park was annexed to the City from the County. Now we are contemplating bringing dense populations of people back closer to the trucks.

The Staff Report seems to downgrade the importance of the Housing Element (It is not "the larger vision") while at the same time implicitly working from a larger vision. The General Plan is the most important guidance document for any city. However, Brisbane's General Plan, except for the Housing Element, has not been updated since 1994. Therefore, the Housing Element takes on a greater importance than would otherwise be the case.

The proposed Housing Element envisages high density residential use in the southeastern corner of Crocker Park. Whether that's the general community's vision has not been tested. Whether the citizens of Brisbane want the Old County and Valley entrances to be consolidated into one has not been tested. Neither resonates with me, but I don't know what the general public thinks.

If we had been starting out together two years ago, alternative visions could have been shared and informed our respective thinking processes. In my view, since we are talking about the General Plan, the Council should have as big a role as the Planning Commission. The tight time schedule at the end of the process seems to presume a mostly rubber stamp role for the Council. I obviously disagree with that assumption. I am pleased that at least some of the Council's thoughts and concerns have been shared, even though it's too late to have the type of collaboration that I would have preferred.