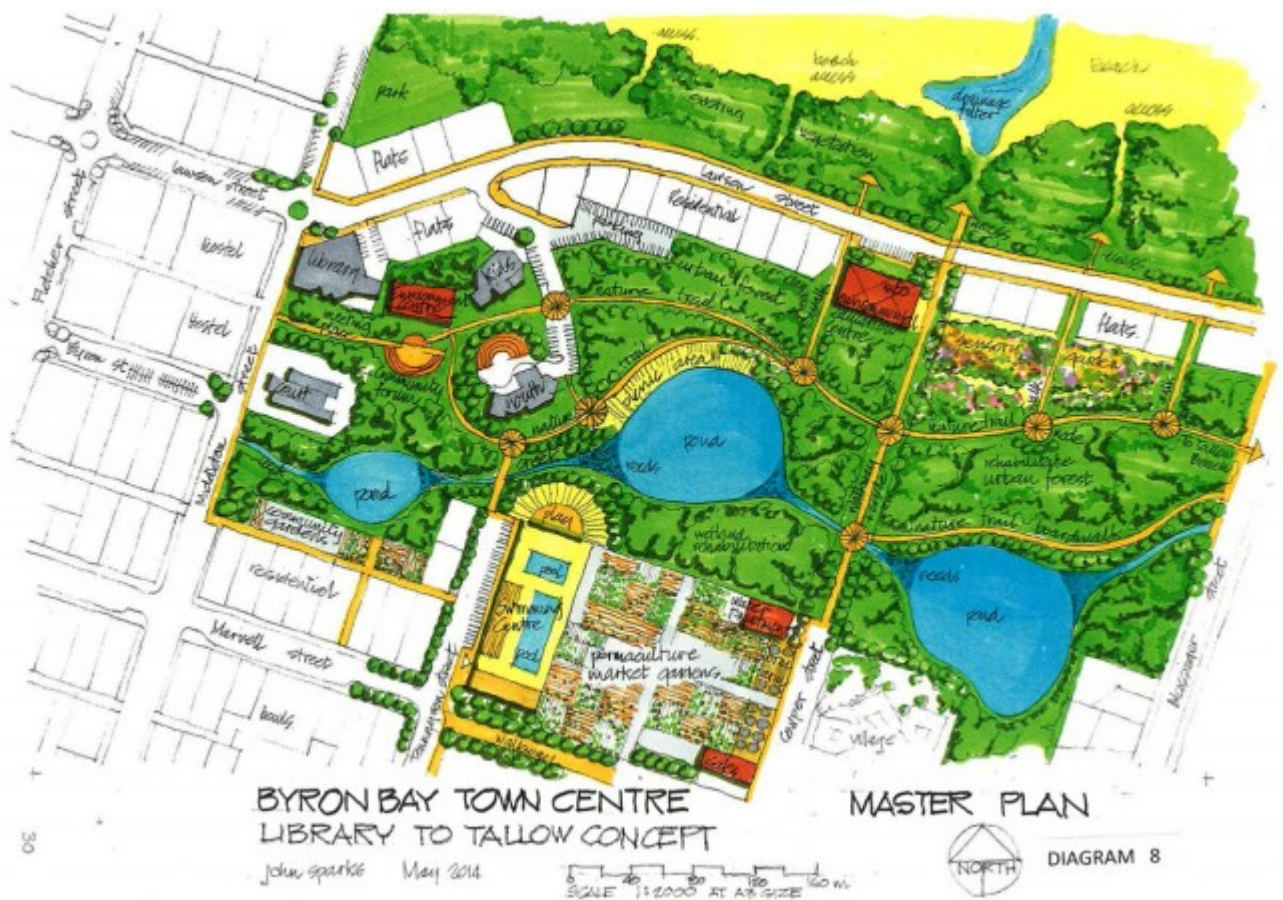


# Retired planner submits his vision for Byron Bay



## Image by John Sparks

A vision for Crown land east of the town; retired planner/architect John Sparks has submitted a detailed vision for Byron Bay.

Recently Byron Shire Council, along with the business chamber, encouraged the public to be involved in how to improve the town's CBD.

An interactive map at [www.byronbayourplan.com.au](http://www.byronbayourplan.com.au) was recently launched and contains suggestions by the public, and consultants McGregor Coxall are tasked by council with providing a report, which is expected around September 2015.

And with mayor Simon Richardson claiming that over 700 ideas have already been submitted, *The Echo* features here extensive concept plans from local retired town planner and architect, John Sparks.

Entitled *Reclaiming The Spirit Of Byron*, Mr Sparks says, 'This study assesses the potential of a vision for Byron Bay town centre to encompass its natural surrounds and enhance the open environment to be an integral part of the town.'

‘This includes the potential to be self-sufficient by generating energy, recycling water, reusing waste and producing food in a sustainable zero-carbon town.’

While obviously ambitious, Sparks believes his proposal is not only feasible but ‘makes good economic sense to those who choose to be part of our community and sets a significant example for others.’

‘For a small population of about 10,000 people to cater for 1,400,000 visitors each year is no small task, and we can only do this by reclaiming our community and reinforcing the assets we have, because if we lose the uniqueness of Byron, we lose the reason for visitors to come and we will finish up like all other mundane towns that come and go.

He says the basis for the plan is defined by four open spaces: the Butler Street Reserve, Railway Park, Main Beach and Crown land behind the courthouse and Sandhills childcare centre.

### **Beach park**

The suggestion by Mr Sparks is to relocate the swimming pool near the beachfront to behind the courts and Sandhills daycare centre and instead use that space for parking.

The cafes and restaurant would remain, while a large amphitheatre and stage would be opposite in Apex Park.

The top end of Jonson Street would also be closed to traffic, but one-way traffic would head straight up the middle of the existing carpark adjacent to Jonson Street.

### **Railway Park**

Mr Sparks suggests creating carparks on the Butler Street side to accommodate a loss of parking around Railway Park, which could be created into more open spaces.

Walkways would connect the town’s CBD, while a substantial transit centre could exist, along with a dedicated one-way Butler Street bus bypass, around the Railway carpark.

An art gallery is proposed for the area tucked in next to the post office on Byron Street.

### **Butler Street**

A Byron Bay skate park and pop-up stage could be built around the existing toilet at the Butler Street Reserve, according to Mr Sparks. Also he suggests that a large pond in rehabilitated wetlands built west of the market space could provide grey water for the town.

Additionally new bikeway paths could connect to existing trails towards Belongil Creek.

## **Library to Tallow**

Crown land behind the courts and Sandhills daycare centre could provide the most opportunity for enhanced town development, according to Mr Sparks's plans.

Bike trails winding through rehabilitated wetlands could run past to three large ponds connected to a water treatment centre. Another community centre, more parking and a visitor info centre is suggested. Additionally, community gardens and a permaculture market garden could be located around the southern end, near the Byron Recreation Ground.

**Source:** <http://www.echo.net.au/2014/12/retired-planner-submits-vision-byron-bay/>