



The Chief Executive Officer  
Sunshine Coast Regional Council  
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28 February 2025

Dear Sir

**Subject: First Bay Retention Works, David Low Way, Coolum Beach – Request for Urgent Consultation to avoid unintended detrimental impacts on local amenity and values**

CRA is not aware of any community consultation that was undertaken to inform the design of this project, and is very concerned that the design of the built-form elements of this project (as distinct from the principal civil engineering works) will have serious detrimental impacts on important local community values and amenity.

First Bay (together with Point Perry and the adjoining bays) is an important part of Coolum Beach and the broader Sunshine Coast. First Bay features prominently in advertising and promotional material for the Sunshine Coast. It is the first point at which the David Low Way touches the coast and opens up panoramic sea views. It is a popular spot for surfing and beach recreation. People regularly stop on David Low Way to check out the surf or just enjoy the views, which they do from the grassed areas adjoining the pathway without impeding cyclists or walkers. The pathway itself forms part of the Coastal Walkway and links to Point Perry and the well-used Coolum Boardwalk with its distinctive design, seating and viewing platforms and in-built opportunities for local art works. In short, First Bay is a much loved and well used part of Coolum Beach and its characteristics and amenity need to be protected and enhanced where possible. We fear the current design does not do this.

Some time ago CRA identified the opportunities the retention works may provide to enhance, or at least maintain, the amenity and use of First Bay. Accordingly, CRA contacted Division 9 Councillor Maria Suarez on 23 January noting that the information provided to date does not address these detailed aspects of the work, and requesting her to arrange for Council officers to provide “further information regarding the detail of the proposed walkway and associated elements (eg railings, viewing/resting areas, planting and finishes)”.

After two follow-up emails from CRA (to Cr Suarez on 31 January, and to the nominated project officer on 7 February), a “No Reply” response from the project team was received on 20 February. The response did not adequately respond to the information request. It reiterated some publicly available information, advised that the design was in accordance with various codes and standards (as would be expected), that the path would be concrete and that the balustrading would be fitted with cyclist friendly handrails. But we are still largely uninformed as to the final appearance and detailed design of the built form elements. The response did advise that “existing funding does not facilitate enhancements or improvements to project elements as the works are limited to the approved scope. Regarding the possibility of seating or rest area within the works site, Council will consider retrofitting street furniture in the future if additional funding becomes available.”.

No information was provided as to how the scope of work came to be approved. Clearly it was not based on any community consultation. Given the local councillors' deep understanding of local values and concerns, it seems unlikely they were consulted. The information provided to date seems very engineering centric (fair enough perhaps) which raises the question of whether Council's other design specialists (landscaping, environmental etc) were involved as they should have been.

Further information suggests that the pathway may be physically separated from the adjoining parking lane on David Low Way by a safety barrier and a balustrade or fence of some sort. If correct, this would prevent the very freedom of movement and access that is such an important element of the character of First Bay.

The issues raised in this email relate to relatively minor aspects of the overall project. These could be consulted on and reconsidered without affecting the delivery of the principal civil engineering works. It's not too late to avoid detrimental impacts and achieve better outcomes for First Bay, but we need to start soon.

CRA respectfully requests Council to initiate a design review of the built form aspects of the project. Such a review should include local community consultation and multi-disciplinary design input. CRA would like to be consulted, and could nominate other interested parties and organisations if that would assist.

Your sincerely,

Gary Lee  
Secretary, Coolum Residents Association

Cc Cr Maria Suarez, Cr Taylor Bunnag