

Boardwalk plan for south coast

by Geoff Chambers
Tweed bureau

AN ambitious plan to transform the southern Gold Coast into a budding Venice Beach is being considered by councils on both sides of the border.

Initial plans have targeted the construction of a 15km beach promenade, which would begin at Bilinga and snake its way south into Tweed Heads.

The joint project, between the Gold Coast and Tweed Shire councils, involves the creation of a pedestrian friendly foreshore precinct that would link the booming beachfront regions.

Tweed Heads facilitation team project manager Magdy Youssef said the proposal would position the area as a world-class beachside address.

"On completion, it will rival Venice Beach in California, San Sebastian in Spain and Nice on the French Riviera - only it will incorporate some of the most

spectacular headlands and beaches found anywhere," said Ms Youssef.

"Between the two councils, we are about to witness the largest foreshore rejuvenation plan ever seen in this region."

The first stage of the proposal involves the transformation of the old Border Park caravan site into cultural gardens.

The second stage will incorporate a civic entertainment area, an underwater observatory, a water park, a tourist centre and a riverwalk.

"Under the plans people will be able to walk or cycle unimpeded from Bilinga, around the southern headlands of Kirra and Coolangatta, and over the border via Point Danger to Jack Evans Boat Harbour," she said.

The Gold Coast City Council is awaiting a final report from environmental consultants before starting work on the new Kirra foreshore masterplan extending from Bilinga to Point Danger.

The overall scheme is part of the Gold Coast City Council's Oceanway program, which extends to the Gold Coast Seaway in the north.

Area councillor Chris Robbins said the adjoining suburbs complemented each other and a foreshore boardwalk would further enhance the border community.

"The precinct will form a transition between the intensive urban landscape of Coolangatta and the more natural 'coastal village' landscape of Kirra," said Cr Robbins.

"It is a very exciting strategy for the southern end and the fact it links in with the Tweed masterplan is another major bonus."

Features of the masterplan are likely to include pedestrian zones, parkland plazas, playgrounds, tree planting and car parking.

Both councils are working in tandem to enhance Hill and Boundary streets, which will effectively link the two masterplans.

Plans are being prepared for release to the public in March.

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