

Spit set for \$58m revamp

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AN aquatic stage, being proposed as part of a \$58 million overhaul of The Spit, could transform the dust bowl into one of the country's premier live music locations.

A report has been released by the Gold Coast City Council which outlines plans to construct an amphitheatre, marine stadium, bird watching hubs and an extension of the Federation Walk. The project could set up the rundown beach and parklands area as a rival to Brisbane's River Stage.

The report outlines a grand plan to build an integrated infrastructure network, which would deliver a family and tourism hub with lagoons, lookouts, diving and surfing platforms and markets. The overhaul would also clean up the unsavoury area known as Bums Bay, which is packed with boaties looking for free mooring spaces.

The report outlines plans to deliver infrastructure, which could handle national and international events ranging from a balloon race to state and national surf titles.

It says 'a renewed Spit would attract an even bigger slice of the interstate and international tourist markets'.

Community and cultural development director Colette McCool said the proposal would be put on display for public consultation. She said the council would need to rely on state funding to complete all elements of the proposal. "Doug Jennings Park is still owned by the Department of Transport and of course they would have to be closely consulted," said Ms McCool. "The next step is to get some valid consultative data together that we can take to them and pitch our case. "On the funding issue, council would be required to fund a large portion of the project with the ideal outcome being a partnership with the State Government."

The revamped area would take in open spaces north of the Sea World Resort and east of Seaworld Drive.

Coolangatta councillor Chris Robbins was concerned about where funding would be sourced to bankroll the project. "Nobody on the Gold Coast wants The Spit to go on resembling a Third World country like it currently does," she said. "And I would say yes, let's go ahead, if we had the money, but we must be careful with how much we spend. "I couldn't agree to anything close to \$58 million."

Community and cultural development committee chairman Cr Bob La Castra said he was keen to hear from community groups and residents.

Council officers have already talked with industry and commerce stakeholders about their vision for The Spit.

"We've worked with the State Government and the community on the Southport Broadwater Parklands which is just across from The Spit," said Cr La Castra.

"I hope that we have the opportunity to all work together again and create another world-class public parkland.

The State Government is pushing ahead with its immediate plan to fast-track a super-yacht marina on The Spit.

Tourism Minister Desley Boyle recently rejected the merits of a cruise ship terminal.

Councillors are expected to endorse the proposal at Monday's council meeting.