

## State set to fast-track Coomera Town Centre

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**Leah Fineran | December 4th, 2009**

THE Gold Coast's super city is set to explode after years of ticking away like a time bomb.

Under a new State Government reform, plans to build the Coomera Town Centre, which will create 10,500 homes and 20,000 jobs and the Gold Coast's largest shopping quarter, have been doused with rocket fuel and the development could now be completed within four years.

For the past 14 years the \$1 billion project has been mired in paperwork, inter-government clashes and commercial stoushes, leaving it lagging behind the population spike in the northern Gold Coast corridor.

That could all change with Infrastructure minister Stirling Hinchliffe expected to make an announcement this month of a reform to cut through bureaucratic red tape and unleash a storm of overdue development.

Council preparations are already under way, anticipating the minister's bombshell which will declare Coomera as Queensland's first 'master-planned' region under the new Sustainable Planning Act which comes into effect from December 18.

The reform will force the Gold Coast City Council to create a single powerful masterplan within six months to allow developers to fast-track their applications and start construction sooner.

Mr Hinchliffe remained tight-lipped on his announcement this week but said he supported 'expedition' of the Coomera Town Centre and would be working closely with the council to have plans finalised for the precinct as soon as possible.

Once approved, Coomera is expected to boom with a population of 83,000 by 2016 and 100,000 by 2026.

A Westfield shopping centre, a civic town centre and Coomera Rail Station will form the heart of the centre surrounded by high-density residential development and social infrastructure which could include a hospital, university, courthouse and library.

The Bulletin understands the masterplan option was touted by the State Government after frustration over 11 months of holds-ups at the council level.

Despite the pending good news, lead developer Westfield maintained a cautious position and refused to comment this week.

Council's Sustainable City Future committee boss Councillor Peter Young said a masterplan completed by July would open the door for developers to have their applications finalised in 2011.

"The earliest I believe we can expect something substantial to be built at Coomera is 2013," he said.

But local councillor Donna Gates said she hoped the public would see official openings in 2011 or 2012.