

Expert's demand: go forth, go north

A PROPERTY heavyweight has issued a Coast-wide call to push the city's boundaries north.

Midwood Report author Bill Morris said residents' groups should lobby Gold Coast City Council to expand the city's urban footprint under the draft South East Queensland plan to ensure sustainable growth.

The alternative would be further high-density development in already-crowded suburbs.

The Gold Coast's development footprint – under review in the State Government's plan – has not changed in the 15 years since the city's amalgamation with Albert Shire in 1994.

"In 15 years, we've taken in 200,000 people while there's been 80,000 more dwellings built," he said.

Despite 2009's correction in home prices, he said expansion north was the key to avoiding harsh market rises, like the 120 per cent spike experienced in 2003. He also said higher-density dwellings in established areas, under guidelines suggested for the new town plan due in 2012, were unlikely to prove a

By MATT QUAGLIOTTO

long-term solution to growth problems.

"Concerned groups need to lobby the council and councillors," he said.

"Any interest group is only going to have one chance of changing anything within the next 10 years and that's now."

He noted areas outside the urban footprint, such as Pimpama, towards the Coomera River and east of Yawalpah Road, as prime urban expansion sites but identified the need for 'green buffers' between developments.

City Sustainable Futures Committee chairman Peter Young said under the regional draft plan, 135,000 new dwellings would be built on the Gold Coast by 2026, 80,000 of which would be in established areas.

He said the council's submission to the draft plan did not call for an increase in the urban footprint given residents' need to be close to services and infrastructure.

"There's no need to expand the urban footprint, except to accommodate some additional industrial development around Yatala," he said.