

CENTRAL HIGHFIELDS MASTERPLAN



Background

During February 2025, Toowoomba Regional Council released a draft revision of the Central Highfields Masterplan for community feedback. Council is reviewing and considering the comments provided by the community. Following this process, the revised plan will be presented to Councillors for adoption.

What is a Masterplan?

A masterplan is a high-level document that provides a strategic framework for the future development and growth. It outlines broad goals, zoning intentions, infrastructure planning, and land-use priorities.

Its purpose is to guide long-term decision-making, while remaining flexible enough to adapt to future needs and opportunities.

The Central Highfields Masterplan is a non-statutory document, and it does not replace formal development approval processes required under Council's planning scheme.

For this to occur, it will require the masterplan to be incorporated into the Planning Scheme under formal plan making and amendment processes established by the Queensland Government.

What the Masterplan does *not* do:

- Detail specific development applications, building designs or individual projects.
- It does not automatically rezone land or change existing planning scheme requirements.
- It does not approve specific developments or building designs.
- It does not commit Council or landowners to delivering

particular projects or infrastructure and property acquisitions.

- It does not prevent future changes – it is intended to be a flexible, guiding document, not a rigid blueprint.

Why did the 2018 version of the Central Highfields Masterplan need to be updated?

Masterplanning is a dynamic process that aims to address growth, evolving demographics, liveability, and the needs of the community (which change over time), while also considering economic viability and sound environmental outcomes.

The following are some of the factors that have influenced and required the changes proposed in the draft version released in February 2025.

ShapingSEQ 2023 (Qld State Government)

ShapingSEQ 2023 (the Southeast Queensland Regional Plan) aims to manage population growth, increase urban density, promote infill development, and develop walkable and connected communities.

It also outlines specific population and dwelling growth targets with a requirement that 37% of all dwellings be attached housing (townhouses, apartments, and terrace homes) to better meet the evolving needs of our community. For Highfields, this means that by 2051:

- Population growth: to reach 33,439 (+21,794 additional people)
- Dwelling growth: to reach 14,338 (+8,768 additional dwellings)
- Jobs growth: to reach 5,561 (+ 2,159 additional jobs)

The Highfields population is currently about 11,645 people.

Updates to town planning requirements

The town planning principles have been refreshed to better support community safety, good quality housing, connected communities, and support of public transport.

Market Sounding

Market sounding was undertaken to ensure the masterplan aligns with recent economic realities and market demand, addressing matters such as:

1. Supporting Investment and Growth

Early engagement with developers, businesses, and investors ensures the Masterplan is realistic, commercially viable, and attractive to private investment.

2. Responding to Market Demand

Market feedback helps shape the right mix of shops, services, housing, and public spaces to create a vibrant and successful town centre.

3. Future-proofing the Masterplan

Ensures the Masterplan remains practical, sustainable, and aligned with changing community and business needs as the Highfields township grows over the next 25-30 years.

4. Prioritising Infrastructure

Assist Council with planning and prioritising transport, utilities, and public spaces to support future growth and development.

5. Community Benefit

The 2025 Masterplan incorporates the feedback and recommendations for the purposes of achieving the best return for the community, while balancing the intention of the 2018 masterplan.

Queensland Fire and Rescue

Council has been working with Queensland Fire Department (QFD) to find a suitable permanent, 24/7 fire station in Highfields.

Upgrading Highfields to a 24/7 permanent facility would:

- reduced response delays
- enhance local safety and resilience
- align service local levels with community growth and expectations

QFD is committed to working closely with the community to minimise any local impacts. This includes careful management of vehicle movements, limited use of sirens, and thoughtful station design to suit its surroundings.

The Queensland Government has the power to compulsorily acquire land for emergency services facilities, if an agreement with the Council (as landowner) cannot be reached. Council is committed towards working collaboratively with the Queensland Government to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.



Rationalisation of zoning and land use allocations

Council has improved the clarity of the zoning to better reflect the intended land uses and to reduce confusion between the 2018 masterplan's Mixed Use and Major Centre zones — which currently allows for many of the same land uses under the current Planning Scheme. This updated zoning layout helps define where residential development is appropriate, while protecting the town centre's commercial and retail focus.

These changes are also designed to align with the zoning structure proposed in the upcoming Toowoomba Region Planning Scheme, ensuring long-term consistency and easier interpretation for the community, developers, and decision-makers.

Introduction of a Town Centre Frame

The updated Masterplan introduces a new allocation called Town Centre Frame, intended to support and compliment the core town centre as it grows and develops over time.

This frame surrounds the main commercial area and will provide opportunities for ground floor commercial land uses such as small-scale offices, café's, health services, and community facilities to be established, with opportunities for residential dwellings constructed above. It is intended to act as a transition zone between the busy heart of the town and surrounding residential areas.

The Town Centre Frame helps manage growth in a coordinated way, supporting walkable and vibrant environment, and allows for a greater mix of uses close to shops, services, and public transport, without undermining the core commercial focus of the town centre.



For more information contact Council:
131 872 | <https://yoursay.tr.qld.gov.au/HTC>

RESPONSES TO KEY ISSUES RAISED

The masterplan process is not intended to provide detailed information on future specific uses or detail road cross-sections. Proposed land uses and detailed design will be required as the land is developed, and many of these processes are expected to include further opportunities for community feedback. However, we can provide the following additional information.

Opening of Hitzke Road

Council acknowledges the concerns raised by residents of Hitzke Road and Bronwyn Crescent regarding the proposed new road and pedestrian connections to the town centre site. These connections are a key element of good urban design, aimed at enhancing accessibility and walkability for nearby residential areas. Improved connectivity supports more active forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, and reduces reliance on private vehicles. Without these links, the town centre would be less permeable, making it harder for the community to access shops, services and public spaces conveniently and safely.

Intersection of Hitzke Road and Clarke Road

The intersection at Clarke Road and the eastern side of the road alignment of Clarke Road, between Hitzke Road and O'Brien Road, has sufficient road reserve width to allow for future road pavement widening and improvements to meet changing traffic conditions.

Public Transport Hub

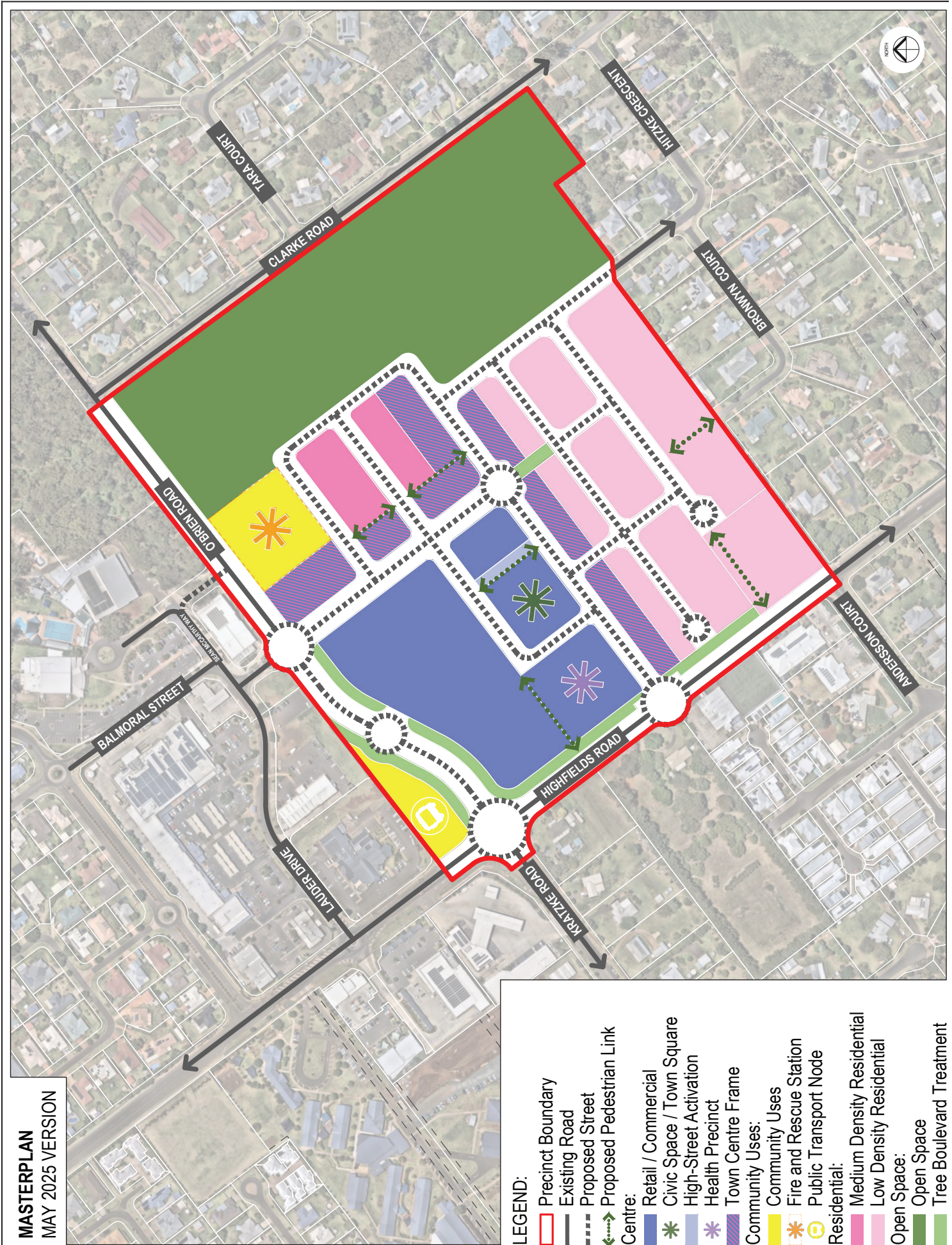
The planned new town centre will bring immediate demand for a centrally located public transport facility that can accommodate the needs of residents, students, workers, and shoppers.

The incorporation of a Public Transport Hub will enhance connectivity and increase opportunities for the Highfields community by providing a central location with easy access to new more frequent public transport services that will progressively occur.

Parkland and Civic Space

Council received a high number of comments and suggestions about the proposed parkland and civic space areas. There will be additional planning processes to assess the best way to use these areas and what facilities should incorporate into the designs, including opportunities for the community to have their say in what they would like to see included.

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MASTERPLAN
MAY 2025 VERSION

- LEGEND:**
- Precinct Boundary
 - Existing Road
 - Proposed Street
 - Proposed Pedestrian Link
- Centre:**
- Retail / Commercial
 - Civic Space / Town Square
 - High-Street Activation
 - Health Precinct
 - Town Centre Frame
- Community Uses:**
- Community Uses
 - Fire and Rescue Station
 - Public Transport Node
- Residential:**
- Medium Density Residential
 - Low Density Residential
- Open Space:**
- Open Space
 - Tree Boulevard Treatment