

PLANNING OUR FUTURE

The Gympie Region Planning Scheme

Gympie Regional Council
New Planning Scheme Project

Draft

Retail and Commercial Position Paper

31 March 2023

Introduction

The town centres of the Gympie region provide a range of retail, commercial and community services to the residents of, and visitors to, the region.

In considering the future economic growth of the region, council is aware of the need for the planning scheme to identify the preferred role and function of each of the region's town centres, the desired urban design outcomes, the need to reinforce local character and to protect the town centres from inappropriate out of centre development.

It is intended that the town centres of the region be characterised by mixed-use development, interesting and diverse public spaces and a built form that reinforce local character and identity as they continue to evolve to become vibrant and vital focal points of economic and social activity.

This paper discusses:

- the issues relevant to the region's town centres,
- the current situation, including constraints and opportunities,
- desired outcomes in relation to town centre development, and,
- potential policy positions to address the identified issues.

The position paper is one of 13 position papers addressing key aspects of the future land use and development policy for Council. The paper has been prepared as part of Stage 2 of the Gympie Regional Council Planning Scheme project and is intended to inform the planning scheme drafting process to occur in Stage 3.

Other position papers to be prepared as Stage 2 are as follows:

- Housing
- Retail and Commercial Development
- Rural Land
- Open Space and Recreation
- Heritage
- Bruce Highway Upgrade Response Strategy
- Biodiversity Conservation
- Scenic Amenity
- Flooding
- Bushfire
- Land Stability
- Coastal Hazards.

Issue 1: Retail and Commercial Land Supply

Discussion:

- The Gympie Retail and Commercial Needs Study, Gympie Regional Council, 12 July 2022, found an over-supply of retail and commercial land in certain areas:
 - there is excess capacity of centres zoned land over and above demand projected in the longer term. The exception is the need for another full line supermarket in Greater Gympie by 2031, with the need for a second supermarket by 2046 .
 - with the exception of the Mary Valley, which is anticipated to record a shortfall in retail floor space by 2031, there is no need for additional non-supermarket floor space within Greater Gympie to 2046.
 - the supply of commercial office floor space in the region (as of May 2022) was 45,533 sqm.
 - the demand in commercial office floor space in the region is projected to increase from 40,275 sqm in 2021 to 62,814 sqm by 2046.
 - From 2031 onwards, it is anticipated there will be a need for additional commercial office floor space within the region.
 - the medical and health care services sub sector is a key driver of commercial office floor space demand with an identified demand for an additional 13,433 sqm of commercial office floor space within this sector to 2041.
 - some consolidation/rationalisation of dispersed local and district centre zoning land is warranted to address fragmentation and localised instances of oversupply.

Desired outcome:

- A sufficient supply of suitably located land zoned for retail, commercial, community services and administrative purposes is available to meet the needs of businesses, service providers, residents and visitors.
- A coherent centres hierarchy is established and maintained.

Policy position:

- Council's planning scheme shall identify the location, extent and sequencing of commercial and retail land to provide for the development of commercial, retail, community and administrative uses within designated centre precincts at a rate adequate for the needs of the population during the planning period.

Actions:

- Within the framework of the planning scheme review, investigate localities with opportunities for the rationalisation of “centre” zoned land through rezoning. Localities to be investigated include:
 - Northern Gympie Strip District Centre - Duke Street between Alfred Street and Iron Street.
 - Gympie Town Centre - Calton Terrace and Young Street.
 - District Centre land along the Highway north of Rose Street:
 - Kilkivan - examine land to the west of Hall Street and the east of Park Street for potential rezoning for non-centres based uses, to encourage consolidation in the longer term.
 - Imbil - Review opportunities for rezoning of sites for centres-based uses.

Issue 2: Development of the Centres Network

Discussion:

- The Gympie Retail and Commercial Needs Study identifies a range of opportunities for retail and commercial development at a centre network level and includes specific recommendations for finer grain planning exercises for relevant precincts.
- Larger scale offices should be directed to the principal centre (Gympie's CBD). Larger scale retail (such as department and discount department stores) should occur within the principal or major centres, while full line supermarkets are directed to district centres and above.
- The centres hierarchy should not be compromised by inappropriate out of centre development.

Desired outcomes:

- The network of centres is understood and recognised within the new planning scheme to provide appropriate levels of access to shopping, community and government services, education, recreation and entertainment.
- Residents and visitors have convenient access to goods and services.

Policy positions:

- The network should consist of:
 - The Gympie central business area and core retail area is the Principal Centre for the region providing the highest order of commercial, community and cultural services and facilities in the region;
 - District Centre uses that do not compromise the primacy of the Gympie Principal Centre may be located at Duke Street, Excelsior Road, Mellor Street, Imbil, Kilkivan, Goomeri and Cooloola Cove;
 - The Gympie Medical Precinct providing integrated and enhanced medical services at both local and regional levels;
 - Local centres at Tozer Street, Stewart Terrace, Curra, Gunalda, Theebine, Widgee, Southside, Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach continue to provide access to services at a local level;
 - Rural local centres and townships include a range of small-scale retail, business and industrial activities to facilitate growth in services and provide employment opportunities.

Actions:

- Within the framework of the planning scheme review:
 - encourage growth in region's network of centres, and
 - provide clear direction on purpose, scale, and limitations for each identified level of centre, generally in accordance with Table 1 below:

Table 1:

Centre	Issue	Strategic proposition
Principal Centre Gympie CBD (Mary Street)	<p>Does not contain the most significant level of retail or commercial office floor space.</p> <p>Gympie Central (Excelsior Road) is the focus of higher order shopping needs and the Northern Gympie Strip District Centre (Duke Street) the focus of commercial office activity within the region.</p> <p>The Gympie CBD could be the focal point for delivery of multi-unit residential, tourist and short term accommodation on sites that are not significantly impacted by flooding.</p>	<p>Potential inclusion of Gympie Centre District Centre (Mellor Street) within the Principal Centre zone.</p> <p>Review the zoning of land within flood affected parts of the Gympie CBD to encourage a transition to an alternative use.</p>
District Centres Duke Street, Excelsior Road, Mellor Street, Southside, Cooloola Cove, Imbil, Goomeri, Kilkivan	<p>Presently, the district centre zone within the Gympie Planning Scheme does not support the delivery of retail and commercial floor space in excess of 2,000sqm. However, it is clear that this allowance has been exceeded in the majority of district centres in Gympie, with Excelsior Road, Mellor Road and Southside accommodating full line supermarkets, with Excelsior Road also accommodating a discount department store.</p>	<p>Review the district centre zone code to address current floorspace limitations.</p> <p>Consider rezoning of land within the area bound by Oak Street, Duke Street and Pine Street to Low impact industry or residential choice as appropriate to reflect either the existing industrial use or opportunities to increase residential densities.</p>
Local Centres Old Maryborough Road, Tozer Street, Stewart Terrace, Crescent Road, Red Hill Road, Mount Pleasant Road, Monkland, Tin Can Bay, Rainbow Beach	<p>The assessment identified no need for additional local centres within the Gympie region, with additional floor space need to be met by expansion of activity within existing centre zones.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure these centres are focussed on convenience shopping needs and limited the extent of office development within these centres, other than for small scale medical uses to service the local community.</p>
Specialised Centres Gympie Medical Precinct Monkland Showroom Precinct	<p>Support for the co-location of low impact/ service industry uses within the Monkland Showroom Precinct to encourage land take-up and recognising the limited need for additional traditional bulky goods floor space in the Gympie region.</p>	<p>Continue to support the development of the Gympie Medical Precinct as the focal point for medical specialist uses, but recognise that health related uses may also establish in other centres zones, particularly within Greater Gympie.</p>

Issue 3: Centre Diversity

Discussion:

- Planning schemes need to accommodate the diverse and evolving nature of town centres to facilitate a wide variety of activities; - retail, commercial, administration, tourism, cultural, entertainment, residential, and community are activities that typically occur within town centres.
- Some centres are moving away from being predominantly retail towards a more lifestyle-oriented focus. Lifestyle centres include entertainment, leisure and retail spaces.
- It is recognised, this needs appropriate management as some centres may be more suited to a wider variety of uses than others.

Desired outcomes:

- An enhanced mix of uses within centres expressed.
- The commercial resilience of the town centre is enhanced by the diversity of activities occurring within it.
- The vibrancy of town centres extends beyond traditional business hours.

Policy position:

- Council will encourage the highest level of diversity in land use, appropriate to each centre's position within the hierarchy of centres.

Actions:

- Within the framework of the planning scheme review, incorporate provisions that encourage mixed use development:
 - Multiple dwellings are currently impact assessable. There is potential to change to code assessment where part of a mixed use development, with specific outcomes requiring ground floor retail/commercial activation.
 - Indoor sport and recreation uses are currently impact assessable. There is potential to change, making Indoor sport and recreation uses (i.e., gymnasiums) either accepted development subject to requirements or code assessable within each of the Centre zones (with the exception of the specialist centre zone).
 - Community uses: There is potential to change to code assessment in the principal centre zone where they are not already accepted development (i.e. in an existing commercial building), as they are currently impact assessable if not categorised as accepted development.
 - Bar, nightclub, entertainment facility and function facility: The potential to change activities such as bars, nightclubs, entertainment and function facilities uses to code assessable development within the principal centre zone will be considered.
 - Craft brewery or distillery – consideration will be given to permitting these uses as code assessable within the Principal centre zone.

Issue 4: Residential Development in Centres

Discussion:

- Medium density residential development concentrated in, or around, key centres provides opportunities for people to live within walking distance of a range of commercial and community activities.
- Residential development within, or in close proximity to, a town centre will expand the business opportunity hours of the town centre by generating “after-hours” activity.
- Gympie town centre presents an opportunity for key worker accommodation to take up underutilised commercial land on the fringes of the town centre in the form of medium density housing
- Expanding the business opportunity hours of a town centre will improve the utilisation of the infrastructure installed to support the town centre.

Desired outcome:

- Residential development and short-term accommodation is provided at an appropriate scale and integrates with the commercial uses of the centre where this can be achieved without creating conflict between commercial and residential development.

Policy position:

- Increased residential densities are accommodated in close proximity to Principal and District Centres at a scale that accords with infrastructure capacity and the nature of surrounding development.

Actions:

- Within the framework of the planning scheme review:
 - Implement residential development strategies that aim to increase residential densities within, and adjacent to, town centres.
 - Review planning scheme codes with a view to encouraging the development of attached dwellings in Gympie.

Issue 5: Town Centre Design

Discussion:

- Many centre design matters are already addressed within the current planning scheme. For example, emphasis is placed on the quality of built form, streetscapes, and the public realm in centres, with particular attention to the creation of active frontages with built to boundary shopfronts and awnings in key locations.
- Each of the existing town centres have their own character and identity – the elements that constitute the character should be identified and preserved.
- The careful consideration of the interface between the public and private domains within town centres is critical to their success.
- Town centres represent significant investment by both the public and private sectors. It is vital therefore that the design of development within the town centre stimulates extended hours of operation to maximise the return on that investment.

Desired outcomes:

- The character and identity of the centres is established through the provision of high quality urban form in all new development through attention to siting, design and finish of buildings, landscaping, vehicle access, and the use of open spaces.
- Supporting infrastructure such as car parking and waste management services are designed and operate in a manner that does not detract from the character or sense of place of the town centre.
- A seamless interface between the private and public domain is achieved.
- The town centre is a safe and vibrant place for commerce, community events and social interaction well beyond the “business hours” in each day.
- Town centre hard and soft landscaping:
 - promotes night-time activation of the centre
 - ameliorates the extremes of weather
 - provides shelter and shade
 - enhances the character and identity of the centre
 - is hard wearing and easily maintained
 - unifies the public and private realms
 - enhances wayfinding.

Policy position:

- Development is well-designed, incorporates public open spaces, provides a high level of amenity, is reflective of the surrounding character of the area and promotes public transport use.

Actions:

- Review planning scheme codes and carry out local area planning to establish a high standard of town centre design with particular regard for:
 - the preferred mix and character of centre uses.
 - building scale, bulk, layout and siting.
 - transport, access and circulation.
 - environmental and amenity.
 - landscaping, streetscapes and centre beautification.
 - heritage and character protection.
 - public spaces –the location and role of major spaces for cultural, recreational and social interaction.