



Topic 1. Integrating the Thomson River Master Plan (TRMP)

Longreach Regional Council adopted the Thomson River Master Plan (TRMP) in May 2021, following extensive community consultation. The master plan sets out a long-term vision and supporting strategies to guide investment and change within a defined area adjacent to the Thomson River.

A key component of this Major Amendment No. 2 is to reflect the adopted Thomson River Master Plan within the Longreach Regional Council Planning Scheme and review whether any broader planning or zoning changes can be made to integrate that vision with surrounding development and context.

What is the Thomson River Master Plan?

The TRMP is a master plan for a defined area of land extending 12 kilometres along the Thomson River from the Fairmount Weir in the north-east to the Town Weir in the south-west. The primary focus of the master plan will be the 4km stretch of the river from Apex Park towards Fairmount Weir. The master plan is a strategic decision-making tool that:

- guides and prioritises investment in physical infrastructure to maximise its value and long-term relevance
- gives a clear indication to the community about the future direction of the waterfront precinct
- provides a place for Council to demonstrate its leadership position on environmental matters, recognition of Aboriginal knowledge and culture, economic contribution and community access
- confirms and reinforces the importance of the Thomson River as the town's most important natural asset.

The Thomson River Master Plan document can be accessed here:

<https://www.longreach.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/824/thomson-river-master-plan-adopted-may-2021>

Options for Amending the Planning Scheme

Under the planning scheme, most of the land within the Thomson River Master Plan (TRMP) area is zoned rural. Two small portions of land (the sites of the existing Apex Park and Outback Watersports Club) are zoned recreation and open space. The whole of the TRMP area is included within the flood hazard overlay in the planning scheme. Bushfire hazard and a segment of the stock route network are also relevant planning considerations within the TRMP area.

The planning scheme presently provides that before being undertaken, the following aspects of the TRMP require planning approval and assessment against the planning scheme and its codes:

- the proposed accommodation, function centre and tourist attraction uses
- community uses within the bushfire hazard area, and
- development undertaken by a private sector entity.

Development proposed by the TRMP would not have been envisaged at the time the planning scheme was drafted. As a result, the planning scheme also does not prevent or restrict development from occurring which would be inconsistent with or adversely impact being able to achieve the aspirations of the TRMP.

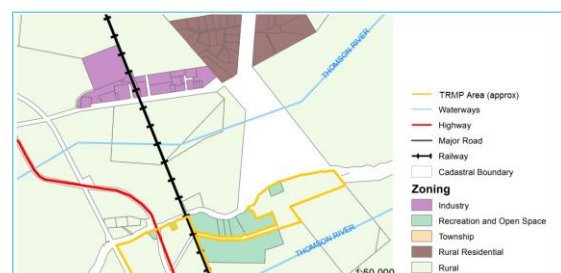


Figure 1: Existing planning scheme zones and the TRMP area.

Exploring potential future land use options for the TRMP area would provide for a broader range of land uses across the different precincts of the TRMP which have distinct roles or functions. There are several ways the planning scheme can be

amended to accommodate development that is consistent with Council's preferred future land use mix for the TRMP. A basic outline of these options, including the foreseen advantages and disadvantages, is outlined in the table below.

Planning Scheme Amendment – Option and description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>1. Amend the Strategic Framework <u>only</u></p> <p>For instance:</p> <p>Review Strategic outcome 3.3.1(3).</p> <p>Insert Strategic outcome to support aspirations of the TRMP (ie. in or around 3.3.1(15) or insert a new Element).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables Council to clearly articulate the types of development envisioned within the TRMP. • Enables Council to elaborate on its vision for the land surrounding the TRMP and the nature of its potential relationship with the TRMP area (for instance, the land between the Western and Eastern Precincts in the TRMP and on the opposite side of the river). • Gives the Council a head of power when deciding and conditioning impact assessable development applications. • The amendment is relatively simple to prepare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May impede, complicate the process or add cost for a future landowner/ developer lodging a planning application that is supported by the TRMP but not reflected in the zoning and other code provisions in the planning scheme. • Does not prevent accepted or code assessable development which may conflict with or compromise the vision of the TRMP from potentially occurring/having to be approved.
<p>2. Amend the Strategic Framework <u>and</u> the zoning of land in and/or around the TRMP area</p> <p>For instance:</p> <p>Consider if expanding the existing Tourism Zone, Community Facilities Zone and/or Environment Management and Conservation Zone may assist in supporting the vision in the TRMP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per 1 above. • Provides more certainty for landowners and the community regarding Council's position on the future land use mix for the TRMP area. • Creates the opportunity for a future landowner/developer to lodge a planning application supported by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the zoning of land within the TRMP area may facilitate and encourage landowners to lodge applications for other activities typically envisaged in those zones, which may not be consistent with or limited to achieving the

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	<p>planning scheme to develop within the TRMP area. This may 'bring forward' delivery of the TRMP objectives.</p>	<p>intent for the TRMP area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the rural zoning of land to an urban zoning has consequences for how other planning considerations are regulated (for instance, native vegetation clearing). In order to do this, Council may be required to demonstrate a measurable local need and regional justification for the proposal. Such justification would typically involve demonstrating there are no feasible alternative options to unlocking new areas for urban uses. • Recognising the fragmented nature of lots and tenures in and around TRMP area, if development is not undertaken in an orderly and integrated manner, it may undermine what is in the best interest of the community. • Given the existing lot configuration and the precincts identified in the TRMP, it may involve split-zoning individual

Planning Scheme Amendment – Option and description	Advantages	Disadvantages
		lots. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amendment would require new mapping to be produced.
<p>3. Amend the Strategic Framework and the Categories of Development and Assessment tables for development on land in the TRMP area</p> <p>Note: Some category of development and assessment triggers that would be reviewed would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment level for a Material Change of Use for the Discovery Centre and Observatory Tower; Assessment level and benchmarks for Material Change of Use for the short-term tourist accommodation uses; Assessment level for Operational Work involved in potentially creating a Wetland in the Outback Campground area; Assessment level for Reconfiguring a Lot for an inflatable water park lease area and associated use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per 1 above. The land would retain its underlying rural or recreation and open space zoning, however the procedural requirements (whether a development permit is required, and where one is required, the assessment process and criteria) could be reduced and/or tailored to facilitate specific development envisaged by the TRMP. Assist in removing 'red tape' and aligning the planning scheme with industry, developer and community expectations of the TRMP by providing greater clarity and certainty around the development assessment process. Subject to the apparent flood hazard and bushfire risks from being addressed in relation to development envisaged by the TRMP, it would not need to affect how other planning considerations are regulated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To fully appreciate the planning intent for the TRMP area, landowners and the community (including new-comers) would need to be familiar with the TRMP or interrogate the planning scheme in more detail than simply relying on a scan of the zone maps. <p>Note: There are mechanisms, such as notating the strategic framework mapping, which could mitigate this disadvantage</p>

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<p>4. Amend existing codes or include a new code in the planning scheme to state specific overall, performance and acceptable outcomes for development in the TRMP area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for tailored assessment benchmarks (criteria) to be applied to stated development on stated land. • Could complement an amendment to the Categories of Development and Assessment tables. • Addresses the disadvantage of amending the Strategic Framework only, in that code provisions can be applied to development which is accepted subject to requirements and code assessable development, and also be taken into account for impact assessable development. • Can expressly impose a provision which requires development (other than accepted development) from compromising or conflicting with the vision of the TRMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the length of the planning scheme document.
<p>5. Amend the planning scheme to include a new precinct for the TRMP area (similar to how the existing stables precinct works).</p> <p>Note: Consideration could be given to defining a precinct in the planning scheme which encompasses additional land to the TRMP, where the planning scheme amendment will expand the planning policy to address the relationship and connectivity between the TRMP area and the land surrounding it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would not be introducing a planning concept or layer because the planning scheme is already set up to include the stables precinct, which has proven workable and generally realised the desired outcomes of the precinct. • A precinct in a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amendment would require new mapping to be produced.

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	<p>planning scheme is a drafting tool that can be used in conjunction with assigning different categories of development and assessment to certain land despite it sharing a zone with other land.</p> <p>Note: According to 6.1(6) of the planning scheme, “Precinct provisions are contained in the zone code.”. Consideration would need to be given to whether the two recreation and open space zoned lots would need to be brought into the rural zone if a precinct as to be adopted for the TRMP area.</p> <p>Note: This approach would work in conjunction with 3 and 4 above, but would define the format for doing so.</p>	
<p>6. Incorporate the consultation findings from the TRMP project to ensure that local heritage values and places identified by Traditional Owners’ are reflected in the planning scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Council continues to improve the way it values, protects and promotes Aboriginal knowledge, culture and tradition in its planning policies. • Utilise information available from consultation and work already undertaken (such as information about bush tucker, location of remnant medicine trees and scar trees, and the importance of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Traditional Owner input into the TRMP project may not have been provided with this purpose in mind. <p>Note: Further consultation may be appropriate before just including this information in the planning scheme in its current form.</p>

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	<p>river in Aboriginal history and tradition).</p> <p>Note: The Major Amendment No. 2 also represents an opportunity to build on and go beyond the information obtained within the scope of the TRMP project This would need to be the subject of further consultation with the Aboriginal community of the Longreach Region.</p>	

Have Your Say

There will be multiple opportunities to have your say during the process. The first of these will be in January 2022 when we release a public survey gathering feedback from our communities on all aspects of the current planning scheme. We will also be seeking to engage face to face with stakeholders on the unique issues covered in each amendment. We anticipate this process commencing in February 2022.

How Can I Keep Updated?

For more information about the proposed planning scheme amendments, or to register for email updates please visit longreach.qld.gov.au/townplan or contact us directly:

Email: assist@longreach.qld.gov.au

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