



## CENTRAL HIGHFIELDS Structure Plan



Adopted Version  
Council Decision - 17 December 2019  
(Planning and Development Committee - 10 December 2019 - Item No.16)

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BACKGROUND

After a number of years of strategic planning for the Highfields Centre, Toowoomba Regional Council (Council) purchased 20ha (approx.) of vacant land at 54 Highfields Road, Highfields and 0 Hitzke Crescent, Highfields (the site). Council now wishes to deliver a strategic vision for a centre which reflects best practice centre design, community aspirations and encourages commercial investment into Highfields.

PROJECT TEAM

Toowoomba Regional Council has engaged the Project Team to assist in preparing a Structure Plan to provide for finer-grain planning of the Central Highfields Master Plan and set a road map for moving forward to delivery. The team includes technical experts who have a proven track record for developing master plans which are implemented, embraced by the community and awarded. The following list includes all members from both Toowoomba Regional Council and the consultant team:



Team Member	Organisation	Expertise
Lachlan Macgregor	Development Directive	Town Planning / Project Management
Rebecca Mayne	Development Directive	Town Planning / Project Management
Peter Macgregor	Development Directive	Development Advisory
Jon Voller	Marchese Partners	Architecture
Paul Chang	Marchese Partners	Architecture
Andrew Tomlins	CUSP	Landscape Architecture
David Waldock	RMA Engineers	Engineering
Ann Whitton	Toowoomba Regional Council	Strategic Planning
Brian McCay	Toowoomba Regional Council	Transport Planning
Kristy Dalton	Toowoomba Regional Council	Parks Strategy
Trevor Mitchell	Toowoomba Regional Council	Stakeholder Engagement
David Krumins	Toowoomba Regional Council	Architecture
Peter Swan	Toowoomba Regional Council	Strategic Planning
Heath Martin	Toowoomba Regional Council	Strategic Planning
Toby Milikan	Toowoomba Regional Council	Water & Waste Planning
Graham Bebbington	Toowoomba Regional Council	Drainage Planning







Highfields is located approximately 12km north of Toowoomba and forms a major and growing satellite town to the Toowoomba CBD. The Highfields population is projected to grow significantly over the next 10 years, by around 7000 people to approximately 16,000 people in 2031. This population growth will generate demand for an additional 27,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial, retail and civic floorspace. Central Highfields is the focal point of retail development and community facilities in the area and is positioned to accommodate most of this commercial floor space growth. Higher density residential development around the retail core will be important to provide a diversity of housing options for population growth and to ensure the ongoing activation of the centre.

The Council has undertaken significant planning in the Highfields area in order to prepare and accommodate for this growth. This planning includes:

- July 2013 – Preparation of the Highfields, Meringandan & Meringandan west Local Plan;
- In July 2018 – Preparation of the Central Highfields Master Plan.
- In November 2019 – Preparation of the Central Highfields Structure Plan (this document).

Council's commitment to the development of this area lead to the acquisition of 20ha of vacant land on the south-east side of O'Brien Road in 2017. The Council seeks to develop the land to accommodate the growing demand for extra commercial, retail and civic floor space in Highfields; to encourage the highest and best use of residential land surrounding the centre and to provide quality public realm that supports the Highfields character and provides recreational/community opportunities for the local and wider community.





The vision is to create a vibrant and exciting centre which will service the Highfields community and the greater region. The precinct will add to the existing Highfields Village centre by providing additional retail and commercial floor space and complementary uses, including administration & office space, medium density housing and further recreation and civic spaces.

With a focus on open-air amenity, maintaining a family-friendly precinct, bushland character and an engaging public realm, the centre will be a destination with a distinct 'Highfields' character. It will be a place for the community to work, meet with friends, attend weekend markets, participate in social events, go to the doctor, undertake weekly shopping and also call home.

With this in mind, the following vision statement has been created for the centre:

*To create a distinct, vibrant centre which provides local & regional residents with a convenient alternative to the Toowoomba CBD to access day to day commercial, leisure and retail facilities. Central Highfields will be a mixed-use location characterised by open-air and bushland surrounds.*

*It will be an exciting place for residents to work, live, shop and interact with the local business.'*





## PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### THE SITE

The site exists in a vacant and natural state. The sites high point is on the north-western corner with a gradient of approximately 2% fall across the site to the south-east corner. There are a number of large stands of mature trees on the site however, none are identified as state significant bushland or habitat.

### THE SURROUNDS

The site is central to the Highfields locality which can be characterised by predominately large lot residential living and open space. The community enjoys ample access to a number of community facilities and parks.

The site is bounded on three sides by Highfields Road (sub-arterial), O'Brien Road (distributor) and Clarke Road (local access). The site is surrounded, to the north-east, south-east and south-west by large-lot residential subdivision (generally greater than >1000m<sup>2</sup>). To the north of site and O'Brien Road is the existing Highfields Village anchored by a Woolworths supermarket and number of specialty stores. An Aldi & service centre has recently been approved adjacent to the Highfields centre across Highfields Road. The Highfields community centre (Fitness, Cultural, Aquatic) and future Highfields Library also supports the centre. The existing centre is 'book-ended' by two schools: Highfields secondary school and Mary Mackillop Catholic College. These combined areas to the north of the site form the civic heart of the Highfields areas. To the north of the site is the Charles and Motte Rogers Parkland which is made up of mature bushland vegetation and a walking trails.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The site is within the SEQRP Urban Footprint. The site is identified as a Major Centre under the Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme Strategic Framework and Land Use Zoning. The centre is intended to act as a

major satellite centre to the Toowoomba CBD. It is the focal point for the Highfields area and community and encourages intensification of residential development around the centre. This is followed through in finer-grained planning for the site by the Highfields Meringandan and Meringandan west Local Plan (the Local Plan).



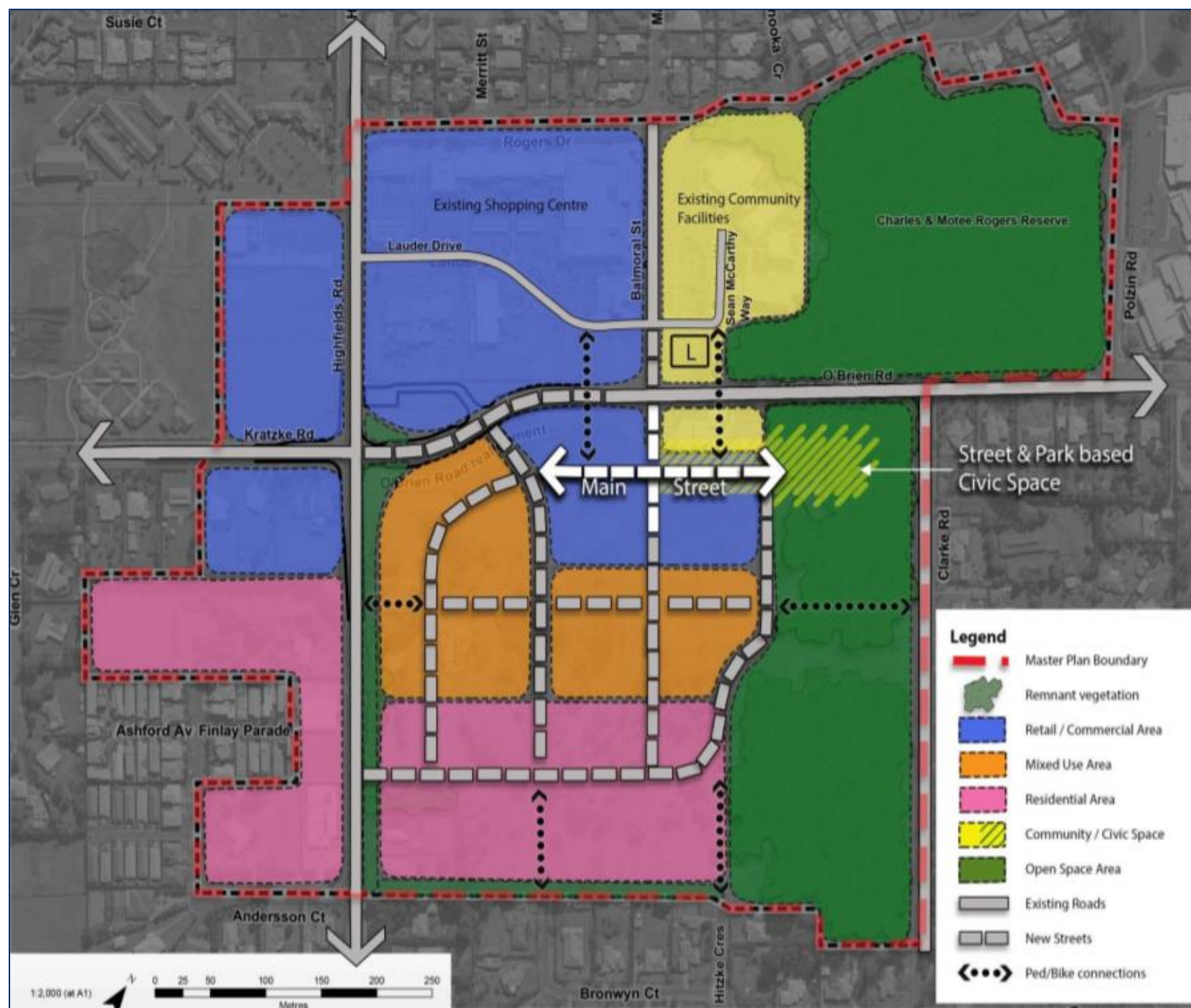


## RELEVANCE OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION & MASTERPLAN TO THE STRUCTURE PLAN

The Master Plan generally represents an expression of the public interest and community expectation for the development of the site and the Highfields town centre.

The team has used the development principles, identified in the Master Plan, to guide decision making through the design process. The community values, also developed in Stage One, have been adopted as 'criteria' for evaluating the Structure Plan outcomes to ensure community aspirations are achieved.

The team has adopted the Master Plan as the guiding document for the development of the design of the centre. Where there are differences between the Masterplan and the Structure Plan, the team believes that the changes further the community values whilst dealing with the planning, physical and economic constraints inherent to the site.



## COMMUNITY VALUES

As a result of the Masterplan, a number of community values were identified which have remained a core for decision making throughout the Structure Plan process. The community values have been addressed in the following ways:

**Belonging, Family, Community & Neighbours** - The plan provides a space for the community to hold events, markets, and engage with one another through the development of an urban common, landscaped streets, parkland whilst also being located close to residential areas. Central Highfields will be a place where people can live, work and play through the establishment of office, retail and residential.

**Distinct Identity** - Distinct Identity will be created through the proposed design of the centre as a 'hinterland village' feel through design, layout and close connection to parkland. A family-friendly environment with low-speed streets and street layout to support family activities such as pedestrian thoroughfares and connections to greenspaces.

**Space** - Green trees and green open spaces are to be maintained and also developed to enhance community benefit. Land uses are located to provide privacy between apartments, attached dwellings and detached dwellings, with a logical stepping down of form from centre uses, medium density residential to low density residential.

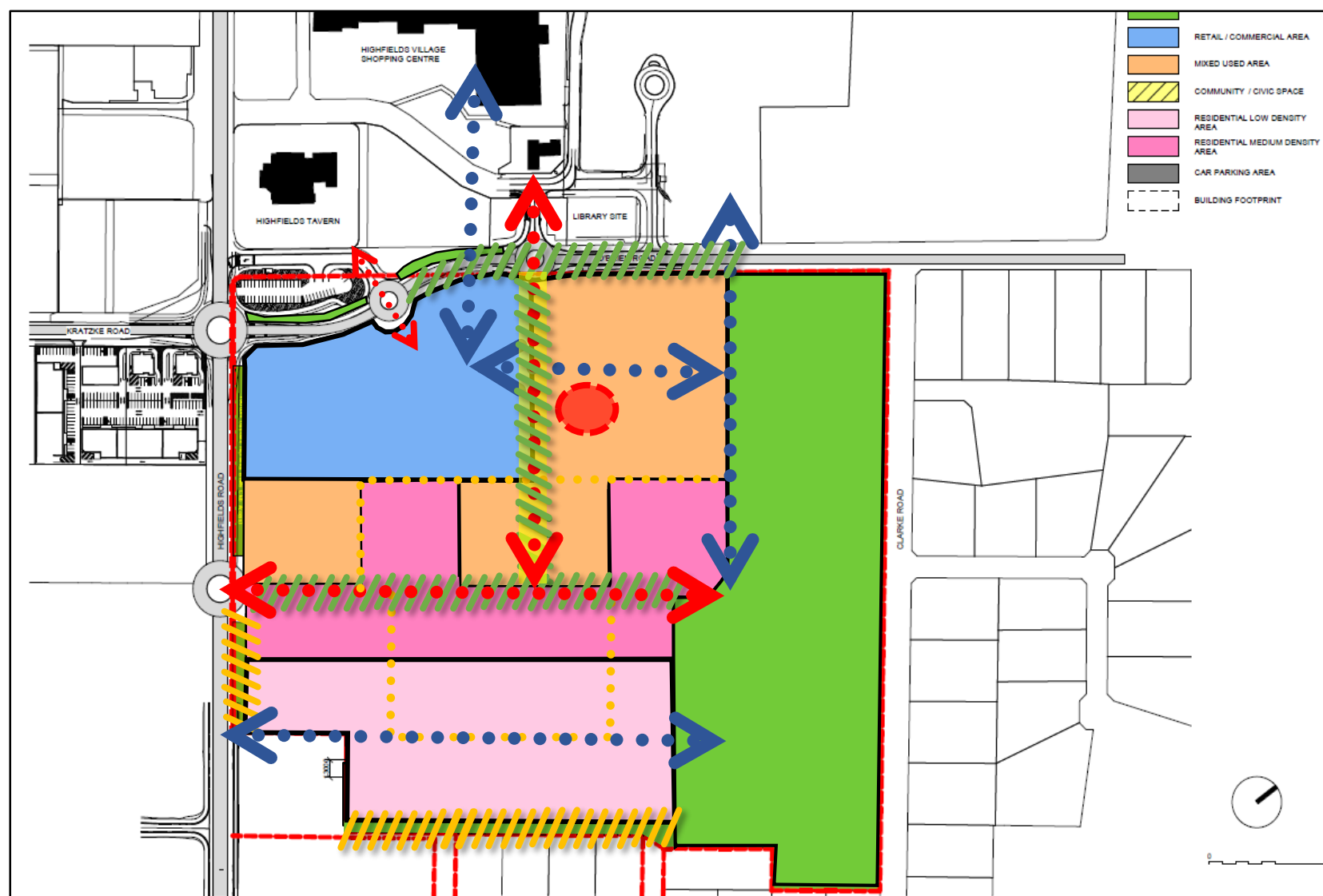
**Trees & Nature** - Significant vegetation to be retained in the parkland to maintain bushland character of the area. Naturalised detention basins proposed to create integration between engineering design solutions and their location with the edge of the park and developed areas.

**Accessibility & Connectivity** - Accessibility and connectivity through the site will be enhanced through dedicated pedestrian and cycle access through laneways.

A transit hub has also been proposed after realignment of O'Brien Rd to support public transport use to access Toowoomba.

**Safety & Security** – Principal cycle route to be provided along O'Brien Rd to encourage safety for active transport. A number of areas provided purely for pedestrians to reduce possible conflict between cars and pedestrians. The proposed development will be well lit and CPTED principles adopted to ensure a sense of security for users.

**Economy & Growth** - Development caters for a range of uses to stimulate the economy in Highfields through retail, office and a health precinct. Being anchored by a large retail tenant and health precinct will reinforce Central Highfields as the focal point of the greater Highfields area. This will stimulate job growth and encourage the establishment of small businesses in the area.

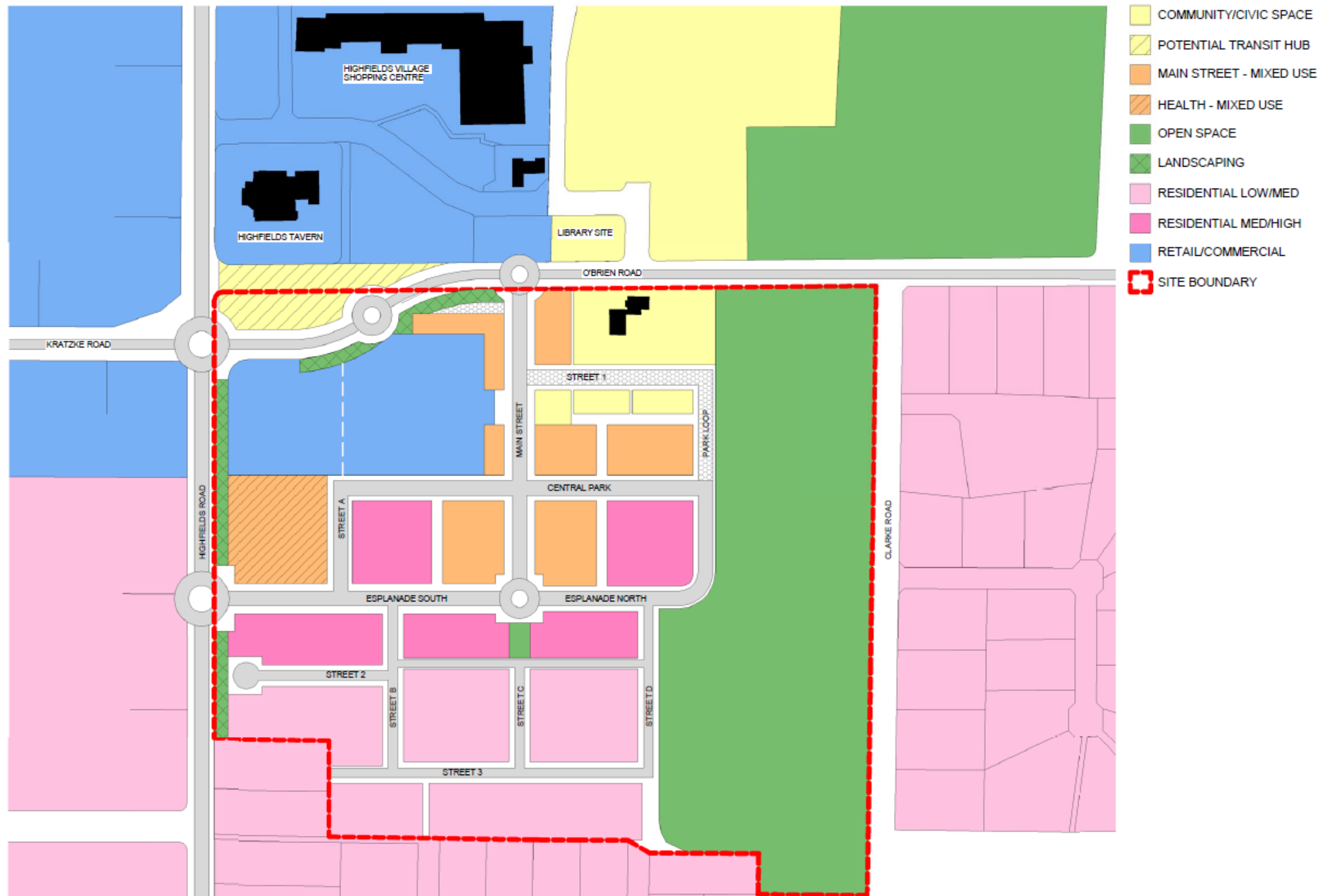




The Central Highfields Structure Plan (Structure Plan) has been developed to build on the high-level detail of the Master Plan and produce a finer grain development plan for the site. The Structure Plan has been informed by a number of studies and technical reports including economic need and market sounding, traffic engineering, service engineering, tree survey, and community consultation reporting.

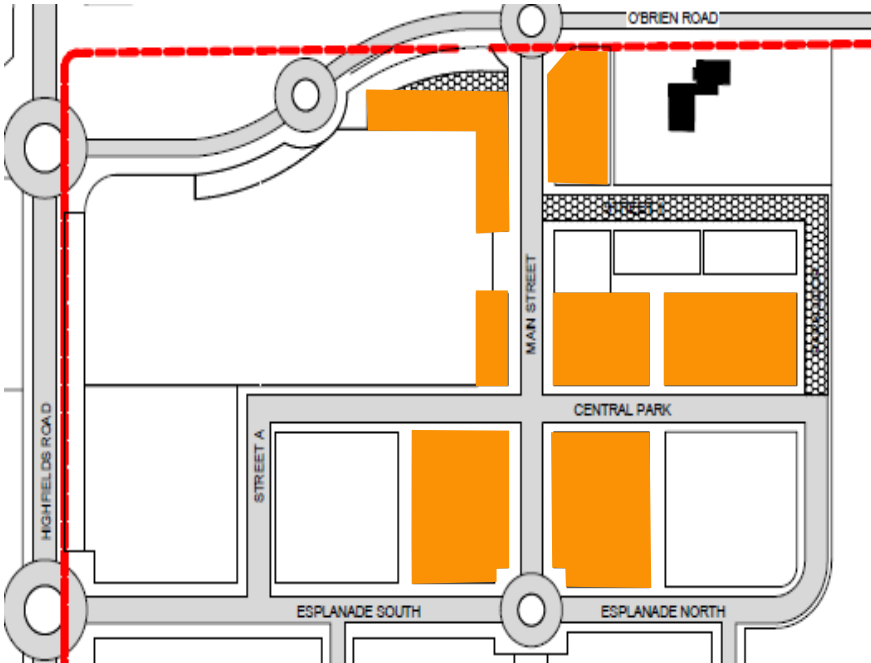
It is responsive to the surrounding area, community needs and aspirations and physical site characteristics. The Structure Plan seeks to deliver a true mixed use centre and to provide land for residential, centre, office, administration, health, civic and parkland uses. There are a number of key design elements which have been developed to deliver a vibrant, cohesive and exciting centre offering:

- Integrated Centre design;
- Pedestrian focus & Public Realm;
- Main street & Esplanade Road;
- Urban Common;
- Parkland;



MAIN STREET – MIXED USE

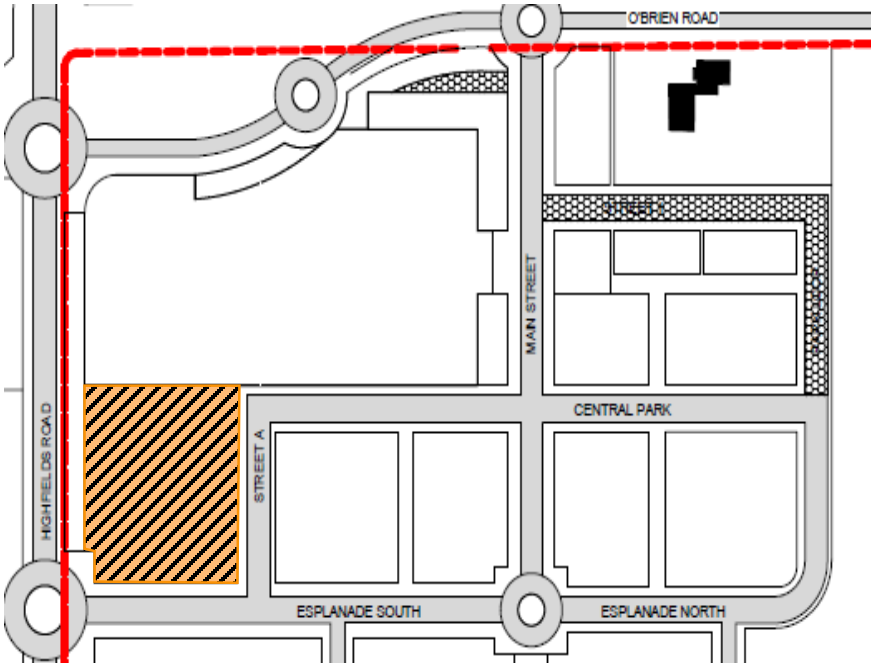
The Main Street – Mixed Use will provide a variety of uses which support the retail core through the provision of activity generating uses including office, administration, leisure/entertainment, restaurants and bars, small retail, and residential development. Generally, mixed use development is provided to sleeve the retail core and along road frontages and civic spaces to activate the streetscape and public realm. Uses will be required to face and activate the Main Street which will create development that can build up to 4 storeys in the Mixed Use zone, with a 2 storey podium to maintain a pedestrian scale at the street level. Floor plates in this zone will vary greatly in order to provide a diversity of uses and innovation in design.



Mixed Use	
Height	Up to 4 storeys
Density	25-40 Dwellings per hectare
Likely Uses	Accommodation activities (other than a dwelling house, dual occupancy or a tourist park), Business Activities, Club, Community Use, Community Centre, Community Residences, Car Park, Car Wash, Food & Drink Outlet, Function Facility, Entertainment Activities, Educational Establishment, Garden Centre, Hardware and Trade Supplies, Health Care Services, Hotel, Office, Parking Station, Service Industries, Services Station, Shop, Shopping Centre, Showroom, Theatre, Tourist Attraction, Veterinary Services, Substation, Multiple Dwelling, Short term accommodation, Dwelling unit, Retirement Facility, Residential care facility, market

HEALTH PRECINCT – MIXED USE

The Health Precinct – Mixed Use zone will provide for needed health services in Highfields. The health precinct is to be provided along the Highfields Road frontage with access proposed via the proposed Esplanade /Highfields Road intersection. Development within the precinct is encouraged up to 4 storeys and is intended to comprise a day hospital, medical centre and healthcare shops.



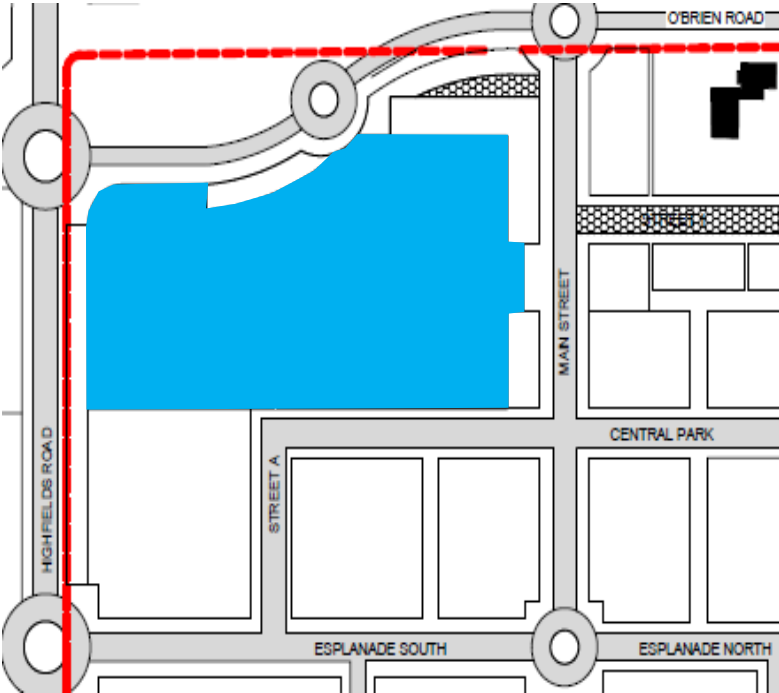
Mixed Use	
Height	Up to 4 storeys
Density	25-40 Dwellings per hectare
Likely Uses	Business Activities, Food & Drink Outlet, Health Care Services, Office, Retirement Facility





RETAIL CORE

The retail core zone has been created to protect the major function of Central Highfields and is to form the retail ‘heart’ of Highfields. It will accommodate anchor retail development which requires convenient vehicle and service access, ample car parking and larger floor plates. This precinct will accommodate retail, supermarket and healthcare uses.

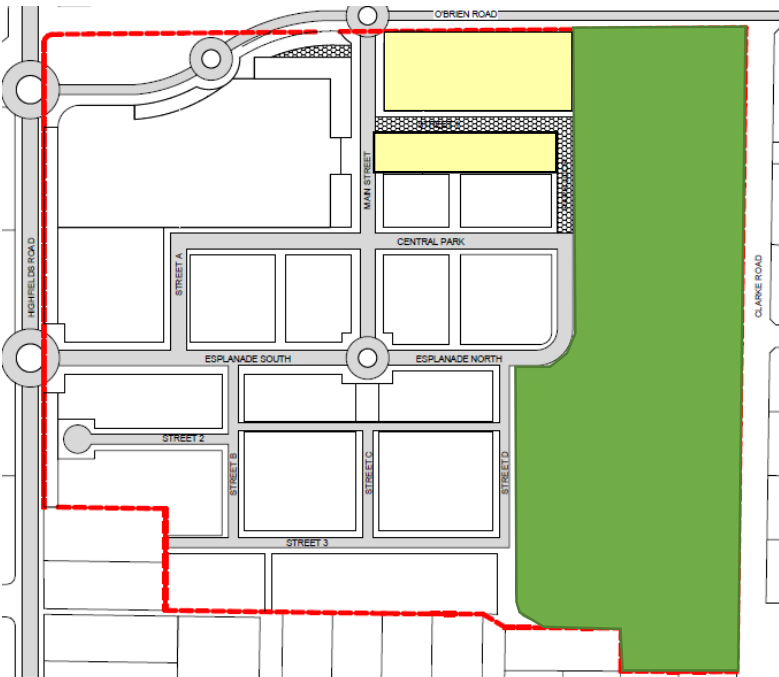


Retail / Commercial	
Height	Up to 4 storeys
Density	N/A
Likely Uses	Adult Store, Accommodation activities (other than a dwelling house, dual occupancy or a tourist park), Agricultural Supplies Store, Bar, Business Activities, Child Care Centre, Car Wash, Club, Community Centre, Community Residences, Car Park, Food & Drink Outlet, Function Facility, Entertainment Activities, Garden Centre, hardware and Trade Supplies, Health Care Services, Hotel, Office, Parking Station, Service Industries, Services Station, Shop, Shopping Centre, Showroom, Theatre, Tourist Attraction, Veterinary Services, Substation, Short term accommodation.

CIVIC AND OPEN SPACE

As a result of the Master Plan, a strong focus within the Structure Plan has been placed on civic and open space. As a result, 6.6 hectares has been allocated to preserve established vegetation but also to provide spaces for recreation and events. The park will provide a corridor function, but with recreational/event space near mixed use areas to activate park and create place. It will also be a key feature for residential living for the higher density areas proposed. This zone will deliver three key functions:

- Recreation and open space to enhance civic amenity and accessible public green space for the community
- Water quality and detention for stormwater run-off
- Retention and protection of existing significant trees and landscapes on the site.

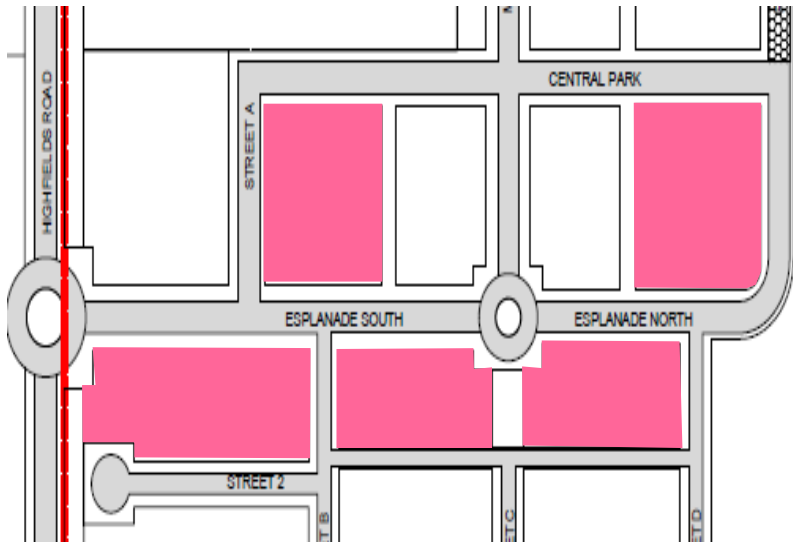


Civic / Open Space	
Height	N/A
Density	N/A
Likely Uses	Park, market, outdoor sport and recreation, telecommunications infrastructure, utility



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

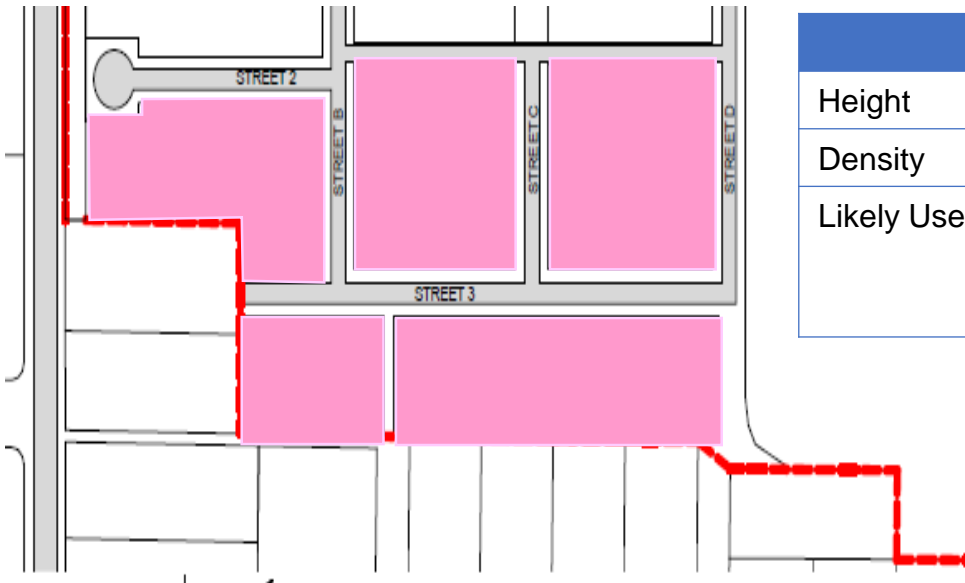
The Medium Density zone will frame the commercial and Mixed Use zones. Its purpose is to support the major centre function whilst providing a diverse range of housing choice for the growing population. Development in this zone is to be provided by apartment buildings, multiple dwellings and attached dwellings, which achieve a density greater than 25 dwellings per hectare. Development in this zone could be up to 4 storeys with a 2 storey podium and may incorporate ground floor retail and commercial uses.



Medium Density Residential	
Height	Up to 4 storeys
Density	25-40 dwellings per hectare
Likely Uses	community residences; dual occupancy; multiple dwelling; residential care facility, retirement facility, resort complex, rooming accommodation, short term accommodation, tourist park, dwelling unit, shop, food and drink outlet, childcare centre, short term accommodation.

LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Low-Medium Density zone will provide a transitioning function of bulk and form from the Mixed Use and Medium Density zone into the surrounding lower density areas. The Low-Medium Density zone is to incorporate development of town houses, attached & detached houses, small lot housing and multiple residential (where transition of bulk and form can be managed), to achieve a dwelling density of between 15 dwellings per hectare and 25 dwellings per hectare. Development in this zone could be up to 2 storeys high.



Low-medium Density Residential	
Height	2 storeys or 8.5m
Density	15-25 dwellings per hectare
Likely Uses	dwelling house, dwelling unit, home based business, dual occupancy, multiple dwelling





### EXTERNAL TRAFFIC

All access to Central Highfields is proposed off Highfields Road and O'Brien Road. Highfields Road is a sub-arterial road which has the function for traffic circulating around the centre, and has a posted speed limit of 60km/h. No direct vehicle property access is proposed to Highfields Road from the Centre. Highfields Road is intended to maintain its distributor function.

O'Brien Road is a distributor road which has the function of allowing traffic to move through the precinct, and has a posted speed of 60km/h. O'Brien Road will maintain this function, however will be modified to provide for a lower speed environment (30km/h) through the use of roundabouts and traffic calming devices.

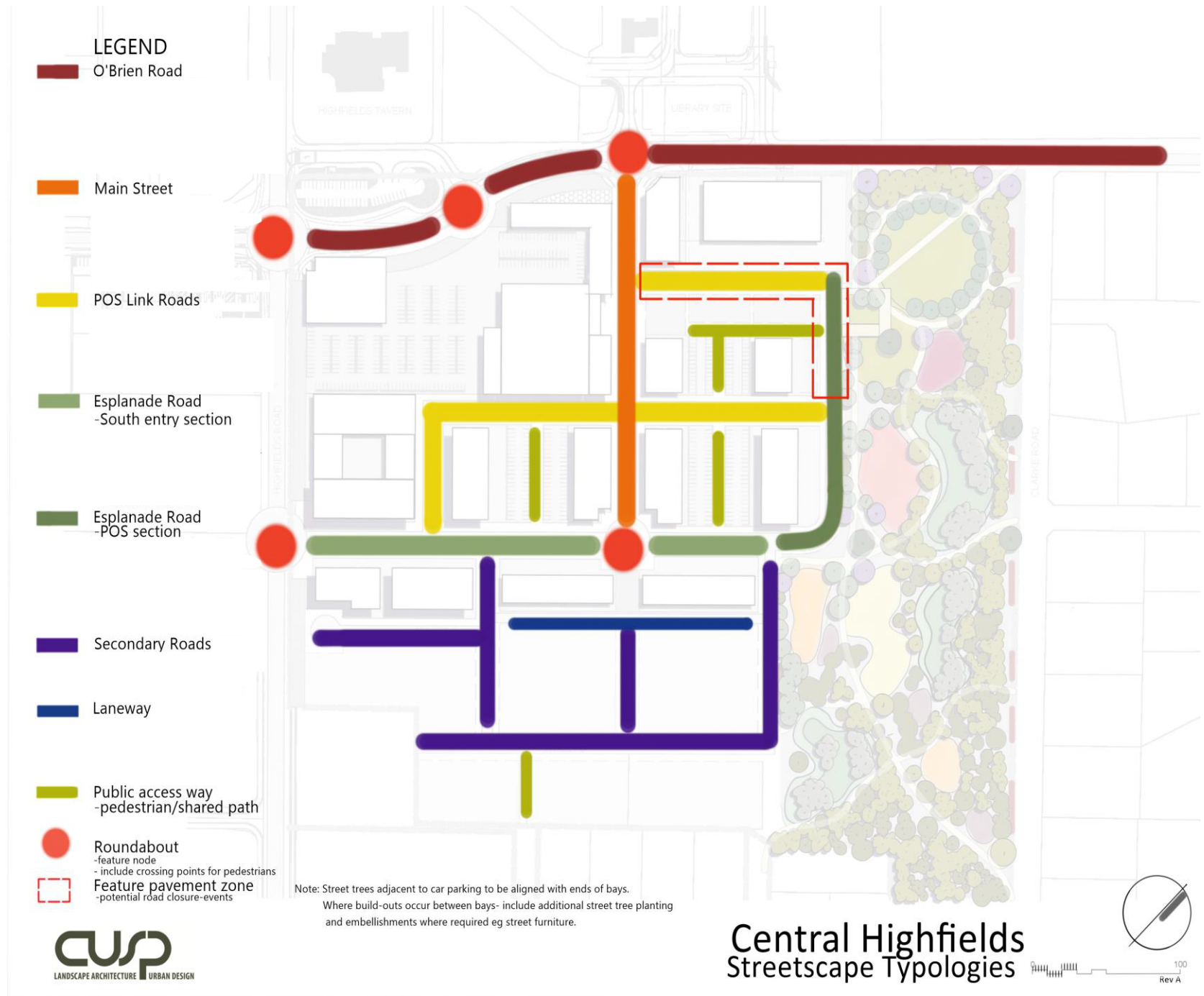
O'Brien Road will be realigned to intersect with Kratzke and Highfields roads to create a more efficient, equitable and safe junction and reinforce the entrance to the town centre.

### KRATZKE/HIGHFIELDS/O'BRIEN INTERSECTION

The intersection is proposed as a pedestrian prioritised roundabout. The roundabout will allow for through movement of traffic through the roundabout to avoid long 'dead times' at signals typical in regional areas. The roundabout will prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements through the use of raised pedestrian 'wombat' crossings around the roundabout entry/exits. The use of raised crossings at the roundabout will reduce the speed environment whilst changing the traffic treatment to indicate a pedestrian friendly environment.

### O'BRIEN ROAD ROUNDABOUTS

The Structure Plan will introduce two roundabouts into the streetscape. The main intersection with main street and the library entrance will form a central focus to the town centre. A smaller secondary roundabout provides service access to the Retail Anchor to a potential future transit hub.



## ELECTRICITY

Central Highfields is serviced by electricity by Ergon. Sustainable development principles will be incorporated as part of urban design guidelines (Next Stage) which encourage solar passive design, natural ventilation and other power conserving development techniques. The guideline will explore how energy efficient design can provide a point of difference for living and working in Central Highfields.

## SEWERAGE

The majority of the Central Highfields site is not currently serviced by reticulated sewer. There will be a need to construct sewer reticulation throughout the site to service proposed development. The following truck infrastructure works are identified in the current TRC infrastructure Plans:

- Construction of the Kuhl's Road sewer pump station
- Construction of the Kuhl's Road rising main, via Clarke Road, O'Brien Road and connection to gravity mains in Highfields Road
- Construction of trunk gravity sewer mains within the subject site from the existing fire station SPS4 to the proposed Kuhl's Road pump station.
- Decommissioning of the existing SPS4 and 75mm rising main in O'Brien Road.

Preliminary assessment indicates that the planned trunk infrastructure should have capacity for the development as proposed in the Structure Plan.

## WATER

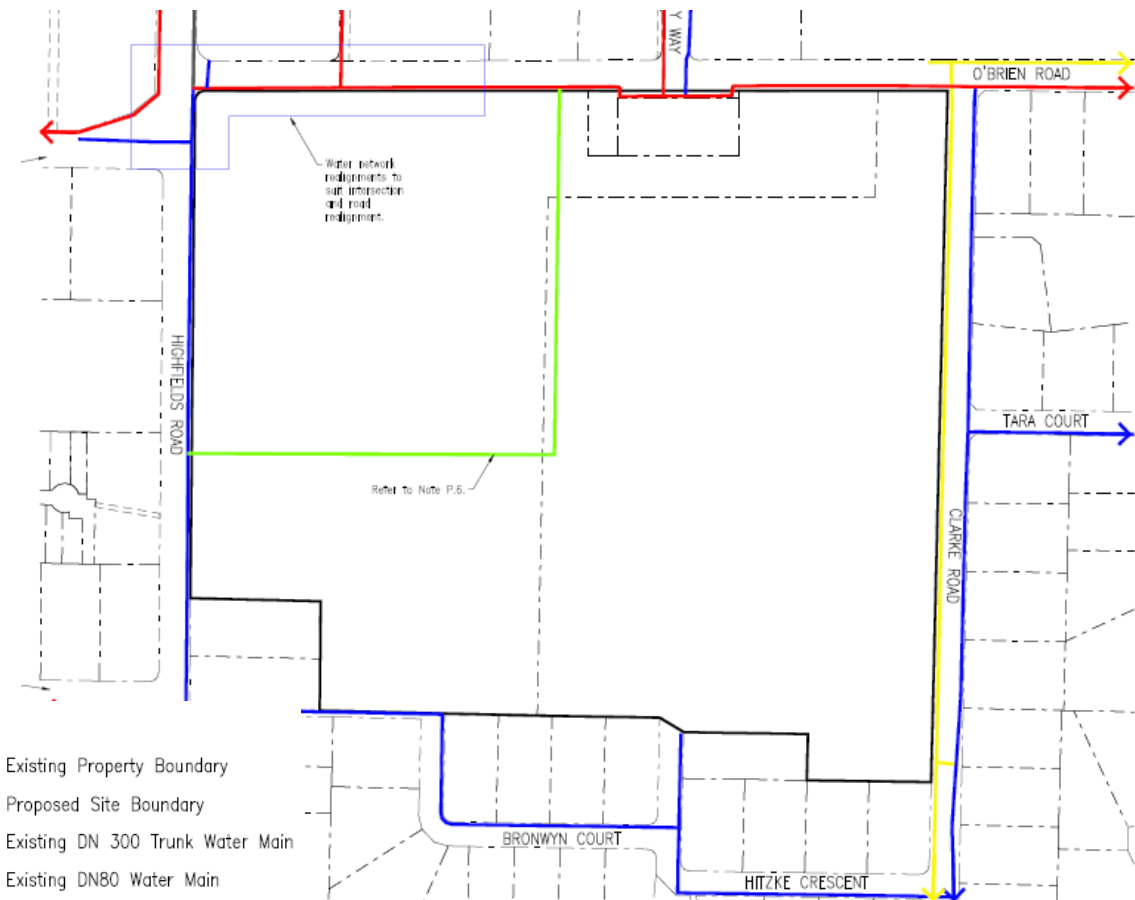
The site is bounded by water reticulation networks in Highfields, O'Brien and Clarke Roads. A trunk water main is proposed in Clarke Road linking eastern parts of Highfields to the central reservoir located in Highfields west.

It is proposed that further development in Central Highfields will connect to existing reticulation networks in Highfields and O'Brien Road. It is anticipated that an additional higher-order water main will be required through the site to provide for fire services in commercial and residential development.

Preliminary assessment suggests that the existing and planned upgrades to water services will have capacity to service the development.



*Preliminary Higher Order Sewer*



*Preliminary Higher Order Water*



## STORMWATER

The site is generally undeveloped with grass covering. The majority of the site currently drains via surface flow to an open swale drain in Clarke Road and then to a natural drainage system. A secondary drainage point exists to the lower east of Central Highfields near Hitzke Crescent, which consists of a 525mm diameter stormwater pipe.

The development of the site will be required to create no worsening for downstream properties. Accordingly on site treatment of post-development storm water runoff is required.

### Stormwater Quantity

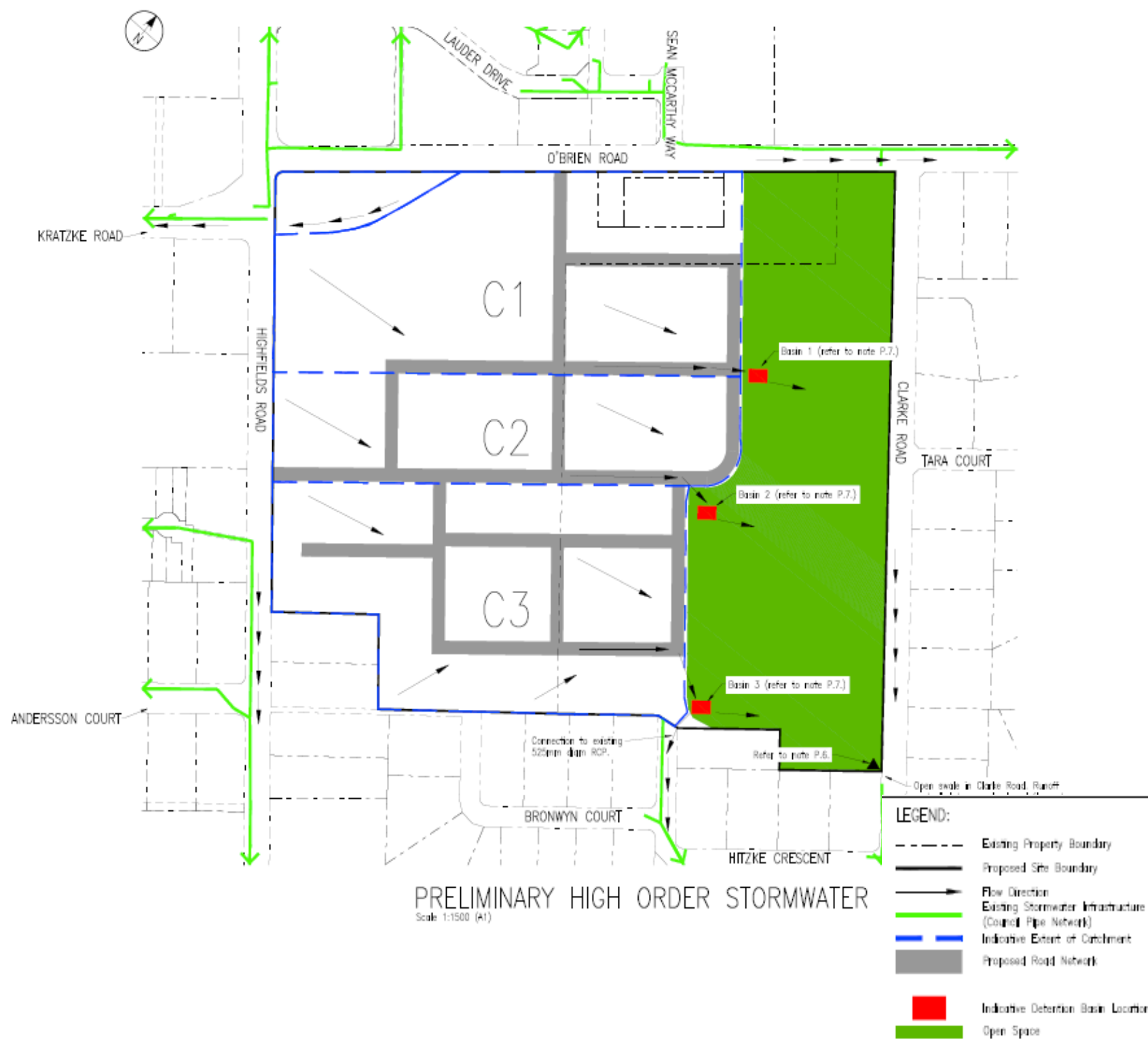
The pre-development stormwater quantity runoff was established to the nominated points of discharge in Clarke Road and Hitzke Crescent. This runoff was used as the assessment baseline for the post-development assessment against actionable nuisance.

DRAINS stormwater assessment software was used to calculate preliminary detention basin sizing in response to managing runoff to pre-developed conditions up to a 1% AEP storm event. Generally the results were as follows:

Item	Basin 1 (eastern Catchment)	Basin 2 (southern Catchment)
Storage Requirement	4,659m <sup>3</sup>	603m <sup>3</sup>
Land Take	3,025m <sup>2</sup>	144m <sup>2</sup>

### Stormwater Quality

Post-development run-off will be required to meet water quality treatment requirements in accordance with the State Planning Policy (SPP). It is proposed that water quality treatment will be achieved through at-source devices, swales and other bio-retention devices constructed in and around detention basin.



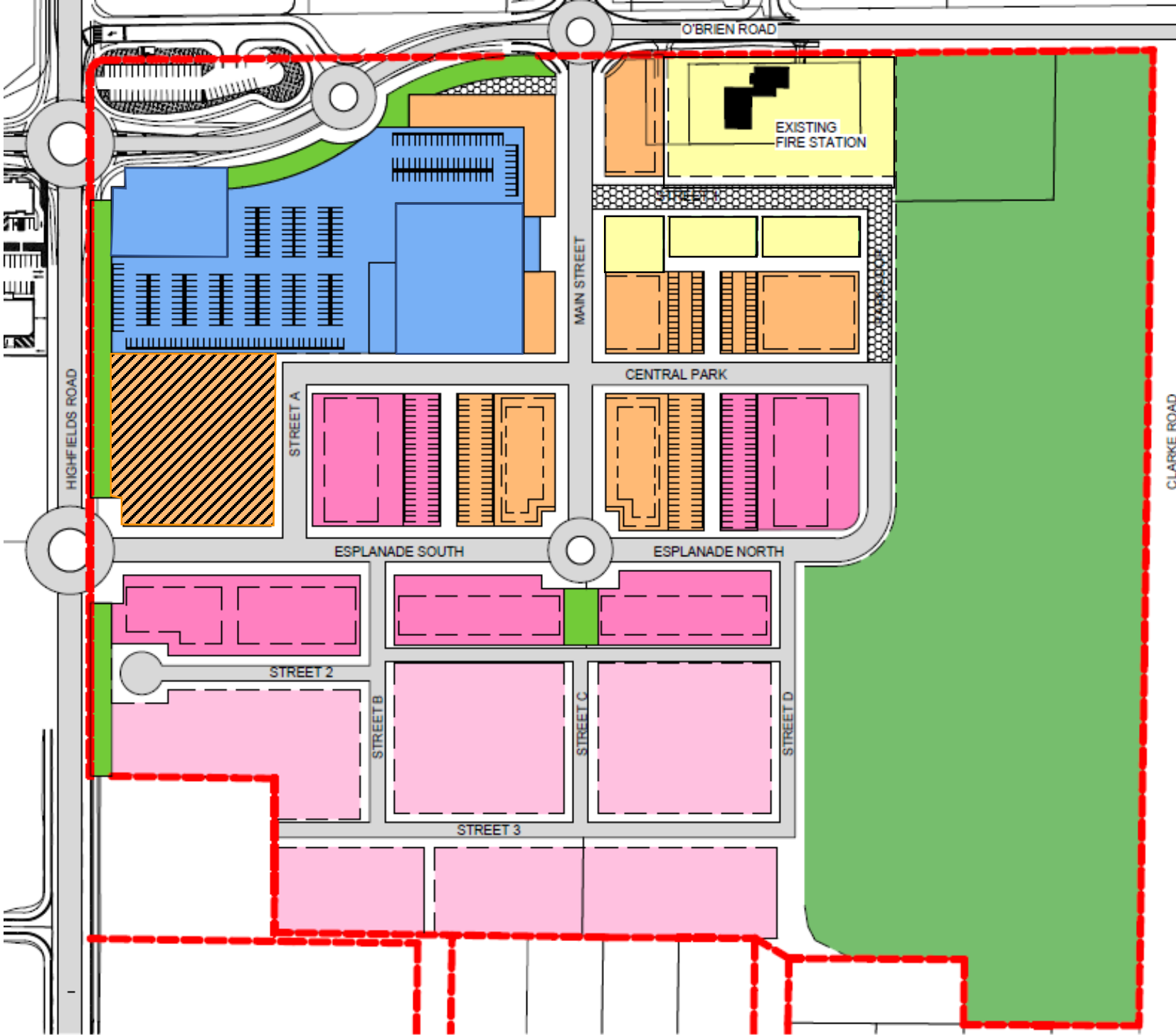
# 10 POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD

It is envisaged that development in accordance with the Structure Plan will deliver the requisite commercial floor space and residential dwellings to accommodate the growing population in Highfields. A massing exercise has been undertaken to prove up the likely development yield for the Structure Plan. The massing diagram (next page) has assumed no basement car parking. It is envisaged the Structure Plan will provide the following development floor space and dwelling outcomes:

COMMERCIAL		
Land Use	Total Area of sites	Total GFA
Centre	18,123m <sup>2</sup>	5498m <sup>2</sup>
Mixed Use – Healthcare	5,933m <sup>2</sup>	9813m <sup>2</sup>
Mixed Use – other (retail, food and drink, office, etc)	12,304m <sup>2</sup>	13,601m <sup>2</sup>
Community Facilities	6,098 m <sup>2</sup>	N/A
Parkland	66,292m <sup>2</sup>	N/A
TOTAL	108,750m <sup>2</sup>	28,912m <sup>2</sup>

RESIDENTIAL		
Land Use	Total Area of sites	Approximate no. of dwellings
Mixed Use – Other	N/A (shop top)	(2958m <sup>2</sup> Apartment GFA): 24 dwellings*
Medium Density Residential	15,120m <sup>2</sup>	60 dwellings**
Low-medium Density Residential	25,923m <sup>2</sup>	52 dwellings***
TOTAL	41,043m <sup>2</sup>	136 dwellings

\* assumed 80% efficiency of floor plate and avg unit size of 100m2.  
\*\* assumed dwelling density of 40dwellings per ha  
\*\*\* assumed dwelling density of 20dwellings per ha





### MASSING DIAGRAM

Indicative massing diagram representing potential development yield of the Structure Plan.



Given the large area of Central Highfields and the significant investment into infrastructure upgrades and community open space, it is important to establish a sequential staging plan for development. Generally, development should start close to the existing centre where existing activity and infrastructure exists and move east towards the parkland.

**External Works** – Council has committed to relocating the Kratzke/Highfields/O'Brien Road intersection in coming financial years. This will also require realignment of a section of O'Brien Rd to connect to the new roundabout at the Highfields Library.

Delivery of other trunk infrastructure augmentation will be delivered in accordance with Council's LGIP program or through infrastructure agreements during the normal course of development.

**Stage 1:** Development of the most prominent corner location of the structure area and adjacent to established centre development at Highfields Village. With an Anchor retail tenant (Coles/Woolworths/Kaufland/other) this stage represents an investment piece. It also provides for the development of the civic core with the establishment of the urban common and part of the main street to establish a sense of place and identity for the structure plan area.

**Stage 2:** Logical linear development along Highfields Road. This stage is based off the establishment of a health anchor tenant (day hospital) and construction of supporting uses including medium density residential and mixed use offices.

**Stage 3:** Low-medium density residential development. Development will be reaching a critical mass with an established central core based around retail anchor and health care precinct. There will likely be a demand for

residential development. Releasing the 'low-medium density' stage first will provide transition into higher density development envisaged in later stages.

**Stage 4:** Development of park-front medium-high density residential and office uses. This development will be supported by a strong population base and established centre function in immediate proximity. It may be in this stage which Council look to move to the next stage of Park embellishment.

**Stage 5:** Development of final stage of medium-high density residential along Highfields Road. This block of residential apartments is not within immediate proximity of the centre or parkland and therefore to come after the development of parkland residential.

**Stage 6:** Development of the existing QFES fire services site. This is a speculative stage contingent on the relocation of the Fire Station and may form an extension of the existing community facilities to the north-west of O'Brien Road.

