

10 November 2025

Townsville City Council
Executive Office – Planning & Development
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To: Planning and Infrastructure Team, Townsville City Council

Local Government Infrastructure Plan and Local Housing Action Plan

Q Shelter welcomes Townsville's recent planning work and its focus on increasing housing delivery and supporting infill development. The Q Shelter team recently participated in the non-statutory consultation meeting held on 23 October 2025, during which we provided direct input on the proposed planning schemes and related work.

We provide the following recommendations to align infrastructure planning and local incentives to enable infill and the "missing middle" housing types that sit between single-detached houses and apartment towers (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, and small walk-ups). These typologies provide denser housing that offers a diverse range of affordable, family-friendly options, helping to meet the needs of Townsville's diverse community and ensuring a broader range of housing choices for households of different sizes and life stages.

Key local context

Council projects that Townsville will need more than 45,000 new homes over the next 25 years. Over this long-term planning horizon, the city's population is expected to evolve, with increasing diversity in household structures and sizes, alongside an ageing demographic. The Local Housing Action Plan sets targets to increase infill to at least 10% of new housing and to lift annual delivery "Increase the proportion of new housing being delivered as infill development from less than 5% to at least 10%"¹. The Townsville City Plan responds to these trends by promoting a variety of housing types, diverse lot sizes, greater housing choice and affordability, as well as the integration of open spaces, local centres, and public transport connections².

Trunk infrastructure constraints are a recognised barrier to bringing large numbers of infill and new homes online. Targeted infrastructure funding can unlock thousands of dwellings³. We note that the Queensland Government has recently rolled out a new initiative in the Residential Activation Fund (RAF) to support some of these challenges.

Our Recommendations

1. Prioritise targeted trunk-infrastructure upgrades in infill corridors

- Map and publish a priority list of trunk works (water, sewer, stormwater, road access, public transport links) that constrain infill and missing-middle development.

¹ https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/250107/Local-Housing-Action-Plan-2024-27.pdf?utm_source

² https://www.planning.townsville.qld.gov.au/townsville-city-plan/shaping-our-neighbourhood?utm_source

³ https://www.townsvilleenterprise.com.au/trunk-infrastructure-holding-back-5-600-new-homes-in-townsville/?utm_source

- Sequence these upgrades in the capital works program, enabling developers to plan accordingly.
2. *Introduce flexible infrastructure charging and fast-track connections*
Council's prior decision to waive infrastructure charges for secondary dwellings establishes a 'policy precedent' that supports consideration of further targeted exemptions or reductions to facilitate diverse and affordable housing supply.
 - Consider waivers or rebates for duplexes, triplexes, and small multi-unit developments where servicing capacity exists.
 - Q Shelter notes that councils across Queensland, including Brisbane City Council, Moreton Bay, and Charters Towers, have precedent for waiving infrastructure charges for social and affordable housing projects.
 3. *Easier-to-understand planning rules and pre-approved designs for medium-density housing.*
 - Update local codes to explicitly allow duplexes, dual-occupancy, triplexes, and 3–6-unit walk-ups in targeted low-density zones.
 - Use pre-approved design packs to reduce assessment time and costs.
 - Review minimum lot sizes in relation to the delivery of 'missing middle' housing typologies
 4. *Use targeted incentives to catalyse housing delivery*
Combine modest incentives such as:
 - Density bonuses for projects that deliver affordable floorspace
 - Reduced infrastructure charges
 - Expedited approvalsLink incentives to clear outcomes, such as long-term rental affordability.
 5. *Integrate transport and active-mode upgrades with infill*
Coordinate infill priorities with local transport improvements, including safe walking/cycling links, and bus stop accessibility. Better transport access increases feasibility and liveability.
 6. *Land Grants or Long-Term Ground Leasing*
Councils can make land available to non-for-profit community housing providers (CHPs) through:
 - Gifting land: transferring ownership at little or no cost to enable social or affordable housing.
 - Peppercorn leases: long-term, nominal-cost leases (e.g., \$1 per year) that maintain public ownership while supporting development.Examples include Moreton Bay's long-term leases for community housing and Quilpie's subsidised land schemes.
 7. *Encourage early-stage co-design and community engagement for sensitive sites*
Ensure co-design with people with lived experience of housing vulnerability, local residents, and social services for projects that affect existing communities or vulnerable cohorts. This builds social licence and improves project outcomes.
 8. *Set measurable monitoring and an annual "infill" report*
Produce an annual report tracking infill % of new housing, number of missing-middle approvals, infrastructure works delivered/unlocked, and timeframes for connections.

In addition to these recommendations, Q Shelter will continue to engage directly with local and state government on the policy and investment conditions required to unlock housing supply, inclusive of affordable and diverse housing. We will be taking forward some proposals to utilise the successful RAF to support infill development as well as greenfield development.

In summary, Townsville's strategic planning sets a clear direction to increase housing supply and diversity. With coordinated infrastructure sequencing, targeted incentives, zoning clarity, and early-stage co-design, Council can materially accelerate delivery while supporting affordability and



liveability. Q Shelter would be pleased to provide a more detailed submission in due course and to partner on co-design guidance for the engagement process.

Q Shelter can be contacted via the Policy & Strategic Engagement Lead, Maya Glassman, at Maya.glassman@qshelter.asn.au or 0411 395 842.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Hills', is placed over a light grey rectangular background.

Jackson Hills
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