

What is a planning scheme?

A planning scheme is an important document that provides the blueprint for what can be built where and how land is intended to be used and developed, while also ensuring the things we love about our region are protected and enhanced.

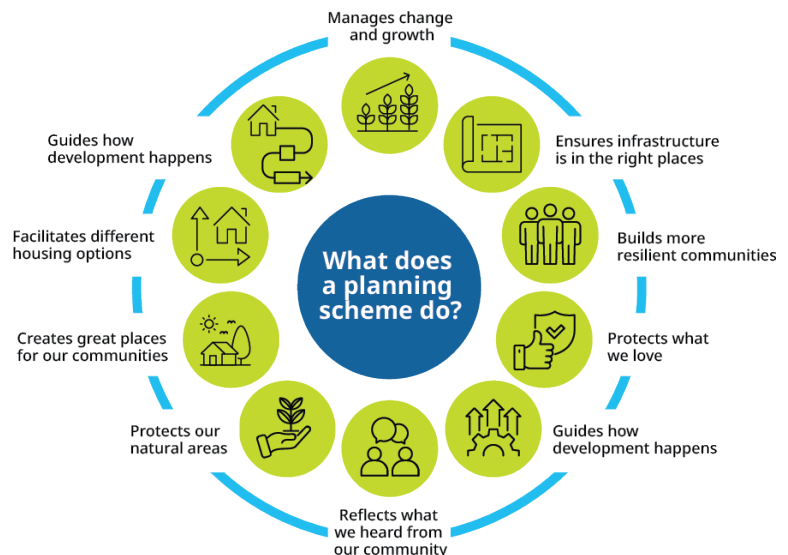
Each local government in Queensland is responsible for preparing its own planning scheme in consultation with the state government and the community.

A planning scheme is a forward-looking document that identifies:

- the future vision for our region
- where growth and development should occur, such as new shopping centres, industrial estates, and residential areas
- places where development should be avoided, like sensitive environmental areas
- what assessment processes are required
- rules and requirements for development, including changes of use and subdivision.

A planning scheme provides residents, businesses and governments with a shared vision for managing growth. It seeks to balance often competing objectives, including the community's need for certain types of development, economic growth and the protection of environmental values.

Localised planning within the planning scheme helps ensure new development complements the setting and desired character of an area.



How can a planning scheme affect you?

The planning scheme potentially affects anyone that lives, has a business or owns property on the Sunshine Coast, as well as visitors to the region.

A planning scheme could affect:

- what you can (and cannot) build or develop on your property
- what can (and cannot) be developed in your local neighbourhood or places where you live, work and visit.

A planning scheme **can**:

- set a long-term planning vision for the next 20 to 30 years
- regulate new land uses and development (existing land uses and development can continue to operate if established lawfully)

- identify the assessment process for development (e.g. whether a development application is required)
- ensure there is enough land available in the right locations for housing, business, community and open space needs
- maximise the liveability of our communities by planning for green spaces, community facilities, places to work and shop, and diverse housing options
- ensure land use and infrastructure like roads, pathways and stormwater are well planned and co-ordinated
- protect natural areas and valuable features such as heritage buildings
- make new development more resilient to natural hazards such as flood, bushfire, landslide and coastal erosion.

A planning scheme **cannot**:

- stop or further regulate existing lawful uses and existing development approvals
- apply to development prevented from being made assessable development under State planning legislation, such as community residences and rooming accommodations in specific situations
- override legislation and State planning instruments
- prevent a development application from being made
- make development happen 'on the ground'
- address issues covered by other legislation, such as building codes.

Key elements of a planning scheme

The provisions of a planning scheme (comprising text and mapping) typically include the following key elements:

- The '**Strategic Framework**' provides the 'bigger picture' long term vision for our region
- '**Local Plans**' support the individuality and vibrancy of our distinct communities
- '**Zones**' identify the type of land uses that can occur in a particular area
- '**Overlays**' identify important features or values, like flooding or heritage buildings, that need to be carefully considered in the development process
- The '**Tables of Assessment**' identify the codes that apply to a development proposal and if a development application is required
- '**Codes**' are a set of standards that must be followed to achieve good planning outcomes
- A '**Local Government Infrastructure Plan**' (LGIP) sets out an infrastructure blueprint to support planned growth.

What next?

To find out more about the New Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme Project, visit [Council's website](#).

Disclaimer The contents of this information sheet deals with technical matters in a summary way only and has been prepared to assist the community to understand what a planning scheme does. © Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2025