

OVERLAY INFORMATION SHEET - FLOOD HAZARD OVERLAY

A planning scheme (referred to as Townsville City Plan) is a legal document that guides, enables and regulates how land can be developed. The Townsville City Plan organises Townsville into land use zones, with every property included in a zone.

Overlay maps identify areas that have unique characteristics that require further planning consideration when development is proposed. The Townsville City Plan contains several overlay maps, including Bushfire hazard, Coastal environment and Flood hazard.

Townsville is built on the natural floodplains of the Ross and Bohle Rivers. For residents, this means living with the best and worst of our local climate. More than 300 days of sunshine each year can be tempered with our traditional wet season, which runs from November to March each year. Flooding in Townsville is generally caused by heavy rain from a cyclone or rain depression crossing the coastline. This can result in local flooding to streets, yards, and in extreme events, homes and businesses.

The planning provisions, through the Flood hazard overlay code in the Townsville City Plan, seek to ensure that future development contributes to creating a safe and flood-resilient city in the future. Not all properties are affected by the Flood hazard overlay.

If a property is affected by an overlay, proposed future development must address specific requirements outlined in the overlay codes. Overlays do not impact existing lawfully established uses on a premises and may only apply when materially changing a use of land, some building works, some filling or excavation works or when subdividing land.

Flood hazard overlay

The Flood hazard overlay developed for the Townsville City Plan is derived from numerous background studies, flood modelling and a collaborative partnership with experts both within and beyond council to develop up-to-date and accurate mapping. The flood modelling will be maintained periodically to reflect changes across the city.

The Flood hazard overlay is made up of two elements: a written component and maps that identify the areas affected by the overlay. The main purpose of the Flood hazard overlay is to ensure risk to life and property is minimised during future flood events and that development does not increase the potential for flood damage on-site or other property. In the Townsville City Plan, the overlay provisions are located in:

- Part 5 – Categories of development and assessment for the Flood hazard overlay code;
- Part 8 – Flood hazard overlay code;
- Schedule 2 - Flood hazard overlay maps; and
- Schedule 6.7 – Flood hazard planning scheme policy.



Helpful hint: [ePlanning](#) is also available as a tool for undertaking property search against the Townsville City Plan.

Helpful hint: Zoning and overlay maps are available electronically at [TownsvilleMAPS](#).



Applying the Flood hazard overlay to your next development

The below steps help identify flood affected properties and establish whether a development application is required for a particular land use.

Step 1: Check your property zoning and identify your proposed use type e.g. Low density residential zone and dual occupancy. (Use definitions are found in Schedule 1 of Townsville City Plan).

Step 2: Refer to Part 5 of the Townsville City Plan and determine the category of development and assessment for the zone which your property is located in. Important note: the category of development and assessment stated for the zone may be changed by the Flood hazard overlay in Part 5.9.

Step 3: Check if your property is mapped by the Flood hazard overlay (Schedule 2 contains the overlay maps, but use of the electronic mapping may provide clearer property level detail). Important note: the overlay mapping and code requirements only apply to the part of your property mapped. If you undertake development in the mapped area, you may require approval for your development (see step 4).

Step 4: If your property is affected by the Flood hazard overlay and you are proposing development within the mapped area of your property, then check Part 5.9 Categories of development and assessment for the Flood hazard overlay. If your development is listed (e.g. dual occupancy), then you will be required to address the relevant provisions of the Flood hazard overlay code.

What are the Flood Hazard Areas

Council has categorised four (4) flood hazard areas on the Flood hazard overlay map to guide future planning and development within flood affected areas. The provisions in Townsville City Plan are tailored to each flood hazard area and are designed to advise the susceptibility of flooding and the degree to which new development must consider the flood hazard.

Flood Hazard Area	Description	What does the hazard code mean for development?
High hazard area	High hazard area represents the 1% Annual exceedence probability (AEP) event. This is the Defined Flood Event and the Defined Flood Level for Townsville City. Flooding may involve fast flowing and/or deeper flood floodwaters.	New development within these areas should be avoided. Any new development would be subject to the highest development assessment requirements.
Medium hazard area	Medium hazard area represents the 1% AEP event. This is the Defined Flood Event and the Defined Flood Level for Townsville City. Flooding exists but less likely to be deep and/or fast moving water.	New residential development subject to building requirements such as minimum floor heights for habitable areas.
Low hazard area	Areas of the floodplain outside the 1% AEP flood extent are still susceptible to flooding in rarer, more extreme flood events. The low flood hazard area represents inundation by the probable maximum flood outside the combined extent of the high and medium flood hazard areas.	No flood hazard overlay code requirements apply to dwelling houses. New development with a role in community resilience may be built in these areas subject to higher standards.
Medium hazard – further investigation areas	Areas outside the extent of the flood modelling studies. Limited information is available about flood depths, levels or velocities in these areas.	High intensity development is likely to require further detailed flooding investigation.

Frequently Asked Questions

My property is in the high flood hazard area on the Flood hazard overlay map. How do I find out the depth or height of flood water over my property? Council has created an online Flood mapping service. This mapping tool enables you to check how deep over natural ground level or the height of the 1% AEP for your property. This will tell you what floor levels you will need to build to if you are in a Flood hazard area.

What is the defined flood event?

Most development applications for which the Flood Hazard overlay code is triggered will require details of the defined flood event (DFE). The DFE is the 1% AEP flood, which is spatially represented by the combined extent of the high flood hazard and the medium flood hazard areas mapped on the Flood hazard overlay maps OM-06.1 and OM-06.2 (Schedule 2).

I am building a house in the medium hazard area, do I need approval?

No. Houses are accepted subject to requirements in the Flood hazard overlay which means you need only comply with acceptable outcomes of the Flood hazard overlay code. No application is required unless you cannot comply with the relevant acceptable outcomes. If your property is stated as either code or impact in the zone categories of development and assessment (Part 5.5), then that category of development and assessment will prevail and you will require approval.

DISCLAIMER: The contents of this information sheet have been prepared to assist in the understanding of the Townsville City Plan. The information sheet is an outline only. For full details of the applicable provisions, please refer to the Townsville City Plan.

For more information please contact Planning Services: ☎ 13 48 10 ✉ enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au 🌐 townsville.qld.gov.au