TENNANT CREEK LAND USE PLAN

Consultation Report for Stage 1
Community Consultation
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About the Commission

The Northern Territory Planning Commission’s primary role is to prepare integrated strategic land use plans to manage growth. The NT Planning Commission is working to create a planning framework for Tennant Creek by preparing a Land Use Plan.

Introduction

To help with preparing a draft Land Use Plan for Tennant Creek, the Northern Territory Planning Commission has started a three stage process structured around public consultation.

Stage 1 community consultation started on Thursday 9 November 2017 and closed on Friday 8 December 2017. Stage 1 was a chance for the community to get involved in the planning process by contributing to a vision to meet the future needs of Tennant Creek.

This report summarises key themes that were identified during Stage 1 Community Consultation. The feedback received will assist the Planning Commission in drafting the Land Use Plan for Tennant Creek.

Purpose of the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan

The Tenant Creek Land Use Plan will identify current and future land uses and potential land requirements. When finalised, it will form part of the NT Planning Scheme. The objectives of the Plan are to:

- provide for orderly and appropriate land use and development catering for a growing population;
- reinforce the primacy of the existing business hub on Paterson Street;
- preserve the existing rural character of established small lot rural subdivision south of the town;
- provide appropriate areas for future industrial development to the west of the town; and
- identify and protect major corridors for transport, energy and servicing infrastructure.
1. **Background Context**

**The Study Area**

The Barkly Region covers more than 300,000 square kilometres. The NT Department of Treasury and Finance has estimated the Barkly Regional population to be 6,561 in 2011. The region is forecast to reach a population of 7,572 by 2026, nearly 70% of which are expected to be of Aboriginal background.

The Tennant Creek Region, for the purpose of the Land Use Plan, is shown by Figure 2.1 and is defined as the whole of the Tennant Creek Municipality, together with adjacent land, generally extending to:

- the Adelaide to Darwin railway line to the west;
- the future by-pass alignment/Lake Mary Ann area to the north;
- the Gun Club/Go Karts and Golf Course precinct to the east; and
- Tennant Creek Railway Station to the south.

The Tennant Creek Township is situated on the Stuart Highway in the centre of the Northern Territory, approximately 500 kilometres north of Alice Springs. Its traditional land owners are the Patta Warumungu people. It is the major centre for the cattle producing Barkly Region, known as the Barkly Tableland.

Based on ABS Census information, approximately 53% of the population of the Barkly Region resides in Tennant Creek.
The Study Context

Along with mining, the pastoral industry was one of the key economic drivers for the township up until the 1960s and 70s when demand for labour was reduced as a result of greater mechanisation. Locally this led to a decline in employment in the pastoral industry and created a shift of Aboriginal population into Tennant Creek from the pastoral areas.

The Tennant Creek economy has diversified to include more service and tourism-based industries as mining employment declined in the 1980s. In 2004, the Adelaide-Darwin railway (with both freight and passengers) commenced servicing Tennant Creek. It is evident that the wider region is subject to a range of environmental, agricultural and cultural influences.

Opportunities for future development within the Study Area are identified in part by the existing Tennant Creek Land Use Framework and in part by existing zones of the NT Planning Scheme.

The available data tells us that there is sufficient land available for future commercial, industrial and residential development within existing zoned land (including Future Development zoned land). However the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan will be influenced by a number of factors, including but not limited to:

- land capability;
- airport noise contours;
- flood risk (not quantified);
- cultural heritage; and
- the efficient economic delivery of servicing and infrastructure.

Background Information

Several strategic land use investigations have been undertaken for Tennant Creek over the years. The land use studies have consistently identified the same areas for potential future growth. Most potential future growth areas are already zoned FD (Future Development) under the NT Planning Scheme. The following land use strategies and other relevant planning documents have been reviewed in order to provide context to the background investigations:

- Tennant Creek Land Use Framework, 2013;
- Draft Tennant Creek Land Use Structure Plan, 1995;
- Paterson Street Urban Design Plan, 1991;
- Tennant Creek Traffic Management Study, 2016; and
2. Stage 1 Consultation Process

The Northern Territory Planning Commission is using a three stage process to prepare the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan, with public consultation a key element of each stage.

Stage 1 community consultation started on Thursday 9 November 2017 and closed on Friday 8 December 2017.

The first stage of consultation was focused on gathering information, building an understanding of stakeholder issues and sensitivities, and providing opportunities through a variety of feedback mechanisms to encourage and enable participation from all stakeholders. Stakeholders identified included:

- Residents
- Local Businesses
- Barkly Regional Council
- Local Members
- Special interest and community groups
- Government agencies and departments
- Industry associates and representative bodies

Landowners / Residents

Flyers were sent to over 650 land owners in the Tennant Creek Municipality to inform them that work on the Land Use Plan had started and to encourage involvement in the land use planning process. Flyers were also hand delivered to businesses on Paterson Street.

Sharing of information and the involvement of the community was also encouraged through the following activities:

- release of background investigation reports and Discussion Paper;
- print advertising in the Tennant Creek and District Times;
- a dedicated page on the NT Planning Commission website including times and dates of public displays, contact details to receive submissions and answer enquiries, and an online feedback form;
- a community information session; and
- a stakeholder workshop.
Barkly Regional Council

Tennant Creek is located within the municipality of the Barkly Regional Council. On Thursday 23 November 2017, NT Planning Commission member, Ms Fran Kilgariff, and key Department staff briefed the full Council at its meeting. This initial briefing was to inform Council on the background investigation report and the Planning Commission’s process for community consultation.

A number of Councillors and Council representatives also attended the Community Information Session.

Project Control Group (PCG)

A PCG was convened for this project in late January 2017, however the group was not able to convene again and the original membership has now dispersed. Critical input into the preparation of the Background Information Report and the Discussion Paper has been maintained from the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics, Power and Water Corporation and the Barkly Regional Council.

Others

NT Government Departments, industry and community groups identified as stakeholders in the Communications Engagement Strategy were provided with the consultation materials, and an invite to attend the information session.

The Member for Barkly, Gerry McCarthy, was also formally briefed on the project by the Chairman of the Commission on Thursday 30 November 2017.
3. Submissions and Feedback

Residents / Landowners

Tennant Creek land owners and residents had several opportunities to provide feedback to the Planning Commission.

Submissions/Feedback received from Information Session

15 residents and affected stakeholders attended the community information session held on Tuesday 23 November. A number of informal meetings with stakeholders were also conducted in early December. Comments that were received are summarised below:

Traffic

Tennant Creek is bisected by the Stuart Highway (Paterson Street). This national highway is the primary connection between Adelaide and Darwin and currently accommodates large passenger vehicles as well as large commercial vehicles.

The primary concern raised by the community and the Background Investigation Report is in respect to the conflict between general activities within the town centre and large commercial vehicles passing through the town. A number of residents expressed safety concerns:

- for school children who attend the local primary school; To access the school, which is located on Paterson Street, a number of children need to cross Paterson Street. With large vehicles passing through Paterson Street residents believe that this is a major cause of concern even with the existing pedestrian crossing located adjacent to the school; and

- for vehicles using angled parking on Paterson Street.

The option for a bypass for larger vehicles was discussed. Although the Background Investigation Report states that the development of a bypass would be beneficial from a road safety perspective, a number of residents felt that it would have a negative impact on local businesses as commuters may not stop in town to make use of existing services.

For those residents who supported a bypass, concerns were raised about the significant cost associated with building a bypass.

As an alternative solution it was suggested that perhaps the school be relocated away from Paterson Street to a more suitable site and that the IGA utilise the school site to expand and to provide sufficient off street parking for large vehicles.

Growth within Tennant Creek

Future population thresholds of 5 000 and 8 000 people have been used to inform the background investigations to the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan. Generally speaking most people supported growth in the population however concerns were raised regarding if and when the population would grow from 3 662 to 5 000 – 8 000 people.
The residential areas of Tennant Creek are primarily located east of Paterson Street, south of Peko Road. If growth were to occur there was a preference expressed by residents to use up vacant lots first and then release lots in the area east of Paterson Street.

In terms of lot sizes, the majority of residential allotments in Tennant Creek are larger than 1 000m². The majority of residents did not support small allotments of less than 800m² and preferred to maintain a minimum lot size of 1 000m².

There was no opinion given on whether small-scale multiple dwellings would be appropriate on the lots located behind the commercial lots on Paterson Street. However, residents did not support multi storey residential development on these lots.

Residents also sought to promote home ownership. Currently there are a high number of investment properties within Tennant Creek. They felt people should be encouraged, and mechanisms should be put in place, to provide more affordable housing in particular for first home buyers.

**Commercial growth outside of Paterson Street**

Paterson Street is the major commercial area of the town, with commercial uses stretching between Garnett Street and the northern end of town.

There was a mixture of opinions between residents about providing an opportunity for a neighbourhood store in either existing or new residential areas. On one hand, there was a view that the IGA should expand to cater for locals and visitors, whilst on the other hand there was a view that a neighbourhood store would move unnecessary traffic from Paterson Street and provide more convenience for locals.

**Infrastructure**

There was a general interest in stormwater and power infrastructure. Concerns were raised about the impact that additional housing would have on the reliability of the current power station. Further concerns were also raised about the capacity of drainage infrastructure to cope with stormwater.

**Environment and Heritage**

The Tennant Creek region is subject to a range of environmental, agricultural and cultural influences. There are three sites in the township of Tennant Creek which are listed on the NT Heritage register:

- Tennant Creek Hospital Outpatients Department;
- Tennant Creek Catholic Church; and
- Old Postmaster’s Residence.

The wider Tennant Creek region also includes sites of conservation significance, four of which are recognised as nationally significant under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

There was general support from the community to preserve and enhance Tennant Creek’s cultural heritage. One resident suggested making Tennant Creek a cultural hub whilst another suggested that there should be better connectivity between significant cultural sites including the old mining sites.
**Government Agencies**

A number of Government agencies provided oral and written feedback to the Planning Commission during the consultation period.

**Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority**

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority advised there are many sacred sites within the study area and the Authority would recommend an Authority Certificate be obtained before any works occur.

**Department of Housing**

The department advised that it owns a number of dwelling across Tennant creek, and therefore plans for the future growth are of key interest. Depending on future funding, population growth, policy and political commitments, the department may require additional land holdings in Tenant Creek.

**Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics**

In relation to the Discussion Paper, the Department’s Transport Planning Division advised that the Department is currently investigating the feasibility of a multi-modal facility for Tennant Creek which may have implications for the Land Use Plan.

The Transport Planning Division also advised that the Land Use Plan could consider the provision of a pedestrian network between key facilities and a cycle network within the study area. Furthermore, angle car parking along Paterson Street makes reversing challenging and could be reviewed.

The background information paper contains a range of options for provision of an alternate route for heavy vehicles. Significant planning would need to be undertaken before options suitable for inclusion in a Land Use Plan could be considered.

**Department of Tourism and Culture - Heritage Branch**

The Department’s Heritage Branch advised that they support the development of a Land Use Plan for Tennant Creek. Heritage further advised that at some point in the future that they would like to see a ‘Heritage Trail’, or a linked walk around declared heritage places within the central Tennant Creek town area if there is not one in place.

**Department of Primary Industry and Resources**

The Department advised:

- the area to the east of Paterson Street is the most logical location for future residential development;
- the town may benefit from additional stores which complement the IGA such as a bakery;
- the opportunity for people to live further out of town would be welcomed; and
- industrial activities such as mine processing or an abattoir are likely to be located outside the town boundary and would not have an effect on residents.
Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services

The Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTFRS) provided the following comments for consideration:

- future development should take into account flooding risk and ensure appropriate mitigation is put in place.
- any increased risks presented by expanding residential development directly in front of the airport runway should be considered.
- to mitigate against risks associated with heavy vehicles carrying toxic or hazardous materials through Tennant Creek, mitigation measures such as building a heavy vehicle by-pass road to the west of the town should be investigated.

NTFRS are also interested in building NT Emergency Service Station or/and joint volunteer facilities in the region.
4. Summary

Stage 1 consultation has allowed the Northern Territory Planning Commission to engage with the community on future land uses for Tennant Creek. Responses to the consultation process has been very positive, particularly with regard to the community open session held in Tennant Creek on the Thursday 23 November 2017.

Matters raised by the community through consultation included aspirations to preserve and promote the cultural and heritage values of Tenant Creek, a strong desire to support existing commercial business and a strong need to address existing and potential traffic issues on Paterson Street. There was a general interest in stormwater and power infrastructure. Concerns were raised about the impact that additional housing would have on the reliability of the current power station and also the capacity of drainage infrastructure to cope with stormwater flows.

In terms of population projections, residents expressed concerns about how realistic it would be to expect a future population of 5,000 to 8,000 people. However, if the population were to increase there was general support for existing surveyed land to be released east of Paterson Street with residential lots of not less than 800m² preferred. Medium density residential development was not supported.

The key message from service authorities and government agencies is that reticulated water and sewerage services are available to service future residential and industrial land. However, any development must take into consideration Native Title and sacred sites in the locality.

Overall, the development of a Land Use Plan for Tennant Creek is broadly viewed as a positive initiative that will allow Government agencies to plan for the future. It will provide certainty for existing land owners and business by providing a guide for future development within the locality.

5. Next Steps

This report covers only community consultation and engagement during Stage 1, the information gathering stage of the development of options for a draft Land Use Plan for Tennant Creek.

Stage 2 consultation is due to start in February 2018.
The Northern Territory Planning Commission is an independent and advisory statutory authority that prepares strategic land use plans to manage growth in anticipation rather than response.

The Planning Commission proactively sets the strategic framework for better integrated land use, transport and infrastructure planning, delivering more sustainable and cost-effective outcomes for the community, with sensitivity to environmental and heritage values.