

The background features a stylized map of the Lowood area. A central greyish-teal shape represents the landmass, with a prominent orange line winding through it, likely representing a river or a major road. The surrounding area is dark teal, with light blue outlines of other landmasses or water bodies.

Lowood Futures Strategy

LOWOOD FUTURES
STRATEGY REPORT

Prepared for Somerset Regional Council
December 2022

Prepared for



Project Team

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Quality Information

Document Ref	Lowood Futures Strategy 60684757
Date	December 2022
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Revision	Revision Date
DRAFT	14-November-2022
FINAL	December-2022

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1 Background

1.1

Introduction

The Lowood Futures Strategy is a blueprint that establishes a bold and ambitious vision and Concept Master Plan. The Strategy focuses on priorities for redevelopment, public realm enhancements and infrastructure upgrades to create a distinctive and attractive place, strengthen the local economy and attract people to stop, interact and engage.

The Strategy is based on a holistic revitalisation framework which recognises that the creation of a positive legacy requires a continual and iterative process with all stakeholders working together to plan, enable, manage and promote outcomes that have social, economic and development benefits for Lowood.

This document defines the challenges and opportunities for Lowood as drivers for change in order to provide a clear and compelling rationale for the need to reconsider the township and act as a basis for the vision. The document contains a Concept Master Plan with initiatives that shape the future township and transform the Town Centre.

The Concept Master Plan is supported by a pragmatic implementation plan with prioritised initiatives and economic analysis that demonstrates the future value of the Strategy and investment in the concept for Lowood.

The Strategy is timed to capitalise on significant road and water infrastructure upgrades as part of the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program and SEQ City Deal that will improve access to Lowood and enhance water supply and efficiency for growers in the Somerset region, as well as provide the opportunity to attract investment and tourism.

The Strategy is a collaboration between Somerset Regional Council and the Lowood community and provides the foundation for effective partnerships to enable and deliver the initiatives and projects.

The approach is built on the understanding that the Strategy will be successful if the community and key stakeholders own the outcomes and are confident to act on the initiatives.

The Futures Strategy is underpinned by rigorous technical analysis and a collaborative planning and design approach that built understanding of the challenges facing the town, developed a shared vision, co-created options and solutions, and laid the groundwork for effective partnerships to lead implementation and deliver the outcomes.

Strategy Components

The Lowood Futures Strategy is organised into five key components.

These components reflect the shared views of the community and simply illustrate 'why' we think change is required, 'what' our future aspirations are for Lowood, 'how' we will achieve the vision, 'where' change is proposed and 'when' you can expect action and transformation to occur.

5 DRIVERS



1 VISION

3 STRATEGY ELEMENTS

COMMUNITY BUILDING

BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

IDENTITY & ATTRACTION

CONCEPT MASTER PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Alignment

The Lowood Futures Strategy forms part of a broader suite of vision and policy documents that collectively guide the future of the region. The Strategy also builds on previous studies that investigated future planning needs, issues and growth options for the township and region.

VISION



Somerset Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026

INVESTMENT



South East Queensland City Deal (2022)



Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) 2022-23 to 2025-26

POLICY



ShapingSEQ – South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017



Somerset Regional Council Planning Scheme 2016



Somerset Tourism Strategy 2021-2025



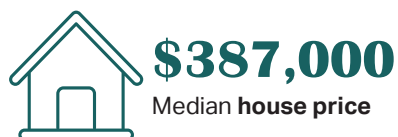
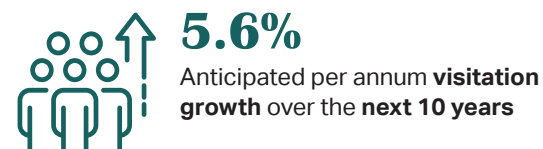
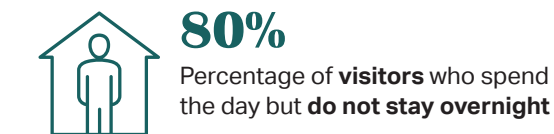
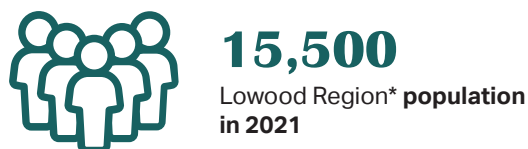
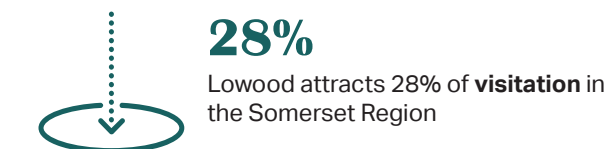
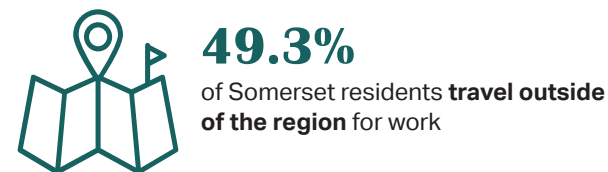
Draft Somerset Economic Development Strategy – The Next Horizon (2022)

1.2

Strategic Context

About Lowood

Understanding Lowood in its broader context, including its historic evolution and future outlook, its people, role and function and relationship with other places in the region, and its unique character and identity provides valuable insights into the drivers for Lowood's future and the natural advantages and opportunities that can be leveraged.



Note: Lowood Region includes the townships of Lowood, Coominya, Clarendon, Banks Creek, Fernvale



48.3%

of **economic activity** in the Somerset Region is generated in Lowood



43%

Lowood Region is responsible for **almost half of the value** of Somerset's **agricultural product**



KEY INDUSTRIES PROVIDING JOBS

13.2%
Retail

10.6%
Construction

12.1%
Manufacturing

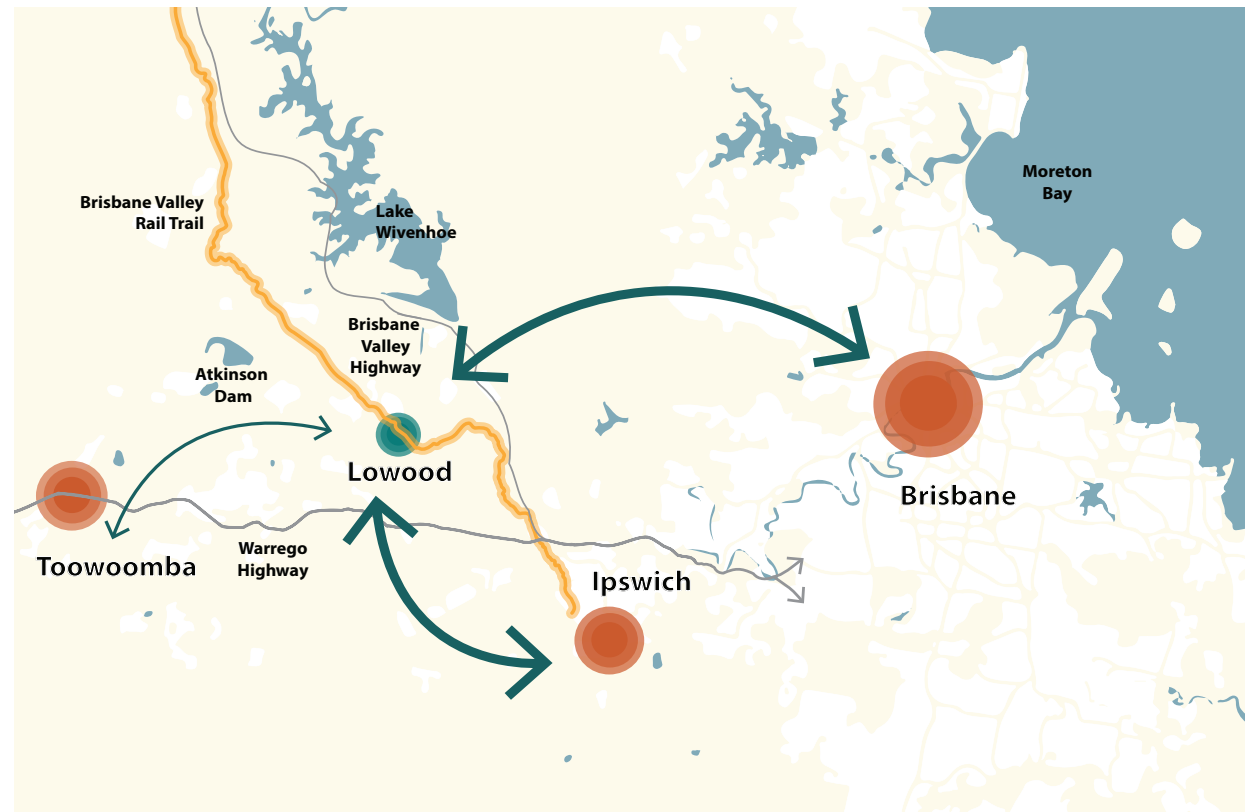
Town Role and Function

Lowood is located approximately 60km west of Brisbane, in proximity to the Warrego Highway, Ipswich, the Lockyer Valley and Toowoomba. It has a rural setting with natural features including the Brisbane River, Lake Wivenhoe and Atkinson Dam nearby.

Lowood township predominantly comprises rural residential and low-density residential areas, with the Town Centre located in the north-east of the township. Lowood Town Centre has a small footprint associated with a rural centre and provides general services and amenities for the local population including a grocery store, banks, post office, library, community services, retail shops and limited food and beverage offers.

The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail provides a popular recreation route through the centre of town and also provides a high-quality walking path to the school and other destinations. Clock Park in the middle of the Town Centre is also a popular recreation space.

An opportunity exists for Somerset Regional Council to work with the Lowood community and businesses to enable and promote development that encourages people to stop, stay and engage. There is also an opportunity to reinforce Lowood as a regional centre and unlock the potential of the Town Centre sites and provide services to the community and visitors.



A Rich History

Prior to European settlement in 1824, the landscape of south-east Queensland was influenced and protected by millennia of Aboriginal stewardship. In the 1880s, it is believed that approximately 300-400 indigenous people lived and had corroborees in the Lowood area.

European explorers first navigated the upper reaches of the Brisbane River and parts of the Lockyer Creek from 1824–1825. In the 1870s, European immigrants, predominantly German, settled and introduced their culture, farming techniques and language to Lowood. The name Lowood is derived from the prevalence of low-growing scrub in the area.

In 1884, Lowood became the first terminus for the Brisbane Valley rail line which was used to transport supplies to the growing number of small farmers in the valley, as well as milk products, timber and stock to the Brisbane markets. From the 1890s to the 1950s, tonnes of local produce were despatched every day by trains to Brisbane.

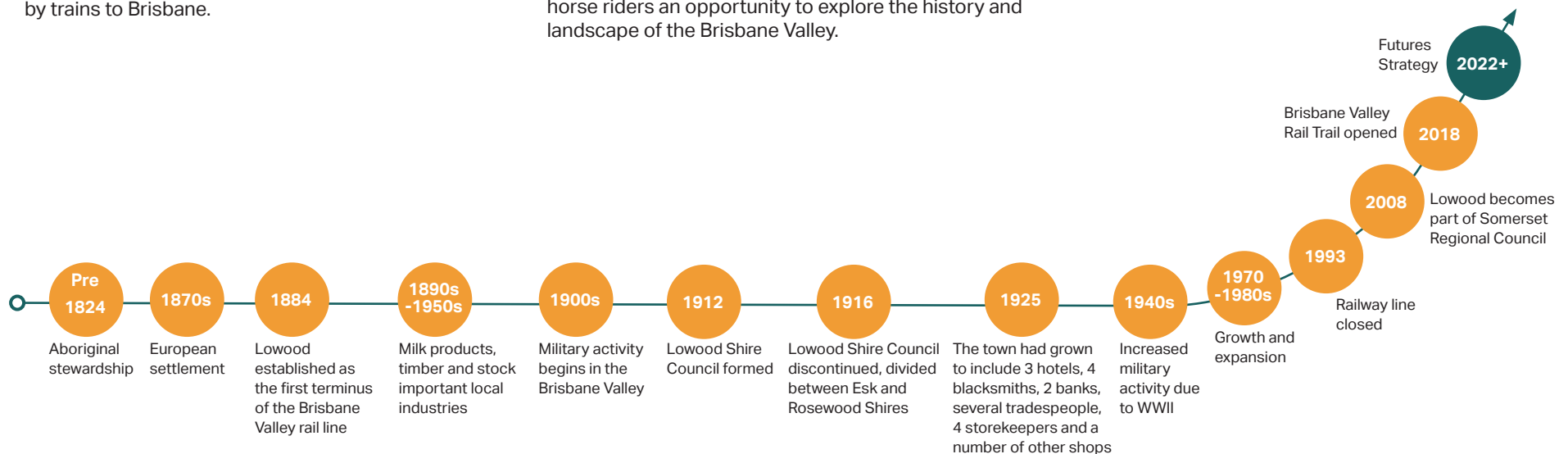
Before the rail line, the Lowood area consisted of many scattered farms, a sawmill and only three public buildings – Bethel Lutheran Church, Cairnhill Provisional School and the Beacon Light Hotel. Soon after the rail line was built, Lowood became a thriving township and the market distribution centre for surrounding communities.

The district was sufficiently unified and influential to form Lowood Shire in 1912. However, the shire was discontinued in 1916 and divided between Esk and Rosewood Shires, before becoming part of the Somerset Regional Council area.

The last motor service on the rail line occurred in 1989, and removal of the rail lines commenced in 1993. Lowood Station and some other buildings associated with the railway remain. Since 2018, the disused line has operated as the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail and has provided walkers, touring cyclists and horse riders an opportunity to explore the history and landscape of the Brisbane Valley.



Railway yards at Lowood, 1910. Image: State Library of Queensland





Main street of Lowood (Railway Street) in 1929, showing the heritage-listed former bank building to the left of the image.
Image: State Library of Queensland

1.3

Drivers for Change

Lowood has untapped potential as a regional centre serving the needs of a growing population, as well as visitors and tourists stopping to experience the town's unique local character. Now is the time to leverage the positive momentum and investments in major projects and harness the community's desire to transform the Town Centre and stimulate new activity and development.

1 Population Growth

The Lowood region is anticipated to grow by 6,300 residents to approximately 21,800 residents by 2041. Additional services and amenities in the Town Centre, including things to do, especially for young people, will be needed to serve the growing population.

2 Evolving Lifestyle Focus

Increasing numbers of residents are choosing Lowood for its regional lifestyle in proximity to major centres. Higher quality Town Centre outcomes and amenities are needed to draw residents into the centre where they can connect with their community.

3 Changing Identity

The existing character and identity of the Lowood Town Centre is fragmented and lacks a sense of vibrancy, whereby the former rail functions no longer provide a core purpose for the town. A unifying concept for the Town Centre that includes public realm, streetscape and placemaking upgrades and the adaptive reuse of Council's land in the centre of the town will enhance the identity of Lowood.

4 Visitor Economy

Despite being the economic centre of the Somerset region and home to key visitor assets such as the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, Lowood captures a small share of visitation to the region. There is an opportunity to better connect existing attractions and increase the number and quality of attractions to encourage visitors to stay longer and drive demand for supporting services and facilities such as short-term accommodation and restaurants which will help to activate the Town Centre.

5 Industry Growth + Diversification

Key industries, such as agri-food, logistics and renewable energy, are anticipated to increase significantly over the next few decades. Combined with better access to the Warrego Highway and key centres, there is an opportunity to unlock growth and diversification in Lowood by removing constraints and challenges and promote it as a hub for new investment.



An increasing population will demand greater access to services and amenities in the Town Centre



Underused space in the Town Centre presents opportunities to create new places for people



A regional lifestyle is drawing increasing numbers of residents to Lowood



Public realm, streetscape and placemaking upgrades can help to create a more vibrant Town Centre



The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail is a key visitor draw card in the Lowood region



Expanding industries have the potential to bring economic growth to Lowood



2 Engagement Outcomes

Engagement Outcomes

The success of the Strategy relies on community, business and government working together to develop a shared vision and design concept for the Town Centre.

Somerset Regional Council engaged with community groups and key stakeholders between May and November 2022 to understand the community's issues and aspirations and to provide an opportunity to comment on the concepts.

Public consultation on the Draft Concept Master Plan was undertaken, utilising Council's 'Have your say' platform, from Monday 15 August 2022 to Monday 5 September 2022.

These insights helped Somerset Regional Council understand what the community considers important and wants for the future. The feedback provided through the process was used to inform the Strategy and Concept Master Plan.

3 LOWOOD FUTURES
REFERENCE GROUP
MEETINGS

32 SUBMISSIONS
RECEIVED

“ Loving the trees. Can't
ever have too many trees! ”

What we heard about the Draft Concept Master Plan:

- The community showed support for the project, with more positive feedback received than neutral or negative.
- The top 3 categories of comments submitted related to existing building and business impacts; car parking changes; and the botanic core and community hub.
- Existing building and business impacts – the community noted a desire to retain historic buildings, promote heritage and ensure character is preserved in design.
- Car parking changes – the community shared concerns new parking options will affect existing businesses and are too far away (to walk); but, equally, supported the options as proposed.
- Botanic core and community hub – there was overwhelming support for the community garden/ botanic core/tree-lined streets, and for the community hub.
- Respondents identified a need for improved town entry statements and façades, public spaces, better use of the former indoor sports centre, better public transport, and access for all.
- Other ideas put forward included new facilities such as electric car charging points and a function centre; new visitor and recreation activities and facilities such as a canoe trail, a four-wheel-drive club and a splash water park; and, suggestions to support growth and investment.

“ **The park has always been a central place for the community to visit and botanical core and new connections are particularly exciting.** ”

“ **It is great to see that many of the businesses and organisations on Railway Street are already improving their buildings.** ”

“ **The space for community workshops is brilliant. Community allied health sometimes have difficulty renting a room during the week.** ”

“ **Doing something special with the playground could really progress this to the next level... The number of families it brings on weekends is phenomenal which would be great for local businesses on the weekend.** ”



3 Vision and Strategy Elements

3.1

Vision

Developed in partnership with the local community and stakeholders, the Vision sets the scene for the identity and experience of Lowood in the future. The four key aspects of the vision include:

GREEN AND BOTANICAL CHARACTER



DESTINATION WITH GENUINE EXPERIENCES



FRIENDLY VIBE



COMMUNITY PRIDE AND OWNERSHIP



3.2

Strategy Elements

Underpinning the Vision are three Strategy Elements that address the challenges Lowood is facing, the drivers for change, and the aspirations for Lowood's future. The elements provide the foundation for ongoing change and guide the Concept Master Plan.

Element 1 — Community Building



Social issues and a lack of community pride were key issues that arose through stakeholder engagement. Crime, dilapidated buildings and a lack of employment opportunities have eroded the sense of community in Lowood and contribute to a negative image within the local area.

Fostering a strong and engaged community is crucial to the success of Lowood and the Futures Strategy. There are opportunities to build community through improvements to public space and community facilities on Council sites in the Town Centre, as well as engagement programs that empower community members to take charge of Lowood's future.

Element 2 — Business & Employment



Lowood has higher levels of unemployment than the State average and the Somerset Region has a low employment self-containment rate with many residents travelling to Ipswich or Brisbane for work.

Improved accessibility through planned major road upgrades including the Warrego Highway will make the town more attractive to established and new businesses.

Opportunities exist to better capitalise on Lowood's competitive advantages through commercial cluster of ag-tech and agri-business uses, diversification of existing industries, expansion of logistics services and renewable energy, and the attraction of population servicing sectors to support liveability and resident attraction.

Element 3 — Identity & Attraction



Lowood captures a relatively small share of visitation to the Somerset Region. Limited services provision for tourists impacts on tourist retention within the town, particularly at night and on weekends. Existing demand is insufficient to entice private sector investment, but future demand requires delivery of services.

There are opportunities for Lowood to better leverage its heritage and local attractions to expand its tourism offering and attract greater visitation. This can be achieved by diversifying the range of overnight accommodation options available to tourists, expanding the range of tourism products and experiences that the region can provide, and furthering development of tourism infrastructure that supports these products and experiences.

Strategy Initiatives

The Strategy Initiatives set out the strategic outcomes that shape the future direction for Lowood. Initiatives sit across the Revitalisation Framework to reflect the collaborative approach required to achieving the strategic outcomes.

The Revitalisation Strategic Framework has guided the collaborative process to Plan for change; Enable and Manage catalyst projects, investment and delivery models; and Promote place and events in order to create a positive and long-lasting Legacy.

It is a multi-faceted approach that incorporates all available levers to revitalise. The circular design of the framework represents a dynamic and iterative model driven by local champions where plans, investments, projects and campaigns are continually monitored and improved in response to changed circumstances, learnings and stakeholder engagement feedback. Lowood's future prosperity and liveability will depend on the coordination and integration of all projects and investment decisions aligning with the shared Vision for the town.



1. Community Building

Objective: Bringing people together is key to community building. This can be done through community groups and activities, as well as connecting people to a place. Providing spaces for the community and establishing an inviting identity will foster community ownership and pride in the Town Centre.



1.1 Lowood Futures Taskforce



Futures Taskforce — Establish a group of community and business representatives forming a ‘Lowood Futures Taskforce’ to act as champions for change and provide oversight to the implementation of the Strategy.

1.2 Reinforce the Town Centre as the Community Heart of Lowood



Green Botanic Core — Establish a Green Botanic Core in the Town Centre, providing central spaces for the community to meet and promote community pride in the centre.



Town Centre Improvements — Enhance public spaces with lighting, art, landscaping and other improvements to provide shade, shelter and comfort and promote a feeling of safety.



Parking — Re-locate and formalise car parking in the centre to make land available for the community while providing convenient access to destinations around town.



New Connections — Create a tree-lined east-west connection between Michel Street and the Showgrounds via Station Street.



Activation — Support and host activation events (e.g. film nights in the park, markets) as part of a staged redevelopment to encourage locals to be in the Town Centre and engage with young people.



Multi-Purpose Spaces — Investigate the potential of a multi-purpose indoor/outdoor space for markets, events or community workshops.

1.3 Enhance Public Spaces and Facilities



Community Hub — Develop a community hub that brings together government services and provides flexible spaces that could be used for multiple purposes including a disaster management centre.



Lowood Recreation Reserve Upgrade — Explore opportunities to upgrade facilities at Lowood Recreation Reserve.



Emergency Services Hub — Work with Queensland Government to investigate relocation of Lowood Police Station into the Town Centre, with opportunities to form an emergency services hub.

2. Business & Employment

Objective: Capitalising on Lowood's competitive advantages to attract business investment will improve employment opportunities and enhance Lowood's liveability.



2.1 Capitalise on Lowood's Competitive Advantages

	Business Attraction — Incentivise businesses such as start-ups, paddock to plate ventures and local processing of agri-food products to locate in Lowood, to underpin demand for Town Centre development including Council sites along Railway Street.
	Industrial Land Needs — Plan for industrial land needs for sectors based around transport, logistics, water and agri-business.
	Defined Role — Define Lowood's role within the Somerset Region through the Regional Business Investment Prospectus planned by the Draft Somerset Economic Development Strategy.

2.2 Unlock Business Opportunities

	Improved Infrastructure — Advocate for improved telecommunications, digital and NBN services, as well as coworking spaces to support businesses.
	Business Initiatives — Undertake Council business initiatives and events to encourage business investment opportunities and ensure businesses are provided with an efficient, customer-focused experience regarding necessary approvals.
	Temporary Activities — Enable agile activity such as markets and temporary activation of empty shops.
	Skills Development — Facilitate access to skills through engagement with schools and students.

2.3 Facilitate Development in the Centre

	Council Land — Review all Council held land and identify surplus sites for investment.
	New Development — In partnership with owners and tenants, utilise existing available land for future retail, dining, office, short-term accommodation opportunities, allowing development to happen over time.
	Facade Improvements — Support and promote façade improvement and encourage investment in the renewal and appearance of buildings to enhance street life.

3. Identity & Attraction

Objective: Providing new or improved facilities and promoting Lowood as a visitor destination will enhance the tourism offer and encourage people to stay in Lowood.



3.1 Define and Promote Lowood's Identity

	Signage — Install town entrance and wayfinding signage in line with the Draft Somerset Economic Development Strategy and Somerset Tourism Strategy.
	Brand Toolkit — Develop a region-wide brand toolkit for tourism operators with town-specific identity.
	Lowood Greeters — Initiate the Lowood Greeters program where locals volunteer to provide guided tours of the town for visitors and celebrate its people, history and landmarks.
	Rail History — Explore opportunities to celebrate the rail history of Lowood, with the train station as the central marker.

3.2 Unlock Visitor Opportunities

	Short-Term Accommodation — Support and promote opportunities for investment in short-term accommodation in Lowood Town Centre to diversify the range of overnight accommodation options available to visitors.
	Lowood Spur Line — Create a route off the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail that connects local destinations and natural attractions to attract visitors and encourage people to spend more time in Lowood.
	River Access — Facilitate improved access and infrastructure around the Brisbane River to support water-based tourism activities.
	Manage Natural Attractions — Explore opportunities to manage natural attractions such as Jensen's Swamp Environmental Reserve and Atkinson Dam to resolve issues and facilitate recreation activities.



4 Concept Master Plan

4.1

Concept Master Plan

The Concept Master Plan illustrates how the Strategy Initiatives can be realised through change on the ground, presented at a Township scale and Town Centre scale.

Township

The Township concepts harness the potential of Lowood's key features that combine to define the unique identity based on lifestyle, recreation and business opportunities.



TOWN CENTRE

Reinforcing the Town Centre as the community heart of Lowood and planning for its future evolution.



LOWOOD SPUR LINES

Creation of routes off the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail that connect local destinations such as the Town Centre and natural attractions such as the Brisbane River, to attract visitors and encourage people to spend more time in Lowood.



RIVER ACCESS

Facilitating paddle craft access to Lowood's greatest natural asset, the Brisbane River.



LOWOOD RECREATION RESERVE COMPLEX UPGRADE














Explore opportunities to upgrade facilities at Lowood Recreation Reserve.



HOUSING

Housing will continue to be provided within the urban area of Lowood as the town grows.

LEGEND

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Brisbane Valley Rail Trail
-  Open Space and Recreation
-  1 Golf Club
-  2 Showgrounds
-  3 Primary School
-  4 High School
-  5 Swimming Pool, Police Station & Bowls Club
-  6 RSL
-  7 Jensen's Swamp Environmental Reserve
-  Lookout
-  Botanic Gardens
-  Spur Lines



Town Centre

The Concept Master Plan seeks to transform the Town Centre into an area that the community can be proud of, with a green character and activities and spaces that create a friendly atmosphere.



GREEN BOTANIC CORE

Creating a people-focused centre with open space at its core will build upon Clock Park and recent planting to establish a green botanic character throughout the Town Centre. The Green Botanic Core could include trees, landscaping, BBQ areas, playgrounds and an event lawn.



COMMUNITY HUB

A potential new building to bring government services together into one place and provide a hub for the local community with flexible spaces that can be used for different purposes, including a disaster management centre.



BRISBANE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

Harness the visitor attraction of the Rail Trail by creating places for people to stop and spend time in Lowood, and by enhancing crossings for the safety and comfort of all users.



LOWOOD TRAIN STATION

Celebrating the railway history of Lowood provides inspiration for the Concept Plan, with Lowood Train Station as a central marker in the Town Centre.



NEW CONNECTIONS

Creating a new east-west connection between Michel Street and the Lowood Showgrounds via Station Street will improve connections and reinforce the people-focused centre.



CAR PARKING

Relocating and formalising public car parking in the Town Centre will support the creation of the people-focused Green Botanic Core while providing convenient access to destinations around town.

New car parking would also be established as new development or refurbishment occurs in the Town Centre.



YOUTH ACTIVITY AREA

Create and enhance spaces and activities for young people in the Town Centre.



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Utilising existing available land for future retail, dining, office and short-term accommodation opportunities, allowing development to happen over time.

New buildings would include awnings and materials that complement the existing character of Lowood. Buildings adjoining the Green Botanic Core, including on government-owned land on Railway Street, will address and activate the open space.



Not to scale

Roles Key

Somerset Regional Council ●

Queensland / Australian Government ●

Community and Private Sector ●

4.2

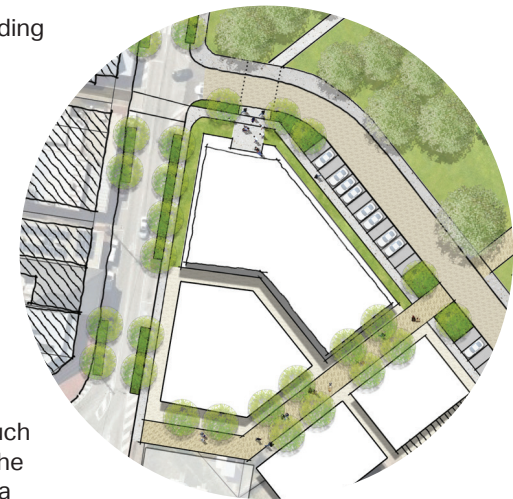
Catalyst Projects

These projects offer transformational opportunities, acting as catalysts for associated changes. Improvements to the Town Centre, new facilities and new attractions demonstrate that the community and Council take pride in Lowood and have genuine aspirations for its future as a town. Showing that Lowood is a friendly and welcoming place with good opportunities for investment will encourage new businesses and development.

Community Hub

Creating a new Community Hub building will provide a central place for the community to gather and access services. Bringing various existing government services that are spread across town into a single 1,600m² building will enable efficient service provision as well as repurposing of underutilised space in the centre. This could be delivered in two stages.

Flexible spaces could be used for community activities, conferences and meetings or Council services such as a disaster management centre. The Community Hub has potential to be a new landmark with a buzz of activity and community participation.



Enabling Actions

- ● ● Work with the Lowood Futures Taskforce and stakeholders to determine community needs and confirm the services and spaces to be accommodated in the Community Hub.
- ○ ● Work with land, building and business owners in the centre to make the Community Hub land available for development, including relocation of car parking.
- ○ ○ Develop a business case to support funding including procurement of architectural services to develop a concept design of the Community Hub building.

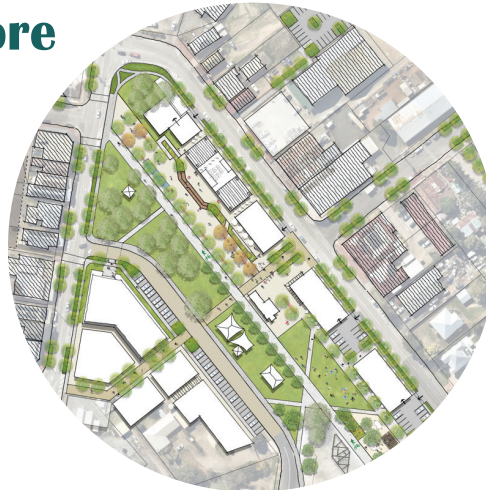
Roles Key

- Somerset Regional Council
- Queensland / Australian Government
- Community and Private Sector

Green Botanic Core

The open nature of Lowood's Town Centre presents a unique opportunity to harness the space for the community and visitors and celebrate the town's history by establishing a Green Botanic Core embracing the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail.

Providing a specific function for the space that builds on the local identity and provides a civic heart will ensure the Town Centre is a place for people and supports local business.



Town Centre Improvements

Streetscape improvements such as tree planting and footpath upgrades can make a considerable difference to the comfort and character of the Town Centre. Coupled with enhancements to shop fronts and pedestrian connections, these improvements will assist in uplifting the appeal of Lowood and fostering community pride in the Town Centre.



Enabling Actions

- ○ ● Undertake concept design and community engagement for the spaces that make up the Green Botanic Core.
- ○ ● Stage delivery of the Green Botanic Core to align with funding and other revitalisation/ development activities in the Town Centre including relocation of car parking.
- ○ ○ Review and update the planning scheme to ensure new buildings adjoining the Green Botanic Core address and encourage activation of public spaces.
- ○ ● Work with the Lowood Futures Taskforce to involve local businesses and community groups (e.g. Landcare) in the delivery of the Green Botanic Core.

Enabling Actions

- ● ○ Investigate reclassification of Main Street and Railway Street from State-controlled roads to Local roads to reflect their current function as well as recent and planned upgrades to other roads.
- ● ● Establish a program to support local businesses improve shop fronts in the Town Centre.
- ○ ○ Stage delivery of streetscape improvements to align with other revitalisation activities in the Town Centre.

Roles Key

- Somerset Regional Council ●
- Queensland / Australian Government ●
- Community and Private Sector ●

Lowood Spur Lines

The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail is a major visitor attractor that brings people through the centre of Lowood. Creating a spur route, or routes, off the Rail Trail that highlight local destinations such as the Town Centre, local historical places, environmental reserves and the Brisbane River will encourage visitors to spend more time in Lowood. Longer stays mean more patronage for local businesses and assist in building the profile of Lowood as a welcoming destination.



Enabling Actions

- ○ ● Work with the Lowood Futures Taskforce to identify destinations and different Spur Line route options for staged delivery.
- ● ○ Develop a detailed route plan taking into consideration land tenure, topography, cycle networks, safety, infrastructure requirements and user experience.
- ○ ● Rejuvenate or promote local attractions such as Jensen's Swamp Environmental Reserve.
- ○ ○ Provide wayfinding and informational signage along the Spur Line.

River Access

The Brisbane River and Lockyer Creek are valuable natural assets that contribute to the character and lifestyle of Lowood. Improving access to the water will help to facilitate a variety of recreational experiences that are unique to Lowood, for locals and visitors alike.



Enabling Actions

- ○ ● Work with the Lowood Futures Taskforce to identify key locations where improvements to access or facilities would enable new recreation or business activities.
- ● ○ Work with government entities to provide a coordinated response to land side and water side infrastructure to enable river access.

A stylized, light-colored map of Somerset is visible in the background, showing the county's outline and some internal regional boundaries. The map is rendered in a light teal or greyish-blue color against the dark teal background.

5 Implementation

5.1

Benefits Realisation

Economic analysis has revealed that, with the right level of intervention and investor confidence, the Futures Strategy has the scope to deliver demonstrable socio-economic impacts for Lowood and the broader Somerset Region.

Delivery of the Concept Master Plan is able to generate a Benefit Cost Ratio — the relationship between the relative costs and benefits of a proposed project — of **2.06** over the next 30 years, providing quantifiable benefits to Lowood in the form of enhanced amenity and liveability for residents and increased economic activity from greater business and visitor activity in the region.

In addition to the quantified benefits, the Concept Master Plan is likely to result in a range of other qualitative benefits to residents and businesses across Lowood and the Somerset Region, including improved identity, resident attraction, lowered retail vacancy rates, reduction in crime/ anti-social behaviour, improved accessibility, community wellbeing/ cohesion, road/ pedestrian safety and improved adaption to climate change.

Investment in the concept masterplan will transform Lowood into an area that embodies a green character and friendly vibe, and is a destination with genuine experiences and that fosters community pride and ownership. However, success will depend on collaborative governance, pragmatic and programmed delivery and partnerships between the private sector and all levels of government.

It is estimated that the investment in the concept masterplan will generate the following socio-economic benefits for Lowood over a 30-year period:

- Increased floorspace activity arising from the community hub as well as the additional private sector investment, generating an estimated annual benefit of \$6 million
- Increased visitation to the region by 6,570 people per annum
- 7.5% increase in existing business activity, generating a benefit of \$0.7million annually
- Increased employment in the region, generating an estimated benefit of \$1 million annually
- Increased amenity through improved access to open space, the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail and the Brisbane River, and greater pedestrian connections, generating an estimated benefit of \$96,000 in the first operational year and increasing with population growth
- Improved access to health care through the provision of medical centre facilities within the community hub, generating an estimated benefit of \$81,000 annually
- Increased disaster preparedness resulting from a disaster management centre, reducing the cost of natural disasters and generating an estimated benefit of \$29,750 annually.



INCREASED VISITATION



7.5% INCREASE IN BUSINESS ACTIVITY



ENHANCED LOCAL HEALTH BENEFITS



AMENITY BENEFIT FOR LOCALS



INCREASED FLOORSPACE ACTIVITY



DISASTER MANAGEMENT BENEFITS



5.2

Implementation Plan

Implementation of the Strategy relies on community, business and government sectors working together to plan, enable, manage, promote and deliver the Strategy and Vision. Somerset Regional Council will investigate and establish an appropriate governance framework to implement and deliver the Strategy in partnership with key stakeholders. The key responsibilities would include:

- Coordinating public and private sector initiatives and investments to understand the collaboration and co-funding opportunities
- Working with State and Federal governments to explore funding support for the concept plan investment
- Developing a program for delivery of the Strategy
- Investment attraction and marketing the business and development opportunities
- Activation overlay and events planning
- Facilitating development and catalyst projects
- Measuring progress and effectiveness of the Strategy.

The preparation of the Futures Strategy is the first step in the process. The Strategy identifies a range of key delivery projects in a variety of areas including governance, place activation and capital works that can be sequenced over the short, medium and long term for the benefit of Lowood. Actions relating to Catalyst projects have been incorporated into the implementation plan at a high-level. See the enabling actions under each project for more detail.

The information in this section is indicative only and the actions, projects, and staging are subject to funding allocation, budget approvals, agreements between public and private sector agencies and delivery/timing of works.

Short Term

In the short term, there is a need to maintain the community momentum for change driven through the preparation of the Futures Strategy and focus on early actions that capture quick wins or prepare for future investment.

Enabling Actions

- ○ ○ **100 Day Revitalisation Plan** — Council outlines the actions and initiatives to be undertaken through a 100-day plan focusing on delivering quick outcomes such as graffiti removal, rectifying broken pavements, footpaths and lighting, undertaking small scale public realm works or installing street tree feature lighting.
- ○ ● **Lowood Futures Taskforce** — Council appoints a Lowood Place Manager that works with locals to establish a community and business group to act as champions for change and provide oversight to the implementation of the Strategy.
- ○ ● **Engagement Strategy** — Council and the Lowood Futures Taskforce develop an Engagement Strategy that outlines when and how the community will be involved with projects and initiatives.
- ○ ○ **Monitoring and Evaluation Program** — Establish a program that monitors the progress of actions from the Strategy on an annual basis.
- ● ○ **Somerset Region Planning Scheme Review** — Review and update the planning scheme to support the Strategy vision, including tailoring of building design and massing, street and open space interface, and car parking outcomes to support appropriate development.
- ● ● **Town Centre Improvements** — Commence Town Centre improvements including establishing a program to support local businesses improve shop fronts in the Town Centre.
- ○ ● **Green Botanic Core** — Commence works to relocate car parking and establish the first stage of the Green Botanic Core.

Roles Key

- Somerset Regional Council ●
- Queensland / Australian Government ●
- Community and Private Sector ●

Medium Term

Medium term implementation will focus on projects that attract private investment into Lowood and lay the groundwork for catalyst projects.

Enabling Actions

- ● ● **Community Hub** — Facilitate funding and works on the new consolidated Community hub and negotiate opportunities to entice private enterprise and other government occupation.
- ○ ● **Town Activation Program** — Establish an activation program with initiatives such as art curation, community markets, day and nights events to promote activation of the Town Centre.
- ○ ● **Development and Business Prospectus** — Create a development prospectus to attract short-term accommodation and a diversified business offer in Lowood, aligning with the Strategy and the Somerset Regional Economic Development Strategy.
- ● ● **River Access** — Community and government entities identify river access locations and coordinate infrastructure provision.
- ● ● **Lowood Spur Lines** — Investigate routes and establish initial stages of the Lowood Spur Line.

Long Term

In the long term, the Concept Master Plan will need to be revisited and new initiatives considered to ensure they are appropriate for the time and maximise the benefits delivered. It will also be important to continue to advocate for more complex changes.

Enabling Actions

- ● ● **Supporting Development** — As the Town Centre improvements mature and more land is made available in the centre, Council will continue to work with locals and private industry to support development and investment in Lowood.
- ● ○ **Emergency Services Hub** — Work with the Queensland Government to explore an emergency services hub including relocation of the Police Station into the Town Centre.
- ○ ● **Expanded Green Botanic Core** — Build upon the initial works to expand the Green Botanic Core, aligning with development and other Strategy actions.
- ○ ● **Expanded Lowood Spur Lines** — Investigate opportunities to expand the Lowood Spur Line.
- ○ ● **Revisit Initiatives and Actions** — Ensure ongoing activation with review of initiatives, reinvigoration of works and ongoing curation of events and spaces.

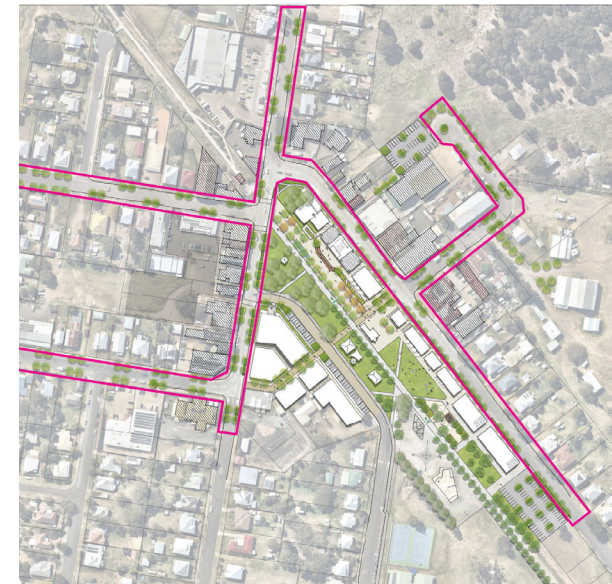
Staging Plan

This section provides an indication of how delivery of the initiatives and catalyst projects in the Town Centre could be staged over time. The staging plan acknowledges interdependencies between initiatives, potential impacts of initiatives, and the potential value that can be captured by logical sequencing of delivery. Stages suggest a sequence of projects that will build value over time, with a staged approach to more significant or complex changes to the Town Centre.



STAGE ONE Parking Relocation / Botanic Core

Reclaiming the centre of town for people and open space by relocating car parking nearby within the Town Centre will have an immediate benefit and provide an important foundation for the Green Botanic Core.



STAGE TWO Streetscape Enhancements

Spreading the green botanic appeal into Town Centre streets through streetscape enhancements will contribute to a cohesive Town Centre character. Opportunities for revitalisation of buildings along Railway Street would further enhance the appeal of the Town Centre in the short term.



STAGE THREE
Community Hub

Delivery of the Community Hub will require funding sought through the development of a business case, informed by planning and design involving various stakeholders.



STAGE FOUR
Expanded Botanic Core

Completing the second stage of the Green Botanic Core to support the new Community Hub and align with potential development opportunities allows the concept to evolve over time to ensure it achieves the vision for Lowood's future.



STAGE FIVE
Further Development / Emergency Services Hub

Further development opportunities and creation of an emergency services hub in town will take longer to coordinate and for market demand to compel development.

