

DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY ROUND 2 CONSULTATION

2021-2025

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

CITY OF WODONGA VIC

Wodonga Council acknowledges the traditional owners of this land on which we stand and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the tradition and the culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

OVERVIEW

Wodonga's great outdoors

Wodonga's open spaces are one of the factors that make it a great place to live, work and play.

Wodonga has 429 hectares of usable public open space, which is important in our lives for sport, recreation and relaxation.

In 2018, a community conversation about the future of Wodonga's open spaces started.

We asked people about the planning, provision, design and management of all public open space for the next 15 years.

From what we heard back from our community, we developed a draft Open Space Strategy.

Then, we took that draft strategy back to stakeholders and our wider community to give their further feedback between September and November 2021.

ABOUT

What is the Open Space Strategy?

The draft Wodonga Open Space Strategy (the Strategy) provides the strategic direction for the future planning, provision, design and management of public open space in Wodonga over the next 15 years.

The Strategy identifies challenges faced by the development of public open spaces in odonga, such as competing public open space uses and interests; increasing ressure and demand on open spaces for amenities and infrastructure; and hurdles in developing quality public open space that is appropriately located, sized, designed and serviced in new development areas.

To address these challenges, the Strategy provides recommendations for the management of, and establishes planning and design standards for public open space in order to facilitate the growing needs for quality public open spaces as the city develops and community needs change.

It also highlights the importance to provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to have access to nature and outdoor recreation to maximise the benefits provided by improved health and wellbeing.

It outlines actions to address existing community and recreational needs, to anticipate and meet the public open space requirements of the municipality's forecast population and changing leisure and recreational trends.

HOW PEOPLE GOT INVOLVED

EXHIBITION PERIOD - PHASE 2 - DRAFT STRATEGY

September 22 to November 22, 2022

WEBSITE

Make Wodonga Yours website, including interactive map, online and mail submissions

SURVEY

65 people did a survey

IN-PERSON

- 3 pop ups outside business hours:
  - Albury Wodonga Farmers Market, Saturday, October 16, 8am to 12pm
  - Murray River Market, Thursday, October 21, from 4pm to 8pm
  - Baranduda Community Centre, Friday, November 19, from 6pm to 8pm
- A drop-in session at council, Thursday, November 4, 3.30pm to 6.30pm

ONLINE FORUMS

An online froum was held for developers on Tuesday, October 26, and seven people attended

An online community forum was organised for Wednesday, October 27, but cancelled because there were no RSVPs.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Stakeholder meetings and discussion were held with Wodonga Urban Landcare Network and Friends of Willow Park.

WE ASKED CHILDREN

Wodonga Primary School students used a supplied poster and stickers to highlight what they would like to see in Wodonga's open spaces, casting 156 votes.

We asked 12 children and parents at Hyphen Library-Gallery storytime on Monday, November 22, what they want to see in Wodonga's open spaces.

How people had their say

›300 overall number of people who got involved

51 attended face-to-face sessions

156 votes from Wodonga Primary students

6 written submissions

26 comments on social media

65 survey responses

9 comments on interactive map

How we encouraged people to get invovled

7 public notices in *The Border Mail*

47,000 circulation*

* emma March 2020 print report

8 Posters on community noticeboards and at council venues

20 A3 corflute signs at open spaces across Wodonga

19 social media posts*

34,771 reach

1885 engagements

Data is primary channels only and includes paid adverts across the Facebook network. Engagement and reach numbers do not include Stories

2726 emails sent

39.8% average open rate

8 click-throughs

231 website visits

157 clicks to online consultation information

160 visits to interactive map

WHAT WE HEARD

FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATIONS

- Love of Wodonga's open spaces from people who live in Wodonga, but also people who visit from Albury and elsewhere
- Praise for the standard of cleanliness and tidiness of Wodonga's parks and gardens
- Newer residents, particularly those who have moved to Wodonga during the COVID pandemic, are particularly impressed with Wodonga's open spaces and the opportunities for outdoor activities
- There needs to be more outdoor recreation opportunities for young people - kids are creating their own dirt bike jumps
- People would like better connectivity between the tracks and pathways
- People raised concerns about a lack of open green space in new estates and a need for more playgrounds
- Concern about proposed development at Junction Place and desire for community space
- Gateway Island's potential needs to be fulfilled
- Bike paths and trails are well used, need to maintained and there needs to be more connections between paths and trails to help reduce a reliance on cars
- Killara needs more playgrounds and parks and trails that are accessible to prams
- Concern about motorbikes being illegally ridden in open spaces
- Baranduda needs more recreational parks and playgrounds

WHAT CHILDREN TOLD US

We asked students at Wodonga Primary and a storytime at Hyphen library-gallery, what would you like to see more of in Wodonga's open spaces?

Their top five responses:

- Nature and animals
- Dog parks
- Playgrounds
- Entertainment
- Sportsfields
- Swimming facilities
- connects Baranduda Blvd to Beechworth rd and at the other end to the rail trail.
- Gateway Island: Splash park.

SURVEY

Respondents were asked to rank a series of priorities in order of importance.

Top actions
1. Investigation and implementation of proposed four hills trail
2. Continue the existing cycling paths audit and upgrade program
3. Investigate gaps in public open space facilities and access for vulnerable community cohorts, including older people, women and young people
4. Conduct an existing public open space improvement plan, including audits and upgrade processes
5. Implement recommendations from the strategy's gaps in public open space distribution to ensure equity of public open space provision

How important do you think open spaces are in a post COVID Wodonga?
More important 85%, same 14%

Most common topics raised

- Trees, conservation and planting:
  More trees, native revegetation and support for community groups
- Paths: Maintenance, more paths, better connections in Killara and Baranduda, colour coding tracks to indicate difficulty
- Mountain biking: More trails, lighting, emergency button at Hunchback Hill
- Dog parks: Another off-leash dog park and more bins and bags, improve existing park
- Lighting: More lighting
- Waterways: Better access to and better care for
- Shade: More shade, natural and sails
- Activities for children and young people in outdoor spaces
- Accessibility: Improved access for prams and people with special needs..

SOCIAL PINPOINT INTERACTIVE MAP

- Alan Cracknell Park Playground:
  New park upgrade. BBQ area, fencing back up to stop the cars and motor bikes going through. So many children play at this park but it hasn't been upgraded since the original equipment was installed.
- Hunchback Hill: Formalisation of car parking and beginner and progressive skills-based cycling facilities.
- Open space between Willoughby Avenue and Gillman Terrace:
  A playground in this vicinity would fill a gap in the area.
- Belvoir Park dog park: Allowing for a cafe somewhere along the banks of the lake with seating that fits the profile of the gardens.
- Kinchington Estate:
  Provide green spaces, playground and parks for Kinchington estate, similar to Whitebox Rise
- Baranduda Blvd: Ensure large walking and cycle pathways from Kinchington estate to baranduda, along the boulevard.
- Baranduda Blvd: It would be great to have a footpath/cycle path that connects Baranduda Blvd to Beechworth Rd and at the other end to the rail trail. A number of people ride and run along this road and with the 100km/h speed limit it's not the safest option. It would also allow the new development areas a connection with the soon to be developed Baranduda sporting complex

The hills are on our back doorstep and they are gorgeous.

We like getting out and about on the network of bike trails.

We moved here from Melbourne. We love Wodonga's open spaces. We skate, run, kayak, ride and walk. Living here in Wodonga, we're outdoors more. Our kids are happy. And so is our dog.

I love Willow Park and House Creek and seeing all the birds and wildlife.

New housing estates are going up quickly. Those areas need green spaces.

I'd like to see Gateway Island realise its potential

SUBMISSIONS

Submission 1 Wodonga Urban Landcare Network's Julie Hind	• Commends council on comprehensive draft open space strategy that follows a greening legacy left by Albury Wodonga Development Corporation, leaving Wodonga with a unique asset. • Encourage five per cent developer public open space contribution be increased to 10 per cent and that developers be encouraged to retain as much existing tree cover as possible. • Improve access to Murray River and Wodonga creek for passive recreation and adding amenity to the city. • Recommend use of permeable paving so water is retained landscape. Where hard paving is used, recommend increased use of greenery to minimise the heat sink effects. • Some concerns about trees listed and recommend exotic green conifers are replaced with local species such as Murray Pine. • Agree with the setting of a tree canopy target and urge that to be increased form 30 per cent to 40 per cent, with no net loss of canopy • Given rapid urban growth in Wodonga urge upgrading of strategies including: • Incorporating actions from RNES • Preparation of environmental management plans, implementation of place-based Integrated Water Management Plans • Developing Landscape Plan Guidelines
Submission 2 Neil Andrews, of Killara	• Councils have a role to play because removing native vegetation for urbanisation and development is likely to be a significant issue. • I totally support the intent of protecting native vegetation and biodiversity through environmental lands in the local area. • It's not clear from the strategy how council intends to fund ongoing maintenance of sites after the 10 years of initial funding from developers is exhausted. It's essential that developers continue to fund the ongoing maintenance of offset sites. • Developers should fund the purchase of relevant plant species for planting at these offset sites. • The number of plants funded by a developer each year should be at least equal to the number of native plants that will be cleared for a specific development and this should be sorted out in the initial development approval process.

SUBMISSIONS

Submission 3 Helen Corrigan	• Concerned that many of the plant species listed in draft strategy for future growing are exotic and not locally occurring native plant species • It's critical to the success of the strategy that native plant species are grown in Wodonga that provide food, shelter and breeding habitat for Wodonga's native birds, mammals and insects • Urge council to consult experts in locally occurring native plant species to create planting lists that suit Wodonga's varied open spaces • Council and the community deserve to have the best possible advice on what local native plant species can be grown in Wodonga open spaces
Submission 4 Alison Davey and John McDonald	• I have viewed the draft open space strategy at the Wodonga City Council Offices and was unable to confirm if there was an intention to construct a cycle trail link along the Baranduda Boulevard. I feel that this would be an important link to connect the Baranduda estate to the Beechworth Road/ Yarralumla Road roundabout and existing cycle path network. Given that the Leneva area is also earmarked for future expansion this link would provide an excellent cycle trail for both recreational riders and commuters. • I understand that there is a possibility that the Baranduda Boulevard will be duplicated at some time in the future. I hope that provision will be set aside for a cycle path in this location. • Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on this important strategy.
Submission 5 Alfonso Building solutions	• A key stakeholder in building and developing within our local community, we would like to voice our strong objection to your proposed five per cent contribution payment on development of commercial and industrial land. • Industrial land is not a destination for the public to walk through for a pleasant relaxing environment or parkland visit, due to the nature of the lands purpose, noise and dynamics in manufacturing. • Industrial land does not facilitate an increase in the population base for Wodonga and accordingly, does not directly impact the demand on public open space. • Residential areas are generally located proximate to Commercial and Industrial areas and therefore the space offset and the 5% used close by. For example, Woolworths at White Box has extensive parkland. *Submission continues...*

SUBMISSIONS

Submission 5 continued	• The city already has access to a lot of reserves, parklands and open spaces. Nature is in abundance around us. There is no logic or purpose for creating parks and gardens in the middle of industrial developments. • Significant risks of injury or death to the public when inviting them into high-risk work environments or places. • Potential for increased number of complaints from users of open space about the presentation of industrial land and the impacts that these uses have on open space. These unfounded complaints cause additional stress and distraction for businesses /business owners • Many industrial zones are out of the way and therefore, of low use if open spaces apply. • We are open to five per cent or similar rate being applied to Commercial Zoned Land as there is the opportunity to facilitate mixed use opportunities including residential apartments but most certainly not to Industrial Zoned Land.
Submission 6 Nordcon	• The cost benefit of additional open space should be carefully considered in parallel with council's resourcing and ability to maintain ongoing management of such land. • The draft strategy seems to include contradictions between the value of encumbered open space, and its recognition of this value. While the value of native vegetation, ecosystems, wetlands, cultural heritage, passive open space, pathways are espoused as desirable, there is no clear mechanism to weight their provision within open space and the resulting community benefit. Consideration needs to be given towards a system of weighting or recognising these values do provide open space benefit, even when included in the mandated 5% open space contribution. • Our view is that the approach of mandating 5% unencumbered open space will ultimately increase open space demand in new subdivisions, which has flow on effects for affordability. • Significant opportunities for open space provision appear to have been missed, such as use of the existing landfill as an area of future open space, to address the identified lack of open space in Wodonga's south. • Similarly, the hills offer opportunities for recreation (trails, mountain biking, etc) that are not considered in open space distribution. This is incongruous.

SUBMISSIONS

Submission 6 continued Nordcon	• Other opportunities include transition of Kinchington Road, Boyes Road (for example) into recreation reserves in the longer term, once alternative transport corridor development occurs. These opportunities are not identified or addressed. The main thrust of the draft strategy appears to be placing the impost of past poor planning oversight onto new developments, rather than looking at what opportunities exist to address gaps through existing significant expanses of public land. • The mapping appears incomplete, omitting existing parks and playgrounds (Whenby Grange, Daintree Estate, Huon Park – as examples). These details are important, as confidence in the proposed draft strategy network has been informed by the mapping. • Council proposes to introduce open space contributions. Would this replace embellishment? How do we ensure double dipping is avoided? • While 4.1 of the draft strategy states that walking and cycling are the two most popular activities undertaken by Wodonga residents, the use of linear reserves and encumbered land to provide a trail network is ignored. This seems illogical. **Appendix D** • References the Wodonga Open Space Strategy classification framework but it's not clear how this achieves an outline of the planning and design considerations • Size, width, gradient, inundation requirements seem onerous and prescriptive. How do we value the provision of encumbered open space when it is appropriate and results in a good open space outcome? • The consideration of significant native vegetation/trees as constrained land in developable areas offers no real incentive to retain it. Are we really comfortable stating that trees in a park are an encumberance? • The non-acceptance of culturally significant land as open space seems wasteful, not in line with sustainability values or multi-use approaches. We oppose this. • Encumbered land to the 100-year flood line is a ridiculous notion. Consider Albury's Norieul Park. Just because land is subject to occasional flooding, does not render it useless from a public open space perspective.

SUBMISSIONS

Submission 6 continued	• How does urban shading and greening compliment the double footpath approach of placing additional hard surfacing in all minor streets? **Appendix E** • 6m buffer in addition – compensation if not considered as open space? This is a significant impost without being explicitly stated in any genuine consultation exercise **Wodonga Open Space Strategy Main document** • Page 5 – section 1 references affordable communities in para 6, but doesn't appear to address the costs to development and ongoing maintenance that additional open space will require

