Planning and Environment Act 1987

WODONGA PLANNING SCHEME

AMENDMENT C140WDON

EXPLANATORY REPORT

Overview

The amendment seeks to introduce the recommendations of the *Wodonga Open Space Strategy* (City of Wodonga Council, adopted 15 May 2023) into the Wodonga Planning Scheme. The intention of this strategy is to provide standard guidelines and provisions for the creation of new open space as required by the subdivision process.

This is achieved through updating policy to Clauses 02.03-9 and 12.01-1L; updating and adding additional mapping to Clause 02.04; adding additional Clauses at Clause 18.02-1L, 18.02-2L and 18.03-4L; updating Clause 19.02-6L; updating Schedule 1 to Clause 53.01; including additional documents under Clause 72.08 as Background Documents.

Where you may inspect this amendment

The amendment can be inspected free of charge at the City of Wodonga Council website at https://www.wodonga.vic.gov.au/Building-Planning/Planning/Planning-for-the-future/Planning-scheme-amendments

The amendment is also available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

- City of Wodonga Council Offices, 104 Hovell Street, Wodonga, VIC 3690

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport and Planning website at http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection or by contacting the office on 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the amendment documentation.

Submissions

Any person may make a submission to the planning authority about the amendment. Submissions about the amendment must be received by 28 September 2025.

Submissions must be sent to:

Chief Executive Officer

City of Wodonga

PO Box 923

Wodonga Vic 3689

Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No. 15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- Directions hearing: 8 December 2025
- Panel Hearing: 9 February 2026

(Note: these dates may be subject to change. Submitters will be notified.)

Details of the amendment

Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the City of Wodonga Council, which is the planning authority for this amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of the City of Wodonga Council.

Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to all land in the municipality of the City of Wodonga.

What the amendment does

The amendment implements the recommendations and actions of the *Wodonga Open Space Strategy* (May 2023), which seeks to manage the public open space needs of Wodonga's growing community and shifting population profile.

The amendment:

- Amends Clause 02.03-9 Infrastructure to the Wodonga Planning Scheme.
- Amends Clause 02.04 Strategic Framework Plans to the Wodonga Planning Scheme.
- Amend Clause 12.01-1L Protection of Biodiversity to the Wodonga Planning Scheme.
- Insert Clauses 18.02-1L Walking, 18.02-2L Cycling, and 18.02-4L Roads to the Wodonga Planning Scheme.
- Amends Clause 19.02-6L Open Space to the Wodonga Planning Scheme.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 53.01 Public open space contribution and subdivision to include subdivisions in relevant zones to contribute 5 per cent of land for public open space.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 72.08 Background Documents to include the *Wodonga Open Space Strategy (2023), including Appendices B, D and E* and the *ESD for Subdivisions in Regional Victoria (2018).*
- Amends Clause 74.02 Further Strategic Work to include strategic work streams arising from the recommendations of the *Wodonga Open Space Strategy (2023)*.

Strategic assessment of the amendment

Why is the amendment required?

Both the 2018 and 2021 Wodonga Planning Scheme Reviews (PSR) signalled and then identified the commencement and completion of the *Wodonga Open Space Strategy* (the Strategy) as an important piece of strategic work in regard to the quantity and quality of open space resulting from urban development. Both PSRs identified the provision of "fit for purpose open space" as an ongoing issue between development proponents and the community. Clarity and strategic justification on this perennial issue was seen as a key to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Wodonga Planning Scheme and the application of limited resources in achieving quality outcomes. Growing community concerns, with inadequate provision of *fit for purpose open space* is clearly linked to growing development pressures and the associated and changing demographic needs of the Wodonga community.

Challenges of delivering 'fit for purpose' public open space in Wodonga

The Strategy has identified challenges faced by the development of open spaces in Wodonga, including:

- Competing uses/needs and increasing pressure and demand on open space for amenities and supplying appropriate infrastructure
- Difficulties in developing public open spaces that are well-located, appropriately sized, well designed and adequately serviced.
- The current Schedule 1 to Clause 53.01 does not require contribution from non-residential subdivisions, which has been identified in the Strategy as a gap in the public open space provision.

The now endorsed *Wodonga Open Space Strategy,* provides strategic justification and support (analysis, background, recommendations and actions) that guides and informs the proposed amendment.

Moreover, the strategy was informed by extensive community engagement and consultation processes, ensuring that recommendations and actions identified would enhance open space outcomes for the whole community.

5 per cent public open space contributions

The Wodonga Planning Scheme currently requires open space contributions from residential subdivisions but not commercial or industrial subdivisions. A POS contribution of 5% is proposed for commercial and industrial subdivisions as it aligns with the requirements of the Subdivision Act and provides a consistent and clear standard for developers and the community.

No increase to the 5% POS requirement is proposed for residential subdivisions. This aligns with historical practices and balances community needs with development practicality, ensuring sustainable open space provision while minimising impacts on costs and affordability.

The proposed rates are supported by state and local planning policy and are an essential component of the successful implementation of the Strategy. A 5% POS contribution acknowledges the practicalities of development while ensuring that all residents, workers, and visitors in Wodonga have the right to enjoy high quality, accessible POS. A Cost Analysis Report is attached to this report.

How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The Amendment seeks to implement the following objectives outlined in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*:

> *(a) 'to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land;*
> *(b) to provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;*
> *(c) to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria;*
> *(g) to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians'*

The Amendment helps to implement these objectives by:

- Providing a formal and equitable method to collect contributions for public open space based on sound analysis, increased demand and community expectations.
- Providing certainty and clarity around the form and standard of required public open space contributions.
- Improving public open space areas to enhance the health and wellbeing of the Wodonga community, as well as the liveability and recreational environment to meet the existing and future needs of residents and visitors alike.

How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

Social

- The Amendment will provide positive social benefits. The provision of quality public open spaces is a key to the liveability, resilience and biodiversity of Wodonga. Public open space provides numerous benefits for community and culture, and is important for social interaction, community safety, health (including mental health), physical fitness, children's development, sense of place, and visual amenity.
- The Amendment will allow Council to ensure that public open space is of the form, quality and quantity to meet the ongoing needs of existing and future residents.

Economic

- The Amendment will have a positive economic benefit as it will provide a clear, consistent and fair policy direction in relation to the form and maintenance of open space provided by developers. High quality open space helps attract businesses and residents, can revitalise neighbourhoods, boost tourism and raise property values.

Environmental

- The Amendment will provide positive environmental benefits by assisting in

upgrading existing public open spaces and ensuring appropriate and affordable maintenance of future public open space, leading to better environmental outcomes. The contributions set aside for public open space in future developments will provide opportunities for the planting of more vegetation, including trees and native plants. The improved connectivity across the Wodonga public open space network will enhance biodiversity through establishing continuous habitat corridors for flora and fauna. Quality open space will improve an area's general sense of attractiveness and is helpful when seeking to attract visitors and improving worker well-being.

Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

The amendment does not result in any increase in risk to life as a priority, property, community infrastructure or the natural environment from bushfire. The amendment itself does not have any direct impact on bushfire risk, though the planning of open spaces in bushfire risk areas will take into consideration appropriate bushfire management.

Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any other Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The Amendment is consistent with the:

- Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes under section 7(5) of the Act.
- Ministerial Direction No. 11 – Strategic Assessment of Amendments
- Ministerial Direction No. 15 – Planning Scheme Amendment Process

How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The Amendment is consistent with the following objectives and strategies:

Clause 11 (Settlement), one of the strategies is to '*develop sustainable communities through a settlement framework offering convenient access to jobs, services, and infrastructure and community facilities.*' Ensuring useable public Open Space is a key component to developing community facilities that contribute to a more sustainable, healthy and productive community.

Clause 15 (Built Form and Heritage), specifically Clause 15.01-3S (Subdivision design), has the relevant objective *'to ensure the design of subdivisions achieves attractive, safe, accessible, diverse and sustainable neighbourhoods'*. This objective is achieved by *'creating landscaped streets and a network of open spaces to meet a variety of needs with links to regional parks where possible.'*

Clause 19.02-6S (Open space) which includes the objective *'to establish, manage and improve a diverse and integrated network of public open space that meets the needs of the community'*. The relevant strategies include the need to:

- *Plan for regional and local open space networks for both recreation and conservation of natural and cultural environments.*

- *Ensure that land is set aside and developed in residential areas for local recreational use and to create pedestrian and bicycle links to commercial and community facilities.*

- *Improve the quality and distribution of* public *open space and ensure long-term protection.*

The Amendment supports and implements these policies by introducing a new local policy ensuring that new development provides public open space that is usable and meets the needs and expectations of the community, in accordance with the *Wodonga Open Space Strategy*. The Amendment will not only improve outcomes for new urban development but will also lead to the possible expansion and embellishment of existing open space.

How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

The Amendment seeks to implement a new local policy located within Clause 02.03-9 Infrastructure. The Amendment includes an additional policy focused on the location, standards, functions and connectivity of public open spaces. The Amendment impacts some provisions within Clause 02.04 of the Municipal Planning Strategy as it introduces updated mapping in accordance with the findings of the Strategy.

Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The Amendment makes proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs). The Amendment ensures a consistent and fair approach to the provision of public open space contributions across the municipality.

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The views of relevant agencies will be sought through the amendment process. Relevant authorities were included in the consultation associated with the preparation of the Open Space Strategy, and their views were considered in the development of the final Strategy.

Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The Amendment is unlikely to have a significant impact on the transport system as defined at Section 3 of the *Transport Integration Act 2010*.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The introduction of this amendment into the Wodonga Planning Scheme will result in more efficient use of existing resources, as it clearly defines and expresses underlying policy, criteria and design standards for public open space contributions.