02.03 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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02.03-1 Settlement

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Wodonga comprises a range of settlement types including established suburbs, emerging communities in designated growth areas and small townships with ample land supply that is able to accommodate a population of approximately 100,000 people.

Residential growth in Wodonga primarily occurs in greenfield sites with urban renewal in key strategic locations such as the former railway land and the Central Business Area (CBA), contributing to growth and diversity in the housing market.

Leneva and Baranduda will accommodate the medium to long-term growth of the City. The Leneva and Baranduda Precinct Structure Plan comprises approximately 1062 hectares and creates a well-defined urban character that has a strong relationship to the surrounding rural landscape and the Wodonga Retained Environment Network (WREN). This urban development focuses on affordable, sustainable and healthy living opportunities through a traditional urban structure comprising a walkable street network, housing diversity, employment opportunities, activity centres, schools and open space areas.

Bonegilla is dominated by vistas to Lake Hume and the surrounding backdrop of the Wodonga hills network and rural landscape. The township is currently being developed as an alternative to the suburbs of Albury and Wodonga. Bonegilla township provides a convenience retail function for Department of Defence employees and recreational lake users, and also has a small residential element.

West Wodonga Enterprise Park is an 80 hectare mixed-use estate that includes several industrial precincts and is designed to minimise inter zone land use conflict and amenity impacts.

In managing its growth, Council will:

- Protect the prominent hillsides that surround Wodonga and other significant environments and landscapes of the area from encroachment by urban development.
- Maintain multiple development fronts as a means of facilitating a competitive and affordable land supply.
- Prioritise development of land that is already zoned for residential purposes in greenfield residential growth areas of West Wodonga, Wodonga, Bonegilla, Killara, and the Leneva Valley and Baranduda growth corridor.
- Encourage residential and recreational development in Bonegilla that takes advantage of the township's lakeside setting while maintaining its village character and preserving its environmental values.

Activity Centres

Wodonga has a well-established activity centre hierarchy that provides retail and service employment opportunities. There is a relatively high level of escape expenditure from Wodonga to Albury and other surrounding areas.

The revitalisation of the CBA is one of Council's key initiatives, aided by the removal of the rail line and the creation of Junction Place. The CBA is the primary activity centre where most economic, social, cultural and residential activities take place.

As Wodonga grows, additional retail floorspace will be required. New communities within growth areas, in particular the Leneva Valley and Baranduda growth corridor, will require access to new or expanded activity centres in a way that supports the primacy of the CBA.

Table 1 – Activity Centre hierarchy

Designation	Role	Location
Primary Activity Centre	Primary centre for higher order retail, offices and services employment, social, cultural and residential activities. Serves the entire City of Wodonga and surrounding regional catchment.	Wodonga Central Business Area
Large Local Town Centre	Serves the everyday and local service needs of residents of a neighbourhood or series of neighbourhoods.	Whitebox Rise Baranduda Town Centre
Small Local Town Centre	Serves the everyday and local service needs of residents of a neighbourhood or series of neighbourhoods, at a smaller scale than a large Local Town Centre.	Birrallee Killara Enterprise Park Leneva
Convenience Centre	Meets the convenience retail needs of a local catchment or passing trade.	Bonegilla Baranduda Village Local shops group (McFarland Road, De Kerilleau Drive, Morrison Street, Barton Street, Jarrah Street, Mayfair Drive, Waratah Way and Gayview Drive)
Restricted Retail Centre	Sites identified for the sale of restricted retail (bulky goods), generally along higher order roads.	Anzac Parade High Street North Melbourne Road

To manage the development of its activity centres and meet the needs of both regional and local catchments, Council will:

- Reinforce its retail hierarchy and protect the primacy of the CBA.
- Concentrate retail activity, key commercial, community and leisure infrastructure in the core area of the CBA.
- Support mixed use, walkable local town centres that maximise opportunities for multipurpose trips and reduced reliance on car-based travel.
- Stage activity centre development in growth areas in response to demand, particularly in Leneva and Baranduda growth corridors.
- Discourage commercial and retail development outside of activity centres.

02.03-2 Environmental and landscape values

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The City of Wodonga is defined by its surrounding hills and the Murray and Kiewa rivers. The hills are a vital environmental, lifestyle and community asset. There is clear community support for their protection, insisting that they remain free of development. Several hills have been listed by the National Trust as being landscapes of significance.

Dominant Ecological Vegetation Classes in Wodonga include grassy woodland, and grassy and riverine forest. Historically, land management practices have significantly reduced the extent of native vegetation. Most remaining vegetation types are considered either endangered or vulnerable, including potential remnants of grassy woodland, which is listed as critically endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. In the southern parts of the city, the Wodonga Retained Environmental Network (WREN) contains significant corridors and patches of native vegetation within areas of urban growth.

The Murray and Kiewa rivers are important agricultural and recreational resources in the region and have high economic, environmental and social values, with numerous sites of archaeological and cultural significance. The largely intact River Red Gum overstorey of the Murray River and its anabranches plays an important role in maintaining the health of the river and overall catchment. Several nationally listed threatened species and two nationally significant wetlands, Lake Hume and Ryans Lagoon, are in the Murray River corridor. The Kiewa River, despite having a floodplain affected by sedimentation and constructed levees, also provides a key habitat within a largely cleared landscape. Other main tributary waterways include Middle Creek, Finns Creek, Felltimber Creek, Huon Creek, House Creek, and Jack in the Box Creek.

To protect biodiversity and natural habitats, Council will:

- Protect the prominent hills that surround Wodonga from encroachment by urban development.
- Protect environmental values, in particular native vegetation and habitat for threatened species.
- Protect connections between the WREN and larger adjoining habitats such as Baranduda Range, Bears and Federation hills, and the Kiewa River floodplain.
- Support the provision of safe and adequate public access to the hills while also protecting their environmental and landscape value.
- Acquire land identified for reservation in the Leneva Valley and Baranduda Native Vegetation Precinct Plan.
- Protect the natural environment and scenic quality of Lake Hume and surrounds, the Murray River, Kiewa River floodplains and other main tributary waterways.
- Avoid further degradation of water quality and fragmentation of native vegetation along urban waterways.

02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity

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Bushfire

The municipality has areas of significant bushfire hazard, including areas identified for future settlement such as the Leneva Valley and Baranduda growth corridor. The southern and western boundaries of Wodonga City directly interface with vegetated hillsides and associated bushfire hazard areas. There are also small lots and rural-residential lots that are close to bushfire hazard areas.

To address bushfire risks, Council will:

- Ensure development, including in Leneva Valley and Baranduda growth corridor, mitigates high bushfire risk to an acceptable level.
- Encourage development only where bushfire protection measures can be implemented, including through the provision of interface treatments such as roads between residential subdivisions and reserves subject to bushfire risk.

Floodplains

The floodplains of the Murray River and Kiewa River and their tributaries are significant natural landscapes and sources of flooding for Wodonga. This also affects Gateway Island, which forms part of the floodplain bounded by the Murray River and Wodonga Creek.

There is an increased risk of flooding resulting from heavier, more intense rainfall events due to increased climate variability.

To manage flooding risk, Council will:

- Protect floodplains from the encroachment of urban development.
- Discourage flood sensitive use and development from locating on the floodplains.

Soil degradation

Parts of the municipality, particularly land abutting the hillsides, are prone to erosion risk.

To minimise risk of erosion and landslip, Council will:

- Direct development to land where the risk of erosion or landslip is minimal.
- Discourage removal of native vegetation.

Amenity and safety

There is potential for amenity impacts resulting from land use conflict, particularly with major hazard facilities such as the former Wodonga Landfill and the Department of Defence.

Council will:

- Protect major hazard facilities from the encroachment of sensitive land uses that would compromise their operation.

02.03-4 Natural resource management

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Agriculture

Wodonga's rural land is valuable for its agricultural productivity, landscape quality, and contribution to the character of the region. Wodonga's highest quality agricultural land is located on its floodplains while other agricultural land is of a lesser quality.

Due to constraints such as hills and floodplains, a large part of the City will remain rural. However, due to population growth and increasing demand for rural residential living, rural land remains under pressure and will need to be carefully managed to protect its agricultural productive capacity and viability from future urban expansion.

To protect the viability and productive capacity of agricultural land, Council will:

- Support development that does not compromise the agricultural and landscape value of rural land.
- Discourage urban and rural residential development from occurring on high quality agricultural land within floodplains.
- Minimise land management conflicts that threaten existing agricultural operations.
- Support the expansion of farming.
- Protect rural areas from further fragmentation caused by small lots, low density and rural living subdivisions.
- Support non-agricultural uses, including tourism, where these activities contribute to the local economy, maintain environmental and landscape quality and do not jeopardise existing rural activities.
- Direct residential development and small lot housing to residential, low density and Rural Living Zones in preference to ad-hoc residential development in the rural areas.

Catchment management

The City of Wodonga is located centrally within the North East Regional Catchment. Key water sources of this catchment in Wodonga include the Murray and Kiewa rivers and Lake Hume. Use and development in the catchment need to be managed to protect water quality and riparian environments. In particular, development in the Murray and Kiewa river flood plains for non-agricultural uses such as sand and gravel extraction have the potential to contaminate the water supply.

In managing its catchments, Council will:

- Protect downstream water sources and the broader catchment from the impacts of land use and development.
- Limit the encroachment of use and development on the Murray River and Kiewa River floodplains and downstream catchments.

02.03-5 Built environment and heritage

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The City contains diverse heritage places of local and state significance. Together with the settlement pattern of Wodonga City and surrounding rural areas, they provide valuable information about the history and development of the region.

Quality urban design, particularly on entry to the City of Wodonga and its settlements, is important in reflecting their identity and reinforcing their role as gathering points and destinations. Beechworth Road is the most significant entry boulevard to the City, featuring a planted central median and several houses of local historic significance. Other heritage areas, such as the Lawrence Street precinct, are under threat from development pressure associated with urban consolidation.

Historically, residential subdivisions in Wodonga have often been designed for efficiency of infrastructure serviceability and lot yield rather than to create a sense of place, safety and beauty. As Wodonga continues to grow, there is a need to facilitate healthier and more environmentally sustainable developments that will incorporate quality urban design and sustainable neighbourhood principles to improve the liveability and prosperity of the city.

Measures to improve energy and resource efficiency in subdivisions and all development will benefit the environment, community and economy by contributing to reducing climate change challenges, including impacts from extreme and variable weather events, and water scarcity.

To protect heritage assets and promote built form improvements, Council will:

- Conserve and enhance heritage places to reflect their role in the City's history.
- Support developments that promote the amenity, attractiveness and safety of the public realm, especially when visible from transport corridors and upon entering the city.
- Encourage industrial development to improve its visual amenity and appearance.
- Support the use of public art in the public realm.
- Encourage development to be energy, water and waste efficient and use recycled and low-embodied energy materials.

02.03-6 Housing

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Residential development in Wodonga is dominated by low-density detached dwellings. Central Wodonga is undergoing redevelopment at increased densities through infill subdivision, extensions to existing dwellings and replacement of existing housing stock with multi-dwelling developments.

Aged care facilities and retirement villages are dispersed across the city, with larger facilities in Baranduda and West Wodonga. There is a need to allow for housing diversity and higher density residential development in areas that have convenient access to public transport, community, recreation and commercial facilities.

Low density and rural living are popular and valued lifestyle options within the municipality. Although popular, this type of housing can have problematic effects such as displacement of agricultural activity, fragmentation of farming land, inefficient delivery of infrastructure and services, and potential land use conflicts.

To further guide residential development, Council will:

- Encourage housing diversity and affordability, particularly in subdivisions located close to facilities and services.

- Direct higher density residential development to areas that have good access to public transport and community, recreation and commercial facilities.
- Encourage intensification of residential development within the Central Business Area (CBA), in particular in the former railway land and immediate surrounds.
- Support medium density housing in existing neighbourhoods that is respectful of the neighbourhood character.
- Encourage the development of aged care facilities and retirement villages that are well designed and located with convenient access to services, commercial facilities and public transport.
- Direct rural living and low-density residential development away from hills, waterways, active agricultural areas and areas identified for future urban development.

02.03-7 Economic development

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Employment and tourism

Wodonga's key strengths include its strategic transport links and educational facilities, its relationship with Albury and high employment land uses. This is underpinned by the presence of many large, well-established businesses, a large defence presence at the Latchford Barracks and Bandiana Army Base, and Wodonga's role as a transport, warehousing and logistics centre.

Agriculture, particularly beef cattle, sheep and milk products, also forms part of the city's economy, though it is less important than in surrounding areas in the region.

Wodonga's strengths in the education sector, driven by the presence of La Trobe University, Wodonga TAFE and a range of schools and community colleges, presents opportunities to increase access to higher learning through diversity and value-add to employment sectors.

Tourism also plays an increasingly important role in the economic development of the region. Revitalising the Central Business Area (CBA) and protecting natural assets within the municipality are both central in supporting this employment sector. Lake Hume and Gateway Island, located on the Murray River floodplain between Albury and Wodonga, also provide major tourist, cultural and recreational opportunities for the region.

In promoting growth, productivity and diversification of employment opportunities, Council will:

- Support investment in the CBA and enhance its role as an overnight tourism destination.
- Reinforce the role of the primary employment nodes as the key location for industrial and logistics land uses.
- Support expansion and diversification of the tertiary education sector.
- Protect the region's natural and man-made assets.
- Facilitate a range of hospitality and entertainment uses, cultural facilities, high-end accommodation options and other recreation opportunities.
- Consolidate and strengthen the role of tourism, recreation, arts and culture, and related business functions of Gateway Island.

Industry

Strong population growth and proactive economic development strategies have resulted in employment growth in the manufacturing and construction industries. Due to its location on the Hume transport corridor, growth continues to be strong in the transport, warehousing and logistics sector. Wodonga has an ample supply of industrial land to meet the needs of a growing economy.

Some industrially zoned land, however, is constrained by its slope and environmental sensitivity. There is a shortage of small to medium size lots, and most industrial areas are unattractive and need to be protected from encroachment of sensitive uses.

Logic Wodonga is a major development site for distribution, warehousing, transport and manufacturing site on the Hume Freeway and Murray Valley Highway. The inter-modal rail facility further enhances the transfer of goods from rail to road.

The Baranduda industrial precinct accommodates significant food production, engineering, waste management and public utilities. It adjoins the Baranduda wastewater management facility and includes the former saleyards site.

In supporting new and emerging industries, Council will:

- Support industrial uses that contribute to the diversity of Wodonga's employment base.
- Facilitate the supply of small industrial lots.
- Support the development at Logic Wodonga with a focus on manufacturing, distribution and storage.
- Support industrial development in the Baranduda industrial precinct, particularly food production, engineering, waste management and public utilities.

02.03-8 Transport

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The City's movement network and its location on the nationally significant Hume transport corridor contribute to Wodonga's connectivity, economic success and to the social and physical health of its inhabitants. Wodonga's movement network comprises a range of modes, including road, rail, bus, pedestrian and cycle networks.

Wodonga is a car-dominated city. Its road network was designed for traffic efficiency and privileges vehicle movement over sustainable forms of transport, such as walking and cycling. There are significant barriers to both pedestrian and cycling movements, such as unsafe road network designs, lack of connectivity between existing routes and lack of supporting infrastructure, all of which would make these modes of transport safer and more convenient. Apart from the Melbourne to Sydney railway line, public transport is also of poor quality. New growth areas, particularly the Leneva Valley and Baranduda growth area, are expected to have even higher levels of car dependency. Providing greater and better-quality transport choices is a priority issue as Wodonga grows.

The Hume transport corridor serves a dual role as transport corridor and bypass for local users accessing Albury. This can create conflict, however, between heavy vehicles and commuters. The planning of the Hume Freeway and the areas through which it passes needs to be coordinated and integrated to ensure its efficiency and to mitigate any negative impacts on surrounding areas.

The arterial road network of Wodonga is of high quality and includes inner and outer ring roads, allowing vehicular traffic to efficiently bypass the Central Business Area (CBA). Its design, however, prioritises vehicle movement over sustainable forms of transport and contributes to conflicts between freight transport and other commuters.

Car parking within the CBA is generally adequate and well located but does not have convenient pedestrian access.

In improving transport, Council will:

- Support improvements to the public realm and pedestrian amenity.
- Encourage the design of pedestrian and cycling routes to be safe, practical and direct.
- Provide a transport hub in the CBA, with long-term bicycle storage and end-of-trip facilities.
- Facilitate the integration of public and sustainable transport access to Wodonga Railway Station.
- Improve the inner and outer ring roads to minimise traffic in the CBA.
- Support use and development that does not prejudice the function of the Hume Freeway.

02.03-9 Infrastructure

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~~Community infrastructure~~Community infrastructure

Wodonga is currently well-serviced by community infrastructure, including social, cultural, health, education and open space, both in terms of quantity and diversity. This infrastructure, however, is coming under increasing pressure as the population grows and the footprint of the city expands.

As Wodonga continues to grow and serve an even stronger regional role, strategic approaches to the delivery, timing and upgrade of vital community infrastructure is required to ensure the community is provided with the basic building blocks of a healthy, vibrant and resilient community.

~~The open space network is a defining characteristic of the city and a key contributor to its liveability. While the older parts of Wodonga have benefitted from a high-quality and well-connected system of open space, newer areas lack the same extent of open space provision, with encumbered spaces of limited usability. Similarly, some areas of public open space are not large enough to be functional or are affected by constraints such as slope or flooding.~~

Wodonga is serviced by regional health provider Albury Wodonga Health, with public health facilities located in Wodonga and Albury. Albury Wodonga Health services a catchment across north-eastern Victoria and southern NSW of approximately 250,000 residents. Wodonga's public and private hospitals are located in residential areas, with incremental expansion occurring off-site into those residential areas. Medical centres (including preventative health services) in particular have been proliferating along Beechworth Road. This can result in land use conflict between residential areas and medical centres.

In planning and delivering community infrastructure, Council will:

- Facilitate the provision of accessible community, health and education services as Wodonga grows.
- Support the expansion of public health facilities to serve the needs of the growing community.
- Support medical centres that are designed to minimise amenity impacts with surrounding residential areas.
- Support co-location of community facilities and local commercial facilities.
- Support community and recreational facilities that are compatible with the needs, character and socio-economic profile of the local area.
- Support the provision of ~~a range of high-quality, diverse and interconnected open spaces~~open space assets and facilities that promote a variety of physical activities and sports for people of all ages and abilities.

Open Space

Wodonga has a diverse open space network, supporting a variety of formal and informal recreation facilities, open spaces, play spaces and environmental lands. However, this open space network is becoming increasingly strained by a growing population, changing community demographics and needs, declining biodiversity, and climate change.

This policy implements the *Wodonga Open Space Strategy (2023)*, including Appendices B, D and E, and guides the design and provision of public open space that supports liveability, ecological health, biodiversity protection, and sustainable development in Wodonga. Open space planning and subdivision design must be consistent with the Strategy, and the Strategy's classification framework (Appendix B), design standards (Appendix D), and interface guidelines (Appendix E).

Open Space functions include:

- Environmental Land - Land set aside primarily for conservation and biodiversity including the hills, Wodonga Restored Environment Network (WREN) land, vegetation offset sites, and some remnant native vegetation areas.

- Semi-Natural - Areas ranging from remnant native vegetation through to revegetated and semi-landscaped areas. Can include land managed for natural or heritage conservation not included in Victoria's protected system or former landfill sites.
- Parks and Gardens - Modified landscaped areas (formal/informal design) that provide informal recreation and activities.
- Sports and Organised Recreation - Areas primarily used for playing organised sport in an outdoor setting. Can include public golf courses and public racecourse
- Special Purpose - Unique or single purpose spaces that contribute to local character and provide a space for community use or events.
- Urban Spaces - Such as town plazas, squares, historical and cultural sites, or memorial parks.
- Corridors/Links - Trails/paths used for walking and/or cycling that link areas of public open space or streets and provide connections between and within neighbourhoods and districts. Also includes links that serve as biodiversity and wildlife corridors. Can include fire buffers and land adjoining creeks and rivers.

Table 2: Public Open Space Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Size	Catchment	Description
Pocket Park	Less than 0.2ha	n/a	Small parks less than 0.2ha.
Local	0.2-2ha	<400m	Provides space for residents to enjoy passive or informal recreation activities.
District/Neighbourhood	2-15ha	1km	Provides various, medium-scale formal and informal recreation and facilities and features that appeal to the district population.
Regional	>15ha	>15km	Provides large areas with high recreational, social and environmental or tourism value.
State/National Park	Various	State or National	Open spaces managed by government agencies.

The open space network is a defining characteristic of the city and a key contributor to its liveability and prosperity. While the older parts of Wodonga have benefitted from a high-quality and a well-connected system of open space, newer areas lack the same extent of open space provision, with encumbered spaces of limited usability. Similarly, some areas of public open space are not large enough to be functional or are affected by constraints such as slope, installation of infrastructure or flooding.

In planning and managing of the open space network, Council will:

- Prioritise the provision of land and infrastructure within new developments that resolve identified gaps in the open space, cycling, pedestrian and habitat networks.
- Provide healthy environments for current and future generations, to promote active lifestyles and provide various health and well-being benefits, and designed and managed according to best practice standards.
- Provide a hierarchy of open spaces that includes a variety of sizes and functions, complementary mixed uses and a balance of formal and informal recreation opportunities.
- Ensure that land provided for public open space contributions is suitable and safe for public use via incorporation of crime prevention through environmental and safer by design principles as well as providing for a range of landscape opportunities and settings.
- Prioritise local biodiversity and ecological outcomes to ensure that sustainability, biodiversity, water management and resource efficiency is considered in all aspects of open space planning, design, construction, management and use.

~~Development infrastructure and contribution plans~~Development infrastructure and contribution plans

Historically, the collection and charging of development contributions ~~have~~has lacked a holistic approach and charge levels have been low compared to similar regional municipalities.

As Wodonga grows, demand for services and infrastructure will be generated from three main catchments: the existing urban area, the Leneva and Baranduda Precinct Structure Plan area, and the balance of the Leneva and Baranduda growth area corridor. A more holistic infrastructure funding mechanism through the preparation of development contributions plans based on short, medium and longer term priorities will be necessary.

The efficient design, delivery and management of infrastructure is a fundamental element in providing affordable and diverse housing, generating economic growth and managing the municipality in a sustainable manner.

Standardised infrastructure design guidelines provide for the efficient design, assessment and development of infrastructure within the municipality, including roads, drainage, stormwater, car parking, landscaping, access, earthworks, public lighting and intersection infrastructure.

To support the efficient delivery of infrastructure, Council will:

- Alleviate potential affordability impacts resulting from contribution rates, both within Wodonga and in comparison to Albury.
- Apply standardised infrastructure design guidelines.
- Ensure water, sewerage and drainage infrastructure are delivered at the time of development.

Integrated water management

North East Water provides essential services of water and sewerage to the region. It operates wastewater management facilities at West Wodonga and Baranduda and a water treatment facility at East Wodonga. These facilities are necessary to facilitate urban growth of the municipality. However, their operation can result in land use conflict with surrounding sensitive land uses.

Council will:

- Encourage the expansion of essential services, including wastewater management and water treatment facilities to meet growing demand.
- Protect wastewater management facilities from the encroachment of sensitive land uses that could compromise their operation.
- Encourage the flow of stormwater run-off from urban areas to be minimised.