

Planning and Environment Act 1987
WODONGA PLANNING SCHEME

AMENDMENT C9

EXPLANATORY REPORT

Who is the Planning Authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the City of Wodonga. The Council is the responsible authority for the scheme.

Land affected by the Amendment

The amendment applies to the following land described below and marked on the attached plan.

- Plan of Consolidation 168053, rear of 11 Moloney Drive Wodonga.
- Lot 1 Plan of Subdivision 340798, rear of 9 Moloney Drive Wodonga.
- Lot 2 Plan of Subdivision 340798, rear of 9A Moloney Drive Wodonga.
- Plan of Consolidation 170223, rear of 7 Moloney Drive Wodonga.
- Part lot 36 Plan of Subdivision 147456 & Part of Allotment 6, Section 6, Parish of Wodonga, 1 Moloney Drive Wodonga.
- Part of Allotment 5 Section B2, Township of Wodonga, Moloney Drive Wodonga.
- Allotments B22 & B23 Township of Wodonga.
- Allotment 16 & 17 Section, Township of Wodonga.
- Wodonga Creek Crown Land Reserve.
- Allotments 4 & 5, Section 13, Township of Wodonga, Stock Route, Gateway Island.
- Allotments 11, 12, 14 & 15 Section 13, Township of Wodonga, Stock Route, Gateway Island.
- Part Allotment B17, Township of Wodonga, Lincoln Causeway, Gateway Island.
- Lincoln Causeway road reserve.
- Allotments 13C, D, E, G, H & K, Crown Land Reserve Lincoln Causeway, Gateway Island.
- Lot 1 Plan of Subdivision 17959, Gateway Island.

What the Amendment Does?

The amendment proposes to:

- Introduce a Public Acquisition Overlay on land required to be acquired by the Victorian Rail Track Corporation for the relocation of the Melbourne to Sydney railway line from the Central Business Area of Wodonga to its new alignment as shown on the attached plan.
- Substitute a schedule to the Rural Floodway Overlay over the section of land to be acquired by the Victorian Rail Track Corporation.

Why the Amendment is Required?

This amendment facilitates a key strategic initiative of the Wodonga Planning Scheme as part of the process toward the eventual relocation of the Melbourne to Sydney rail line from Central Wodonga. The amendment will enable the Victorian Government to commence the process of acquiring the land required for the proposed rail alignment.

This amendment is the first essential stage of the Wodonga Rail Project involving the rail relocation, establishment a new inter-modal freight terminal at Wodonga West and redevelopment of the Wodonga Central Business Area.

Once the land is acquired it can be included in a Public Use Zone, facilitating construction works and the future management of the new rail assets.

Impact of the Amendment

Social and Economic Effects

The proposed amendment will have a number of positive social and economic impacts. The development is consistent with Council's strategic directions for Economic Development as outlined in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

The amendment will;

- Remove the traffic delays currently experienced due to approximately 60 daily train movements through the town centre day and night;
- Remove the noise and pollutants generated by rail use from within an existing developed urban environment;
- Reduce vehicle travel times throughout the city and improve road safety by the removal of 12 rail crossings;
- Provide a large centrally located parcel of land within Wodonga which will act as a catalyst for future redevelopment;
- Remove rail speed restrictions by eliminating the slowest bend between Sydney and Melbourne;
- Reduce rail travel times;
- Increase the efficiency of freight movement;
- Provide for additional business development opportunities within the West Wodonga Activity node via the development of a new freight terminal;
- Create significant short and long term employment opportunities within the region via the promotion of a \$50 million capital infrastructure project;

Environmental Effects

Assessment work undertaken for the Wodonga Rail By-Pass Project has demonstrated there will be a limited impact on the environment. The project proposal

has been presented to Environment Australia and the Victorian State Minister for Planning for advice on obtaining the appropriate environmental approvals.

Environment Australia has advised that this project is not a controlled action under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999. In not being a controlled action, the project is not considered to have any impact on: items of world heritage significance, wetland ecology, threatened species, coastal or marine waters or Commonwealth protected land.

The Victorian Minister for Planning advised that an Environmental Effects Statement is not required subject to a number of conditions including the undertaking of environmental studies along the bypass route. This decision is based on the disturbed nature of the environment, the limited impacts of the project on the affected area and the extent of previous studies within the area.

The environmental studies completed as part of the Planning Scheme Amendment are:

- Hydrology and Flood Modelling
- Flora and Fauna
- Cultural and Indigenous Heritage
- Noise and Vibration
- Landscaping Proposals

An additional condition set by the Victorian Minister for Planning is that an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is to be produced prior to construction. The EMP will detail procedures for environmental monitoring before, during and post construction. The development of the EMP will be discussed with the community and key stakeholders. A communications strategy with focus on community liaison is required as part of the EMP.

A Supplementary report has been produced as part of the Planning Scheme Amendment documentation and is on display during the public exhibition period. This report provides an assessment of the results from the environmental studies and guidelines for the required information to be included in the EMP.

Minister's Directions

The use and development envisaged via this amendment is not affected by any of the Ministers Directions.

Strategic and Policy Justification for the Amendment

The rail project is identified as one of the key projects in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) for the City of Wodonga underpinning a platform of strategic initiatives that aim to foster future investment and growth in the City. The MSS reinforces the Council's support for the project and recognition of its diverse benefits.

As outlined in the MSS the relocation of the rail line from Central Wodonga will generate opportunities for investment and improvement to the Central Business Area through the development of former railway land. Removal of the railway line will also enable major components of the Council's Road Strategy Plan to be completed,

providing the land required for an inner ring road to encircle the Central Business Area.

Specifically the relocation of the rail line will enable the links from Watson Street to South Street, Havelock to Hovell Street, Elgin Street to Reid Street to be completed. These road links will result in significant improvement to the shopping amenity of the Central Business Area by providing alternative routes for through traffic.

The implementation of the Wodonga Town Centre Structure Plan also relies on the Rail Project to provide the land necessary for the new investment required to lead the revitalisation of the Central Business Area of Wodonga. The removal of the railway line provides approximately 12 hectares of commercial development land in the heart of the Central Business Area. This provides a unique opportunity to totally transform the Central Business Area through a combination of private and public investment guided by a strong urban design concept.

These combinations of strategic projects lead by the Rail Project will enhance the positive transformation of Wodonga from a country town in Victoria, to a leading provincial centre in Australia.

Where you may inspect this Amendment?

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

City of Wodonga
Hovell Street
WODONGA VIC 3690

Department of Infrastructure
North Eastern Regional Office
50 – 52 Clarke Street
BENALLA VIC 3672

Department of Infrastructure
Planning Information Centre
Upper Plaza, Nauru House
80 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000