

No.8 – Medium Density Housing (Two or more dwellings on a lot)



This advice sheet is intended to assist permit applicants with the preparation of planning applications for medium density housing developments.

Understanding the preferred strategic locations for medium density housing

Medium density housing is not necessarily appropriate in all locations of the Municipality as set out in the new residential zones and other relevant planning provisions of the Wangaratta Planning Scheme.

The Wangaratta Planning Scheme encourages medium density or compact housing to be located within and as close as possible to the Wangaratta Central Activities Area (CAA), in close proximity to an activity centre, within Residential Growth Zone and at appropriate locations within General Residential Zone.

It is important to note that each site is different, and the degree of planning policy support will vary depending upon the site's location and its individual characteristics. In this regard, a flat site with little vegetation located within or near CAA or an activity centre can be seen to have more policy support for medium density or compact housing than a site which is heavily vegetated, affected by flooding, heritage controls and located in a cul de sac or remote from services.

Ensure that your proposal responds to the direction of Council's Population and Housing Strategy 2013

Council's Population and Housing Strategy 2013 sets out specific policy positions in respect of medium density housing. These can be summarised as encouraging medium density housing which is:

- Within Residential Growth Zone,
- Within or close to CAA, Wangaratta Hospital and future Neighbourhood Shopping Centres -one in the North - West and the other in the South Residential Growth Areas;
- Incremental growth within General Residential Zone such as corner locations, adjoining or closer to shops and where it does not detract from the character of an area; and
- Responds to, and complements existing vegetation and topography.

The Strategy does not generally support medium density housing in Neighbourhood Residential Zone and on sites of heritage significance or located within a cul de sac or remote from services within General Residential Zones.

Ensure that your proposal responds to the zone purpose and neighbourhood character

The applicant must demonstrate how the proposed development responds to the purpose of the relevant zone and also meets the decision guidelines.

The Residential Growth Zone encourages the greater residential density, diversity and scale of development at appropriate locations.

The General Residential Zone respects and preserves neighbourhood character while allowing modest housing growth and diversity at appropriate locations.

The Neighbourhood Residential Zone restricts housing growth and protects an identified neighbourhood character. This zone represents the lowest scale of intended growth of the three new residential zones.

Given Wangaratta's built form character and landscape which is valued by its community, the medium density housing proposals should ensure that they do not unreasonably impact on the existing and preferred character of residential areas as reflected by the new Residential Zones.

The applicant must demonstrate how the proposed development responds to the preferred character outlined in the new Residential Zones. If a site is not contained within a Residential Growth Zone, the applicant must still be able to demonstrate how the proposed development responds to the existing built form character of the area.

It is recommended that a landscape plan should be submitted with any application lodged for medium density housing for impact assessment of the proposal (refer to Planning Advice Sheet No.11 – preparing a Landscape Plan). The Landscape plan for medium density developments should pay particular attention to any areas of extensive hard stand and access areas and provide separation to adjoining properties.

Ensure that your proposal meets the technical requirements of ResCode (Clause 55)

In addition to meeting the zone purpose, decision guidelines, site context and neighbourhood character considerations, a medium density housing development must also meet the requirements of Clause 55 (ResCode) of the planning scheme. The purpose of Clause 55 is to:

- Achieve residential development that respects the existing neighbourhood character or which contributes to a preferred neighbourhood character as outlined in the planning scheme;
- Encourage residential development that provides reasonable standards of amenity for existing and new residents; and
- Encourage residential development that is responsive to the site and the neighbourhood.

An application for medium density housing development must be accompanied by a neighbourhood and site description and a design response (refer to Clause 55 requirements in the planning scheme). In preparing the design response, the applicant must be able to provide rationale for why the development is designed the way it is.

Medium density housing development must meet all objectives and should meet all of the standards of Clause 55. There may be an alternative design solution that meets the objectives without meeting the standard.

Seek a pre-application meeting

Council officers encourage prospective applicants to take advantage of a pre-application meeting (see Planning Advice Sheet No.3 - Pre-application Meetings). Misunderstandings that may otherwise occur (in terms of the understanding of policy or planning scheme requirements) may be prevented by engaging in discussion with Council's planning officers, who can offer advice prior to the lodgement of a planning application.

Consult your neighbours during the design process of your proposal

Council also strongly encourages prospective applicants to consider communicating directly with neighbours who may be impacted by the proposal. This may enable residents' input into the design of a proposal prior to an application for a planning permit being made to Council. It can also assist in minimising objections and concerns from residents and may prevent the applicant from needing to make amendments to the proposal later.

This advice sheet is to be used as a general guide only. Council has made all reasonable effort to ensure the information provided in this series is true and accurate. However, it is recommended that readers seek professional advice before acting or making decisions on the basis of this information. For any questions or clarification, please contact Council's Planning Unit on 5722 0888.

CHECKLIST FOR MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING APPLICATIONS

The following information (as a minimum) must accompany any planning permit application for the development of land for medium density housing (more than one dwelling on a lot):

- Appropriate application fee (schedule of fees available on Council's website or at Council offices);
- Completed application form (form available on Council's website or at Council offices);
- Full copy of property title, searched from the land titles office within the last 3 months, along with any related plan of subdivision, restrictions, covenants or agreements (available from Land Registration Services (Titles Office) or at www.land.vic.gov.au); (see Advice Sheet 4: Obtaining a Copy of Title);
- A detailed summary of the proposal which provides the following information:
 - total site area (in m²).
 - the number of dwellings and the size of each dwelling (in m²).
 - the total site coverage (%) of the development.
 - number and allocation of car parking spaces.
 - areas to be covered with impervious surfaces (including buildings and paved areas) in m².
 - specify the number of trees to be removed and the number to be retained.
 - area of private open space associated with each dwelling (in m²) and of any communal open space;
- A Neighbourhood and Site Description Plan as described in Clause 55.01 of the Wangaratta Planning Scheme. Refer to Clause 55.01-1 of the Planning Scheme to prepare an adequate Neighbourhood and Site Description Plan;
- A Design Response as described in Clause 55.01-2 of the Wangaratta Planning Scheme. The design response must explain how the proposed design:
 - derives from and responds to the Neighbourhood and Site Description.
 - meets the objectives of Clause 55 of the Wangaratta Planning Scheme (ResCode).
 - responds to any neighbourhood character features for the area.
 - reduces and/or addresses off-site amenity impacts such as overlooking, overshadowing and visual bulk.
 - the design response must include correctly proportioned streetscape elevations showing the development in the context of buildings on adjacent properties;
- Three (3) copies (1 in A3 Form) of a scaled and fully dimensioned Site Plan, showing (as a minimum):
 - the location of existing buildings on adjacent properties (including nominated setbacks from the common boundaries to the subject site)
 - the location of existing and proposed buildings.
 - any existing or proposed earthworks.
 - location of existing individual trees within 10 metres of all proposed buildings, structures and excavations.
 - all trees to be removed and those to be retained.
 - the setback of the buildings and works from title boundaries.
 - details and location of any car parking structures, areas and accessways.
 - details of any lighting proposed;

- Three (3) copies of scaled and fully dimensioned Floor and Elevation Plans, showing
(as a minimum):
 - floor plans of the proposed buildings and structures and any existing buildings to be retained (including nominated setbacks from boundaries and other key site features).
 - natural ground levels and finished floor levels (to the Australian Height Datum).
 - wall heights and overall building heights for each elevation (including 'internal' elevations).
 - external colours, finishes and materials;
- Three (3) copies of a scaled Landscape Plan for the development. Refer to Planning Advice Sheet No.11 – Preparing a Landscape Plan for guidance and an information checklist for landscape plans;
- Three (3) copies of Shadow Diagrams (at a scale of 1:100 or 1:200) of the proposed buildings and adjacent structures at 9am, 12 noon and 3pm at the September equinox (as required by ResCode);
- 1 set of reduced A3 plans of all plans outlined above;
- Where there are existing trees on the subject site or trees on adjoining properties proximate to the proposed buildings, a report from a qualified arborist (an Arborist Report) must be obtained and submitted. This report should provide the following details:
 - the species, height, girth, canopy width and approximate age of the tree/s to be removed.
 - a statement regarding the health, structure and vigour of the tree/s.
 - comments in relation to the future health of the tree/s.
 - a recommendation based on all of the above;
- A written submission detailing how the proposal responds to the provisions of the relevant zone, overlays, particular provisions and State and local planning policies (as appropriate);

The above checklist ensures that all documents are submitted to Council to initiate the assessment of the planning application. Additional information may still be required depending on the precise nature of the proposal and any site-specific considerations. If applications are lodged without sufficient information for Council assessment, Council will formally request further information in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Please check other planning advice sheets (and their attached checklists) for relevance to your proposal. If applicable, the information requirements outlined in that checklist should also be provided when lodging your application. Planning advice sheet which may also be relevant in this particular circumstance; *Advice Sheet No. 8 – Neighbourhood Character*