

Australian Capital Territory

# Planning (Missing Middle Housing Reform) Major Plan Amendment 2026

Notifiable instrument NI2026–

made under the

Planning Act 2023, s 75 (Minister's powers in relation to draft plan amendments)

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## 1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Planning (Missing Middle Housing Reform) Major Plan Amendment 2026*.

## 2 Major plan amendment

- (1) I approve under section 75 (2) (a) of the *Planning Act 2023* (the *Act*) the Major Plan Amendment 04 to the Territory Plan.
- (2) In accordance with the Act, section 75 (5) (c), a major plan amendment must be presented to the Legislative Assembly and may only commence by commencement notice under section 80 (2).

## 3 Dictionary

In this instrument:

*Major Plan Amendment 04 to the Territory Plan* means the Major Plan Amendment in schedule 1.

Chris Steel MLA  
Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development  
22 May 2026



**ACT**  
Government

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**Territory  
Planning**  
Authority

**MAJOR PLAN AMENDMENT**  
**to the**  
**TERRITORY PLAN 04**

**Missing Middle Housing Reform**

Changes to Part A, Residential Zones Policy, Subdivision Policy  
and Dictionary

**May 2026**

This major plan amendment was prepared  
under division 5.2.7 of the *Planning Act 2023*

MAJOR PLAN AMENDMENT 04 – APPROVED VERSION

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose

This document is major plan amendment 04 – Missing Middle Housing Reform (MPA-04) to the Territory Plan.

Key parts of this document are:

- section 2 – summarises the MPA, including amendments to the Territory Plan and associated documents
- section 3 – why this MPA was undertaken
- section 5 – detailed amendment instructions to the Territory plan proposed by this MPA.

This document relies on various background papers including a supporting report. These background papers will be available on the Territory Planning Authority's (the Authority) [website](#) at least until MPA-04 commences or is rejected by the Legislative Assembly (the Assembly).

### 1.2 Outline of process

A major plan amendment (MPA) is statutory process under the Planning Act that enables the Territory Plan to be amended. The three types of MPAs are:

- Proponent-initiated
- Authority-initiated
- Minister-initiated

MPA-04 is an authority initiated MPA.

After public consultation concluded the Authority gave MPA-04 to the Minister for referral to the relevant Legislative Assembly Standing committee (the Standing Committee).

The Standing Committee decided to report on MPA-04 and finalised their report on 30 April 2026. The Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development (the Minister) directed the Authority to revise MPA-04 to consider the recommendations of the Standing Committee report. The Minister presented the government response to the Standing Committee's report to the Assembly on 26 May 2026.

Under section 75 (2) (a) of the *Planning Act 2023* (the Planning Act) the Minister has now approved MPA-04.

Once presented to the Assembly, assuming no motion to reject MPA-04 is moved, MPA-04 may commence and become part of the Territory Plan.

For more information about the content of the [Territory Plan](#) and the [major plan amendment](#) processes please refer to the Authority's website.

## 2.0 APPLICABLE LAND

The subject area for MPA-04 is residential zoned land currently zoned RZ1 Suburban and RZ2 Suburban Core. Some consequential amendments are also proposed to land zoned RZ3 Urban Residential, RZ4 Medium Density Residential and RZ5 High Density Residential as a result of the changes made in RZ1 and RZ2.

The extent and distribution of RZ1 is outlined in Figure 1 and RZ2 in Figure 2.

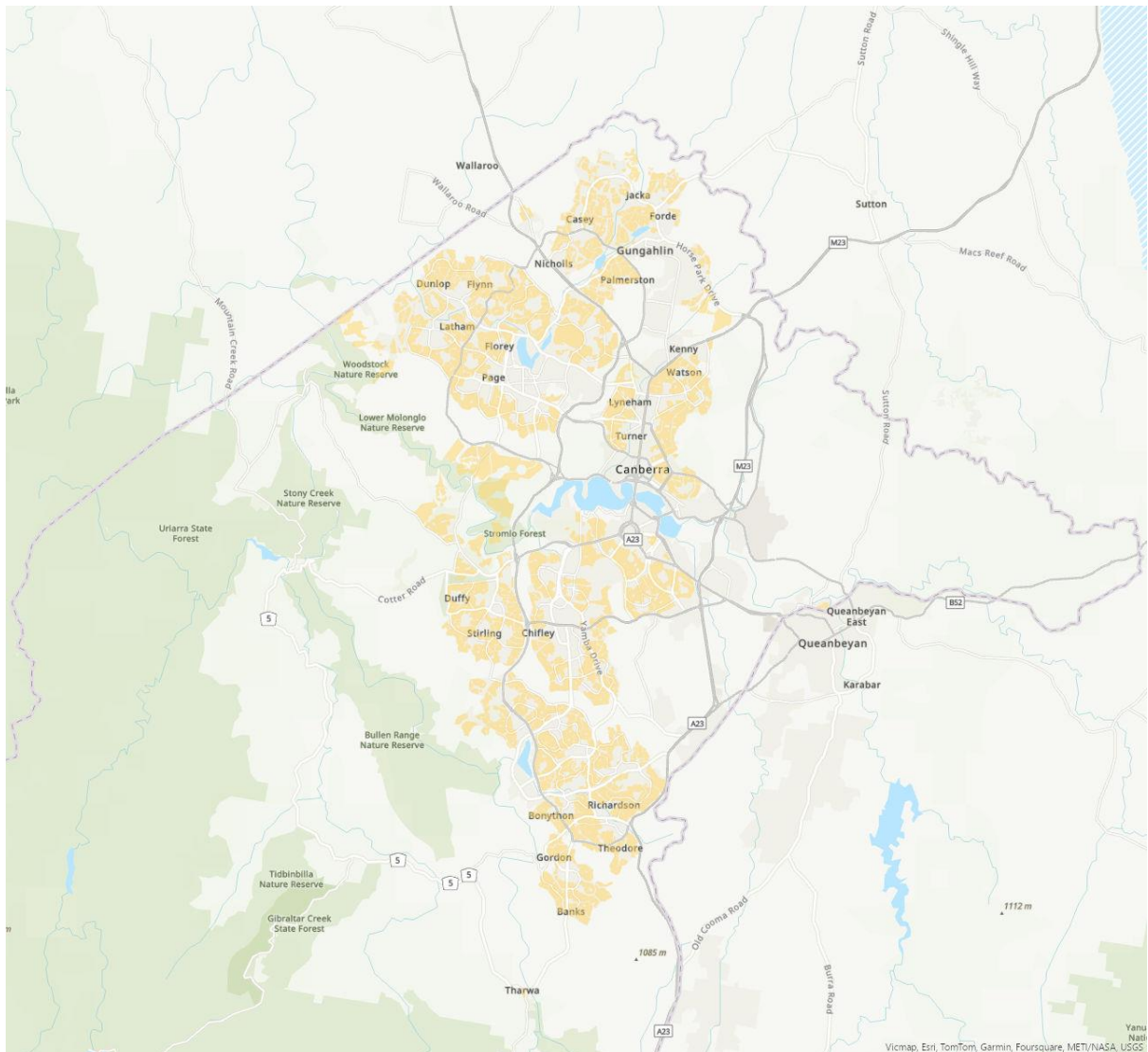


Figure 1 – Current distribution of RZ1 land

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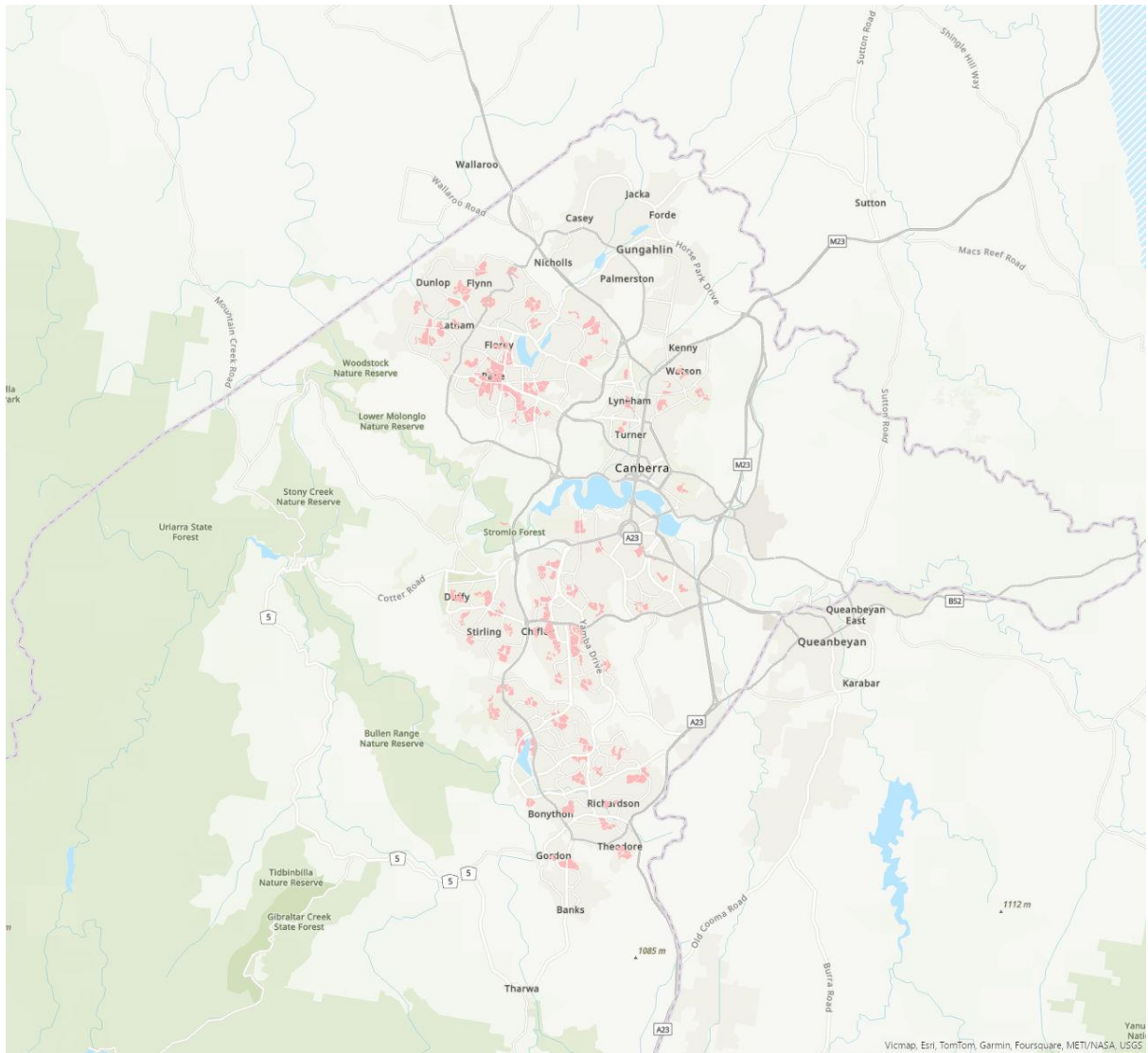


Figure 2 – Current distribution of RZ2 land

For a more detailed site description of the zones, please refer to the relevant supporting report.

### 3.0 NEED FOR THE MAJOR PLAN AMENDMENT

The ACT's population is currently around 470,000 people and by 2050, the population is expected to reach almost 700,000 people. To support this anticipated growth in population, the ACT will need to provide 30,000 new homes by 2030 and up to 100,000 new homes by 2050.

The [ACT Planning Strategy](#) 2018, which sets the high-level and long-term goals for planning in the ACT, aims to accommodate this population growth by delivering 70 per cent of new housing within the existing urban footprint. Ultimately, the Planning Strategy aims to deliver a compact and efficient city. These reforms will directly facilitate achievement of this aim by permitting more 'missing middle' housing within existing RZ1 and RZ2 zoned land.

Introduced in 2023, the [District Strategies](#) consider the broad policy aims of the Planning Strategy along with each district's unique character and values, and outlines where and how change is expected to occur in the next 15 years. Relevant to these amendments, the District Strategies note the importance of delivering missing middle housing across all districts (excluding East Canberra) to provide greater housing choice, including in districts with lower growth projections.

Most recently, the Minister for Planning's [Statement of Planning Priorities](#) directly notes a priority to enable diverse housing choice by delivering missing middle housing in existing residential areas. The Statement of Planning Priorities highlights that the Missing Middle Housing Design Guide (the Design Guide), along with amendments to the planning framework (this MPA), as key mechanisms in which this will be delivered.

The Design Guide provides best practice design guidance for targeted 'missing middle' residential typologies. For the purpose of these reforms, 'missing middle' is defined as multi-occupancy (dual and tri-occupancy), townhouses, terrace homes and low-rise apartments (up to three storeys). Prior to MPA-04, the planning framework did not widely facilitate the delivery of missing middle housing and often presented barriers to this type of housing. MPA-04 was informed by the best practice design guidance contained in the Design Guide. Together, these amendments and the Design Guide will enable for high-quality missing middle housing to be delivered in our existing residential areas.

Further detail about how this MPA meets the key strategic policy documents is set out in the background papers, specifically the supporting report.

## 4.0 CONSULTATION

### 4.1 Consultation with entities

In accordance with section 62 of the Planning Act the Authority consulted with the following entities in relation to this MPA:

- the National Capital Authority
- the Conservator of Flora and Fauna
- the Environment Protection Authority
- the Heritage Council
- each referral entity
- if unleased or leased public land, each custodian of the land likely to be affected.

Comments received from these and other agencies were considered in the preparation of and by the Minister in approving this MPA.

Copies of comments received from the abovementioned entities are provided with the consultation report (background paper) prepared for MPA-04.

### 4.2 Consultation with the public

Public consultation on MPA-04 occurred between 20 May 2025 to 22 July 2025, with written submissions accepted until 5 August 2025. This was concurrent with consultation on the Design Guide.

During the consultation period:

- 539 people were engaged across 18 events held across Canberra, including pop-ups and community and industry workshops.
- Over 16,000 unique visitors came to the YourSay webpage.
- A total of 689 written submissions were received, including:
  - 74 long format submissions
  - 68 written comments at events
  - 398 survey responses, and
  - 149 quick comments.

Feedback received during public consultation suggests there is strong support for diverse housing types that suit different life stages, improve affordability, and promote vibrant communities, support for alternatives to urban sprawl, and a strong desire for subdivision resulting in separately titled dwellings, rather than unit titled dwellings.

Changes that were made in response to consultation are outlined in the consultation report, part of the background papers to MPA-04.

## 5.0 MAJOR PLAN AMENDMENT 04

This section details how MPA-04 amends the Territory Plan.

MPA-04 proposes amendments to Part A, Subdivision Policy, Residential Zones Policy and the Dictionary of the Territory Plan. These amendments are required to give effect to the proposal set out in the supporting report. The amendments to the Territory Plan are summarised below and detailed in 5.1 to 5.7 below.

### Part A - Administration and Governance

- creation of the Design Guide, its applicability, and consequential amendments to the applicability of the Housing Design Guide.
- the Housing Design Guide has been renamed to the Apartment Design Guide and its triggers have been refined to better reflect its focus.
- the role of the policy outcomes was confirmed as high-level objectives rather than specific assessment items.

### Part D - District Policies

- the role of the policy outcomes was confirmed as high-level objectives rather than specific assessment items.

### Part E - Residential Zones Policy

- the role of the policy outcomes was confirmed as high-level objectives rather than specific assessment items.
- the naming and policy outcomes for all residential zones were redefined to differentiate the zones and better target suitable development and redevelopment outcomes within the zones.
- Assessment Outcome 5 was revised to require consideration of desired zone policy outcomes and streetscape character during the development assessment process.
- Assessment Outcome 6 was revised to ensure that potential public domain impacts for vehicular parking are appropriately considered during the development application process.
- co-housing was permitted to support increased population density
- suitably designed apartments were permitted in RZ1 to increase housing choice.
- assessment requirements that limit secondary residence to a block greater than 500m<sup>2</sup> were removed to provide greater housing choice.
- An assessment requirement that limits co-housing to blocks greater than 1050m<sup>2</sup> was removed to facilitate more innovative missing middle development.
- assessment requirements for heights in metres and storeys were adjusted across all zones. Height in storeys were moved to the Territory Plan will instead be located in the technical specifications. This change allowed height to be controlled while reducing pressure on floor-to ceiling heights of developments and supports the appropriate scaling of height across zones.
- site coverage assessment requirements for single dwellings have been standardised.

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- site coverage assessment requirements for multi-unit redevelopment have been increased in RZ1 and RZ2 to 45%, and RZ3, RZ4 and RZ5 to 50%. This allows a wider variety of development on blocks whilst still maintaining adequate space to meet living infrastructure/canopy cover, permeability and private open space requirements.
- block density assessment requirements that limit the number of dwellings and minimum block sizes for redevelopment have been removed. This allows a proposal to instead meet the relevant design provisions of the Territory Plan and design guides supported by the dwelling density targets outlined in the Residential Zones Technical Specification.

### Part F - Subdivision Policy

- the role of the policy outcomes was confirmed as high-level objectives rather than specific assessment items.
- subdivision of RZ1 blocks has been permitted without the need to first construct a dwelling. This is supported by a mandatory 350m<sup>2</sup> minimum block size requirement.
- the assessment outcomes and requirements to ensure blocks which subdivide are suitable for additional development have been changed. This includes specific consideration of impacts related to battle-axe blocks.
- assessment requirements that create barriers to consolidation for co-housing development were removed.
- assessment requirements which create barriers to subdivision and consolidation in RZ1, particularly removing the restriction on subdivision and allowing unit-titling on blocks greater than 600m<sup>2</sup> have been removed.

### Part F – Leasing Policy

- the role of the policy outcomes was confirmed as high-level objectives rather than specific assessment items.

### Part G – Dictionary

- the roof pitch of what is defined as an attic was amended from more than 36 degrees to more than 45 degrees
- townhouse development was included in the definition of detached house
- a definition for 'end of section block' was created to support the Design Guide
- the definition of private open space was amended to confirm that private open space should incorporate planning area.

The supporting report, part of the background papers for MPA-04 provides further detail about the amendments and why they are needed.

For consequential amendments to the other documents, such as the technical specifications because of this MPA, see section 6 of this document.

## 5.1 Amendments to Part A – Administration and Governance

*Substitute* Part A- Administration and Governance with the document at Appendix 1.

## 5.2 Amendments to D01 to D10 - District Policies

This applies to each of the following district policies:

- D01 – Gungahlin District Policy
- D02 – Belconnen District Policy
- D03 – Inner North and City District Policy
- D04 – Inner South District Policy
- D05 – Molonglo Valley District Policy
- D06 – Weston Creek District Policy
- D07 – Woden District Policy
- D08 – Tuggeranong District Policy
- D09 – East Canberra District Policy
- D10 – Non-Urban District Policy

*Substitute* the introductory text under ‘Policy Outcomes’ with the following:

These policy outcomes describe the high-level objectives for the district. District policy outcomes are derived from the relevant district strategy, which sets the strategic planning vision and directions for the district.

Policy outcomes inform assessment outcomes and assessment requirements. Where a development is consistent with the assessment outcomes and assessment requirements, it is considered to be consistent with the policy outcomes.

## 5.3 Amendments to the E01 – Residential Zones Policy

*Substitute* Part E01 – Residential Zones Policy with the document at Appendix 2.

#### **5.4 Amendments to E02 to E07 – Zone Policies**

This applies to each of the following zones policies:

- E02 – Commercial Zones Policy
- E03 - Industrial Zones Policy
- E04 – Commercial Facility Zones Policy
- E05 – Parks and Recreation Zones Policy
- E06 – Transport and Services Zones Policy
- E07 – Non-Urban Zones Policy

*Substitute* the introductory text under ‘Policy Outcomes’ with the following:

These policy outcomes describe the high-level objectives for each zone.

Policy outcomes inform assessment outcomes and assessment requirements. Where a development is consistent with the assessment outcomes and assessment requirements, it is considered to be consistent with the policy outcomes.

#### **5.5 Amendments to the F01 – Subdivision Policy**

*Substitute* Part F01 – Subdivision Policy with the document at Appendix 3.

#### **5.6 Amendments to F02 – Leasing Policy**

*Substitute* the introductory text under ‘Policy Outcomes’ with the following:

These policy outcomes describe the high-level objectives when varying a Crown lease. These are in conjunction with the policy outcomes in the relevant district policy and zone policy.

#### **5.7 Amendments to Part G – Dictionary**

*Substitute* Part G – Dictionary with the document at Appendix 4

## **6.0 CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Documents, such as the technical specifications and development controls, are not part of the Territory Plan and were not amended as part of this MPA. The amendments in this section will be undertaken to the relevant documents when/if MPA-04 commences.

### **6.1 Design Guide**

The Authority prepared the Design Guide to support the provisions introduced by MPA-04. The Design Guide was released for public consultation along with MPA-04.

Revisions were made to the Design Guide in response to public consultation and the Standing Committee's report on MPA-04.

Approval and introduction of the Design Guide and changes to existing Design Guides will be undertaken separately from MPA-04.

### **6.2 Technical Specifications**

The Chief Planner will amend the Subdivision Technical Specifications and Residential Zones Technical Specifications to support MPA-04 as summarised below.

#### **Subdivision Technical Specifications**

- reduce minimum block sizes for RZ1 to RZ4.
- set controls around subdivided RZ1 blocks, particularly to discourage battle-axe block arrangements and to limit the impact of driveways to the streetscape.
- limit the location and size of consolidated RZ1 blocks based on location.
- adjust minimum block size specifications across residential zones.
- introduce a range of heritage specifications.
- other wording changes to clarify specifications that are intended to only apply to estate subdivisions.

#### **Residential Zones Technical Specifications**

- set maximum dwelling densities for different types of multi-unit housing in RZ1
- remove minimum dimensions of private open space of single dwelling developments.
- reduce the minimum private open space specifications for multiunit developments in RZ1 and RZ2.
- for multi-unit development in the RZ1 and RZ2, confirm that private open space can contribute along with principal-private open space and communal open space where it has a dimension of at least four metres.

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- align principal private open space requirements for multi-unit housing developments across all residential zones.
- alter building height limitations (in metres) across all residential zones to reflect changes in the Residential Zones Policy and a transition of height across zones.
- remove height transition requirements for RZ5 blocks, noting these are appropriately captured by other assessment outcomes and general considerations made through the DA assessment process.
- alter building envelopes by slightly increasing the starting point where measurements are taken.
- standardise upper floor level front setbacks with lower floor level front setbacks for single dwelling and multi-unit housing.
- reduce side setbacks and increasing rear setbacks for multi-unit housing in RZ1 and RZ2.
- increase the angle in which solar building envelopes are calculated for multi-unit housing from 31 degrees to 45 degrees.
- clarify the application of solar access specifications in missing middle housing developments and larger-scale multi-unit housing.
- introduce new specifications that consider overshadowing to a neighbour's daytime living area, principal private open space and rooftop solar systems.
- amend building separation and privacy specifications for multi-unit housing across all residential zones to be more prescriptive on separation between walls with windows and to principal private open spaces.
- reduce the minimum dwelling floor area of studios and 3+ bedroom dwellings.
- remove maximum building depth specifications to provide greater flexibility in design outcomes.
- clarify that the minimum floor to floor heights apply to larger-scale multi-unit housing developments. The existing ceiling height specifications continue to apply to missing middle housing developments.
- consolidate storage requirements for multi-unit housing.
- amend the front fence specification to allow fencing or walls forward of the building line for multi-unit housing in select scenarios.
- increase minimum planting area requirements for single dwelling housing in compact blocks.
- decrease minimum planting area requirements from multi-unit housing in RZ1 and RZ2.
- increase minimum tree planting requirements on compact and midsized blocks.
- increase minimum tree canopy coverage requirements that applies to multi-unit housing developments in RZ1 and RZ2.
- introduce a specification to discourage artificial turf.
- introduce a range of heritage specifications.
- remove specification for a minimum of one car space per dwelling to be roofed.
- adjust parking rates for multi-unit housing across all residential zones.

Separate documents have been prepared as part of the background papers for MPA-04 showing how the above amendments will be presented in the

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Residential Zones Technical Specifications and Subdivision Technical Specifications.

Further discussion on the consequential amendments proposed by MPA-04 to the technical specifications are outlined in the supporting report (background paper)

General information about these other documents, such as how the technical specifications will be used by the proponent and Authority in determining a development application, can be found on the Authority's [website](#).

## INTERPRETATION SERVICE

To speak to someone in a language other than English please telephone the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) 13 14 50

LANGUAGE	DETAILS
English	If you need an interpreter please call: 13 14 50
Mandarin (Simplified Chinese) / 简体中文	如果您需要翻译，请致电：13 14 50
Arabic / العربية	إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم شفهي اتصل بالرقم: 13 14 50
Cantonese (Traditional Chinese) / 繁體中文	如果你需要傳譯員，請致電：13 14 50
Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt	Nếu bạn cần thông dịch viên, xin gọi: 13 14 50
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Tamil / தமிழ்	உங்களுக்கு மொழிபெயர்த்துரைப்பாளர் ஒருவர் தேவைப்பட்டால் 13 14 50 என்ற எண்ணை அழைக்கவும்
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