

State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment - Submission

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Public

Tuesday, 4 August 2026

City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee

Program Contact:

Sarah Gilmour, Associate Director Park Lands, Policy & Sustainability

Approving Officer:

Ilia Houridis, Director City Shaping

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of a submission to the State Planning Commission on the State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment (the Code Amendment) (**Attachment A**), open for consultation from 21 May 2026 until 13 August 2026 ([Link 1](#)).

The Code Amendment updates flood hazard planning rules and mapping across the state, based on new and updated flood studies and modelling completed by the State Government.

The strategic intent of the Code Amendment is to provide a more consistent planning framework that incorporates projected climate change impacts into development assessment.

The effectiveness of the Code Amendment will ultimately depend on ensuring that the amended Planning and Design Code remains transparent, evidence-based and practical to administer.

Several aspects of the new flood mapping and policy require further refinement before implementation to ensure the amendments do not result in increased complexity and reduced transparency for applicants.

The proposed submission (**Attachment A**) outlines key positions which the Administration considers need to be refined and changed before the Code Amendment comes into effect including recognising contemporary flood studies undertaken by councils, and improved implementation and assessment guidance.

The key positions are supported by detailed technical comments as provided in **Attachment A**.

Administration is currently undertaking a comprehensive council-wide flood mapping study utilising improved drainage information. The study is due to be completed in early 2027. The draft submission seeks to use this mapping to replace the State's flood maps for future development assessment.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 11 August 2026 for consideration

THAT THE CITY PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Endorses the submission to the State Planning Commission on the State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment consultation as contained in Attachment A of Item 7.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 4 August 2026.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, to make minor technical or typographical amendments to the submission on the State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment consultation as contained in Attachment A of Item 7.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 4 August 2026 for the purposes of finalising and lodging the submission.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Environment Be climate conscious and resilient
Policy	The recommendation proposed in this report aligns with the City Plan - Adelaide 2036 and Integrated Climate Strategy 2030
Consultation	This report responds to a consultation process being undertaken by the State Planning Commission in relation to a State Government led amendment to the Planning and Design Code (Code Amendment).
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	The Code Amendment aligns with the strategic ambitions of the City of Adelaide Integrated Climate Strategy 2030, to be a climate resilient city by preparing our infrastructure and assets to withstand change, and ensuring our community is prepared.
26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 27/28 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
26/27 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

.....

DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of a submission to the State Planning Commission on the State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment (the Code Amendment) (**Attachment A**), open for consultation from 21 May 2026 until 13 August 2026 ([Link 1](#)).
2. The Code Amendment updates flood hazard planning rules across the state, based on new and updated flood studies and modelling completed by the State Government.
3. It focuses on addressing flood hazards along watercourses (riverine flooding) and due to surface water (pluvial flooding).

About the Code Amendment

4. The Planning and Design Code contains three 'Overlays that set the planning rules to guide development in areas with flooding hazard:
 - 4.1. Hazards (Flooding) Overlay, which applies to areas that can be subject to an intolerable flood risk, where development should generally be avoided.
 - 4.2. Hazards (Flooding – General) Overlay, which applies to areas with tolerable flood risk and seeks actions such as raising floor levels to mitigate flood risk.
 - 4.3. Hazards (Flooding – Evidence Required) Overlay, which applies to areas where there are no suitable flood study data so precautionary actions are required, such as ensuring the floor levels of new homes are raised above the kerb.
5. The Code Amendment proposes to update these overlays focusing on:
 - 5.1. More consistent and updated mapping across the state using the latest flood studies and data which are modelled based on projected growth and climatic changes to 2050.
 - 5.2. Improving planning definitions and policies for consistency across the state, greater certainty, and to align with national guidance.
 - 5.3. Providing a more streamlined process to update flood hazard overlay mapping as new flood studies and data become available.
6. The State Government's fact sheet summarising the Code Amendment is available in [Link 2](#).

Hazards Overlays in the City of Adelaide

7. Most of the City of Adelaide is currently subject to the Hazards (Flooding Evidence Required) Overlay with the River Torrens / Karrawirra Pari and its banks subject to the Hazards (Flooding) Overlay (see Figure 1).
8. For the City of Adelaide, the Code Amendment proposes to:
 - 8.1. Increase areas where the Hazards (Flooding) Overlay applies to include watercourses on the Adelaide Park Lands and some residential streets.
 - 8.2. Apply the Hazards (Flooding – General) Overlay in the Adelaide Park Lands and city streets.
 - 8.3. Remove the Hazards (Flooding – Evidence Required) Overlay from applying in the City of Adelaide excepting a small portion of the south-east corner of the Adelaide Park Lands associated with the Pakapakanthi Wetlands (See Figure 2).
9. The result is more location specific identification of flood risk across the City of Adelaide.
10. In some instances, properties will be subject to multiple Overlays, and the submission seeks clarification of how this will be applied in practice through the development assessment process.
11. The proposed changes to the Overlays can be viewed using the State Government's Consultation Map Viewer Tool ([Link 3](#)).
12. The State Government has released a series of Frequently Asked Questions relating to the details of the Code Amendment ([Link 4](#)).

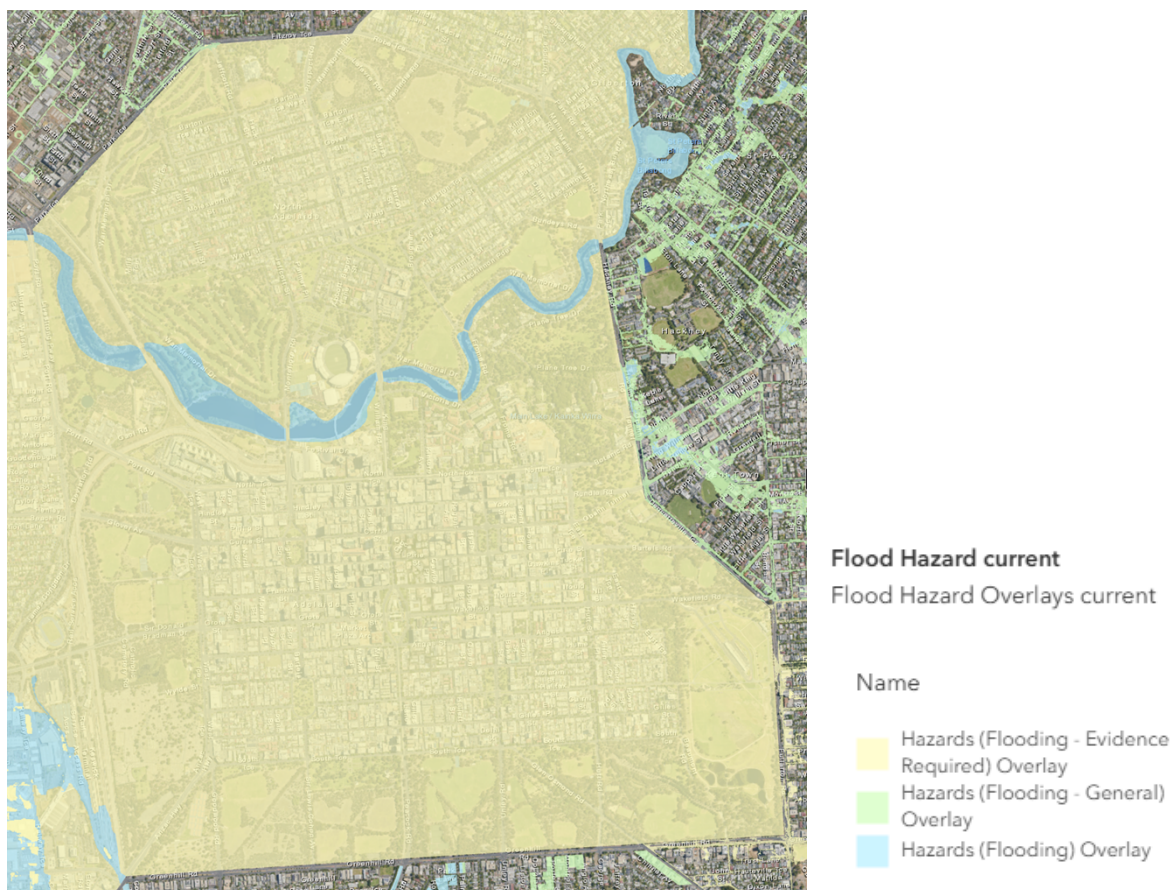


Figure 1 Current flood mapping showing extents of the flood hazard overlays in City of Adelaide

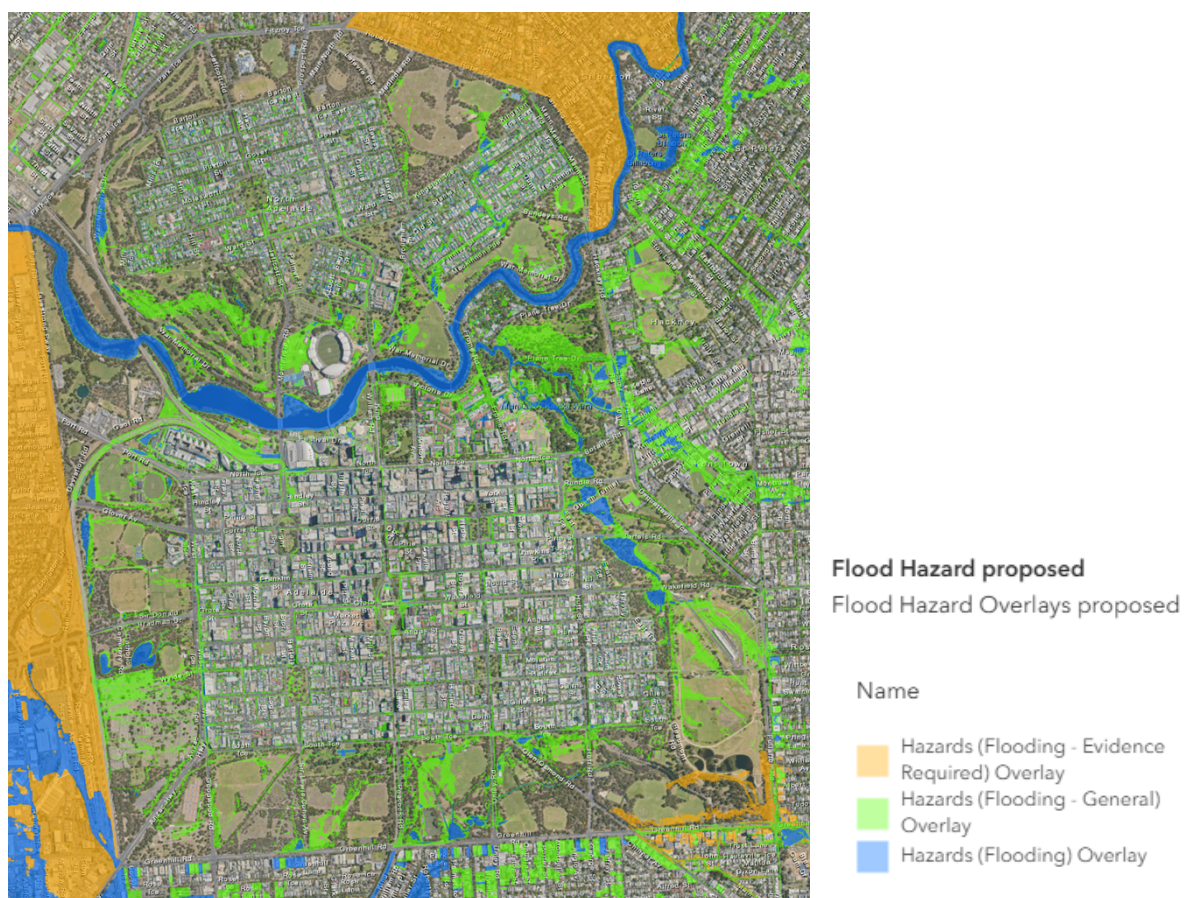


Figure 2 Proposed flood mapping showing extents of the new flood hazard overlays in City of Adelaide

Key changes proposed through the Code Amendment

13. The following key changes are proposed through the Code Amendment:
 - 13.1. Overlay mapping is to be updated and realigned, where supported by new and enhanced mapping
 - 13.2. Mapping has been derived from climate projections to 2050, recognising that future flood behaviour may differ from historical events due to changing rainfall patterns, catchment behaviour, and urban development.
 - 13.3. Underlying flood depth data will no longer form part of the Planning and Design Code mapping. Instead, the detailed technical information required for development assessment will remain in the supporting technical studies.
 - 13.4. Several changes to policy and definitions to align with Australian and International risk management standards, as summarised in **Attachment A**.
 - 13.5. The Minister for Planning can update Flood Hazard Overlays from time to time without the need for a Code Amendment.
14. It is also intended that a Practice Direction be prepared to complement the upcoming Flood Study Guidelines (to be issued by the Department for Environment and Water), to assist in streamlining the process for updates to flood hazard assessment criteria.

City of Adelaide's Draft Submission

15. A draft submission is provided as **Attachment A** – Submission to State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment.
16. The submission supports the strategic intent of the Code Amendment and welcomes the State Government's commitment to improving flood resilience through contemporary flood modelling, a more consistent statewide planning framework and the incorporation of projected climate change impacts into development assessment.
17. It notes alignment of the Code Amendment with the City of Adelaide's Integrated Climate Strategy 2030, particularly Council's commitment to becoming a climate-resilient city and a climate-leading capital.
18. While the intent of the Code Amendment to modernise South Australia's flood planning framework is supported, the effectiveness of the reforms will ultimately depend on ensuring that the amended Planning and Design Code remains transparent, evidence-based and practical to administer.
19. Several aspects of the proposed framework require further refinement before implementation. In particular, the proposed removal of readily accessible flood depth information from the planning system is likely to increase reliance on underlying flood studies, engineering advice and council interpretation during development assessment. This has the potential to increase assessment complexity, reduce transparency for applicants and create inconsistencies between assessment authorities.
20. These matters are particularly significant for the City of Adelaide, which is expected to accommodate substantial residential and employment growth while managing a highly constrained urban environment. The city contains critical infrastructure, established drainage networks, the River Torrens / Karrawirra Parri, extensive Adelaide Park Lands and numerous strategic renewal precincts. It is therefore essential that the planning system continues to provide clear, accurate and accessible flood information that supports both resilient development and ongoing urban renewal.
21. The submission identifies areas for refinement and adopts the following key positions:
 - 21.1. Retain access to technical flood information
 - 21.1.1. Council supports the move towards hazard-based flood mapping. However, applicants and assessment authorities should continue to have access to flood depth information, Water Surface Elevations and Finished Floor Level guidance through SAPPa or an associated State platform. Without this information, development assessment is likely to become more complex and increasingly reliant on site-specific engineering advice.
 - 21.2. Recognise contemporary council flood studies
 - 21.2.1. Council supports the ongoing use of contemporary flood modelling but considers that locally prepared flood studies and Stormwater Management Plans should be capable of informing future Flood Hazard Overlay mapping where prepared using accepted methodologies. This will ensure that planning controls continue to reflect the best available evidence.

21.3. Provide certainty through governance

- 21.3.1. Council seeks a clear governance framework defining how flood mapping will be reviewed, updated and maintained over time, including the respective responsibilities of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Environment and Water and local government. Regular review of flood mapping should become an integral component of the planning framework.

21.4. Support housing and urban renewal

- 21.4.1. The City of Adelaide is planning to accommodate significant housing growth through urban infill and redevelopment. Flood planning should continue to support these strategic objectives by recognising that many flood risks can be effectively mitigated through contemporary engineering design rather than unnecessarily constraining appropriate development.

21.5. Improve implementation guidance

- 21.5.1. Council recommends updated Flood Development Guidelines, Practice Directions and enhanced SAPPA functionality to provide greater certainty for assessment authorities, applicants and landowners. Clear implementation guidance will improve consistency across South Australia and reduce unnecessary assessment delays.

21.6. Continue collaboration with local government

- 21.6.1. Flood risk will continue to evolve as climate science, flood modelling and infrastructure improvements progress. Council supports ongoing collaboration between the State Government, local government and technical agencies to ensure the Planning and Design Code continues to reflect contemporary flood risk while supporting resilient communities.

22. Key positions are supported by detailed technical comments as provided in **Attachment A**.

Next Steps

- 23. Pending Council's decision, the submission will be provided to the State Planning Commission before consultation closes on 13 August 2026.
- 24. Administration is currently undertaking a comprehensive council-wide flood mapping study utilising improved drainage information and more recent climate change factors.
 - 24.1. This work is expected to be completed in early 2027.
 - 24.2. The submission (**Attachment A**) seeks to use the City of Adelaide's flood mapping in the future to replace the State's flood maps for future development assessment.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment for consultation](#)

Link 2 – [State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment Fact Sheet](#)

Link 3 – [Flooding Overlay Consultation](#)

Link 4 – [State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment Frequently Asked Questions](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Submission on the State-wide Flood Hazard Code Amendment for Consultation.