



**ACT**  
Government

# **DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES CITY AND GATEWAY DRAFT URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

2018

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

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### Introduction

The National Capital Authority (NCA) and ACT Government have developed the City and Gateway Draft Urban Design Framework (the Draft Framework) to set the principles for development and growth in the city centre and along the gateway corridor of Northbourne Avenue and the Federal Highway. Community engagement on the Draft Framework was undertaken between 1 March and 6 May 2018.

As part of the engagement process, every Downer household received a mail invitation to attend a workshop at the Downer Community Centre on Monday 9 April from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss how the proposed changes may effect residents and what planning requirements should be considered so that the proposed building height increases to blocks fronting Northbourne Avenue and Federal Highway minimise the impact on the existing character of the suburb. This report documents the key outcomes of the table discussions with residents.

### What is proposed in the Draft Framework?

The Draft Framework recommends a gradual increase in development from the ACT border to the city centre. This includes a progressive transition from an informal bush and grassland character to a formal, structured boulevard with increasing building densities as you approach the city centre.

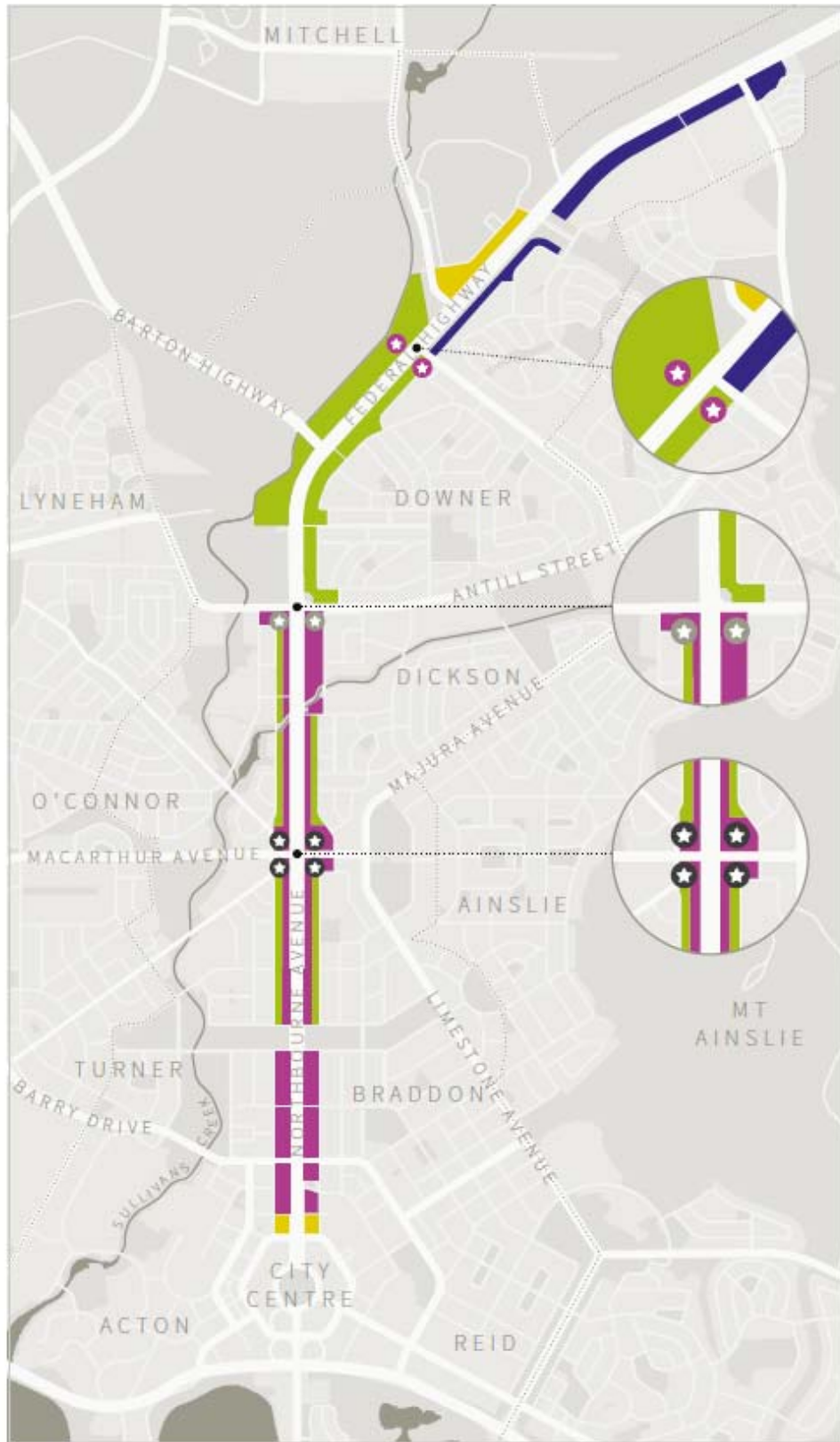
The Draft Framework includes a proposal to increase the building heights for Downer blocks fronting Northbourne Avenue and the Federal Highway from maximum 8.5 metres (approximately 2 storeys) to 18 metres (approximately 5 storeys) with a marker building of 22 metres (approximately 6 storeys) at the southern corner site of Federal Highway and Phillip Avenue (see Figure 1).

The Draft Framework recognises that, with more people living in the area, there is also a need to upgrade infrastructure that supports active living, including walking and cycling networks. The Draft Framework proposes links to public transport and high quality public spaces to support a greater variety of activities for people visiting, living and working in this urban area.

### Previous meeting with the Downer community

The NCA and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) presented an overview of the Draft Framework (including the proposed building height changes for Downer) at the Downer community meeting on Monday 5 March 2018. Feedback on the proposed height changes from attendees of the meeting was mixed and there was a request to provide further planning context and detail around the proposed building height increase. At this meeting it was agreed that a workshop for residents and community members would be arranged to provide clear direction for these sites as part of the finalisation of the Draft Framework.

# DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES



**Figure 1:** City and Gateway Draft Urban Design Framework – proposed building heights.

### Workshop outcomes

#### Agenda

1. Welcome and introduction
2. City and Gateway Downer context – *presentation*
3. Design Studio Exercise: Precinct 1 and Precinct 2 – *small group activity*
  - Workshop each character precinct in small groups
  - Key points for consideration:
    - Building heights and setbacks
    - Approach to consolidation of sites
    - Interface with green open space, low density residential, walking and cycling links
4. Reporting Back – *all participants*
  - Each table presents their five key points for each precinct to the forum
5. Summary, next steps and close

#### Workshop attendees

A total of 58 RSVPs were received ahead of the workshop, and approximately 110 residents attended on the night.

The workshop was facilitated by a team of nine EPSDD planners and one NCA planner who provided presentations and facilitated table discussions.

#### Revised planning proposal as input for discussion

Further design testing was undertaken following the public release of the Draft Framework to ensure a transition of building heights that stepped down to adjacent residential areas. A revised building height proposal for Downer sites adjacent to Northbourne Avenue and the Federal Highway was presented at the workshop for discussion. The revised proposal identified two distinct character precincts in the subject area, one that contained single blocks fronting an open space park edge, and the other containing two adjoining blocks (Figures 2 and 3). It was determined that due to differing conditions, each precinct could require different building heights, setbacks and block consolidation approaches.

## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

**Character Precinct 1** – section of single blocks fronting park edge from Phillip Avenue to Panton Street

**Character Precinct 2** – Section of two adjacent blocks from Panton Street to Antill Street



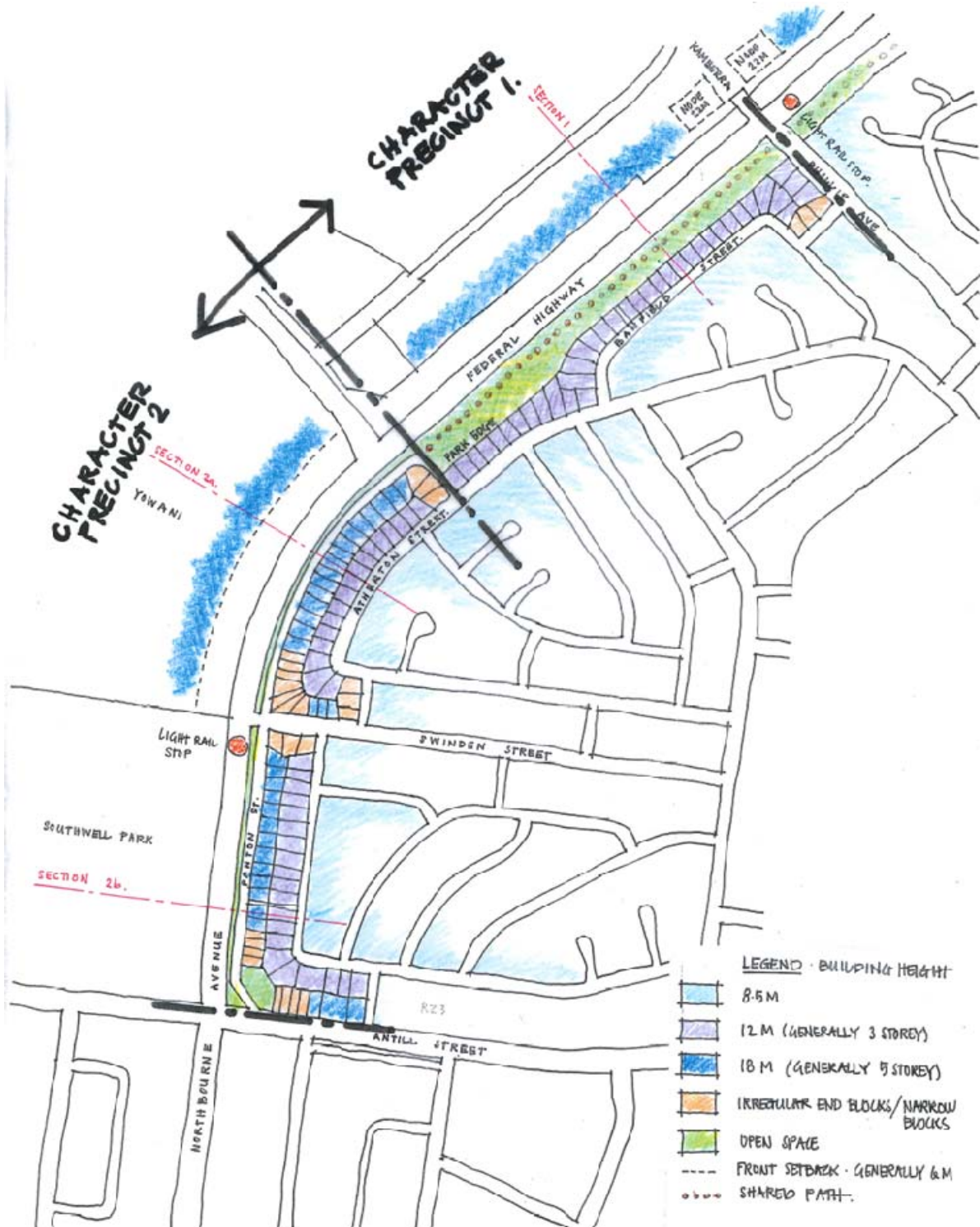
**Figure 2:** Downer section from the City and Gateway Draft Urban Design Framework.

The revised proposal presented at the workshop for discussion (see Figure 3) included:

- Removal of the 22m marker building on the corner of Phillip Avenue and the Federal Highway to provide a better interface with the lower building heights of the surrounding blocks;
- Reduce maximum building heights for blocks in Precinct 1 (that front onto the park edge) from 18 metres (approximately 5 storeys) to 12 metres (approximately 3 storeys);
- A maximum building height of 12 metres (approximately 3 storeys) for sites in Precinct 2 facing onto Atherton Street and Blacket Street to step down development from the 18 metres building height sites fronting Panton Street (and Northbourne Avenue).

# DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Figure 3 below provides a visual representation of the revised proposal, which was used in group discussions at the workshop.



**Figure 3:** Revised building height proposal presented at the workshop for consideration and discussion.

## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

A series of hand drawn sections were also used at the workshop for discussion and consideration by groups, giving further indication of how the revised height proposal would sit with the surrounding context.

### Character Precinct 1 – Section from Phillip Avenue to Panton Street

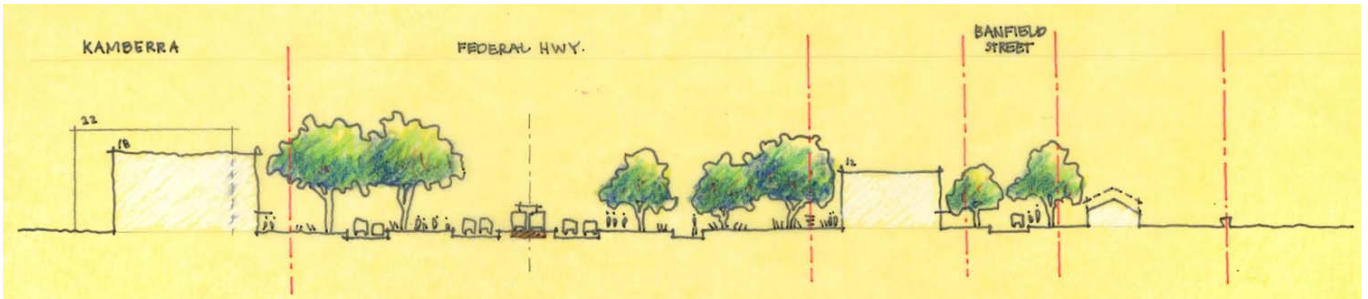


Figure 4: Character Precinct 1 at Kamberra (looking North) – Proposed.

### Character Precinct 2 – Section from Panton Street to Antill Street

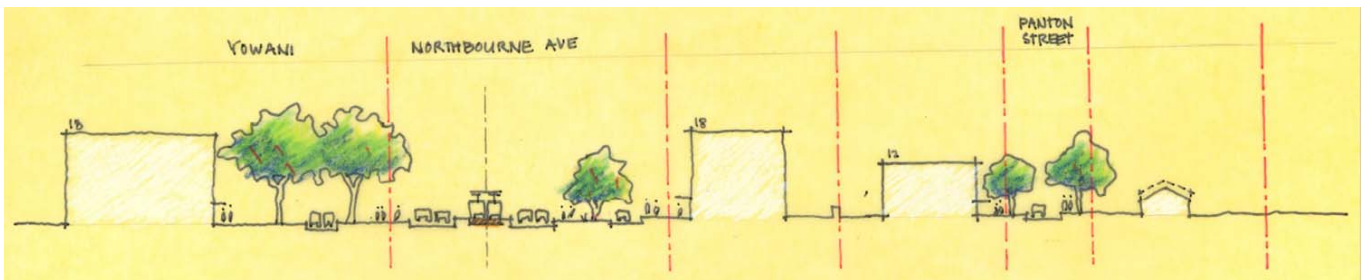


Figure 5: Character Precinct 2a at Yowani (looking North) – Proposed.

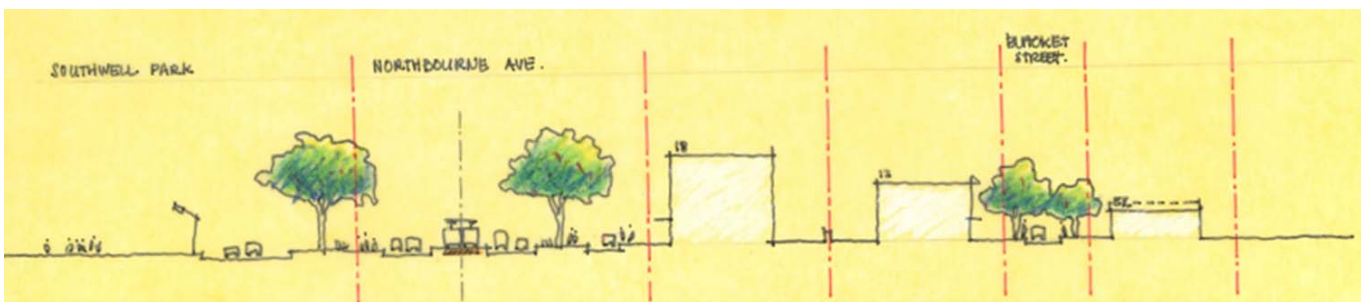


Figure 6: Character Precinct 2b at Southwell Park (looking North) – Proposed.



### Design studio outcomes for each table

The following section documents the outcomes from the Design Studio activities held at the workshop. Table facilitators recorded feedback and group discussion on the night, and a representative from each table was nominated to report back to the group. Participants were also encouraged to submit formal responses to the Draft Framework to further represent their own personal views outside of the group discussion. The response summaries have been provided by each table facilitator, and categorised into themes where appropriate.

#### Table 1

**Facilitator:** Adam

##### Summary

The group was very interactive and interested in getting the best planning outcome for the area. There was concern for building heights, traffic congestion, loss of green spaces and future building mass blocking the suburb in. There was a lot of reference to not replicating what is currently occurring along Flemington Road into Gungahlin. Most of the group are long standing Downer residents who are concerned with the level of development that is occurring in the area.

##### **Precinct 1 – Section from Phillip Avenue to Panton Street**

###### Issues raised

- Proposed building heights - consider them to be too high adjacent to the suburb
- How the proposed building heights integrate into the rest of the suburb
- that development will impact the existing green space
- Avoid what is currently occurring in Gungahlin
- Do not want apartment block buildings
- the impact of parking within the suburb
- If apartments are built, how will anyone afford the rising body corporate fees
- titling of consolidated blocks
- taller buildings will have a negative shadow impact
- Avoid 'canyon effect' development down the street
- Ensure appropriate space between buildings, amenity and solar
- Maintain existing street setback within the suburb
- Consolidation of blocks. Can this be organic and max 2 to 3?
- Townhouse development over apartments
- Maintain green space and build upon it, linear park idea was well received
- Removal of marker buildings of 22 metres (6 storeys) was supported
- Idea of up to 3 storey development at no more than 10m high
- Ensure appropriate level of parking is supplied with new development
- Create better access to light rail with the addition of more laneways
- Maintain integration and connectivity for existing residents
- Provide outdoor exercise / activities in linear park
- Increase housing options for people to age in place

### **Precinct 2 – Section from Panton Street to Antill Street**

#### Issues raised

- proposed building heights - consider them to be too high, would prefer 10 to 12m
- traffic congestion
- the existing landscape could be lost, potential for wind tunnels
- cyclist safety
- Risk of suburb being ringed by development
- green space and solar access could be impacted
- Keen for consultation opportunity for development on the western side of Northbourne/Federal Highway
- Preference for building heights to be same as Precinct 1 i.e. 10m
- Consolidation of existing blocks should be limited to 4
- Opportunity for additional laneways/access ways through to Northbourne/Federal Highway
- Improve green spaces
- Increase housing options
- Affordable housing requirements, retain current % of public housing or increase
- Establish park on corner of Antill and Northbourne
- Make development sustainable, really sustainable
- Ensure cycle friendly
- Ensure 'green belt' along entire length of Northbourne/Federal highway interface
- Increase requirements for natural surfaces/permeability for new blocks

### Table 2

**Facilitator:** Deborah

#### **Summary**

The group consisted of long-term Downer residents who discussed building heights very passionately. Proposed building heights of 18 metres were perceived as high rise with negative impact onto the street and adjacent residential areas. There was concern over building heights of more than 12 metres, parking management and lack of green spaces as a result of intensification.

#### Issues raised:

- Protecting northern light/sun
- Sufficient car parking – residents should not be parking on suburban streets. Need to consider block amalgamation and regulation to address this
- If street parking exists, proper regulation is required
- Power station / tower (in reserve opposite Barton Hwy) – issue is the vista from buildings
- Tree removal – increase in noise?
- Not enough green space and recreation spaces – Antill to Barton Hwy
- Review of tenancy rates elsewhere and whether Downer will end up with vacant units etc.
- Impact on our rates (if we stay!) over the period to 2030 etc.
- Problem of traffic (esp. peak) already avoiding Northbourne via Panton Street – will be impossible with all the high rise
- More foot access from Panton St to suburb and to light rail, through block links

## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- There are new single homes (e.g. in Blacket Street) that might be reluctant to move/redevelop, so 18m to 8.5m stepdown may occur in many instances – motley development
- Make sure cyclists can safely commute without sharing with pedestrians (no recreational cycling)
- Resolve plans for irregular / smaller blocks (more resident input/control)
- Is it the time that outside lane of Phillip Ave being converted to formal parking?
- Parking provision for many more cars
- Ensure pathways are well lit and maintained
- Mixed use amenities are low on Phillip Ave and Federal Hwy
- Maintain plenty of green space between buildings (not towers of concrete)
- Water run-off has increased from increased pavement
- Need provision for elderly, disabled and young families
- Without more green space and proper traffic planning, it will be like rows of battery hens
- Re consolidation of irregular / small blocks – set minimum consolidation size and give residents a choice if they want to consolidate their blocks
- If unsure about the orange blocks (irregular end blocks), consider green (open space)
- How are house prices immediately adjacent going to be affected – also impact on rates?
- Why can't there be medium density development in some areas – and high elsewhere where it's appropriate?
- Subdividing blocks over 800m?
- Footpath along Antill Street are appalling irregular and unsafe for aged and disabled, despite new units
- Retain all open spaces. Medium density development? Subdividing blocks over 800m in this corridor
- Need to ensure public right of way through blocks to allow easy access to Northbourne Ave
- Need to resolve plans for irregular / end / smaller blocks
- Agree with reducing height in Character Precinct 1 area

### Table 3

**Facilitator:** Rochelle

#### **Summary**

It was a very lively discussion, with the majority of participants opposed to change. The majority of the representatives were longstanding Downer residents and shared a passion for their suburb. In particular, proposed building heights and associated impacts (parking, traffic, overshadowing, tunnel of development and poor presentation of waste facilities) were of major concern. One person was comfortable with heights and thought densification was preferable to sprawl in terms of sustainability and impact.

#### Height

- Too high – however group could not resolve an alternative height than proposed. Preference to keep existing height limits
- impacts on parking, traffic, waste disposal, amenity, traffic noise
- an 18 metre height limit on both sides of the Federal Highway could create a tunnel/wall of development along the approach into Canberra

## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- One person did not have a problem with the height

### Design

- High quality design and siting – the group were united in their concern with the quality of design and buildings in Canberra
- All participants thought that Canberra lacks examples of quality design. The Canberra examples shown in the table materials were not considered to represent good design
- Not supportive of the examples – not considered to be inspiring, concern with how the back of sites look with all the waste enclosures/services, lack of gardens, landscaping, areas for kids to play

### Rational for change

- The group agreed that there was not a clear understanding of why Government was proposing changes to existing height limits and lacked a compelling reason for establishing a grand gateway along the Downer frontage
- One person was supportive of making a grand entry to Canberra and conscious of Canberra's role as the National Capital
- Mixed views about whether or not this concept should be pursued. Concern that proposal is a revenue exercise of Government at the cost of sacrificing the original Walter Burley Griffin vision for the city

### Diversity

- Should be a variety of uses – not just residential use. Potential to incorporate tourist accommodation and community hubs/facilities. Could be a prime location for a visitors centre
- Mix of housing and affordability a central issue

### Landscape character and quality

- Lots of agreement regarding retaining the Bush Capital qualities, landscaped area and trees, green corridors to cross Federal Highway and into suburb, tree lined pathways
- Linkages with Climate Change Strategy – how is this reflected in this proposal? Concern around increased density, less able to adapt to climate change. Should consider new green spaces, possibly resuming some blocks and creating “an oasis of green”

### Concern and scepticism

- Will land get taken back by Government? – a position should be clearly and widely distributed to everyone in the community stating that this will not happen

### Requests

- Information presented at the workshop should be accessible to all on the website
- More 3D modelling of proposals
- More detail – how many people will live here?
- More linkages with Climate Change Strategy
- More case studies of other cities that are doing design well

Table 4

**Facilitator:** Stephan

## Summary

The group's discussion indicated a willingness to accept a zoning policy change in the areas identified but that the change needs to be well managed and above all protect the amenity of residents who want to stay in their existing homes.

*What is most important to me to discuss this evening?*

- How many storeys will be allowed to be built in any redevelopment
- Plan around existing mature trees – (a feature of garden city suburbs)
- Protect the amenity of existing residents (e.g. sun access and privacy)
- Don't allow any through traffic
- Consider older residents who find it hard to walk or cycle
- Provide planning rule clarity

## Precinct 1 – Section from Phillip Avenue to Panton Street

- Dual aspect development should be considered if it fits sensibly - height fronting Northbourne Avenue landscape buffer 12 m (3 storeys), lower fronting Atherton/ Banfield Streets
- As no access street can exist in the landscape buffer all access will be off Atherton/Banfield Street this will add to traffic and needs to be managed. Parking will also be a concern and require management. All parking development demand should be catered for on site
- Envelope controls required to protect existing residents (who want to stay in their homes - unwilling to sell). Protect privacy, sun access and amenity
- People would like to restrict development so that family housing is delivered, such as terraces, not all apartments. This housing should be suitable for existing elderly residents to downsize
- Protect garden city character by protecting existing trees and allowing for front and rear garden /open space areas
- Don't allow people to park and ride (the tram) in this location
- Landscape buffer zone to remain and provide improved pedestrian and cycle path

## Precinct 2 – Section from Panton Street to Antill Street

- Suggest being consistent with the policy established along Blacket St – RZ3 (9.5 metre height limit) along the rear streets of Blacket and Atherton Streets. Suggest 3 storeys or RZ4 (12 metre height limit) for blocks fronting Northbourne Avenue.
- The above point represented the majority view on building height, a minority view was 5 storeys fronting Northbourne and 2 storeys fronting rear streets. Minority view supported by 3 people.
- General agreement that height should step down from Northbourne to rear streets.
- Protect street trees and allow generous front setbacks similar to what exists (6 metres) allowing front garden tree planting.
- The two sections 34 and 44 are different by virtue of uses (such as the numerous B&B's in section 34) and building types. The difference could be/should be reflected in redevelopment either by height and/or zoning.
- Don't let the precinct look like Flemington Road!! – This is interpreted to mean long lengths of apartment buildings of 3 to 6 storeys.

## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- Privacy separation between buildings at the rear of blocks will be important.
- Make sure good design is observed by redevelopment (walls of continuous frontage without a break identified as a poor outcome).
- Envelope controls required to protect existing residents who want to stay in their homes/ are unwilling to sell. Protect privacy, sun access and amenity.

### Block consolidation management:

- Group participants agreed that block consolidation is to be managed to ensure good redevelopment outcomes occur and to protect amenity for new and existing residents.
- The criteria for required block amalgamations should consider corner blocks, narrow blocks, and irregularly shaped blocks that cannot easily accommodate a redevelopment.
- Duplex or shared wall existing homes should be indicated as minimum amalgamated blocks. Importantly no single blocks should be left undeveloped between redevelopment.
- Where a resident is unwilling to sell then no redevelopment should occur.

### Table 5

**Facilitator:** Bronwen

#### **Summary**

The table was composed of mostly a younger demographic, with one older couple. A resident, who has been active in community advocacy, reported back the table's key findings to the rest of the meeting. Overall, a lively, informed and passionate group of people who were keen to engage with the issues at hand.

#### Issues raised

##### Building design and quality

- A huge NO to "crappy development" - fearful of creating slums, with development along Flemington Road cited as an undesirable outcome
- Enforcement of planning rules – a general sentiment that developers get away with breaking the planning requirements. Lack of trust of the planning system expressed
- New Acton was recognised as a successful case of high density and great public spaces. A strong desire for this quality of redevelopment

##### Connectivity – within the suburb and to the wider context

- Footpaths – existing ones inadequate in size and extent, poorly maintained. Difficult to navigate for elderly, pushing prams
- Cycle infrastructure – existing roads unable to support cyclists safely
- Road access – Downer is ringed by roads and is hard to get in / get out of
- Active travel opportunities – would welcome provision of safe and adequate infrastructure
- Safety – want slow streets within the suburb, adequate crossings to neighbouring suburbs / destinations, such as schools, shops, employment
- Social infrastructure – provide good connections to parks, schools, shops

## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

### Diversity – of demographic and housing mix

- Demographic – it was acknowledged that it was desirable to maintain a diverse mix of ages, family types
- Housing mix – request for a greater option of housing types, including single level for elderly, public housing. Less support for redevelopment of only apartments (especially 1 bedroom), as has been done elsewhere
- Affordability – concerns raised that Downer was already becoming unaffordable for younger people. Redevelopment seen as a further barrier
- One couple asked that we continue “canvassing the views of the younger people... (as they are) the future Downer residents”

### Social Infrastructure

- Loss of the school and associated open space highlighted
- Would like to see schools, parks re-established in Downer, especially in light of increased local population due to densification
- Use some of the proceeds from up-lift of blocks to provide new green spaces, community facilities

### Parking / Traffic

- On-street parking – high level of concern about increased volumes, not just near the redeveloped sites, but throughout the suburb
- Traffic – high level of concern about increased volumes, not just near the redeveloped sites, but throughout the suburb

### Building Heights

- Local character – much concern about potential loss of the character that makes Downer special to the community
- Nominated building heights – mixed support
- Height vs. number of storeys – wanted certainty about number of storeys allowed

### Implementation

- Timeframes – some expressed the view that it was desirable to achieve re-zoning sooner than later, better allowing the existing community to be the beneficiaries of any up-lift. Concerned that if re-zoning was delayed, “developers” would land bank and vacate houses causing a negative disruption to the feel of the Downer community

### Yowani

- One couple was concerned about the potential impact of development of Yowani on the amenity of Downer

### Table 6

**Facilitator:** Monique

#### **Summary**

The group discussed constructively the merits of higher density development and its impact on the suburb. There were many questions raised about the proposal and the wider issues of intensification and urban renewal, such as physical and social infrastructure upgrades, impacts on traffic and parking and innovative urban design outcomes.

#### Issues raised

- Overshadowing – residents don't want to see big walls of apartments facing onto single story houses
- Plot ratios – concern with density of new buildings – will green space on blocks be maintained if sites are redevelopment?
- ACT public housing – what will happen to this accommodation under the proposal?
- Infrastructure – the area is already struggling in terms of infrastructure (roads, footpaths, schools, and community facilities). If population/development increases, how will the infrastructure cope?
- Traffic and parking – how will local roads cope with traffic increase resulting from more residents moving into the area?
- Need to develop a plan for Downer as a whole – not just consider blocks along Northbourne Avenue
- Keep EPIC as an entertainment precinct! Perfect position for big crowds, esp. with light rail
- Green space – need more and with better access (footpaths, cycle paths, parking, etc.)
- Maintain street trees
- Banfield, Atherton and Blacket Streets – implications from development and traffic?
- Improve bike paths in the area, better connections to and from light rail stops, Dickson, schools and surrounding areas
- Innovative building design – would like to see more of this, especially on main thoroughfares
- Plot ratios – discrepancy with new buildings, extensions to existing buildings treated differently from new builds
- Schools – where will they be? How will the ACT Government cater for future population growth in Downer?

### Table 7

**Facilitator:** Caitlin

#### **Summary**

The group was generally not supportive of height increases and no one was supportive of the Draft Framework proposal for an 18 metre height maximum. Half of the group opposed any height increases, while the other half were willing to consider heights of 3 to 4 storeys, so long as privacy and solar access were not compromised.

#### Issues raised

Heights

- Not supportive of an 18 metre (approximately 5 storeys) height limit



## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- Half the group was supportive of minor height increases to 3 storeys in Precinct 1 and 4 storeys in Precinct 2 fronting Panton Street, stepping down to 3 storeys for sites fronting Atherton Street.
- What height increases would mean for narrow and irregular blocks at the end of each section?
- Overshadowing and solar access to existing houses in the area – need to ensure new development does not compromise solar access to existing dwellings.
- privacy and overlooking concerns, especially if some sites are redeveloped long before others. New developments of 6 storeys adjacent to existing single storey dwellings is not considered to be an acceptable outcome.
- Propose a staged uplift over 10 to 15 years, starting with sites closest to Dickson (Precinct 2b). Sites in Precinct 2a and Precinct 1 can be considered at a later date, when the need arises.
- impact of heights in areas where topography is higher. For residents living near Phillip Avenue, the higher topography means that any height increase will have major implications in terms of complete blocking of solar access and privacy.

### Community

- lack of schools in the area. Lots of families with young children living in Downer – currently need to take children elsewhere for schools, which increases traffic congestion. Surrounding schools are at capacity.
- Need for community facilities to be upgraded in the area to support existing population. Any significant increases to population density will require further upgrades.
- the focus is only on sites adjacent to Northbourne Ave, rather than undertaking an assessment of the entire suburb.
- only one side of the street is being considered for height changes, which may result in a wall of development and completely alter the look and feel of existing streets. Should consider both sides of the street and what impact any changes will have.

### Zoning

- Some additional need for retail uses in the area, group is generally supportive of cafes and corner stores in the vicinity. If this is to be provided on the Lyneham side of Northbourne Avenue, pedestrian and cyclist connections need to be improved to increase accessibility.
- Residents want more information about what is proposed on the Yowani and Kamberra Winery sites and how this will impact the surrounding area.
- Need to ensure residential character of Downer is retained.

### Parking and Traffic

- traffic increases resulting from density increases. Side roads are already at capacity in terms of traffic and parking.
- Street parking is already an issue – apartments often don't have enough parking provided, so residents park on the street. The streets are narrow and this creates safety issues.
- rat running through suburban streets.
- safety of increasing traffic volumes on narrow streets with blind spots.
- new residents won't make use of the light rail network and will continue to be car-dependent.

### Active Travel

- streets being proposed to be used as active travel streets when traffic volumes will increase.
- Inadequate cycling routes along Downer.
- Inadequate connections to light rail stops.
- Large parts of Downer don't have footpaths – this needs to be addressed as part of any changes to planning controls and redevelopment in the area.

### Building Quality

- planning control changes could result in over development, including a lack of open space and deep soil areas.
- Need to ensure existing stormwater/flooding issues in Downer are not exacerbated. Lack of deep soil areas results in localised flooding during heavy rain, resulting in damage to low-lying properties. Changes to planning controls need to address stormwater to ensure it is captured and retained on site for any new developments to prevent increased flooding.
- Concern that building quality will be similar to Flemington Avenue.
- Desire to prevent wall of development along Northbourne Avenue.
- Appetite for lower height redevelopment to townhouses, especially on sites closest to Dickson.
- Need to ensure building quality is addressed before changes are made to planning controls that enable increased development.

### Table 8

**Facilitator:** Katrina

#### Summary

Main concerns related to protecting solar access and privacy for existing residents, traffic and parking management, retaining existing green space, providing footpaths and additional amenities as compensation for an increase in building heights.

#### Issues raised

##### Heights

- 12m (approximately 3 storeys) considered by many in the group to be too high for Precinct 1, concern about
  - overshadowing from higher buildings,
  - lack of privacy (potential overlooking),
  - increased traffic and parking issues.
  - max. 2 storeys preferred
- 18m (approximately 5 storeys) considered by many in the group to be too high for Precinct 2, with the same concerns as above.
  - Max 3/4 stories preferred by many in group, although a few weren't as concerned with 18m in these two locations (2a/2b).
- If 12m+ building heights go ahead, need to have a 'stepping down' of heights from sites fronting Northbourne Avenue into the suburb. Did not want to see 5-6 stories next to 1-2 storey dwellings.
- Did not want to see buildings that are taller than the height of mature trees in the area.

##### Zoning

- what zoning is being proposed throughout the Draft Framework study area? Are additional zoning changes were slated for the rest of Downer?

### Building quality

- Need to strengthen design criteria to avoid 'box developments', especially apartment blocks.
- Would like to see innovative building designs - solar passive, environmentally conscious/sustainable.
- building regulations are not being enforced enough now, leading to very poor building designs and extremely poor workmanship which requires significant work to rectify.

### Traffic

- an increase in apartments/population in the area would mean an increase to traffic congestion and parking problems in the suburb.
- Need to understand how additional traffic and parking requirements will be managed.

### Green space, flooding, pathways/connections

- Important to retain green space fronting Northbourne Avenue.
- some residents are already using this green space for parking, and this would need to be carefully managed if density increased.
- Will there be less green space, less grass and vegetation in the area? This may increase the flooding risk for sites and create a heat island effect.
- current lack pedestrian/cycle access (i.e. there are no footpaths on Banfield Street) and how this will be exacerbated if there is an increase in population.
- Request that information presented at the workshop be put onto the website.

## REPORTING BACK: SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The following key messages were reported back to the room from each table group:

### Table 1

- Northern section too high in heights, maybe 10m height limit would be more appropriate
- Preference for townhouses, not apartments
- Need planning controls that limit site amalgamations
- Max. 10m in Precinct 1 and sites fronting Atherton Street (i.e. at the rear) in Precinct 2
- Monitoring landscaping is important
- Prevent wind tunnelling
- Public housing maintained and increased
- Serious concerns over traffic congestion, sufficient on-site parking, safe cycle paths
- Need to maintain solar access to existing dwellings

### Table 2

- Prioritise no overshadowing of existing dwellings
- Need to preserve green spaces and laneways
- Possibility of government acquiring blocks to return them to green space
- Traffic issues if population increases
- Medium density housing
- Can some uses be commercial / cafes, especially on corner sites?

## DOWNER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- Urban villages at main streets, convenience shopping
- Consider places for green spaces in development
- Get information from elsewhere of price impacts on rate payers if land use changes
- Issues with stormwater run-off – need to ensure this isn't exacerbated

### Table 3

- Majority supportive of lower heights
- Concerns with parking
- Address issues of poor design outcomes and low quality of new buildings across Canberra
- Why is this the gateway to Canberra? Most people coming from the direction of the airport

### Table 4

- Protecting existing character of Downer
- Supportive of 9-12m height limits
- Need to implement envelope controls
- Need for more family housing / terraces / housing for older people
- Traffic and parking management
- Access to light rail needs to improve
- Manage risk that Downer is used as park and ride
- Landscape buffer must be retained
- Majority supportive of 3 storey and two storey (at rear) height limits
- Two people supportive of 5 storeys and 2 storeys at the rear
- Need privacy separation on blocks
- Front setbacks are important

### Table 5

- No concern about building heights
- Focus on connectivity and upgrades of community facilities
- Quality and design is a concern
- Responsibility should fall to Government to better enforce planning controls, not community (e.g. Dickson Coles development case, where Government approved application that didn't comply with controls)

### Table 6

- Some concern with overshadowing on northern site
- Concern about traffic management on Panton Street and how to manage parking
- Transition between detached houses and apartments, sensible tapering
- Access onto and off Northbourne Avenue needs to be managed
- How will new development be linked to former school site and Northbourne Avenue?
- More information needs to be provided on timelines for changes

**Table 7**

- Lots of discussion on heights, general acceptance to consider heights around 3 storeys
- Northern end near Phillip Avenue: topography is significantly higher, creating issues with building heights and stormwater run off
- Concern around overshadowing and solar access
- Impact of traffic and overshadowing on Blacket Street for example
- Little bit of commercial could be considered
- Very little existing community infrastructure, school issue in Downer
- Propose zoning changes are made in a staged approach, starting with sites closest to Dickson

**Table 8**

- Need to protect solar access
- Upgrade of footpaths and amenity
- Need to retain green park edge
- Clarity of what happens to irregular blocks
- Privacy for existing and surrounding dwellings
- No higher than 3 storeys

## NEXT STEPS

Thank you for taking the time to attend the Downer Community Workshop and providing feedback on the changes proposed in the Draft Framework. The outcomes of this workshop and other community engagement feedback received during consultation period on the Draft Framework, including Meet the Planner sessions and email submissions, will inform the preparation of the final framework document. The City and Gateway Urban Design Framework is anticipated to be finalised by the end of 2018.

Implementation of the final Framework will require changes to planning provisions which apply to the corridor and city centre. This includes an amendment to the National Capital Plan by the NCA and a variation to the Territory Plan by EPSDD to give any new planning controls statutory effect. These processes, which are anticipated to run concurrently, will involve further opportunities for community consultation on more detailed planning and design controls starting toward the end of 2018.



**ACT**  
Government

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

2018