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Potential long term development of the City and Gateway Corridor
Foreword

From the Chief Minister
All Canberrans have a stake in creating a gateway to the national capital that is worthy of its status.

From the Minister for Planning
The Canberra we enjoy today did not come about by accident—it has been shaped by the foresight of earlier generations. Its urban form and geometry reflect a strong planning heritage. We can see the legacy of this vision in the places we value in our city.

However, we cannot plan for the Canberra of the future without contemporary thinking. As Canberra grows and develops, we need to manage growth in a way that makes our city more productive and even more liveable.

Nowhere is this more important than the heart of our city, the city centre, and the prominent national Gateway to our city, Northbourne Avenue. Additionally, it is a pivotal time of change for the City and Northbourne Avenue. The light rail and City to the Lake projects will be catalysts for redevelopment and investment, presenting the opportunity to make our city even better.

This discussion paper is just part of a longer conversation. Each element of this plan will have its own opportunities for the community to have its say, but I welcome the community’s input on this important project, which will inform the development of the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy.

Andrew Barr, MLA
Chief Minister

Mick Gentleman, MLA
Minister for Planning
Introduction

The ACT Government is developing an urban renewal strategy for the City and its Gateway, Northbourne Avenue, known as the City and Gateway Corridor.

The urban renewal strategy will be an integrated and community supported vision for the corridor that will guide future development as community needs and market demands change over time. It will recognise the corridor as a unique, vibrant and diverse part of Canberra that is well placed to accommodate growth while maintaining a strong sense of community.

The City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy responds to emerging challenges and aims to harness opportunities to realise positive change. In particular, it seeks to:

- create a new entrance to the city that is worthy of a national capital and in which Canberrans can feel pride
- realise a vision and set directions to enhance Canberra’s liveability and competitiveness
- strengthen the image, role and functions emerging in key centres in the City and Gateway Corridor
- capitalise on the city’s natural assets
- uncover and celebrate the unique qualities of Canberra, and shift national and international perceptions of the city’s image
- enable future economic diversification
- create greener, more people friendly streets
- foster community life and activity in Civic and along the Gateway Corridor
- implement strategic directions for built form and open spaces that are responsive to climate change
- improve the quality and design of the built form
- to enable its successful integration with streets and places
- improve streets to support walking, cycling and wayfinding through the centres and key streets
- provide more transport choice, supported by light rail and high quality cycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- provide logical linkages for cyclists and pedestrians, that are safe, comfortable and attractive, to encourage more active transport journeys and improve accessibility to key centres and green spaces.
City Plan implementation

The City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy is a key implementation initiative of the City Plan, which sets the broad spatial and urban planning policy framework for the city centre towards 2030 and beyond. The City Plan was underpinned by extensive community consultation.

The ACT Government agreed to five priority projects for delivery under the City Plan:

1. City to the Lake proposals
2. Redevelopment of Allawah, Bega and Currong (ABC) flats
3. Transport and movement strategy
4. Economic development analysis
5. Urban design framework for the city centre.

This urban renewal strategy will deliver priorities 3–5 and complement the work the ACT Government is doing to implement priorities 1 and 2.

Northbourne Gateway

Northbourne Avenue is a main avenue with special significance as a national approach route—a Gateway—to the National Capital for Canberrans and all Australians.

As a key public transport corridor, it will become an increasingly important corridor for active travel such as walking, cycling and public transport. The ACT Government has committed to the first stage of the Capital Metro light rail along Northbourne Avenue.

This urban renewal strategy will recognise the national significance of the corridor. It will capitalise on the innovative redevelopment and investment opportunities that light rail offers to support urban renewal including delivery of quality public places, integrating high quality public transport and active travel.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

What improvements to the walking and cycling networks in the City and Gateway Corridor would be most important to you?
Aerial of the City and Gateway Corridor
City and Gateway Corridor

Under this strategy, the City and Gateway corridor area extends from Lake Burley Griffin and includes the suburbs of North Canberra and Mitchell.

The urban renewal strategy looks at how the City and Gateway Corridor integrates with the suburbs along the corridor, including community facilities, open space networks and walking and cycling paths.

The urban renewal strategy also considers the role of the City and Gateway Corridor as a major approach route to the national capital. Consideration of transport takes into account the broader metropolitan context of North Canberra, including the peripheral arterial road network of Gungahlin Drive and Majura Parkway.

Tell Us What You Think

A series of interconnected urban villages at Haig Park, Macarthur, Dickson and EPIC/Mitchell, is proposed to be developed over time. What do you think are the opportunities in the creation of urban villages at City, Dickson and Macarthur?
Vision

The City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy will deliver a vibrant, competitive, beautiful, resilient 21st century city in a unique bush capital landscape setting. It will enhance the premier approach to the National Capital by creating a liveable, connected and sustainable city centre and establishing a series of urban villages of distinctive character that represent the values and aspirations of the community.

This vision will be achieved progressively over the next 50 years and beyond. However, the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy initially focuses on actions over the next five years that will contribute to the achievement of this long-term vision.

Above: Artist’s impression of returning Sullivans Creek to its natural state

Below: Artist’s impression of street activity

Tell us what you think

What else do you think should be included in the vision for the City and Gateway Corridor?
Previous Consultation

This work has been informed by the extensive consultation undertaken during the City Plan with over 10,000 people involved and recent consultations with over 300 stakeholders, including community councils, resident groups, industry and peak bodies.

Key messages received from consultations so far include:

- **Quality outcomes** in the short term are important for building community confidence.
- It is important for the urban renewal strategy to identify what we want to **protect, enhance and build on**.
- There is a desire to review planning policy and controls to encourage design excellence and support greater vibrancy, diversity and activity in precincts.
- **Public space and streetscape upgrades** were identified as a priority. A primary consideration for urban renewal projects should be their impact on and contribution to streetscapes and public spaces.
- Transport solutions should be considered comprehensively, with the impacts on streetscape quality and pedestrian/cyclist safety taken into account. **Pedestrian and cyclist links should be prioritised.**
- **Adequate and strategically located car parking** is important to ensure the City remains accessible to the broader Canberra community.
- **Identifying the places that work** and supporting them to flourish is important.
- There is support to further harness the potential of Sullivans Creek as a green spine with high amenity walking and cycling connections that stitch together neighbourhoods and the City.
- **Housing diversity** is important for attracting and supporting a range of household types and income levels.
- There is a need to find solutions that will help bridge the east/west divide across Northbourne Avenue and **encourage east/west pedestrian and cycle movement.**
The Gateway to the National Capital

The Gateway showcases the arrival to the National Capital from the ‘garden city’ periphery to the progressively formalised character of Northbourne Avenue, leading to the heart of the City and the Central National Area of Lake Burley Griffin and the Parliamentary Zone.

Future growth will build on these foundations to ensure the bushland character continues to define the setting and identity of the city while improving the urban quality and lifestyle enjoyed by residents and visitors.

Quality tree plantings and broad pedestrian paths, street furniture and lighting, combined with high quality architecture and active public spaces, will showcase the corridor as Canberra’s premier entry while affirming the garden city qualities of Northbourne Avenue and its landscape setting.
Planning and design

The study area has been considered at a range of scales to identify and integrate opportunities for the whole study area, urban neighbourhood and place-specific initiatives.

The renewal strategy proposes a concept of urban villages where city life flourishes and the community comes together.

City and Gateway Corridor

There currently are a number of existing neighbourhoods within the corridor, as well as the city centre. These existing neighbourhoods have strong local centres and communities but are currently separated by Northbourne Avenue. Transforming Northbourne Avenue from just a road into an inviting public boulevard serviced by light rail and better walking and cycling infrastructure will better link existing communities. It will also create a premier entrance into the nation’s capital and provide opportunities for new urban villages.

‘Urban Village’

Urban villages are medium to high density hubs of activity located at transport stations where mixed-use development, people-friendly streets and inviting public places combine. They are places where the needs of everyday living are within a convenient walking distance, with homes, shops, cafes, parks, jobs, facilities and meeting places close by. The urban renewal strategy proposes a series of urban villages around light rail stations along the corridor. The villages will be connected to existing communities by enhanced east-west connections to and from Northbourne Avenue.

‘Place’

Places are the individual sites at which improvements and urban renewal may happen. The urban renewal strategy aims to guide change at places within the corridor, to ensure that shared value, such as improvements to public places and streets, is maximised. Improvements at the place scale may involve government initiatives such as enhanced public spaces with new shade trees, improved street lighting, seating and landscaping. They could also involve the business community developing new buildings or refurbishing existing buildings.
Figure 1: City and Gateway corridor

- Priority Urban Village
- Future Urban Village
- Walkable catchment - 1km
- City Centre
- Light Rail Stop
- Light Rail Stop/Bus Station
- Future Light Rail Stop
- Light Rail Stage 1 route
- Future Network extensions
Actions

- Create and reinforce a series of interconnected urban villages at Haig Park, Macarthur Avenue, Dickson centre, Mitchell and EPIC, each with its own character and function.
- Prioritise the planning and investment in the urban villages at Dickson and Macarthur Avenue to facilitate urban renewal and to facilitate two-way travel to and from the City.
- Provide more flexibility in the planning system to encourage innovative high quality development and public spaces in the urban villages.
- Undertake complementary infrastructure and community facility planning to support the growth of urban villages.
- Prioritise public transport, pedestrian and cycling movements by redefining the North Canberra road hierarchy to better utilise arterial roads and reduce traffic travelling through the city centre.
- Enhance the Sullivans Creek green corridor by returning the creek to its natural state and by extending the Sullivans Creek active travel path to connect Gungahlin to Lake Burley Griffin.
City Centre

- Implement major public place improvements such as upgraded street lighting, seating and landscaping to enhance people’s enjoyment of public spaces.
- Deliver the Northbourne Plaza between the Melbourne and Sydney buildings that will be more pedestrian and cyclist, and public transport friendly and will link the east and west of the city.
- At the intersection of Northbourne Avenue and Alinga Street, develop a new bus station that is safe, attractive and well connected to light rail station.
- Redefine the hierarchy, role and function of streets in the city to reduce through-traffic on Northbourne Avenue to produce a people-friendly street network.
- Investigate changes to the planning system to stimulate quality urban renewal in the City, particularly City Walk and Garema Place.
- Improve public places to build better pedestrian and cycle connections between the City, City to the Lake and Australian National University.
- Prioritise short stay parking in the city centre to support local businesses and accommodate long stay parking at the periphery of the city centre.
- Encourage the implementation of smart parking to reduce the lost time and congestion arising from motorists searching for parking.

Proposed Northbourne Plaza in between the Sydney and Melbourne buildings. The wider footpath and new trees and landscaping will create new outdoor dining and pedestrian areas in the heart of the city.
Artist’s impression of improved Sullivans Creek at Dickson

Artist’s impression of Northbourne Avenue
Northbourne Gateway

- Prioritise development around light rail stations with public realm improvements and active travel links.
- Implement streetscape improvements such as more shade trees, path widening and improved landscaping, seating and lighting to enhance people’s enjoyment of the corridor.
- Enhance the corridor’s streetscapes to reflect the Gateway’s importance as the National Capital approach route.
- Introduce new urban design guidelines to improve building design quality and public realm outcomes, which will inform new precinct codes.
- Undertake complementary infrastructure and community facility planning to support urban renewal along the City and Gateway Corridor.

- Develop a new bus station at Dickson, linking to the light rail stop and new bus routing arrangements servicing the inner north and beyond, to improve light rail and bus integration.
- Develop and strengthen walking and cycling networks, including improvements to the corridor’s cycle facilities, a new route to the east of Northbourne Avenue to complement the Sullivans Creek green corridor and improved east–west pedestrian connections.
- Provide urban design guidelines to ensure that redevelopment of major government-owned sites to be sold under the Commonwealth’s Asset Recycling Scheme contribute to building and landscape design excellence in the corridor.

**Enhanced Streetscapes – Improved Avenue Walking and Cycle Facilities**
Implementing renewal

Urban renewal and better transport are strategic priorities of the ACT Government. The vision for renewal is long term, but changes for the better will be seen over the next five years. The actions identified can deliver renewal outcomes over the next five years. Each of the actions or initiatives will be consulted on separately, ensuring the community is involved in each step of the renewal process. Any capital works arising from the actions will be considered by government and subject to future capital works funding. Government encourages the business community to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the urban renewal strategy.

Have your say

Your views on the vision and actions are important and you can have your say in several ways.

Go to http://haveyoursay.planning.act.gov.au to:

- take a survey, leave a comment or join a forum
- keep informed about plans and progress of the project

Make a written submission to:

- planning@act.gov.au
- send your comments to Strategic Planning, Environment and Planning Directorate, GPO Box 158, Canberra City, ACT 2601, or
- call Access Canberra on 13 22 81 for more information.

Community engagement on the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy runs from 18 January 2016 to 14 March 2016.

Tell us what you think

How can we capitalise on the natural assets of the City and Gateway Corridor?

How could design excellence be encouraged?

How can activity and community life in the city centre and along the corridor be encouraged?

What else do you think should be included in the vision for the City and Gateway Corridor?

What improvements to the walking and cycling networks in the City and Gateway Corridor would be most important to you?