



ACT
Government

GUNGAHLIN TOWN CENTRE PLANNING REFRESH – SNAPSHOT

NOVEMBER 2018





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INTRODUCTION

The Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh Snapshot package has been prepared as a summary of work to date and to document recommendations for the future planning and development of the Gungahlin town centre. The Snapshot package includes two documents: the Snapshot (this document); and a Concept Variation to the Territory Plan's Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code that documents the Snapshot's recommendations and how they might translate into the Territory Plan.

The Gungahlin town centre has grown substantially in recent years, attracting new residents, businesses and investment, and importantly has the introduction of light rail. With this growth set to continue into the future, the Planning Refresh is timely to set a planning framework that appropriately responds to and directs this growth and change.

This document (the Snapshot) provides a summary of the analysis and community input from the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh work undertaken over the last 12-18 months and provides recommendations. The Planning Refresh work has focused on the following three key themes which also respond to key community comments:

- building height and character
- upgrading and enhancing public spaces
- walking, cycling and road transport

The Concept Variation to the Territory Plan's Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code document that forms part of this package, is for information and consideration and provides an indication of how the recommendations could be translated into the Territory Plan. A formal Territory Plan variation process will follow in 2019. This will provide the community with an opportunity to provide further comment on the planning for the town centre.

The study area of the Gungahlin town centre planning refresh is shown in Map 1. The town centre forms part of the suburb of Gungahlin.

Map 1. Study Area



BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The original planning vision for the Gungahlin town centre in the mid 1990s was for a low scale urban village with maximum 4 storey buildings across the centre.

In 2010, the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Report documented considerations of whether planning was producing the desired outcomes for the town centre and the community. The key recommendations of this 2010 Planning Report that informed the Variation to the Territory Plan No. 300 (2011) were:

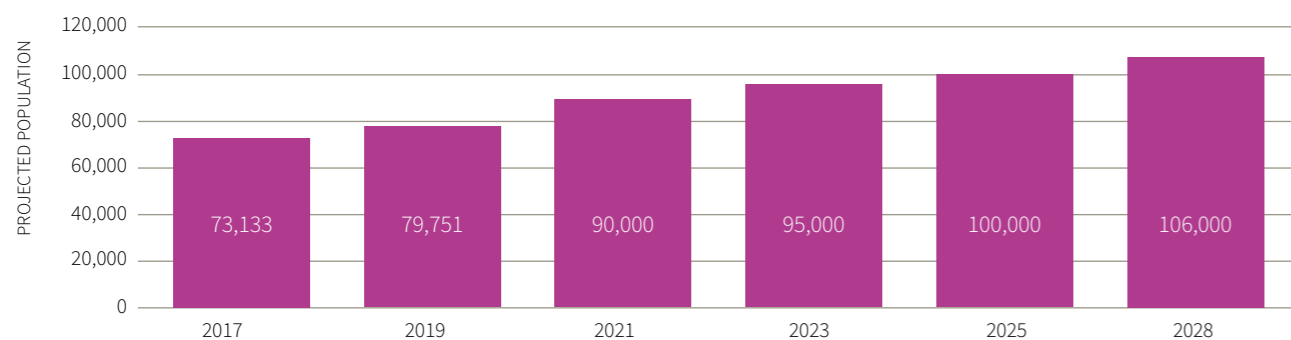
- Maintaining Gungahlin town centre’s distinctive ‘urban village’ character.
- Identifying two office precincts; an office park in the north-west, and office core in the east of the town centre with large sites and flexible planning provisions to attract government departments.
- Prohibit residential uses and serviced apartments in the office core.
- Increasing building heights and introducing building envelopes to minimise overshadowing, bulk and scale in the office core precinct.

- Increasing building heights and introducing building height criteria for the office park precinct.
- Reserving 200,000m² for commercial office floor space distributed in two separate precincts (Office park and Office core) to accommodate 10,000 office jobs to encourage more employment in Gungahlin.

Since 2010, the Gungahlin town centre has continued to grow and evolve. There has been higher demand and growth for residential development within the town centre, compared to commercial development. Much of this residential growth has occurred in the office park precinct in the northwest of the town centre, as the Territory Plan’s Commercial CZ2 Business zoning allows residential uses, along with commercial uses.

Based on projections by ACT Government in 2017, by 2028, the residential population of the Gungahlin District is expected to be around 106,000 (Graph 1).

Graph 1: Gungahlin District Resident Population Projection (excluding Hall)
Source: ACT Government, 2017



In 2016, the suburb of Gungahlin had a population of 6,330 people and employed 4,100 people (Table 1).

Table 1: Gungahlin population and employment (excluding Hall)

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Gungahlin District (population)	100	12,295	24,180	32,385	48,000	72,130
Gungahlin Suburb (population)	0	0	0	3,460	5,865	6,330
Gungahlin Suburb (all employment)	0	0	750	1,650	2,650	4,100
Gungahlin District (all employment)	2,520	4,470	5,810	6,750	12,720	14,800

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data

Note: Gungahlin Suburb contains the Gungahlin Town Centre and surrounding residential areas and is bounded by Horse Park Drive, Gundaroo Drive, Anthony Rolfe Avenue and Gungahlin Drive. The suburb also includes part of Yerrabi Pond and Mulanggari Grassland Nature Reserve

Historically, Gungahlin town centre has experienced a limited demand of commercial office space. By way of comparison, commercial floor space per district population and documented in Table 2, Gungahlin has the lowest commercial floor space ratio of 0.2655m² per resident.

Table 2: Office Floor Space and Employment - ACT 2016

DISTRICT	GUNGAHLIN (INC. MITCHELL)	TUGGERANONG	BELCONNEN	WODEN VALLEY	ACT
Resident Population (1)	72,132	85,968	97,830	35,377	403,486
Employment (2) (people)	14,800	19,920	30,215	24,530	235,000
Commercial office floor space m ² (3)	19,152	148,874	196,980	183,941	2,371,460
Commercial office m ² /resident (Net Lettable Area)(3)	0.2655	1.7317	2.0135	5.1995	5.8777

Source: (1) Estimated resident population, Australian Bureau of Statistics data, (2) Australian Bureau of Statistics and ACT Government data (3) Property Council of Australia (PCA), 2016 data

Note: Commercial office floor space excludes space used for retail, service, industrial and trade.

Whilst the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Report (2010) predicted 200,000m² of commercial office floor space would be required over the long term, by 2016 approximately 13,500m² of commercial office floor space in the suburb of Gungahlin, with an additional 5,500m² elsewhere in Gungahlin district including Mitchell had been taken up. This is predominately small scale offices. As a consequence, the prediction made in 2010 for the town centre has not been realised.

Employment and commercial office space will continue to grow and be distributed throughout Gungahlin district into the future. However, for the purposes of the Planning Refresh, a number of assumptions and projections have been made including nominally allocating all the district’s future commercial office space to the Gungahlin town centre.

It is now expected that employment in commercial (small scale) office uses in the town centre will increase by an additional 16,000m² to reach 35,000m² by 2028.

On the basis of the above district commercial office spaces per resident ratios, the Planning Refresh recommends a more informed total commercial office floor space target in the town centre of 100,000m² over the long term. This target takes into account the opportunities that light rail will present and the amount of undeveloped land available in the town centre.

The 100,000m² target equates to approximately 1m² of commercial office space per resident in Gungahlin district.

As such, 65,000m² is now targeted for large scale office development (e.g. public administration). This development should be located in close proximity of the light rail. The Planning Refresh also recommends the floor space target be monitored and reviewed after five years.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement has been an important part of the Planning Refresh. Community engagement commenced on 1 March 2017 and concluded on 4 May 2017. Engagement focused on the three key issues for the Planning Refresh:

- building height and character
- upgrading and enhancing public spaces
- walking, cycling and road transport.

A range of engagement activities were undertaken to gather input from local residents, businesses, those who use the town centre and the broader Canberra community. Engagement included the Your Say website, a Meet the Planners session, a stakeholder workshop, a 'Planning in the Pub' session, youth workshops, quick polls and email submissions. The community engagement is summarised in the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh - Community Engagement Report.



KEY MESSAGES FROM THE COMMUNITY

BUILDING HEIGHT AND CHARACTER

- There were mixed views about increasing building heights in the town centre.
- Support for retaining the current building heights noting concern about traffic congestion, bulk and scale; overshadowing; privacy; and the interface with existing developments.
- Support for increasing building heights noting that the town centre character was changing; design quality was more important than building height; the need for additional marker buildings; and the strong demand for residential development.

UPGRADING AND ENHANCING PUBLIC SPACES

- Additional public spaces and open space are wanted by the community in the town centre, including active and passive recreation spaces and pocket parks.
- Public spaces should be well designed with amenity including landscaping, seating, shade, recreational activities, playgrounds and opportunities for community activities and good access.
- The amenity of Gungahlin Place needs to be improved, including landscaping, seating and shade.

WALKING, CYCLING AND ROAD TRANSPORT

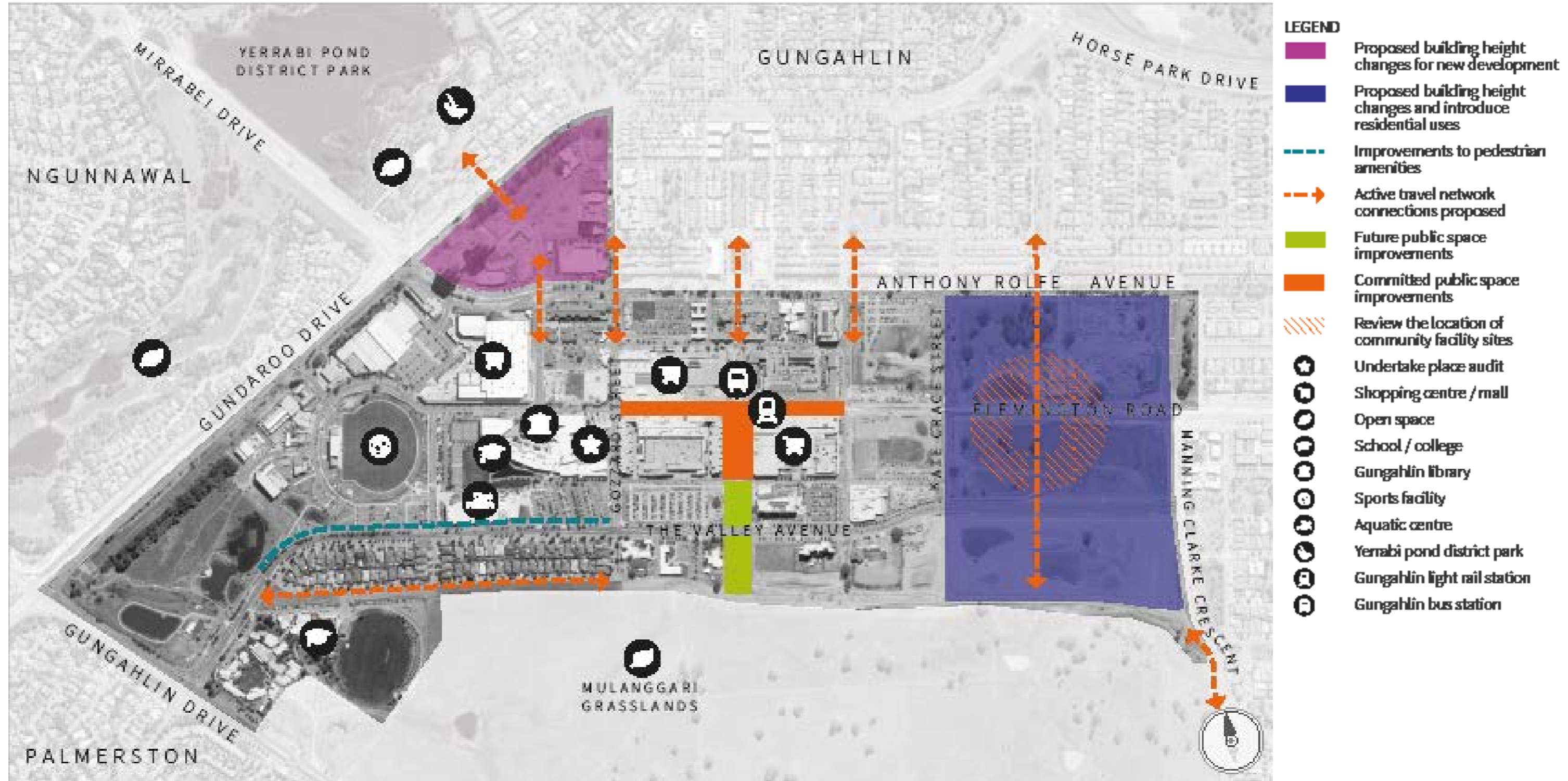
- There was significant concern about increasing traffic congestion, as a result of the continuing growth of the town centre. Traffic flow and intersections also need to be improved.
- There are concerns that parking supply is not meeting short and long term demand.
- Safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorist needs to be improved.
- There is strong support to improve the pedestrian and cycling network both within and into the town centre.

Further details about the community engagement are provided in the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh Community Engagement Report, available www.yoursay.act.gov.au.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Map 2 shows the key recommendations of the Planning Refresh. The recommendations for each theme are discussed in further detail in this snapshot.

Map 2. Key recommendations



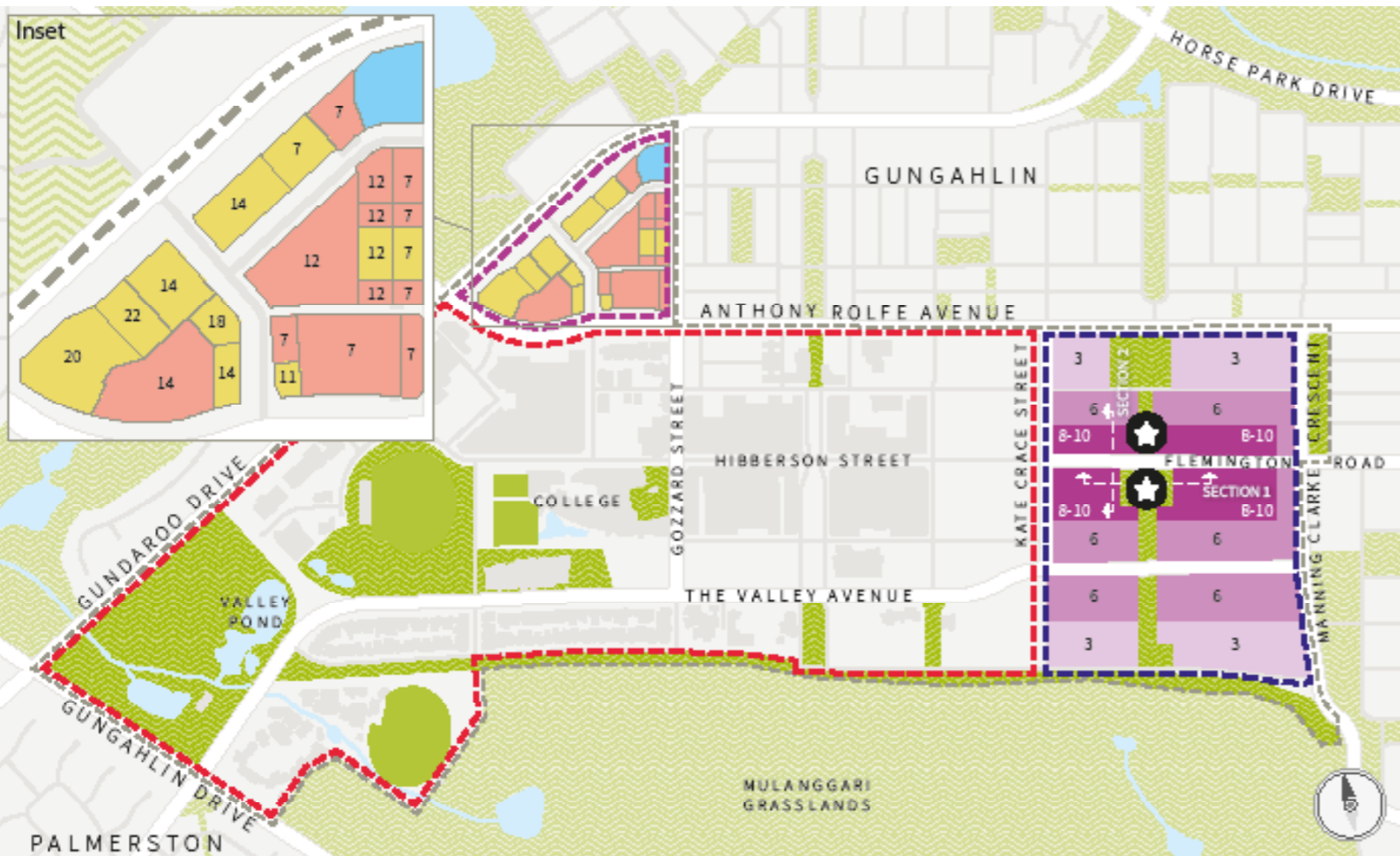
BUILDING HEIGHT AND CHARACTER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Refresh provides an opportunity to review and refine building heights, design and land use in the Territory Plan's Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code to support light rail and changes to the strategic planning context of the town centre.

The Planning Refresh work has found that for much of the Gungahlin town centre, the building heights and land use currently provided by the Territory Plan's Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code are still appropriate. However, for two precincts, change is necessary. The two areas are highlighted in Map 3.

The recommendations relating to the two precincts are outlined in the following pages, with Gungahlin East changes graphically represented in section 1 and 2, the north-west urban residential precinct changes described on page 13 and indicated in Map 3.

Map 3. Proposed building height



Section 1: Proposed linear open space, Gungahlin East (looking north)



Section 2: Flemington Road, Gungahlin East (looking west)



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Urban residential precinct
- Gungahlin east precinct
- No proposed changes to Territory Plan to vary existing building heights
- ★ Restrictions on residential development along linear park and Flemington Road
- 8-10 storeys
- 6 storeys
- 3 storeys
- Approved height in storeys
- Recommended height in storeys
- On 5 September 2018, a development application for Blocks 4 and 5 Section 224 Gungahlin was approved with conditions. Approval is for two buildings – 8 and 16 storeys in height.

GUNGAGHLIN EAST PRECINCT



CURRENT

Building envelopes set overall design parameters for the development. However, this results in a building that steps away and steps back from the street. Depending on the width of the block, the development may potentially result in higher elements towards the middle of the block, as graphically represented in this section. The development's final building height can only be determined through the detail design stage for the building.

This precinct is currently vacant undeveloped land. A number of factors have changed since the 2010 Planning Study indicating that it is time to reconsider the role and character of this precinct.

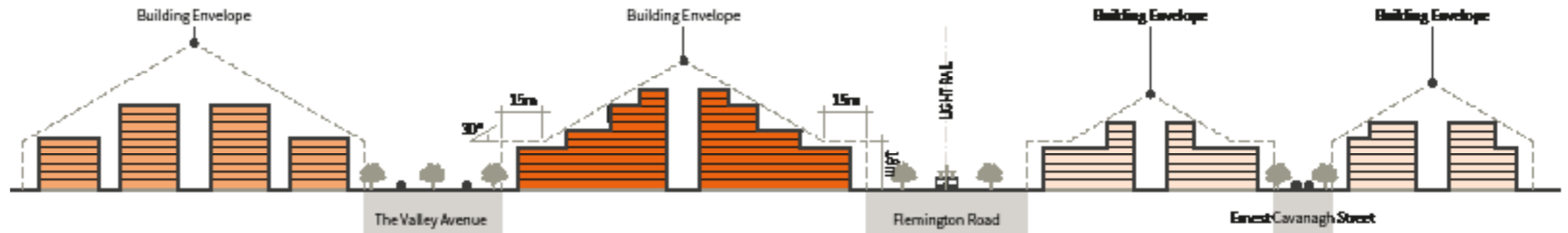
The first significant change for this precinct, is the addition of a light rail stop along Flemington Road at Manning Clark Crescent.

The Territory Plan's Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code currently identifies this precinct as being primarily for office development, retail and other employment.

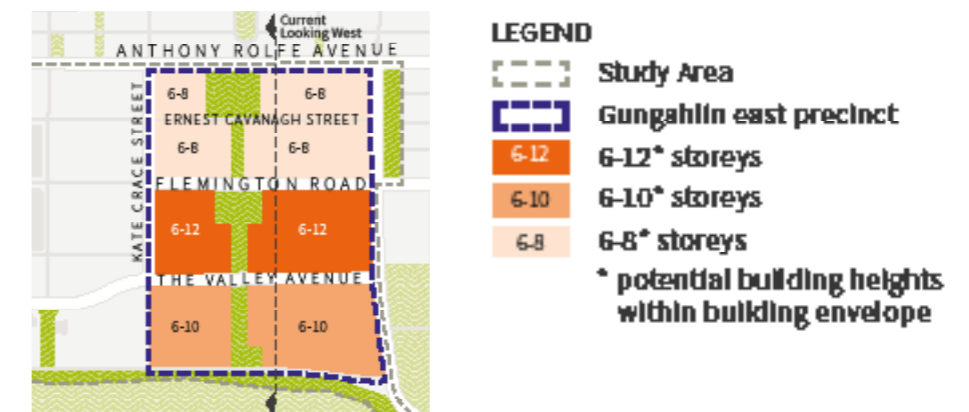
Residential development is prohibited. This provision was put in place in response to significant community desire for more employment in the town centre in 2010.

Presently building height in Gungahlin East is controlled through building envelopes in the Territory Plan (Map 4 and Section 3). It is proposed to replace this with maximum height controls (Map 5 and Section 4).

Section 3: Territory Plans' current building envelope and height controls (Gungahlin East, looking towards west)



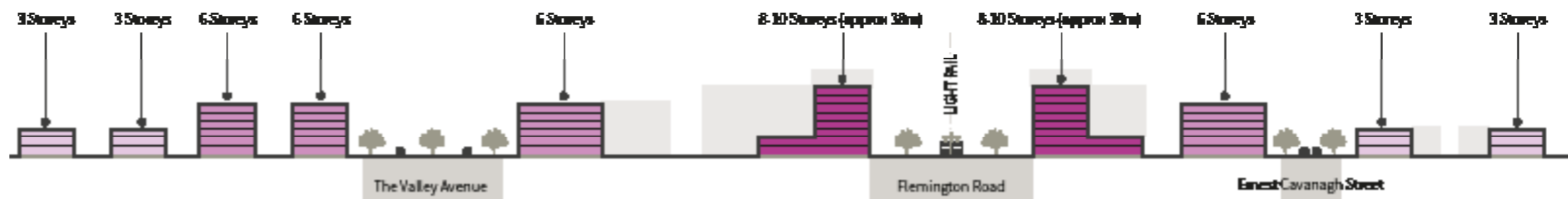
Map 4. Current Territory Plans' building envelope and height controls



PROPOSED

Replacing building envelope with maximum number of storeys (and approximate building height in metres), provides for predetermined built form outcomes that provide for certainty for all stakeholders.

Section 4: Proposed building height controls (Gungahlin East, looking towards west)



Map 5. Proposed building height controls





RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Refresh recommendations for Gungahlin East precinct:

- Remove the existing Territory Plan restriction on residential uses, which will allow mixed uses. This will ensure that some of the large vacant land is developed in the short to medium term. It will also support light rail and activating the precinct throughout the day and night.
- Providing retail and convenience services adjacent to the Flemington Road / Manning Clark Crescent north light rail stop.
- Allowing building heights to increase predominately from 6¹ to 8–10 storeys (approximately 38m high) for the blocks fronting Flemington Road. This increase in height will support light rail and announce to those travelling along Flemington Road that they are moving towards the town centre, a more urbanised environment. The 10 storey components could be located on the building's corners to indicate arrival at destinations and provide articulation in building height.
- Building heights transition from the 8–10 storeys (approximately 38m high) on Flemington Road down to 6 and then 3 storeys to the north and south of the precinct boundary.
- Buildings facing Manning Clark Crescent be 6 storeys to ensure a transition down to existing lower scale residential.
- Buildings fronting the north-south linear open space corridor will be required to have pedestrian access from it and an active interface.
- Requiring that buildings ensure good solar access to the southern side of Flemington Road and open space, including wider verge at selected locations.
- Ensuring verge allows sufficient space for large shade trees along both sides of Flemington Road.
- Ensure developments have a variety of building heights, articulation, corner address and a human scale.
- Investigation will be undertaken to identify a site to be reserved for large scale commercial office to address the future needs. This site will need be located within in a walkable distance from light rail station.
- Reserving 65,000m² for commercial offices, to be reviewed in five years.
- Change the precinct's name in the Territory Plan's Precinct Map and Code to 'Mixed Use Living' to reflect the change to the allowable mix of land uses.
- Restrictions on ground floor residential uses at nominated locations.

¹ Maximum building height directly adjacent to Flemington Road allowed by the current building envelope.

URBAN RESIDENTIAL PRECINCT

The precinct is currently referred to as the Office Park in Territory Plan's Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code. The original intent of this precinct was for it to be a campus style business park with 2–7 storeys building height.

In the past few years, however, this precinct has been subject to a number of high rise residential development proposals, some of which have been approved and constructed. These new buildings range in height from 7 to 22 storeys (up to approximately 69m high) and are primarily residential. The Territory Plan's Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code permits residential developments in this precinct. The Territory Plan also allowed developments on lands which were leased before 30 November 2010, a greater flexibility on building heights for a period five years (until 30 November 2015). Consequently the precinct's character has evolved significantly. As such, it is appropriate that all future development occurs in a manner that minimises impacts on residents within and adjacent to the precinct and ensures a high amenity for the residents living in the precinct.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Refresh recommendations for this precinct:

- For blocks that will be developed or redeveloped in the future (excluding those subjects to current development application), maximum building height of 14 storeys (approximately 51m high) will be introduced, stepping down, west to east, to 7 storeys towards the existing residential area on the eastern edge of the precinct. This is to minimise overshadowing, bulk and scale on existing adjacent low scale residential. Refer to Map 2.
- Introduce requirements for setbacks, building articulation and podium heights to ensure new buildings along the eastern edge are of a human scale
- Renaming the precinct in the Territory Plan's precinct name from 'Office Park' to 'Urban Residential'.

PUBLIC SPACES; ACTIVE TRAVEL; ROADS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT; AND PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

UPGRADING AND ENHANCING PUBLIC SPACES

Gungahlin town centre's network of streets, linear parks, trees and other open spaces all contribute to the setting of the town centre and its public domain.

The primary public spaces are Gungahlin Place, Hibberson Street, and Gungahlin Town Square. The public realm in the town centre is characterised by hard surfaces, lack of 'green' areas that are not utilised to their full potential. Softening the spaces with landscaping and activating the public realm can be used to increase the town centre's appeal and contribute to a vibrant and well used open space network.

Gungahlin town centre is surrounded by a substantial open space network with Yerrabi Pond to the north and the Valley Ponds to the west. In the future, a linear park will transect the Gungahlin East precinct. Access to these open spaces are disconnected with major roads and intersections to negotiate.

Improving the quality, use and connections to public spaces and open space has been an important consideration for the refresh. Key messages from community engagement noted the desire for additional high quality and high amenity open spaces.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Refresh recommendations for upgrading and enhancing public spaces:

- Improve the quality and use of open spaces and public spaces by undertaking a place audit to understand the current use of the space to inform designs for improvements.
- Deliver improved shade, additional seating, lighting and opportunities to incorporate public art and supporting features such as water and power supply for events and gatherings.
- Enhance the landscaping to soften the appearance of the area and provide a comfortable climate at the heart of the town centre, including irrigated grass areas.
- Ensure some public spaces can provide opportunities for performance, markets and pop up vending opportunities to support the community's desire for activated and used public realm.
- Investigate the development of a micro park in the town centre including assessing community interest, location and design.
- Ensure development contributes to the improvement of the centre's public domain.
- For example street tree planting, street furniture and paving adjacent or elsewhere in centre.
- Improve connections to surrounding open space to support walking and cycling and ensure all people can easily access facilities and key areas within the town centre.
- Enhance the capability of the open space network to adapt to a changing climate by implementing living infrastructure principles. Components of living infrastructure includes large trees to provide shades, watered grass to provide cool areas, plant on the building to provided insulation and permeable pavement to allow water to recharge.



ACTIVE TRAVEL

Walking and cycling connections are important to encourage active travel within, to and from the town centre. The Active Travel Infrastructure Practitioner's Tool (a design tool used by ACT Government for planning active travel facilities), has been used to identify gaps in the active travel network for future improvements.

Active travel connections are also important to improve linkages to guide developments and identifying gaps from the town centre to the surrounding open space network, including Yerrabi and the Valley ponds.

ROAD AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Whilst the focus of the Planning Refresh is on the Gungahlin town centre, because transport is part of a wider network, the broader Gungahlin district transport network has been considered in the analysis for the Planning Refresh.

The 2016 Census journey to work data showed that 81% of Gungahlin workers travelled outside of the district for employment and 77.4% of these workers travel to work by car, resulting in high levels of traffic on arterial roads of the Gungahlin district road network during peak hour.

In response to concerns about the impact of additional population growth in the Gungahlin town centre on traffic congestion, strategic transport (including traffic) modelling has been undertaken to understand the impact of this growth on the Gungahlin town centre and Gungahlin district road transport network. The transport modelling found that high levels of vehicle traffic already use the arterial road network for inter-district travel and that potential increased residential growth within the town centre in the short and medium term will not significantly add to these issues.

Road and public transport improvements are underway to address a number of current issues, including the duplications of Gundaroo Drive and Horse Park Drive, ongoing construction of the Gungahlin town centre road network, light rail stage one and the upcoming bus network changes to align with light rail.

Road and public transport improvements are underway to address a number of current issues, including the duplications of Gundaroo Drive and Horse Park Drive, ongoing construction of the Gungahlin town centre road network, light rail stage one and the upcoming bus network changes to align with light rail.

Further network capacity upgrades and traffic management improvements will be investigated once the current construction of light rail and public realm improvements are completed. Future, more detailed transport planning will account for the network improvements currently being made and land use changes being considered by this refresh. Such improvements may include further capacity increases at targeted locations, intersection upgrades and management of through traffic volumes.

PARKING

The demand for parking will continue to grow, as the town centre continues to grow.

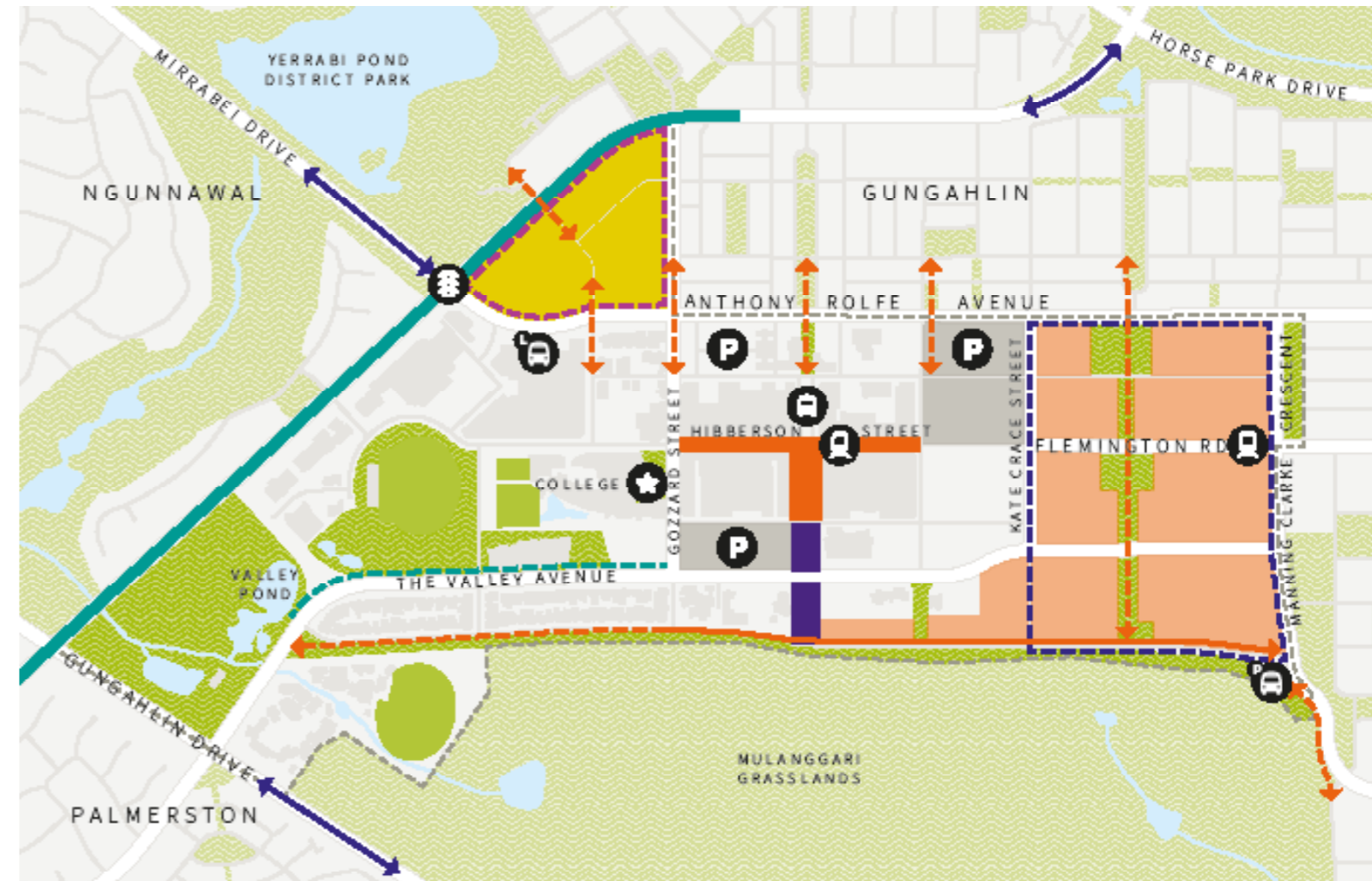
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Refresh recommendations for active travel; road and public transport; and parking:

- Monitoring the effect of light rail on traffic.
- Monitor short and long stay parking supply and demand as the town centre grows and develops.
- Review of the Territory Plan's Parking and Vehicular Access General Code to determine appropriate parking provision rates for development - not Gungahlin specific.
- Implement active travel connections and improvements along key identified routes.
- Future augmentation of transport options, including:
 - > public transport
 - > active travel
 - > road infrastructure
- Monitor the use of the Gungahlin Park and Ride through the Park and Ride Feasibility Study and consider the need for additional park and ride as Gungahlin grows.

Map 6 shows the key recommendations of the Planning Refresh for public spaces; active travel; roads and transport; and parking.

Map 6. Key recommendations on public spaces; active travel; road and public transport; and parking



LEGEND

- | | |
|---|---|
| Study area | Urban residential and mixed use |
| Urban residential precinct | Office employment and retail mixed use |
| Gungahlin east precinct | Mixed use residential and commercial incl. community use |
| Duplication work of Gundaroo Drive under construction | Permanent bus layover site investigation |
| Monitor future arterial road augmentation | Undertake place audit |
| Improve active travel network connection under construction | Signalised intersection upgrade with pedestrian crossing under construction |
| Improvements to pedestrian amenities | Gungahlin bus station |
| Active travel network connections proposed | Light rail station (under construction) |
| Future public space improvements | Proposed bus layover |
| Committed public space improvements | Public car parking |



GUNGHALIN TOWN CENTRE CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS

The ACT Government is undertaking significant investment in and around the Gungahlin Town Centre. Some projects have recently been completed, whilst others are due for completion later this year or in the coming years.

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Gungahlin Bus Station
- Camilleri Way
- Gungahlin Walk-in Centre
- Hibberson Street shared zone.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY INCLUDE:

- Light Rail Stage 1
- Road network improvements within Gungahlin town centre and in the surrounding area

PROJECTS TO COMMENCE SHORTLY:

- Gungahlin Place Park



COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN GUNGAHLIN EAST RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no change proposed to the existing Territory Plan's Precinct Map and Code provisions relating to community facilities. The Precinct Code requires that at least 6 hectares of land in the town centre area be zoned Community Facility to provide for population growth and demand for supporting facilities and services.

This provision is currently on track to being met, however close monitoring is required to ensure the required supporting facilities can be provided as the town centre and district grows and change.

Existing community facilities and areas nominated by the Territory Plan for community facilities are indicated on Map 7. Community facility areas often complement the open space network and provide opportunities to activate spaces and increase use of the public domain.

It is key to consider community facilities and open space together to maximise the function and amenity of the public realm.

A range of community facilities are already provided in the town centre. These include child care, indoor recreation, emergency services, health, library, education and religious uses.

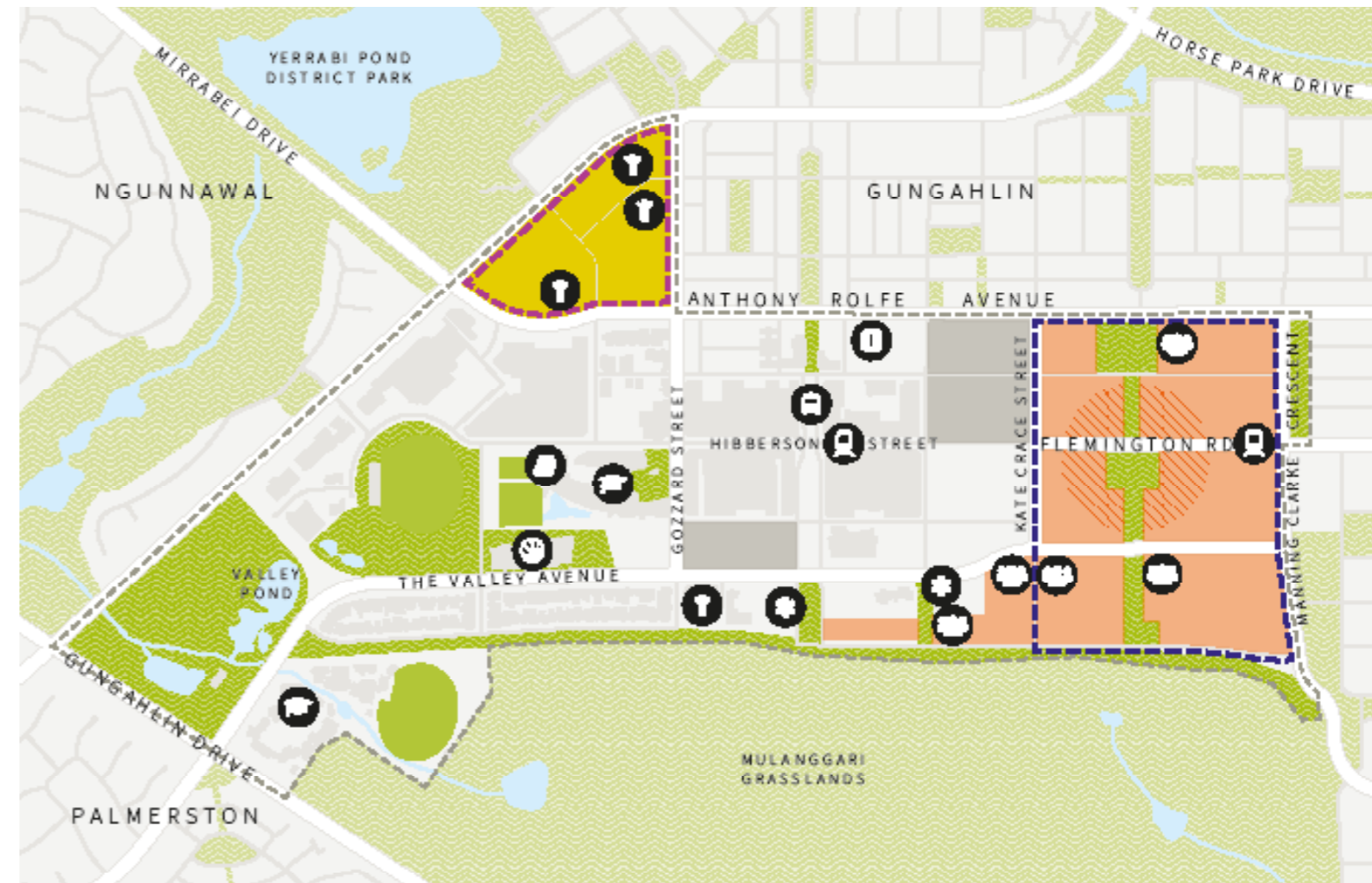
The Territory Plan also provides for a range of other uses within a Community Facility zoning to provide services for individuals, families and the communities including community activity centre, community theatre, cultural facility, retirement village and residential care facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Refresh recommendations for community facilities:

- Future investigation will explore if community facility uses, contributing to the required 6 hectares of land, can be located nearer to Flemington Road and closer to the light rail station.

Map 7. Community Facilities



LEGEND

- Study area
- Urban residential precinct
- Gungahlin east precinct

Land Use

- Urban residential and mixed use
- Office employment and retail mixed use
- Mixed use residential and commercial incl. community use
- Community facilities location subject to future investigation

- Territory Plan identified locations for community facilities
- Gungahlin bus station
- Light rail station (under construction)
- Education
- Library
- Indoor recreation
- Health centre
- Child care
- Religious





PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TERRITORY PLAN

To assist with documenting the Refresh’s recommendations and how they will translate to the Territory Plan, a concept Precinct Map and Code document is provided at Appendix A. This concept document identifies the proposed changes to the Territory Plan’s Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code. These changes do not form part of the Territory Plan, nor do they constitute a draft variation to the Territory Plan.

It is provided for information only.

NEXT STEPS

In early 2019, a draft Variation to the Territory Plan will be released for public consultation to give effect to the recommendations. This will provide the community with a further opportunity to influence the future of the town centre.

Recommended improvements to parks, pedestrian and cycle paths and other public domain improvements will require ACT Government funding, which will be dependent on further investigations, future budget bids and private sector investment.

APPENDIX A

Concept Variation to the Territory Plan.

