



## **Planning System Review and Reform Project<sup>1</sup> – Questions from the EPF**

### **1. What compliance management strategies will be put into place in the Planning System Review and Reform Project?**

- The Project will consider compliance and enforcement mechanisms with a view to providing further municipal-type enforcement powers, allowing a more flexible, responsive approach to enforcement.
- The Project team is also in early discussions with Access Canberra about the strategic compliance approach to support the reformed planning system.

### **2. What independent expert advice will be available to the community during the consultation period of this project?**

- The project team (who have expertise in a range of areas relevant to the project) will be seeking external input through consultancies to provide further analysis and input on best practice approaches applied in other jurisdictions and proposing approaches relevant for the ACT system. Consultancy focus areas include:
  - ACT Planning System Review and Reform - Commercial and Industrial Zones - Mixed use development and land use zoning analysis.
  - ACT Planning System Review and Reform - Achieving improved built form, place design and public realm design outcomes through the ACT planning system and Territory Plan.
  - ACT Planning System Review and Reform - Achieving improved greenfield subdivision and redevelopment outcomes for precincts and estates through the ACT planning system and Territory Plan.
  - ACT Planning System Review and Reform - Indigenous Land Use Planning.
- A summary of some of the consultancy work findings will be made available on the Project webpage when complete and as part of consultation on the Territory Plan.
- With respect to the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement item (App 1 – C.3(vi)) referring to:

*Fund an independent planning advisory service for residents impacted by planning decisions or development applications, so they can seek advice on lodging complaints or seeking review of decisions.*

This matter is being considered by Government with respect to how this could be delivered and continue to retain independence for the planning and land authority.

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning System Review and Reform Project will be referred to as 'the Project' throughout



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**3. District Plans would appear to add an extra layer of complexity to our planning system. Can you articulate where the current gaps are that District Plans will fill and what the main overall benefits would be?**

- The 2018 Planning Strategy identified district planning as a more detailed level of strategic planning that could provide an improved 'line of sight' and directions between the Planning Strategy and the Territory Plan.
- It is proposed to provide more strategic planning guidance at a district area scale and could include a statement of values. This will allow for distinctive character elements to be reflected in the planning system.
- District planning is proposed for Canberra's eight urban districts.
- Our most recent consultation with the community on district planning (May-July 2021) has been based around these eight districts of Canberra. While we have been consistent in referring to district planning, on some occasions 'district plans' have been referred to. The intention is to undertake planning at a district scale to provide a stronger basis to inform future directions at that scale. We don't intend to have district plans – we will have district strategies.
- It is intended to have a component that is strategic and that is more similar to the planning strategy directions at a district scale (i.e., district strategies), and this will inform some elements that may apply at a district scale and be given statutory effect through codes.
- District planning provides the following benefits:
  - a. improve the 'line of sight' from the Planning Strategy to the Territory Plan and illustrate current Government strategy and policy at a district scale.
  - b. provide desired future direction for a district in relation to key planning elements.
  - c. provide a strategic spatial indication of the future direction for each district around key spatial and planning elements and reflecting valued elements and character.

**4. We note that the Government is considering, how District Plans will be incorporated in the Territory Plan. Has its thinking progressed on this issue?**

- As noted above – we are not preparing district plans.
- As noted above, it is likely that the district planning will inform matters that need to be given statutory effect and could be included within codes in a new Territory Plan.

**5. How will the District Plans interact with Precinct Codes and Master Plans?**

- As noted above – we are not preparing district plans.
- We are currently looking at how the district planning will be best incorporated into the Planning System including the Territory Plan. (see above responses for further detail)



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- The master plan program for areas identified in the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 is now complete. Information from the various master plans has been incorporated into the suburb Precinct Codes through variations to the Territory Plan.
- The work on the Territory Plan and district planning is examining current plans (including master plans) and codes (including precinct codes) to identify how the relevant matters will be best incorporated into a new Territory Plan. For example, some matters that were included in master plans may be better aligned with what will be in district strategies, while some matters are more appropriately implemented through statutory effect in the Territory Plan.

**General Question (not PSRRP specific – from Gungahlin Community Council)**

**6. What processes (policies, initiatives, incentives, metrics) does the ACT government have in place to encourage the equitable distribution of sustainable economic development, facilities and services across all of Canberra's districts?**

In terms of policies, a clear hierarchy of centres applies in Canberra and this influences the spatial structure and distribution of activity throughout the city. The centres distributed across Canberra include: the city centre, four district town centres, 19 group centres and 93 local centres. This hierarchy is recognised in the ACT Planning Strategy, the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan. Beneath this, the Territory Plan provides a system of zoning that is implemented in all centres across all districts to provide for and support economic development, facilities and services to be located at accessible locations. While planning can facilitate and respond to change it is not solely responsible for development and activities that occur throughout the districts. Market forces and industry play a role eg, locational decisions of the private sector to take up the opportunities presented under the land use zoning for centres and in districts. Employment areas and activity areas might also occur in other areas and provide further differentiation of services and competition of economic development opportunities.

The government plans for a range of uses and facilities based on population projections, comparative analysis, engagement, monitoring of changes over time (locally and in other jurisdictions). As Canberra has grown not every centre is the same or serving the same type of population and the needs, opportunities and challenges change.

The ACT Planning Strategy outlines the Government's clear vision of planning for a compact, efficient, diverse, resilient and accessible city and outlines a number of actions toward achieving this. Further the Strategy identifies an opportunity to undertake a district planning approach to develop a better understanding of district attributes and needs and proposed planning directions for districts (page 93) including (see action section 1.1.4, page 43): <https://www.planning.act.gov.au/act-planning-strategy/strategic-directions/compact-and-efficient-city>

The ACT Planning System Review and Reform project is currently investigating the



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opportunities for a district planning approach (<https://www.planning.act.gov.au/planning-our-city/act-planning-system-review-and-reform>)

**Detailed Planning Questions – (Specific to Gungahlin Community Council)**

7. *Two motions have been passed by the ACT assembly, and the ACT Assembly will receive a petition signed by over 650 residents next week, regarding the development of the Gungahlin Town Centre. This is strong evidence that the current planning processes are failing to deliver a viable town centre for Gungahlin. You have committed to respond to Suzanne Orr MLA's motion (passed on 10 February 2021) by the last sitting day in 2021 (2 December). Andrew Braddock MLA's motion (passed on 3 June 2021) calls for a response by October 2021.*

**What specific actions is the ACT government taking to inform and develop a response to the call to "support the further development of the Gungahlin region and town centre, ensuring that there are additional employment opportunities in Gungahlin" ? How will the Gungahlin community be engaged in the process of developing a response ?**

- The two motions, now resolutions of the Assembly, are being considered. Responses to the Assembly resolutions will be provided by the stated timelines.
- There has been ongoing planning for Gungahlin and it continues to be updated to address changes in market, global impacts and ongoing changes in best practice and communities (including planning for the future Gungahlin community). Through various forms of consultation and engagement the Gungahlin community has and continues to provide input and feedback on planning and development in Gungahlin.
- It is not only planning that is responsible for the viability of centres – noting it is considered that the planning has provided strong foundations for a liveable and viable Gungahlin town centre. There has been considerable investment in Gungahlin as the town centre and district grows and changes.
- Draft Variation to the Territory Plan 364 (DV364) incorporates the recommendations of the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh into the Territory Plan to provide guidance on the desired built form and character of the centre as it develops. An [inquiry](#) into DV364 is being held by the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services. The Government will in due course respond to the Standing Committee inquiry.

8. *Many of the planning (poor development), transport (traffic congestion/parking), and lack of facilities (community, sport, recreation) issues in Gungahlin are the result of disconnected incremental investments and projects without a clear and enforced overall strategy.*

**Will the ACT Government commit, as a matter of urgency, to establishing a cross-directorate place-based approach to completing Gungahlin with all the services residents would expect of a Canberra district? This approach would require active participation from**



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(at least) EPSDD, TCCS, CMTEDD, CSD, SLA, and JCSD, with occasional input/involvement from Education and Health.

The Government's approach to planning is an integrated approach which includes collaboration across Government agencies and Directorates. At both the strategic level and the statutory level there is ongoing sharing of information and input. The district planning work being undertaken is an example of how at a spatial scale, the government is taking an integrated approach to strategic planning.

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## **Questions and 'chat' from the EPF meeting**

### **Conversations during presentation on the Planning Act**

**Q+A 1 – Q** - question on the consultancy on mixed use

**A** - Response provided in meeting with link

<https://tenders.act.gov.au/contract/view?id=191851>

**Q+A 2 - Q** - question on validity of a DA when lodged and if it will be considered valid to lodge

**A** - A DA will not be assessed against the Territory Plan ahead of lodgement (if this is what query on 'validity' meant).

**Q+A 3 – Q** - There is tension between the infill policy and placemaking, how will you ensure we get a balance between homes, jobs, public spaces and community facilities in town centres to ensure we get the right outcomes for peoples quality of life?

**A** – Noted in conversation this relates more to district planning and district strategies and the Territory Plan (see responses provided to earlier questions on this).

**Q+A 4 – Q** – How are organisations that aren't 'district-focused' going to be consulted over the coming months. (and follow up question related to if EDO is involved and Cons Council)

**A** - The Stakeholder Series includes a range of stakeholders and organisations (list of organisations in below table) that are being consulted. Targeted consultation on technical matters will also occur. Additionally, this EPF forum of a range of stakeholders is for updating and discussions on strategic matters and has had presentations on the Planning System Review and Reform project on several occasions. *(Noting this has been followed up post meeting with the person who posed question & EDO has been included)*

<b>Stakeholder Working Series Participants</b>
Australian Institute of Architects
Housing Industry Association
Master Builders Association of the ACT
Property Council of Australia - ACT Division
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
Planning Institute of Australia
Building Designers Association of Australia
Gungahlin Community Council
Inner South Canberra Community Council
Weston Creek Community Council
Woden Valley Community Council
Tuggeranong Community Council
Molonglo Valley Community Council
ACTCOSS
Canberra Region Leaders Tourism Forum
Conservation Council

**Q+A 5 – Q** As districts and the needs and expectations of residents change over time is it intended that district plans are reviewed periodically?

**A** – Yes. Noting we will not have district plans - as noted we will have strategic planning at city and district scales - which we do monitor and is a dynamic process of planning and does get updated. We do this for the planning strategy.

**Q+A 6 – Q** Will the strategic district plans supersede the master plans?

**A** – See other responses (pre-meeting). The master plan programme is completed.

**Q+A 7 – Q** –Support broader policies being incorporated through the planning process. How will city wide matters be considered and incorporated into this project eg, sustainability, environment matters, city wide values?

**A** – The proposed new Act will set improved detail on objects and principles that capture some of these important values and approaches.

While the district planning is going to help pick up some values and set directions at a district scale, the Planning Strategy continues to provide the city wide direction spatially and from a policy perspective. This strategic planning will be given greater clarity and effect in the future system, including through the Act.