

Have your say for a sustainable and liveable Curtin

Send a submission to the ACT Government by Friday 3 March

The ACT Government is proposing changes to the ACT's planning legislation to allow many more dwellings in existing suburbs. The proposals to do this mean many more buildings (many would be multi-storey), less green space, fewer trees and consequently a hotter and less healthy Canberra. You have a chance to express your views by making a submission on the YourSay website: yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-planning-review/provide-feedback



Some ideas for comments and objections

The Curtin Residents Association has developed some ideas for you to consider. If you want to use any of the points listed below, select the ones that most concern you and write them in your own words. Also include your experience: your use of the Yarralumla Creek corridor, for example. More information is available on the Curtin Residents Association website www.curtinresidents.asn.au



More dwellings in residential zones

More dwellings in residential zones (densification) must not be at the expense of the community's health and wellbeing. A critical test for any proposed densification must be 'no adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of individual Canberrans'. The proposed new Territory Plan and Draft Woden District Strategy fail this test as they would exacerbate urban heat, which will decrease health and wellbeing. More dwellings in residential zones must not be at the expense of public and private open space and tree canopy cover. The amount of local public open space must be maintained or increased. 40% of private blocks must be soft planting area with 30%–40% tree canopy cover on each block.

Say 'no' to a hotter Canberra

An overarching objective for the Territory Plan and the District Strategies must be to adapt the urban environment for climate change and to reduce its effects such as increased heat. Despite high-level policy statements, implementation mechanisms, such as the technical specifications in the draft Territory Plan, fall woefully short of what's needed. Technical specifications for adapting to and reducing the impact of climate change are critically important: 40% of residential blocks must be soft planting area with 30%–40% tree canopy cover; buildings in residential zones RZ1, RZ2, RZ3 and RZ4 must be no more than 4 storeys, preferably less, to enable cooling by trees.

Subdivision of residential blocks (Dual Occupancy Developments)

Subdivision of blocks in RZ1 (the zoning of most residential blocks) must preserve the existing character of these areas. To ensure this principle: minimum block size after subdivision of 400m²; all dwellings to front a public road or public open space; maximum building height of 2 storeys; and 40% of each block to be soft planting area with 30%–40% tree canopy cover on each block.

Prevent bad outcomes and gagging of the community voice

Planning decisions must not be made without input and review from the community as these decisions affect Canberrans' everyday living over long periods of time. The system must include mechanisms to ensure this. The planning system must include clear priorities and open and transparent mechanisms to deal with conflict between different objectives.

Yarralumla Creek and Canberra's 'blue-green network'

The Yarralumla Creek corridor must be preserved and enhanced. The Creek and its surrounding area are important to the community for recreation, active travel and reducing urban heat. All the 'key sites' and 'change areas' for Curtin in the Draft Woden District Strategy involve the Yarralumla Creek corridor. Its value to the community must be preserved and enhanced in any changes. We welcome and strongly approve of the Yarralumla Creek corridor being designated as a primary connection in Canberra's blue-green network. We support restoring natural environments along Yarralumla Creek as part of an enhanced blue-green connection.

Key site and change area: Curtin edge north and south (the parts of Curtin closer to Yarra Glen)

A 'new edge street' through the Yarralumla Creek corridor, supposedly 'to clarify the urban edge to Yarra Glen', is not acceptable as it would destroy the amenity this treed open space provides for the community. The Yarralumla Creek corridor defines the urban edge to Yarra Glen perfectly well and the proposed street would significantly degrade the blue-green connection of the Yarralumla Creek corridor. Losing trees would increase the urban 'heat island' effect for this part of Curtin, which is not acceptable. Increasing the number of trees, together with retaining the open green space, would be a better blue-green enhancement than the proposed 3-storey dwellings on an edge street.

Separate pedestrian and cyclist pathways for active travel are needed here rather than new streets.

A new street crossing Yarralumla Creek is not acceptable as it would significantly degrade the Yarralumla Creek corridor and destroy the amenity this treed open space provides for the community. It would also increase traffic in local residential streets.

A bridge for pedestrians and cyclists over Yarralumla Creek is strongly supported as it would connect the new residential area in the former horse paddocks with the rest of Curtin and its active travel routes. It would also open the north side of the Creek to community recreational use.

Key site and change area: Former Curtin horse paddocks

This is a greenfield site. Any development must reduce the impact of climate change: there must be a significant amount of treed public open space; 40% of residential blocks must be soft planting with 30%–40% tree canopy cover on each block; buildings must be no more than 4 storeys to enable cooling by trees. A bridge for pedestrians and cyclists over Yarralumla Creek is essential to connect this new residential area with the rest of Curtin and open the north side of the Creek to recreational use by the community.

Key site and change area: Woden north (the parts of Curtin near the large roundabout at the intersection of Yarra Glen, Yamba Drive and Melrose Drive)

The roundabout area is a significant heat island and is flood-prone. It is not a suitable site for more buildings. The best use of the whole area is treed parkland to provide a cool place for residents of the nearby apartments and to enhance the Yarralumla Creek corridor.

A new street between Holman Street and Theodore Street through the Yarralumla Creek corridor is not acceptable as it would destroy the amenity this treed open space provides for the community.

'Local centre' on Theodore Street, Curtin (site of Daana Restaurant)

The Draft Woden District Strategy must be amended to reflect that this site is not a 'functional local centre' as shown in Figure 31 in the Woden District Strategy Plan. Block 23 Section 29, Curtin (83 Theodore Street) is zoned CZ4: Local Centre but it is small (1039m²) and does not meet the functional definition of a Local Centre on page 159 of the Strategy: 'Smaller shopping centres that provide convenience retailing and community and business services that meet the daily needs of the local population'. For planning purposes it cannot be treated as a local centre equivalent to those in Lyons or Hughes, for example.

Radburn area protection

We strongly support the Assessment Outcome to maintain and improve the existing 'Radburn' housing pattern.