

Curtin Residents Association Inc.
MEDIA RELEASE

North Curtin: three times as dense as Singapore with no facilities

The ACT Government is planning for about 1300 new townhouses and multi-unit dwellings on part of the horse paddocks in North Curtin. This would house over 3,000 people. It will create a residential area with the population of new suburb in South Canberra. New housing in this area is welcome, however, this appears to be a mass of housing in search of a suburb as there are no plans for external road connections or community facilities such as local shops, schools, child-care, parks or other public places for residents to gather and socialise, in the information made available for public comment.

- Populations of the surrounding suburbs are Yarralumla 3,120; Deakin 3,124; Hughes 3,210; and Curtin, which is a double suburb, 5,569 (all from the 2021 census).

The planned development will be very high density: about 25,000 people per square km. This is as densely populated as the most densely populated areas of Sydney, London, Amsterdam or Stockholm. It is more than twice that of New York City as a whole and 3 times higher than Singapore. It is 5 times denser than Braddon and Kingston, which are medium density communities, and which currently have the highest population density in Canberra.

So, the ACT Government's statement that "The future development of the site will be a medium density community" is misleading. It would be a very high-density community. Why is such a high density necessary? Where are the facilities commensurate with such a high density? Why is this missing from the material provided for public comment?

There are so many high impact concerns for the residents of Curtin and other nearby suburbs which must be addressed before public comment is sought, that the Curtin Residents Association calls on the ACT Government to pause the current consultation, extend the time for developing draft Conditions of Planning, Design and Development and only resume public consultation after developing plans for North Curtin that address these concerns and are based on the long-term well-being of people and their environment.

The North Curtin development must be planned in a holistic way as a new suburb. Showing these plans is an essential pre-requisite for input from the community about its impact on those people who would live there, on the residents of surrounding suburbs and on the many people from across Canberra who use roads bordering the area.

The major roads in the area - Yarra Glen/Adelaide Ave, Cotter Rd and McCulloch St - are already very busy and congested with peak hour traffic. Schools in the area are full. Where are the children going to go to school? If the schools are many kilometres away, then this can only add to existing traffic problems. The situation with child-care is similar to schools. Roads, traffic and local community facilities must be addressed now, not as an afterthought. If they are not, then North Curtin will be the most car-intensive 'suburb' in Canberra.

The site of the development is a very significant urban heat island: up to 10°C hotter than treed areas of surrounding suburbs. It's essential that any development on this site address this for the health and well-being of future residents.

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6 May 2024