

North Curtin residential area development consultation May 2024

ACT government proposal for 1300 homes
on the Yarra Glen side of the horse paddocks site

Chris Johnson

Curtin Residents Association and Woden Valley Community Council

Background – development on North Curtin horse paddocks area. Important for all of North Woden.

- The area between Yarralumla Creek, Cotter Rd, Adelaide Avenue on both sides of McCulloch St is allocated for
 - **diplomatic buildings** – under direct planning control of the NCA (National Capital Authority)
 - **residential development** – by the ACT government, under planning approval by NCA as a diplomatic precinct area including building height limits



diplomatic area

New Residential area

light rail stop

Deakin shops

Curtin shops

light rail stop



Cotter Rd

Adelaide Ave

North CURTIN

McCulloch St

Yarra Glen

Kent St

Carruthers St

South CURTIN

Carruthers St

HUGHES

Royal Canberra Golf Club

Equestrian Park

Curtin District Playing Fields

CURTIN

DEAKIN

Royal Australian Mint

Calvary John James Hospital

Alfred Deakin High School

Holy Trinity Primary School

YARRALUMLA CREEK

YARRA GLEN

Future Diplomatic Estate

North Curtin Residential Area

Deakin Shop

Curtin Shops

Government wants consultation

- This a big, important development proposal to house population equal to a new suburb
- Make comments to the *Have Your Say* website
- Government says it wants to hear about
 - The variety and size of **housing types**
 - Type and scale of **public open spaces**
 - **Landscape design** options
 - Opportunities for **supporting** land uses within the residential area, such as **cafes, small scale retail** and **community facilities**
 - Planning for **sustainability and climate resilience**
 - **Transport** and access

but the survey restricts you to multiple choice replies on some of these

Quick summary response

- This proposal is for very dense housing: it packs the population of a suburb into a small area
- It needs to be planned as a new suburb, not as an extension that depends on existing services
- The light rail as it is being planned does not provide any service to this development

A Historical Comment

By late-1965, in the earlier stages of Woden Valley's development, there were complaints from local residents that the new suburbs lacked shopping and recreational facilities, and the first schools in the area, such as Curtin Primary, were overcrowded as surrounding suburbs were developed.

[Wikipedia]

Planning and development proposals

- The north Curtin horse paddock area is allocated for diplomatic use and residential use, after the ACT-National Capital Authority land swap
- The diplomatic area is several years away from development planning
- The ACT residential area proposal is aiming for
 - 1,300 new dwellings
 - “close to existing employment, transport, education, and recreational opportunities in the Woden District”
 - Local green spaces
 - Connections to the surrounding areas

The population of a new suburb

- The number of people is $1,300 \times 2.5 = 3,200$
Same number of people as a suburb like Hughes or Deakin.
Adds 60% extra to the current 5,200 people in Curtin.
- The planned population density is 25,000 people per square kilometre.
This is extremely high density:
2 x New York City 3 x Singapore 3.5 x Hong Kong **4 x Yarralumla Brickworks**
- Is this the same mistake as Woden Town Centre -
buildings crammed in with no green spaces, no breathing or daylight
between them
- Services and transport must be planned as a new suburb,
not just build new housing that is “close to existing services”
and will overload them.

- Numbers
- Transport
- Education
- Green environment
- Housing



diplomatic area

New Residential area

light rail stop

Cotter Rd

Adelaide Ave

Deakin shops

North CURTIN

McCulloch St

Yarra Glen

Kent St

Carruthers St

Curtin shops

light rail stop

Carruthers St

South CURTIN

HUGHES

Pressure of numbers

- The increased number of people will affect
 - Existing local shops – a potential **benefit** with increased trade, *but* parking stress
 - Pressure on using the green space along Yarralumla Creek
 - Road access and traffic – potential problems:
two access roads are needed for safety and flow capacity
 - Not into McCulloch St – not favoured by NCA
 - Into Cotter Rd – more intersections and traffic, slower traffic flows on Cotter Rd
 - Going onto Cotter Rd does not connect to Woden
 - Woden strategic plan suggests a new creek bridge into north Curtin suburban streets or onto a new “edge street”.
But: these are tertiary suburban streets,
not secondary roads like McCulloch St (which already has traffic calming speed bumps and no trucks) or Theodore St, or Kent St.
certainly not primary roads like Cotter Rd or Yarra Glen.

Transport

“close to existing transport” : **where is the “close transport”?**

- A light rail **track** on Yarra Glen/Adelaide Ave does not provide access to *transport*
- The nearest tram **stops** currently planned are
 - Near Curtin shops (Carruthers St/Yarra Glen) **750 metres** from southern corner
 - Near Deakin shops (Hopetoun Cct/Adelaide Ave) **1400 metres** from NE corner
- The nearest current bus stop (route 58) is 600+ metres on Dunstan St
- **Vehicle traffic** needs to flow towards Woden without going through Curtin, as well as towards Civic (parliamentary triangle, the city and beyond). Requires a **complete intersection** at Cotter Rd/Adelaide Ave/Yarra Glen
 - with light rail going through
 - requires complex, competent engineering, expensive
- Must have improved cycling and scooter paths, join up between Woden and Civic
- Make separate active pedestrian paths from the wheels: bicycle and scooter

Education

“close to existing education” ? needs schools and transport

- Curtin primary schools are full (and more than 100 new units are planned for central Curtin)
- Garran Primary is already planned to expand to cater for increased population in north Woden from town centre
 - 5 kilometres away – increased car traffic **through Curtin**
- Alfred Deakin high school – across Adelaide Avenue
- CIT Woden – public transport needed (no parking)
- Universities – need Rapid bus or light rail access (a long bike ride, or by car)

Green environment

- Buildings, driveways and roads will destroy some wildlife habitat (golden sun moth, bird nesting hollows)
- Any development must ensure more than 30% tree canopy cover on the site (no excuses); 40% or more is preferable
- The housing density must require permeable drainage to slow down stormwater surge (no excuses)
- **There is a big opportunity to bring this part of the creek back to a more natural state**
 - **Improve wildlife corridor connections between Red Hill and Molonglo**
 - **Replace the concrete drain channel with a more naturalised creek**
 - **Increase the green walking paths and spaces, pleasant parklands**
- The Parkland between the urban edge and Yarralumla Creek should respond to topography, add trees, use Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD).
Provide opportunities for play, community gardens, urban farming.

Types of housing

- 2,3 and 4 storey proposed: should be no higher for human scale!
 - 1 storey better suits people who are down-sizing. Suggest a better mix is 1,2, and 3 storey
 - Yarralumla brickworks is maximum 3 storey
 - NCA suggests 3 storey maximum near diplomatic precinct
- The building frontage should be directed to give the place its own identity, being seen from the diplomatic area and from the light rail going past
- BIMBY – build better! This is everybody’s back yard.