

2022

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES REPORT 05 –
DRAFT VARIATION TO THE TERRITORY PLAN 364
GUNGAHLIN TOWN CENTRE:
AMENDMENTS TO THE
GUNGAHLIN PRECINCT MAP AND CODE**

TABLING STATEMENT

**Mr Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Planning and Land Management
February 2022**

Madam Speaker, Draft Variation 364 was prepared to implement the recommendations of the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh – Snapshot 2018. This Snapshot was in response to community concerns about building height and character, public spaces, and active travel and roads. The changes promote high quality design outcomes as the centre continues to develop. No zoning changes are proposed through the draft variation.

The ACT Government has a vision for the Gungahlin town centre as a place where people can live, work, study and engage in recreational activities. The planning controls contained in draft variation 364 will facilitate a centre with commercial, community and employment with residential opportunities. Green spaces and active streets and economic activity will create a vibrant centre during the daytime and a night time economy. This vision for the Gungahlin Town Centre will be realised through a suite of policies, including planning settings, the land release program, and private sector investment.

The ACT Government is the largest employer in the Gungahlin Town Centre. The Government will continue to invest in the town centre through employment and the provision of community facilities.

I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services for its thorough inquiry and report into Draft Variation 364. The Committee made eight recommendations in its Report Number 5 which was released in September 2021.

Many of the recommendations of the Committee relate achieving a vibrant, diverse and active mixed-use centre with greater employment within the Gungahlin Town Centre. The ACT Government supports these outcomes and has considered and responded to the recommendations of the Standing Committee report. Three of the recommendations are agreed and the remaining five recommendations are agreed in principle.

The ACT Government agrees in principle to recommendation one. This recommendation relates to the Government undertaking an analysis of different types of commercial activity that could be undertaken in the Gungahlin Town Centre, and that this information be used to inform future land releases. .

This recommendation is agreed in principle. In response to this recommendation the ACT Government will undertake an assessment of commercial market potential. This assessment will consider economic and market factors and will be used to identify potential additional commercial use in the town centre. The detail of the types of commercial activity that can be achieved will be delivered through the land sales process rather than planning controls.

Additionally, the ACT Government has already committed to undertaking consultation and planning to develop a precinct planning approach to future land sales in the town centre. We will look at the blocks along Flemington Road to the east of the town centre to achieve an appropriate best-practice mix and integration of uses. The planning will also take into account public spaces, so that we have vibrant streets and the buildings integrate with the linear park .

A community and recreational facilities needs assessment for the district of Gungahlin is nearly complete and will identify current and future demand and gaps for community facilities. This assessment will inform the government strategy and planning for facilities in the town centre and district. Community facilities are key to the future of the town centre, both for their provision of important community services as well as their value in providing employment.

The ACT Government has commenced work towards a new community centre in the town centre, as a commitment of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly.

Madam speaker, the second recommendation of the Standing Committee is agreed and criterion 43 and the new rule 44 will be removed from Draft Variation 364 to reserve priority commercial space in the town centre.

This would be an ideal site for a large Australian Government Department and we would love for more Australian Public Service employees to join our ACT Government employees in the Gungahlin Town Centre.

Recommendation three proposes that unsold blocks in the Gungahlin East precinct are sold as a precinct. The recommendation includes details proposing a mix of uses and how the land sales process may achieve this

outcome. It is also recommended that the precinct is designed in consultation with the community.

The ACT Government agrees in-principle to this recommendation and is strongly committed to a precinct planning approach to these blocks. This precinct planning approach will include setting the planning framework for land release, development, and uses along Flemington Road.

Land releases will be in accordance with the ACT Government's Indicative Land Release Program, with the method of release determined by the Suburban Land Agency, in the context of the precinct planning outcome and community consultation. The appropriate mix of commercial and community floor space for future years' land releases will be considered in light of the commercial employment assessment I mentioned in response to recommendation one.

The fourth recommendation refers to requirements for a precinct planning outcome for Gungahlin East where the blocks are sold individually.

This recommendation is also agreed in-principle. The ACT Government has a strong commitment to a precinct planning approach for Gungahlin East. This can be achieved either by one developer or multiple developers with sales or deed conditions requiring delivery of part of or all of a coordinated precinct.

As with the previous recommendation, the appropriate mix of uses for this precinct will depend on the results of the commercial employment assessment.

Madam Speaker, the fifth recommendation suggests an additional two storeys of building height be applied to all blocks with height limit provisions in the town centre. This recommendation is agreed in-principle. An additional two storeys will be applied to specified sites in Precinct 2b but only where the additional height does not have an adverse impact on adjacent development.

Building heights in metres will be adjusted, to allow for higher floor to ceiling heights for commercial developments. The draft variation already proposed an additional two storeys for buildings in Precinct 2a Mixed Use East along Flemington Road, and for this reason additional storeys will not be permitted in this precinct.

The ACT Government agrees to recommendation six, which suggests active travel and parking arrangements are reconsidered following completion of traffic and transport assessments being undertaken by Transport Canberra and City Services. Any changes required as a result of these assessments will be incorporated in the Territory Plan at a later date.

The 2021/22 ACT Budget allocated \$200,000 to Transport Canberra and City Services for a Route Planning Study for the Gungahlin Town Centre. The aim of this study is to encourage a shift to active travel and includes feasibility of cycle connectivity improvements and priority designs for active travel network connections.

Madam Speaker, the ACT Government has agreed to recommendation seven which recommends active frontage placements are reconsidered with priority for active frontages in areas identified as pedestrian throughfares. The Government will make these changes and they will be incorporated into the final version of Draft Variation 364.

Lastly, the Committee recommends the study area for the Gungahlin Town Centre Draft Variation is extended to incorporate Yerrabi Pond recreation and commercial area and key connections of Gungahlin Place in recommendation eight. This recommendation is agreed in-principle.

The area subject to the Draft Variation was based on the 2018 Gungahlin Town Centre refresh, which focused on the town centre component of the suburb of Gungahlin. However, the route planning study that I just mentioned will take into account linkages with the Yerrabi Pond recreation area.

Following changes to Draft Variation 364 for the Gungahlin Town Centre in line with the Government's response, I intend to consider the revised variation for approval. The planning controls contained in Draft Variation 364 will facilitate a centre with commercial, community and Government employment opportunities. Progressing the draft variation will enable the Government's vision of a vibrant and lively mixed use commercial centre to be realised. I look forward to seeing the precinct planning in the centre progress this year.

Madam Speaker, I now commend to you the ACT Government's response to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services Report

number 5 on the Draft Variation to the Territory Plan 364 Gungahlin Town Centre: Amendments to the Gungahlin Precinct Map and Code.