

TERRITORY PLAN CHANGES TO MAKE CANBERRA GREENER

The ACT Government is proposing to increase the green space and tree canopy coverage in all residential areas to help the city cope with climate change and be more liveable and comfortable.

A proposed change to the Territory Plan (Draft Variation 369/DV369) will require new residential developments to have more trees, planting areas and soft landscaping than is currently required.

The changes help implement the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 and the Living Infrastructure Plan 2019 to help us respond to the challenges of a growing city and a changing climate.

Living infrastructure is vegetation, soils and water systems. In Canberra's context this includes street trees, ovals, wetlands, creeks, parks, nature reserves, private yards, green roofs (that is, roofs with plants and/or grass), balconies and living walls (that is, plants growing on the walls).

Why are we making these changes?

Canberra is becoming a more compact city, with more intense urban development. At the same time, climate change will lead to longer, hotter summers.

A good balance between urban intensification and living infrastructure creates a healthier, more liveable and sustainable urban environment.

More urban tree coverage and green spaces will reduce the heat emanating from roads, pavements and buildings (the urban heat island effect). More rain will be absorbed by the ground instead of running off into stormwater drains. Natural biodiversity, including birds, will increase. More shade and space for outdoor recreation will make it more pleasant to be outside.

The ACT Government recognises the important role living infrastructure plays in our urban environment. Under Action 2 of Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City (2019) we plan to achieve '30% tree canopy cover (or equivalent) and 30% permeable surfaces in urban areas by 2045'. Under Direction 3.3 of the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 we will 'integrate living infrastructure and sustainable design to make Canberra a resilient city within the landscape'.

We will increase our living infrastructure at the block, street and suburb level and on both public and private land.



What does the draft variation do?

DV369 will apply to all future urban renewal and greenfield development areas.

The variation will change the Territory Plan's residential development codes—the Single Dwelling Housing Development Code and the Multi-Unit Development Code—and definitions related to site coverage and planting area requirements on private land. The variation has been revised following public consultation. The recommended variation and consultation report is available at https://www.planning.act.gov.au/planning-our-city/territory_plan/admin/variatiions/recommended_variations/dv369-living-infrastructure-in-residential-zones

In summary the variation:

- » introduces provisions for how much 'site coverage' a block may have; that is, the amount of land that is covered by non-permeable surfaces, including house, terraces, pergolas, patios, decks and balconies. For example, large blocks will be allowed 40% site coverage and mid-size blocks 60%.
- » expands the definition of 'planting area' and its requirements. For example, large blocks will be required to have 50% of their private open space allocated for planting and compact blocks 30%. Planting area must have a minimum dimension of 2.5 metres.
- » introduces a minimum level of tree planting, with associated requirements for canopy trees; for example, large blocks up to 800m² will be required to have one small and one large canopy tree and mid-sized blocks at least one small canopy tree.
- » reinforces the Territory Plan's criteria and guidelines so developers and architects consider planting area, site coverage, water infiltration, landscape quality, deep root planting, tree canopy, green roofs, green walls and the like.

Table 1: Tree sizes and associated minimum soil volumes and area requirements

Tree size	Mature height	Minimum soil surface area dimension	Minimum pot size (litres)*	Minimum soil volume
Small Tree	5-8m	3m	45**	18m ³
Medium Tree	8-12m	5m	75**	42m ³
Large Tree	over 12m	7m	75**	85m ³

Notes:*Minimum pot size refers to the container size of new trees prior to planting.

**The maximum pot size for small, medium and large eucalyptus sp. trees if chosen is 45 litres, with maximum height at planting of 2.5m and maximum trunk calliper of 3cm.

What will it mean for residential blocks?

- » More trees and open space! Community and resident groups have raised concerns for some time that there is no requirement to provide a tree on a residential block. Members of the community on the Housing Choices Project 'collaboration hub' stressed the importance of trees and green space in residential areas.
- » While the proposed changes may restrict the size of the non-permeable footprint and change the development options of a site, the benefits to the environment and amenity to residents is paramount.

Table 2: Current and proposed changes to Single dwelling housing development code

	Private Open Space	Planting area	Private Open Space	Planting area	Site coverage (new provision)
Block size	Current requirements		Proposed Changes		
Large blocks	60% of block minus 50m ²	30% of block minus 25m ²	60% of block	30% of block, min dimension 2.5m	40% of block
Mid sized blocks	40% of block minus 50m ²	20% of block minus 25m ²	40% of block	20% of block, min dimension 2.5m	60% of block
Compact blocks (front loading)	20% of block	(10% of block)	30% of block	15% of block, min dimension 2.5m	70% of block
Compact blocks (rear loading)	20% of block	(10% of block)	30% of block	15% of block, min dimension 2.5m	70% of block

Table 3: Single dwellings – planting area

Block size	Current	Proposed
600m ²	155m ²	180m ²
400m ²	55m ²	80m ²

COMPACT BLOCKS - FRONT LOADING

COMPACT BLOCKS - REAR LOADING

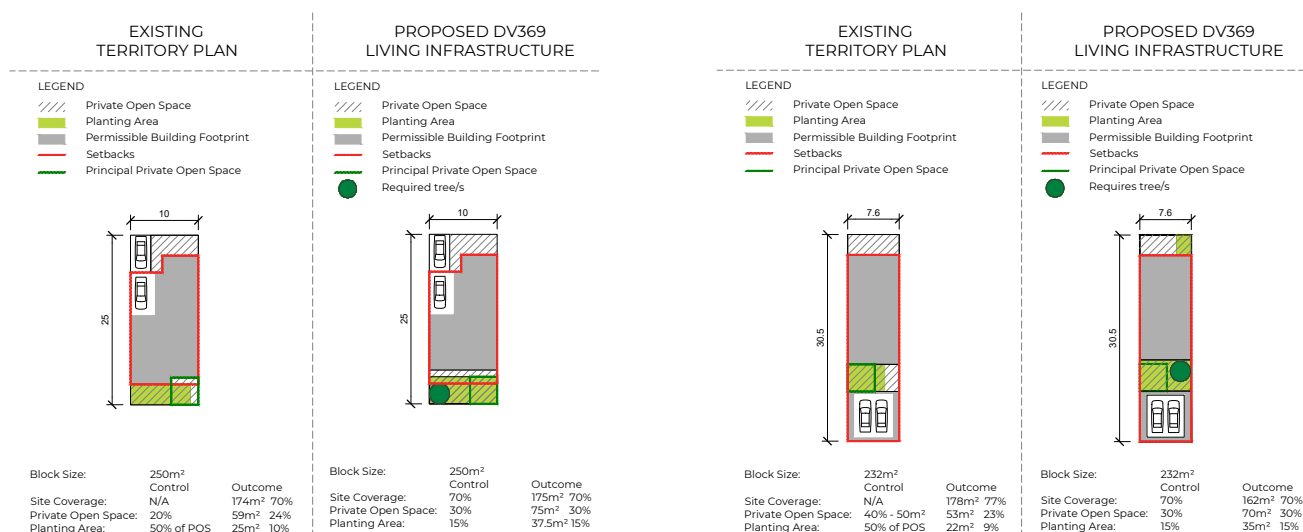


Table 4: Current and proposed changes to Multi-Unit Housing Development Code

Zone	Site open space	Planting area	Site open space	Site coverage (new provision)	Planting area	Trees (new criterion)	Number of trees (see size req. in table above) – (new provision)
	Current requirements		Proposed Changes				
RZ1 and RZ2	40% of site, min dimension 2.5m	20% of site area	40% of site, min dimension 2.5m	40% of block	35% of the block, min dimension 2.5m	Existing and new trees to provide at least 15% canopy cover	Blocks less than 800m ² At least one small and one large canopy tree Blocks over 800m ²
RZ3, RZ4, RZ5	20% of site, min dimension 2.5m	10% of site area	20% of site, min dimension 2.5m	45% of block	25% of the block, min dimension 2.5m	Existing and new trees to provide at least 20% canopy cover	One medium and one large canopy tree plus one additional large or two additional medium canopy trees for each 800m ²
Residential in commercial zones	20% of site, min dimension 2.5m	10% of site area	20% of site, min dimension 2.5m	N/A	10% of site area		

* planting area definition amended to clarify that terraces, pergolas, patios, decks and pools are not included

Table 5: Multi-unit development – planting area

Block size	800m ² block (m ²)		1200m ² block (m ²)	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
RZ1 and RZ2	160	280	240	420
RZ3, RZ4 & RZ5	80	200	120	300
Residential in commercial zones	80	80	120	120

