ACT Government
Territory Planning Authority

CONSULTATION REPORT

Missing Middle Housing Reform

DRAFT MAJOR PLAN AMENDMENT to the TERRITORY PLAN 04

Residential Zones and Subdivision Policy

September 2025

This consultation report was prepared for the missing middle housing reforms and also serves as the consultation report as required under division 5.2.5 of the Planning Act 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

This document is the consultation report on the Missing Middle Housing Reforms and serves as the consultation report required under section 67 (3) of the Planning Act 2023 (the Act).

This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents which have been given to the Minister and are available on the Planning website:

- DPA-04
- Draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide.

1.2. Outline of process

The Authority has considered comments received from agencies and the public as part of the Missing Middle Housing Reforms, including on DPA-04 and the draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide, during the public consultation period. This consultation report has been prepared to provide an overview of the consultation process, to outline comments received and how those comments have been considered or responded to.

The amended version of DPA-04, along with this document and relevant background papers, has been given to the Minister for referral to the relevant Legislative Assembly Standing Committee.

More information about this DPA is provided in DPA-04 provided at Appendix 5 and available on the Planning website.

General information about the major plan amendment process is also available on the Planning website.

2. CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

In accordance with section 62 of the Planning Act the Authority has consulted with each of the following entities in relation to this DPA:

- the National Capital Authority
- the Conservator of Flora and Fauna
- the Environment Protection Authority
- the Heritage Council
- any land custodian or lessee of public unleased or leased land

The following ACT Government agencies were also consulted during the consultation period:

- CED – Transport and City Services (former TCCS)

- ACT Education
- Health and Community Services (ACT Health)
- Emergency Services Agency
- Suburban Land Agency (SLA)
- City Renewal Authority (CRA)
- Housing ACT
- Justice and Community Services Directorate (JACS)

A copy of the comments received from the above ACT Government agencies and entities and the Authority's response to any matters raised are provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

3. CONSULTATION WITH THE PUBLIC

3.1. Engagement numbers snapshot

16K We reached 16,053 people via YourSay	**547** YourSay Contributions, with 398 surveys and 149 'quick comments'	**6.4K** Number of downloads via YourSay	**74** Number of written submissions we received on Missing Middle Housing Reform
18 Number of engagement events held across Canberra	**539** Number of people we talked to at events	**68** We received 68 written comments at events	**125** Media mentions including print, radio, TV and online articles

3.2. Consultation objectives, program and approach

The proposed Missing Middle Housing Reforms represent a significant change to the application of the ACT planning framework, with potential implementation across Canberra. The reforms are the next important step on from the recent broad reform of the ACT Planning System and Territory Plan, and changes to enable more 'missing middle' housing were foreshadowed during community engagement on those reforms.

Given this, the objectives for community consultation on DPA-04 have been to:

- **inform** the Canberra community of the Government's intention to introduce more opportunities for missing middle housing across Canberra, and to

provide clear information about the details of the proposed changes, including how the changes compare to the existing planning requirements
- **provide examples** of missing middle housing design across our city, including how the delivery of housing reform could take place over time
- **actively consult** with the community, allowing for feedback on the proposed specific reforms, to consider any concerns or recommendations for changes and to identify elements that are supported.
- **reach out to a diverse range** of the Canberra public and stakeholders including community representatives, the building industry and design professionals, and local community members.

The public consultation period for the Missing Middle Housing Reforms was conducted over 11 weeks from 20 May 2025 to 5 August 2025. Online consultation closed on 22 July 2025, with written submissions accepted for a further 2 weeks, until 5 August 2025.

During the public consultation period, 18 varied events were offered to provide a broad range of opportunities for the Canberra community to consider the proposed reforms and provide feedback:

- 2 x face to face community information / Q&A sessions ('town-hall' type events held in Tuggeranong and Belconnen)
- 1 x online community information / Q&A session (which was recorded and made available for viewing in full on YourSay)
- 2 x listening spaces (held in Belconnen and Woden)
- 8 x 'pop up' stalls across Canberra
- 2 x 'Meet with the Government Architect' sessions
- A community representative workshop
- An industry representative workshop
- An online listening space (this session was offered but not run as no public registrations were received)

The engagement strategy was designed to offer options for the public to find out information, ask questions and provide feedback both online and face to face, with events located across Canberra both during the week, on the weekend (on Saturdays and Sundays) and outside of work hours. For those people unable to attend any of the scheduled sessions, a recording of the online community information session, including the interactive Q&A session, was made available on the website.

The community was also invited to provide written feedback on the proposed reforms via 'quick comments', a detailed online survey, or by written submission. This feedback could be provided at any time during the consultation period.

In addition to the engagement activities advertised on YourSay, the Directorate also provided a detailed presentation and Q&A session to the Environment and Planning Forum (which includes a number of community council representatives).

Promotion of the missing middle housing reform consultation

A range of communication tools were used to ensure that the Canberra public and key stakeholders were aware of the community engagement for the Missing Middle Housing Reforms and how they might find out more information / provide their feedback:

- YourSay interactive engagement website
- Targeted promotion of engagement program via ACT Government social media channels, the ACT Government OurCBR newsletter mailout, and media releases.

The ACT Government social media campaign resulted in more than 16,000 people accessing the Missing Middle Housing Reforms YourSay page.

Details about the proposed Missing Middle Housing Reforms were also shared across Canberra via various media, including approximately:

- 51 online media articles
- 42 mentions on radio
- 25 print news articles
- 7 television reports

In addition to the ACT Government social media posts, information about the proposed Missing Middle Housing Reforms engagement was also shared on Facebook by a number of media and community organisations.

The social media reach across Canberra and number of media mentions across the engagement period suggest that the broad community had a number of opportunities to hear about the proposed reforms and how they might be able to find out more information or provide their feedback.

3.3. Who we engaged

A range of Canberrans provided input during the engagement period. Participants included residents from across the various districts in the city and represented people of varying ages.

Geographic range: survey participants / community information sessions, and pop-up / listening space locations

People completing the survey or attending the face-to-face information / Q&A sessions (422 people) were asked which suburb they lived in.

District people live in:	No. of people engaged:
Inner North and City	98
Belconnen	97

Tuggeranong	60
Inner South	51
Woden	48
Gungahlin	32
Weston Creek	28
Molonglo Valley	8

Pop ups, listening spaces and 'Meet the Government Architect' sessions were also held across Canberra. 425 people collectively attended those sessions.

Location of event (no. of events)	No. of people engaged:
Belconnen (3)	117
Woden (3)	99
Inner North and City (1)	48
Tuggeranong (1)	42
Inner South (1)	68
Weston Creek (1)	51

Face-to-face events were not offered in the newer districts of Molonglo Valley and Gungahlin, where the proposed Missing Middle Housing Reforms are less likely to apply.

Age and gender

Accurate personal demographics were only available from people who submitted surveys. Of those:

- The majority of respondents to the survey were men (56%) and 37% were women.
- There was smaller representation from people identifying as non-binary (2%) and those who preferred not to specify.
- The age distribution showed strong participation from working-age adults, with the largest groups being 35-44 years (24%) and 25-34 years (21%), followed by equal representation from 45-54 and 55-64 age groups (both 17%).
- While they were also represented, there was less engagement through the survey by young people, with only 6% of respondents aged 24 or under.

Submissions received

Of the 74 written submissions received:

- 28 submissions were from general members of the public
- 16 submissions were from community council organisations or associates
- 8 submissions were received from the professional architecture and design community (88% supportive)
- 11 submissions were from representative organisations (including some related to health, conservation, environment and public transport)
- 6 submissions were from the development and building industry

3.4. Pre-consultation period engagement

The proposed Missing Middle Housing Reforms were drafted in response to community feedback during previous engagement about the ACT planning system reform, and in consultation with local planning and design professional experts. Extensive industry and agency consultation contributed to the development of the reforms, including engagement with a dedicated Technical Advisory Group and Pool of Practitioners with representation from peak industry organisations and ACT Government agencies.

3.5. Comments and feedback received and Authority response

This section summarises the comments received from the Canberra public on the Missing Middle Housing Reforms. The Authority has considered all of these comments in considering potential amendments to the DPA-04 and Missing Middle Housing Design Guide documents that were released for public consultation.

A detailed summary list of the comments / feedback received, and the Authority's response is provided in table form at Appendix 1.

Copies of the public written submissions received, together with feedback provided via the YourSay survey and through the 'quick comments' section on the YourSay website are also provided as Appendices to this document (Appendix 4, 5 and 6) and can be found on the Planning website.

Overall, the majority of Canberrans have indicated that they support an increase in missing middle housing and greater housing choice across Canberra.
However, the community feedback also identified specific areas requiring further consideration and potential refinement of the Territory Plan amendments. Comments included concerns from reform opponents and constructive suggestions for implementation, including recommendations for potential future government action.

There was general support for:

- Enabling more housing choice across Canberra, making it easier for everyone to have access to appropriate housing close to amenities
- Making it possible for subdivision and block consolidation in RZ1
- Increased tree canopy cover requirements and keeping building site coverage the same
- Making it easier for non-developer land holders (eg 'mum and dad' investors) to sub-divide or redevelop their block for missing middle housing.

There was general agreement about:

- An assessment approach that valued (and enforced) the design of new homes that would be 'good neighbours', balancing the need for new housing with preserving neighbour amenity and good local urban outcomes (including the importance of solar access and considering appropriate setbacks)

- The opportunity to have a more targeted approach to providing appropriate missing middle housing for older Canberrans
- Ensuring that new infill development was designed to maximise good landscape outcomes that reduce the impacts of urban heat island effects
- The potential for the Missing Middle Housing Design Guide to help ensure quality design outcomes, and the need to ensure new homes were well-constructed
- The need for Canberra's public transport and active transit network (and associated bus stop / footpath and cycleway infrastructure) to be managed strategically to anticipate and meet increasing demand caused by more density in outer suburbs (and potentially less car parking)
- The need to ensure community infrastructure would be available to meet increasing demand over time – including schools, quality local centres, and public green space.

There was a division in relation to:

- How quality local character will be retained, with some members of the community deeply concerned about the loss of Canberra's unique character and 'Bush Capital' aesthetic, particularly in older suburbs and heritage areas, while others looked forward to an evolving neighbourhood character and increased vibrancy for local communities
- Opinions on the proposed reduction in car parking rates, with clear opposition from a number of Canberrans (concerned about the flow on impacts of on-street and verge parking), tentative support from others (where public transport and on-street parking infrastructure was designed to meet the demand of increased density), and full support from others (agreeing it should be up to the market to respond and that reduced parking would better support a shift to sustainable transport choices).

Some people also raised concerns about:

- Tree species and planting - Concerns that increased canopy cover requirements may result in inappropriate tree species being planted that could drop limbs, create unwanted shade on neighbours' gardens, or be unsuitable for the local environment and climate, and the potential for new homes (or trees) to overshadow established solar panels on neighbouring properties
- Impact on affordable rental supply - Potential reduction in supply of affordable family homes available for rent, particularly impacting low-income Canberrans and those waiting for public housing, as older properties suitable for rental are redeveloped into higher-value missing middle housing.

Those who didn't support the proposed reforms were typically concerned about:

- The potential negative impact on the local character of existing suburbs, including in heritage areas, and the loss of Canberra's 'Garden City' and 'Bush Capital' aesthetic and need for neighbour rights of appeal
- Overshadowing and loss of privacy caused by new neighbouring buildings
- A significant increase in cars parking on verges and on the street, and the resulting impact on neighbourhood character and potentially unsafe road environment
- Increased heat island effect due to more density and reduced planting area

- The proposed canopy cover not being sufficient (or the loss of established trees and time taken for new trees to grow)
- Loss of private garden space and outdoor areas where children can play safely at home, with concerns that reduced lot sizes and increased site coverage will limit opportunities for active play and outdoor recreation
- Poor mental health and well-being outcomes associated with living in higher density environments and poorly designed buildings with inadequate private and communal open space
- The lack of clarity in the guidance materials, creating uncertainty about preferred outcomes and potential for poor enforcement of aspirational design elements.

Perceived barriers to missing middle housing were mentioned by a number of Canberrans:

- The complexity and costs associated with strata management / body corporates, making it expensive and frustrating to live in unit titled properties.
- The impact that various fees and charges (including stamp duty and the lease variation charge) have on the potential feasibility of a missing middle project, including for non-developers and for older Canberrans thinking about downsizing
- Increasing building costs and construction skills shortages.

The consultation has also offered an opportunity for public recommendations for future innovations related to increased density, potential for aligned strategic policies, mechanisms for building inclusive local communities, and a renewed commitment to sustainability and climate resilience.

Recommended further consideration of:

- Potential for incentives for construction of more single level townhouses to increase housing options for people looking to age in place / downsize
- Incentivising more liveable / accessible housing to create more housing choice for people living with disability
- Providing greater certainty to communities about how potential increases in on-street or verge parking will be managed to minimise poor outcomes
- How best to ensure a streamlined, efficient and easy-to-navigate planning approvals system, with capacity for informed and consistent consideration of applications, and transparency in how decisions are made
- How to provide greater certainty to the community and potential developers about how decisions will be made (applying the outcomes-based assessment) and the mechanisms triggering third party appeal rights
- The need for robust data collection systems and regular evaluation of missing middle housing reform implementation to track uptake, monitor outcomes, and enable adaptive management of the policy over time.

4. CHANGES MADE AS A RESULT OF CONSULTATION

The Authority has considered the comments and feedback received from Government agencies and the general public and has subsequently made amendments to the version of the DPA-04, including the technical specifications that was released for public consultation.

Changes will also be made in a revised version of the Missing Middle Housing Design Guide, which is anticipated to commence at the same time as these changes to the Territory Plan and associated documents.

Key changes in response to the feedback are outlined below:

Residential zones building heights

- Height provisions have been simplified through removal of transitional height from RZ5 to adjacent zones. This is appropriately controlled through other outcomes within the Territory Plan and general considerations in the *Planning Act 2023*.

Solar access

- Solar access technical specifications have been revised to articulate differing guidance between multi-unit developments of four storeys or more and multi-unit developments of three or less storeys. Developments of three storeys or less are guided to achieve greater solar access minimums at the site level when compared to those of four or more storeys
- Additional technical specifications have been included to provide guidance regarding the protection of solar access to existing solar collectors (e.g. solar panels or solar hot water units) where located on the roof of adjacent residential developments
- Additional technical specifications included to protect solar access to the main living space and principal private open space located on neighbouring blocks.

Dwelling densities

- Technical specifications have been updated to clarify dwelling densities are maximums, rather than targets. Reference to additional allowable density where basements are proposed has been removed, to further clarify the intent of the provisions.

Subdivision

- Updates have been made to the Subdivision Policy to allow subdivision without the requirement for a lawfully constructed dwelling. This is supported by a minimum block size requirement of 350m^2, which applies where subdivision is to occur without prior development of a dwelling
- Clarification of titling/terminology through the technical specifications to indicate where provisions are intended to apply to estate level development versus subdivision of existing residential areas

- Removal technical specifications for subdivided/consolidated RZ1 blocks to have a street or open space frontage. This will provide greater flexibility for blocks to contain separately titled dwellings.

Fencing

- Updates to the technical specifications to outline that fencing and courtyard walls forward of the building line, closer to the front boundary, is permissible for multi-unit housing where it satisfies particular design requirements.

The amended documents are available on the ACT Planning website and all other changes to the Territory Plan proposed by the Major Plan Amendment are outlined.

The previous versions of DPA-04, technical specifications and the draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide that were released for public consultation are provided at Appendix 5 to 9 of this document.

For further details about why these changes have been made, please see Sections 2 and 3.3 of this document, together with a summary of issues raised by ACT Government agencies and entities, and the public (Appendix 1). Copies of the public submissions and comments received during the consultation period are provided as appendices to this document (Appendix 2, 3, 4) and can be found on the ACT Planning website.

Further information about how the Territory Plan and other documents are proposed to be amended can be found in the DPA document that has been given to the Minister, available on the ACT Planning website.

INTERPRETATION SERVICE

To speak to someone in a language other than English please telephone the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) 13 14 50

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LANGUAGE	DETAILS
English	If you need an interpreter please call: **13 14 50**
Mandarin (Simplified Chinese) / 简体中文	**如果您需要翻译，请致电：13 14 50**
Arabic / العربية	إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم شفهي اتصل بالرقم: **13 14 50**
Cantonese (Traditional Chinese) / 繁體中文	**如果你需要傳譯員，請致電：13 14 50**
Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt	Nếu bạn cần thông dịch viên, xin gọi**: 13 14 50**
Korean / 한국어	통역사가 필요할 경우 다음 번호로 전화하시기 바랍니다: **13 14 50**
Spanish / Español	Si necesita un intérprete, llame al **13 14 50**
Persian (Farsi) / فارسی	اگر به مترجم نیاز دارید، لطفاً به این شماره تلفن کنید: **13 14 50**
Dari / دری	اگر به یک ترجمان شفاهی نیاز دارید لطفاً به شمارهٔ **131450** زنگ بزنید.
Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	**ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 13 14 50**
Tamil / தமிழ்	உங்களுக்கு மொழிபெயர்த்துரைப்பாளர் ஒருவர் தேவைப்பட்டால் **13 14 50** என்ற எண்ணை அழைக்கவும்
Greek / Ελληνικά	Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, τηλεφωνήστε: **13 14 50**
Italian / Italiano	Se hai bisogno di un interprete, chiama: 13 14 50
Hazaragi / هزاره گی	اگه ده ترجمان ضرورت ده رید، لطفاً ده شماره **13 14 50** تماس بگیرید.
Thai / ภาษาไทย	หากคุณต้องการล่าม กรุณาโทรไปที่ **13 14 50**
Karen / ကညီကျိာ်	ဖဲနမ့ၢ်လိာ်ဘာ်ပှၤကတိၤကျိုးထံတၢ်တဂၤအခါဝံသးစူၤကီးဘာ်-၁၃၁ ၄၅၀ တကွၢ်.

Telephone and Interpreter Service **13 14 50** - Canberra and District - 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

APPENDIX 1 **Consultation comments and Authority response**

APPENDIX 1A **Entity comments**

APPENDIX 1B **Listening Report**

APPENDIX 2 **Public written submissions received**

APPENDIX 3 **Public comments received on YourSay – Quick comments**

APPENDIX 4 **Public comments received on YourSay – Survey responses**

APPENDIX 5 **Draft Major Plan Amendment - DPA-04 released for consultation**

APPENDIX 6 **Draft Missing Middle Housing Reforms - Supporting Report**

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APPENDIX 9 **Draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide released for consultation**

APPENDIX 10 **Missing Middle Housing Reforms - Comparison table**

APPENDIX 11 **Missing Middle Housing Reforms - Snapshot**

APPENDIX 12 **YourSay consultation page content and FAQs**