



Communication Link

7

Belconnen District Planning Workshop

ACT Planning Review and Reform Project

18 June 2021

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Ask.
Listen.
Understand.
Achieve.



Introduction

The ACT Government is currently reviewing the ACT planning system. The ACT Planning Review and Reform Project is considering the introduction of district level planning to provide more planning guidance at a district level and allow for the distinctive character of each district to be reflected in the planning system.

The ACT Government has identified eight urban districts and a district planning workshop is being conducted in each of these districts.

Communication Link has been engaged by the ACT Government to facilitate these workshops and report to the Government on what was heard. This report summarises the key feedback gathered from the Belconnen community

The Belconnen District Planning Workshop was held on Thursday 10 June and was attended by 22 people. The workshop was also offered online with participation conducted through Zoom and an interactive collaboration platform called Mural. Four people attended online.

Of the 22 people that attended, there was a range of ages represented with the most common age bracket represented being 35-44 years old. Eleven Belconnen suburbs were represented at the workshop, including Weetangera, Evatt, Florey, Dunlop, Fraser, Giralang and Scullin

What we heard

The District Planning workshop gathered community feedback related to each of the themes identified in the ACT Planning Strategy 2018.

The most common areas of feedback provided by the community of Belconnen are identified against these themes in the following sections.

Liveable

The following questions were asked about liveability:

- What suggestions do you have for how the type of housing and where it is located could be different in your District in the future?
- Are there changes needed to recreational areas, outdoor public spaces and/or community facilities to cater for future needs of people in your District? Where should this occur?
- What community facilities (including schools) are needed to cater for the future needs of the people in your District? Where could they be located?

The most common feedback from workshop participants is summarised in Table 1.



Table 1. Community suggestions on future planning for a liveable district

 <p>Playgrounds and recreation spaces Upgrade and maintain playgrounds</p>	 <p>Revitalise local shops Upgrade local shopping precincts</p>
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Other reoccurring themes included:

- Keep the existing green waste facility.
- Better pedestrian and cycle access around the District.
- Invest in local schools to ensure capacity for the longer term future.
- Preserve green open spaces.

Diverse

The following questions were asked about being diverse:

- How might future changes impact the commercial or retail areas within your District? What changes might impact on the town centre, group centres and local centres?
- Are there places that are considered significant to the community in your District that should be considered differently in the future? Where are they located?
- What characteristics and features are unique to your District that should be considered when planning the future?

The most common feedback from workshop participants is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Community suggestions on future planning for a diverse district

 <p>Revitalise retail centres Enhance shopping precincts from local and groups to the city centre</p>	 <p>Community facilities Create more spaces for community use, including cultural facilities and places for young people</p>	 <p>Enhance Lake Ginninderra Improve the quality of the Lake Ginninderra environment, including recreation, cafes and walking paths</p>
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Other reoccurring themes included:

- Improve accessibility of the town centre.
- Consider better signage at heritage sites in the District.



Accessible

The following questions were asked about accessibility:

- What areas in your District should be considered to improve peoples' ability to walk and cycle?
- What are the long-term travel needs for public transport and cars for your District?
- Are there road connections to other ACT districts or regional NSW that should be considered in your District?

The most common feedback from workshop participants is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Community suggestions on future planning for an accessible district

 <p>Cycleways and footpaths</p> <p>Improve pathways for cycling and pedestrians across the District</p>	 <p>Public transport</p> <p>Improve bus network within the District and from Belconnen to other areas of Canberra</p>	 <p>Safety</p> <p>Improve safety of pedestrian crossings, school zones, bike paths and roads in the District</p>
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Other reoccurring themes included:

- More electric vehicle charging stations.
- Establish direct road access from Fraser to the Barton Highway.

Compact and efficient

The following questions were asked about a compact and efficient city:

- When considering the additional residents that will live in your District in the future, what aspects of your District need to be considered to make sure it is a pleasant place to live?
- What areas should be priorities for open spaces and public places in your District?
- What views from outdoor public places are special in your District and should be considered in future planning?

The most common feedback from workshop participants is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Community suggestions on future planning for a compact and efficient district

 <p>Urban open spaces</p> <p>Maintain green open spaces across the District, including the river corridor and associated with new developments</p>	 <p>Urban density</p> <p>Focus more dense urban areas near commercial centres, leaving general residential areas unimpacted.</p>	 <p>Playgrounds</p> <p>Improve facilities at playgrounds and sports ovals</p>	 <p>Retail centres</p> <p>Rejuvenate local shopping centres, including surrounding amenity, walking and cycle paths, playgrounds etc</p>
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Other reoccurring themes included:

- Maintain and increase shady trees across the District.



Sustainable and resilient

The following questions were asked about sustainability and resilience:

- Consider the following areas in your District and describe what elements should be prioritised as these areas change in the future:
- Investigation areas for potential future suburbs
- Government land identified for sale and private development
- Urban intensification areas within existing suburbs
- Major sites in important areas identified for development by the government.

The most common feedback from workshop participants is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Community suggestions on future planning for a sustainable and resilient district

 <p>Lake Ginninderra Maintain Ginninderra Lake and Creek frontage, including buffer zones, water quality and flood mitigation</p>	 <p>Protect open space Maintain and protect undeveloped land for biodiversity offsets</p>	 <p>Urban density Higher density should be focussed in commercial areas and be complemented by parks and green spaces.</p>
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Other reoccurring themes included:

- Identify appropriate areas for aged care facilities that are located near medical facilities.
- Consider opportunities to further strengthen the university and sports facilities as a hub.
- Consider development on CSIRO grounds and Lawson area.



Next steps

The Belconnen district planning workshop is one of eight workshops being held across Canberra during June 2020.

This report has been drafted based on a preliminary analysis of the data gathered from participants. An overarching consultation report will be prepared at the conclusion of all district planning workshops. Reporting back to the community on what was heard in the district planning workshops and how that input is informing proposed policy changes will occur later in 2021.



Figure 1. Community members from Belconnen during the District Planning Workshop.