

City

The
**City
Plan**

2014



Australian Government



ACT
Government

The plan has been made possible with a \$500,000 grant from the Australian Government's Liveable Cities Program, which supports state, territory and local governments in meeting the challenges of improving the quality of life in our capitals and major regional cities. The ACT Government has matched this contribution to the plan.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduces the City Plan and outlines the study area, context, methodology.

CITY CENTRE CONTEXT

Provides a historical, planning and policy context from which to consider the city centre's future.

ANALYSIS

Analyses the current state of the city centre under six themes that are central to its operations.

THE CITY PLAN

Frames the vision and possible responses to facilitate how the city centre will look, feel and operate towards 2030 and beyond.

IMPLEMENTATION

Indicates how the vision could be delivered over the life of the plan.

Canberra city centre



Poet's Corner, Garema Place, Canberra city centre



Chief Minister's message

The City Plan creates the direction and the impetus to bring new life to Canberra's city centre. The plan has been developed to guide a process of development which will see more people living in the city, less through-traffic, better connections across the city and to the lake, and a modern built environment which fosters a dynamic and vibrant city atmosphere.

Canberrans have shown a strong interest in the City Plan since we began consultations in March 2013. From the feedback we received, it's very clear that the city centre means different things to different people and in turn that they aspire to different things for it. It's also clear that while Canberrans love parts of the city centre, there is an appetite for change which gives it a stronger identity – one that's less about cars and more about people.

Canberrans feel the city centre should:

- be the cultural and economic focus of life in Canberra
- have clear, walkable connections across the city and to the lake
- be strongly identified as the regional and national capital, while staying true to its traditions and character
- respect Walter Burley Griffin's planning visions, particularly through its views, vistas and tree-lined streets
- be home to innovative and well-designed facilities which encourage people to spend time in the city
- be more alive, more active and attractive to both locals and visitors, and
- be serviced by better public transport systems.

One of the strongest messages we heard was 'just get on with it' – people want to see change. The City Plan indicates how change will be delivered to different areas of the city across six themes – growth, land use and development, transport and movement, community infrastructure, public realm and design, and strengthening character.



The ACT Government has agreed five priority projects which will begin our delivery under this plan and set a path for the future. These projects will target reducing traffic dominance to help people connect across the city, getting more people living in the city to add vibrancy and character, progressing proposals from our City to the Lake plan, and new incentives to promote investment and commercial activity.

I would like to thank the many people who took the time to talk to us and provide suggestions and feedback at our consultations and online. Your contributions have helped us find what I believe is the right balance between delivering change and keeping the elements of the city which Canberrans love.

Katy Gallagher
Chief Minister

INTRODUCTION

1

‘A city is not an accident but the result of coherent vision and aims’

Leon Krier - The Architecture of Community

Introduction

This City Plan (the Plan) sets a vision and a framework for future development in the city centre. City is the name formally given to the central urban area of the ACT at its gazettal in 1928. However, it is more colloquially known as Civic. For the purpose of this plan it is referred to as city centre.

The Plan has been jointly funded by the ACT and Australian governments under the Liveable Cities Program. The Liveable Cities Program supports state, territory and local governments to meet the challenges of improving the quality of life in our state and territory capitals and major regional cities. It supports strategic planning in line with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) principles for facilitating urban renewal and strategic urban development.

Planning and development regulation in the city centre is split between the Australian Government (through the National Capital Authority and its National Capital Plan) and the ACT Government (both as land owner and through its Territory Plan). Over the years of planning for the city centre and its surrounds, separate and distinct plans have been made by both governments to establish the future character, growth and development of areas of the city centre. There has, however, been no single overarching strategic framework that sets a clear plan for the city centre into the future. This plan seeks to do that by setting the underpinning spatial framework to support the future growth and development of the city centre as an important local, regional and national place.

The Plan's proposed responses and actions are all subject to further Government investigation, consideration and decision-making in budget contexts over the longer term.

1.1 Overview and context

The city centre is the ACT's main municipal centre. It forms one apex of the National Triangle and is home to cultural, administrative, educational, residential, retail and commercial activities. The area plays an important role in connecting the central core, Lake Burley Griffin and the National Triangle and has significant cultural and commercial importance for the ACT as well as being an area of increasing economic opportunities.

The garden city outcomes of the Griffin plan are reflected in its tree-lined pedestrian ways and its low-rise development that provides views to the surrounding hills. However, its road and urban forms reflect the fundamentally different 1960's Y-Plan that introduced an urban structure based on town centres linked by arterial roads. These widely differing approaches have resulted in a city centre without a recognisable core and with limited vitality and legibility.

There are strong community views about the role, form and function of the city centre. One of the strongest calls from the community is for it to have a stronger identity, a recognisable core or heart that people can relate to, gather in and celebrate. An equally clear call is for the city centre to develop a vitality, a liveliness that will draw people to it at all times of the day and night; in effect, to make the city

centre the focus of civic, cultural and recreational life of the wider ACT and region. The community made it very clear they want the city centre to be less about traffic and cars and more about walkable connections to all parts of the centre and Lake Burley Griffin.

1.2 The study area

The gazetted City area is bounded by Barry Drive to the north, Cooyong and Coranderrk Streets to the east, Parkes Way to the south and Kingsley, Hutton, Childers and Hales streets to the west.

Melbourne Building



Introduction

The Plan considers a wider investigation area that includes adjoining sites and suburbs of Acton, Braddon, Reid, Turner and the area of Parkes north of the lake.

To avoid confusion in terms and for the purposes of this plan, the term 'city centre' is used to define the areas indicated in Figure 1 (the study area) and the key areas of influence immediately surrounding the city centre indicated in yellow.

The location of the city centre in the heart of the ACT gives the area local, regional and national prominence and significance. This is reflected in the sharing of strategic land-use planning responsibility for the city centre between the Australian Government's National Capital Authority (NCA) and the ACT Government.

The prominence and significance of the city centre is further emphasised by its positioning at the north-western apex of the National Triangle, which is highly visible from all key institutions within the triangle. The National Triangle, formed by Commonwealth, Kings and Constitution avenues, was a significant feature of Walter Burley Griffin's plan for the ACT. It is home to nationally significant institutions and buildings that have been located and designed intentionally for visual effect; many are popular visitor attractions. The three apexes of the triangle are Parliament House, the Defence headquarters at Russell, and City Hill representing the municipal core of the ACT. The city centre's position at an apex of the triangle has the potential to create intensely memorable places and strong connections to other elements within the triangle.

Figure 1 - City Plan study area, surrounding context and City to the Lake development area



1.3 Purpose and scope

Significant studies, plans and projects have been undertaken in the past without the benefit of a single vision and plan to guide the whole city centre and integrate actions and projects.

The Plan provides a single, overarching framework for the city centre's spatial planning and development in the shorter to medium terms, as a foundation to take it to 2030 and beyond. It places the city centre at the heart of the ACT as the predominant town centre, while recognising its local, regional and national roles. The Plan also provides the urban planning policy framework for the city centre and establishes directions that can inform public and private investment decision-making to support its cohesive and long-term viability, vibrancy and relevance.

The Plan has been informed by analysis of existing development capacity (within current regulatory controls) and opportunities for growth and land availability that are based on previously completed plans and projects, demographic data and anticipated future initiatives.

Sustainability principles, particularly related to higher densities and sustainable transport have also been considered in developing plan responses and approaches.

Broadly, the Plan sets out a vision for the city centre and proposes responses that could deliver that vision and create and maintain momentum for change and renewal. More particularly, the plan:

- provides a long-term vision of the desired spatial form, structure and activities of the city centre

- provides guidance on the nature and location of development, land use and infrastructure, and
- suggests responses and future actions that can deliver change, growth and renewal.

Six themes (Figure 2) have been developed as the basis for considering the city centre now and into the future to 2030.

Using these six themes, the City Plan is structured in the following way:

- Section 2 provides the historical, planning and policy contexts from which to consider the city centre's future.
- Section 3 identifies the current issues facing the city centre in relation to the six strategic themes and defines the city centre's character areas. It draws out the constraints and opportunities that provide the basis to guide planning, investment and action in the city centre.
- Section 4 establishes a collective vision for how the city centre could look, feel, grow and function to 2030, based around the six strategic themes. Objectives further flesh out that vision, indicating possible outcomes of implementing the vision. Section 4 includes a spatial framework that establishes the proposed city centre structure and urban form around which growth and change can occur and proposes responses and actions that could be implemented to deliver the established vision.
- Section 5 outlines an implementation approach and possible timing of responses and actions that can deliver change in the city centre, subject to future investigations and government consideration.

1.4 Status of the plan

Following public engagement, the City Plan was revised to reflect community comment. While it is not a statutory document, the Plan is the planning and spatial framework to guide future development of the city centre.

Aerial view of the city centre



Introduction

Growth

The opportunities that have been taken and that exist for the future, ongoing economic viability and strength of the city centre.

Land use and development

The critical role that the location, type, mix and integration of land uses plays in creating and maintaining a vibrant and viable city centre.

Transport and movement

How people link to, through, around and across the city centre and how that movement can be leveraged to deliver a legible, accessible and viable city.

Community infrastructure

The different roles that community and cultural facilities play in delivering strong and active bonds between people and the city centre.

Public realm and design

A city centre that is attractive and easy to read and that people enjoy and can readily access and understand.

Strengthening character

Understanding the city centre's five identified character areas as a strong base for future growth, development and vitality.



Civic Square fountain

Figure 2 – Six themes

1.5 Methodology

The City Plan project was informed by issues raised during the ACT Government's extensive Time to Talk community engagement in 2010, and from existing data and previous studies and projects. The development of the Plan was informed by further community input, underlying critical data, and key legislative and planning frameworks such as the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan.

Detailed analysis and investigation was undertaken and was linked with the outcomes from community input, particularly in relation to perceived current issues and desirable, high-level outcomes.

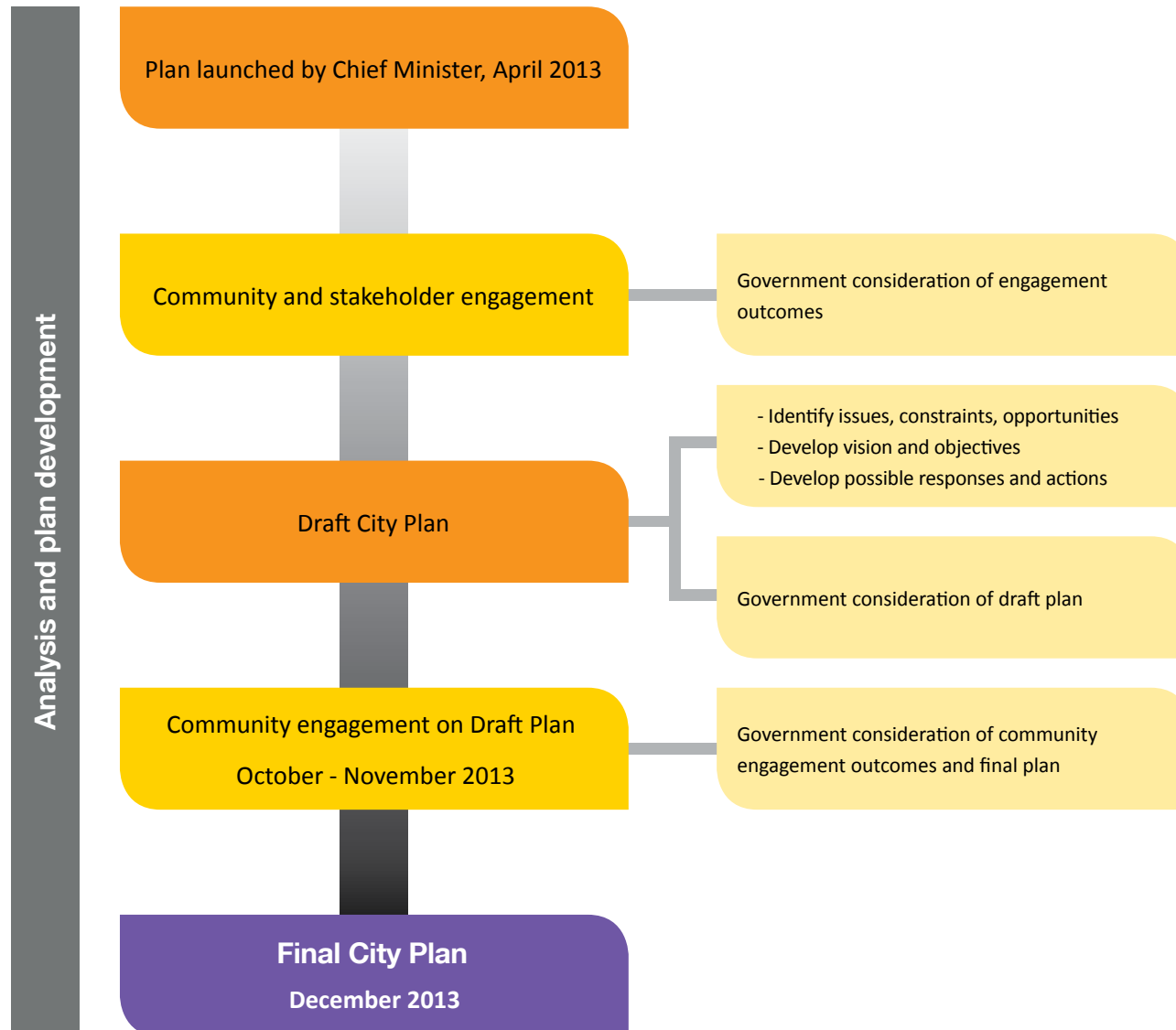
The six key themes of the Plan emerged from that information and analysis; they form the basis from which the future of the city centre is being considered.

Further analysis of identified constraints and opportunities led to the development of a future vision for the city centre and of responses and actions that could deliver on that vision. Critically, the analysis informed the spatial framework for those responses to ensure their benefits are best captured and used.

This approach is broadly established in Figure 3.

A consultation report is being made available with this Plan that details the actions and outcomes of the first round of public engagement on the City Plan.

Figure 3 – Methodology underpinning the development of the City Plan



The background of the page is a solid yellow color. Overlaid on this background are large, white, stylized letters that spell out the word 'City'. The letters are thick and have rounded, friendly-looking shapes. The 'C' is on the left, followed by the 'i', then the 't', and the 'y' is partially visible on the right edge. The text 'CITY CENTRE CONTEXT' is positioned in the lower right area, partially overlapping the white letter 't'.

CITY CENTRE CONTEXT

2

‘I believe in architecture that is the logical outgrowth of the environment in which the building in mind is to be located’

Walter Burley Griffin (1912)

City centre context

2.1 Planning history

While all previous plans for the city centre have included the concept of a grand municipal centre befitting the status of the national capital, the achievement of that goal has varied. As a result, no single plan can be said to be responsible for the shape and feel of the city centre today. Instead, the city centre reflects changing infrastructure priorities over the decades.

The disconnect between planning aspirations and delivery is perhaps best reflected in the City Hill area. All plans have envisaged it as a vibrant, people-filled core of the city, however today it operates as a pedestrian-unfriendly space dominated by through-traffic, car parks and the backs of buildings. Relatively few new buildings have been built in the City Hill precinct in the past 50 years (Magistrates Court, The Playhouse, Civic Library and the Canberra Theatre Link building), while the surrounding business and retail districts have expanded.

Some key features of City plans over time explain the appearance and operation of the city centre of today, including plans by Griffin (1912-19), Sulman (1921), Gibson (1951), Holford (1957) and the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) (1958-89).

Griffin saw the City Hill area (inside the hexagon of London Circuit) as a 'centre of administration of affairs' dominated by a city hall. Buildings surrounding City Hill were to be 'assigned to the administration of urban affairs', including a post

office, criminal and civil courts, banks and allied institutions. Civic (now Vernon) Circle was to be the 'dress circle' for these central functions.

The main shopping street of the city has moved several times, each time further from the envisaged centre. Griffin proposed Constitution Avenue as a Champs-Élysées-style shopping boulevard and business spine. Sulman refocused retail development on London Circuit, with the Sydney and Melbourne buildings (1926-46) being the first of 12 intended

arcade shopping blocks addressing City Hill and the tram-filled boulevard of London Circuit. Gibson's 1950s plan made Alinga Street (including today's City Walk) the shopping core, a move consolidated by the NCDC with the opening of the Monaro Mall in 1963 – Australia's first three storey, fully enclosed, air-conditioned shopping centre. Garema Place was originally created as a car park. More recently, the redevelopment of the Canberra Centre has shifted the centre of retail activity further east to Bunda Street.

*Canberra Federal Capital of Australia:
1913 Preliminary Plan, NLA: map G8984 C3 Gri 1913*



Aerial view of city centre (ca 1948) Image courtesy of NCA



City centre context

Since the 1950s business, professional and legal functions have consolidated in a horseshoe surrounding London Circuit and Marcus Clarke Street, divided by Northbourne Avenue and City Hill.

Early planning clearly shows residential development more closely mixed with business uses in the centre of the city. Griffin included a large urban residential district south of City Hill and flanking Commonwealth Avenue while Sulman proposed residential hostels inside London Circuit. The functional zoning approach of the 1950s saw nine-to-five office and retail activities focused in the city centre, with residential uses pushed to the periphery.

Locations of cultural and recreational facilities have shifted between the lake parklands and the City Hill area. Griffin intended that local recreation and cultural activities should be an integral part of the national capital experience, including a stadium, theatres, galleries, museums, a zoo, aquarium, botanical conservatory, gymnasia and swimming pool – all accessible by public transport. Holford also emphasised Commonwealth Park and Kings Park for cultural and recreational facilities, but located a stadium closer to Russell and a concert auditorium on top of City Hill. In the 1960s the Parkes Way road network displaced much of the lake parkland and created a barrier that refocused cultural and recreational facilities on the city centre. The Canberra Theatre complex opened in 1965 as an early building inside London Circuit and the 1998 adaption of the North Building flanking Civic Square for the Canberra Museum and Gallery consolidated Civic Square as the centre of the city's cultural activities. The existing Canberra Olympic Pool was constructed in 1955.

In 1931 the Federal Highway was connected to Northbourne Avenue, generating a volume of north-south traffic not accounted for in early planning by Griffin and Sulman. By the 1950s and 60s, Holford's plan and the NCDC's Y-Plan sought to address projected high volumes of through-traffic by implementing major bypasses in the east (Monash Drive) and west (Barry Drive/Clunies Ross Street). Planned, grade-separated arterial roads closer to the city centre that had local streets linking surrounding neighbourhoods to the Central Business District (CBD) were not built, leaving growing volumes of through traffic to find their way via Northbourne Avenue and Vernon Circle to Commonwealth Avenue.

The Y-Plan anticipated a population of 500,000. While maintaining Griffin's open, garden city intent, the Y-Plan entrenched private car use as the principal form of transport by providing for new town centres linked by arterial roads to and through the city centre. It converted Griffin's tram (and possible subway) network to road and bus ways with an expanded 'parkway' system to support movement of vehicles around the wider city.

Early planning envisaged a low rise, horizontal city subservient to landscape with taller, important public buildings with towers and domes to mark the key axes and functional order of public buildings. In the 1960s, the NCDC allowed taller buildings consistent with modern CBDs by introducing RL 617 (the height of Capital Hill) as the maximum building height. This preserved the dominant skyline of public buildings like Parliament House and the War Memorial.

In 2004, the NCA's Griffin Legacy strategy aimed to redress the growing disconnect between the municipal city and the central area, the lack of a vibrant city heart and the impact of arterial traffic in areas of national capital significance. The consequent National Capital Plan amendments for City Hill, Constitution Avenue and West Basin reopened possibilities for connection between the city centre and Lake Burley Griffin, capitalising on nearby national capital cultural, tourism, education and business activity and making City an integral part of the national capital experience as intended by Griffin.

Aerial view of city centre (ca 1950) Image courtesy of NCA



2.2 Planning and regulatory context

Strategic and statutory planning functions in the ACT are shared between the Australian Government, through the National Capital Authority and National Capital Plan, and the ACT Government through its Territory Plan. The sharing of these responsibilities provides a local, regional and national focus to Canberra which can be both advantageous and challenging.

Commonwealth Government planning

National Capital Plan

The National Capital Plan (NCP) provides the overarching strategy for the planning and development of Canberra and the Territory, ensuring that 'Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance'.

The key matters of national significance include:

- the pre-eminence of the role of Canberra as the national capital
- preserving and enhancing the character that comes from the natural landscape features and setting
- respecting the key elements of Griffin's formally adopted plan for Canberra
- creating and enhancing opportunities for national institutions, ceremonies and national capital uses, and
- respect for environmental values and national concerns with urban sustainability.

*The Future Canberra,
National Capital Development Commission (ca 1962)*



City centre context

Griffin Legacy

The Griffin Legacy project was undertaken by the National Capital Authority to provide a strategic framework to accommodate the best of contemporary urban development in keeping with Walter Burley Griffin's original plan for the city.

The Griffin Legacy established a range of objectives of particular relevance to this Plan, including:

- protecting and building on the Griffin Legacy
- linking the City to the Central National Area

- extending the City to the lake, and
- reinforcing the main avenues.

The Griffin Legacy provided for the transformation of West Basin into a vibrant and spacious lakeside promenade, realising City Hill as the heart of the city centre and Constitution Avenue becoming a grand boulevard linking the educational centres. Amendments to the NCP provide strategic directions regarding City Hill, Constitution Avenue and West Basin.

Future development in these locations, including the ACT Government's City to the Lake project, are subject to the planning provisions of these amendments.

Amendment 59 – City Hill Precinct

Noting Griffin's intent to make City Hill central to the city's operations, this amendment sees the City Hill area as the municipal and geographic heart of the city centre, completing the National Triangle, acting as a gateway to the Central National Area and as a hub connecting significant main avenues and vistas.

NCA impression of City Hill Park looking towards the National Triangle



NCA impression of Constitution Avenue



NCA impression of West Basin, extending the city to the lake and a waterfront promenade



Amendment 60 – Constitution Avenue

This amendment envisages Constitution Avenue as a mixed-use grand boulevard linking London Circuit to Russell to complete the National Triangle. Delivering this vision anticipates a mix of diverse and active uses (shops, cafes, commercial, entertainment and residential) to create a 24 hour community, and prioritises an integrated transport system.

Amendment 61 – West Basin

West Basin is envisaged as a vibrant cultural and entertainment precinct on a waterfront promenade. Development of West Basin would create a new city neighbourhood, extending the city centre to the lake and providing a mix of retail, dining, recreation and tourist activities and accommodation.

The City to the Lake project implements the vision of Amendment 61 in relation to West Basin.

ACT Government planning

Canberra Plan – Towards Our Second Century

The Canberra Plan – Towards our Second Century was released in 2008 and provides vision for new challenges that emerged since 2004 including climate change, water security and housing affordability.

The Canberra Plan's vision is for Canberra to be:

- a truly sustainable and creative city
- an inclusive community that supports its vulnerable residents and enables all to reach their potential
- a centre of economic growth and innovation

- the proud capital of the nation and home of its pre-eminent cultural institutions, and
- a place of natural beauty.

The ACT Planning Strategy

The ACT Planning Strategy provides long-term planning policy and goals to direct the development of Canberra to help the city achieve its economic, cultural and environmental aspirations. Of particular relevance to the city centre, the Strategy establishes:

- the city centre will remain the predominant town centre
- population increases will be accommodated in town centres and along transport routes
- mixed and diverse uses will be supported in town centres, and
- transport will be connected integrally with development, growth and redevelopment.

Transport for Canberra

The Transport for Canberra strategy is integrally connected with the Planning Strategy and works with it to deliver a more compact, connected and accessible city. Transport for Canberra establishes the Territory's transport policy directions to 2031, setting clear strategies and actions to support: integrated land use and transport; sustainable travel options; increased active travel (walking and cycling); safety and accessibility; and efficiency and cost effectiveness of our transport systems.

As part of implementing Transport for Canberra, the ACT Government is taking a strategic and integrated approach to parking, considering its relationship to car travel demand, alternative transport modes, parking demand management and parking supply options. Parking policy and management measures that are currently underway include:

- the release and implementation of parking plans for the city centre
- implementation of a parking pricing regime, and
- establishment of a parking offset fund that supports development, with parking and transport access provided through 'off site' options.

Active transport and lifestyles are a key feature of modern urban planning



City centre context

Territory Plan

The Territory Plan is the key statutory planning instrument that provides the strategic, planning and development framework for land and development within the ACT and is consistent with the NCP. The objective of the Territory Plan is to ensure the planning and development of the ACT provides an attractive, safe and efficient environment in which people can live, work and have their recreation.

Under the Territory Plan zoning scheme, the CZ1 – Core Zone applies to the majority of the city centre. This zone supports a mix of predominantly commercial land uses that can deliver a diverse

and active character, conveniently located retail and service outlets and opportunities for business investment and employment.

The zoning also promotes vibrant, interesting and lively street frontages and encourages an attractive, safe pedestrian environment with ready access to public transport.

The City Precinct Code sets out the development controls for the city centre. It includes provisions (rules and criteria) related to building heights, uses, overshadowing, setbacks and site specific provisions. Changes to the built form controls applying to the city centre require a variation to the Territory Plan.

Master planning

A number of master plans have been delivered by, and with, the ACT Government to support redevelopment and renewal in the city centre. Those most relevant to the existing form and functioning of the city centre include the following:

- The ANU Exchange Master Plan and Implementation Plan is a joint initiative between the Australian National University and the ACT Government. It has delivered public realm improvements, a new main entrance to the ANU, student accommodation, new arts, entertainment and community uses/facilities, open spaces, public artwork and attractive pedestrian walkways. The development identified by the master plan is largely completed.
- The City West Master Plan has been the basis of infrastructure investment by the ACT Government to improve, among other things: public transport routes and stops within the area; links from City West to open spaces of the ANU and the lake; and business and physical links between the ANU and the city centre. The recommendations of the master plan also informed variations to the Territory Plan and are being implemented as sites are developed.
- The Section 84 Master Plan was the basis of the Canberra Centre redevelopment and expansion that included upgrades to the pedestrian and public realms, and provision of recreation/entertainment facilities, office, commercial and community centre uses and floorspace. The master plan has enabled the continued expansion of the Canberra Centre.

Kinloch Lodge, ANU Exchange



2.3 Broader policy settings

Taxation reform

The ACT Government has committed to creating a tax system that is fairer, simpler and more efficient. As a result of its 2010 review of the tax system, it is implementing a five year package of economy-wide initiatives to support growth, enhance living standards and ensure a more productive and broad taxation base.

Key reforms that will support investment and growth in the city centre include:

- phasing out of stamp duty on conveyancing on residential and commercial properties
- abolishing commercial land taxes
- adjusting the residential rates system from a flat structure to a system based on increasing the tax rate for higher unimproved land values
- increasing the tax free threshold for payroll tax
- removing duty on insurance premiums
- ending duty on transfers of subleases with a term less than 30 years
- aligning with NSW provisions relating to wholesale unit trusts
- simplifying landholder provisions to attract large wholesale investors, and
- increasing the income threshold for the Home Buyer Concession Scheme.

Public Private Partnership Framework

A policy framework for the delivery of public private partnerships in the Territory is being developed. This will draw on best practice and existing materials from other Australian jurisdictions, and be used as a guide when planning large infrastructure projects.

2.4 Current projects and proposals

The ACT Government has made significant investment in the city centre in a range of projects. Some of these projects are already being delivered with investment by the government, while others are in conceptual and investigation stages (Figure 4).

City to the Lake proposal



City to the Lake development project (proposed)

The government has proposed 'City to the Lake', a transformational development project that focuses on West Basin, City Hill and Constitution Avenue that seeks to:

- recognise the unique qualities, significance and prominence of sites
- improve connections and public access – City to waterfront, Commonwealth Park and City Hill
- develop the public realm to enhance waterfront experiences for locals and visitors
- support more people living in the city centre

City centre context

- ensure investment delivers broad community benefit and enhances project viability
- leverage the natural competitive advantage of Canberra as the nation's capital, and
- encourage sustainable development, design excellence and environmental leadership.

The ACT Government has committed funding under the 2013-14 Budget to progress planning and feasibility for the City to the Lake project. The project – which is subject to further government decision-making – envisages residential, commercial and retail development on Territory land within West Basin, City Hill and Constitution Avenue, consistent with the Griffin Legacy amendments to the NCP. This development will be supplemented by waterfront and recreational development along West Basin, including a new aquatic facility.

The realisation of the City to the Lake vision will be made possible by the proposed re-construction of Parkes Way as split level 'smart boulevard', allowing free flowing traffic at the lower level and introducing local City streets. The project also proposes a stadium on the site of the Civic pool and a new Convention Centre within the City Hill area.

Capital Metro light rail (Stage 1)

Capital Metro will link Gungahlin, Canberra's fastest growing residential district, to the city centre with high frequency light rail services that will run along a transit lane to the city centre along Northbourne Avenue, terminating close to the City bus station. In the first stage, it will give access to north-side

communities to city centre amenities and services. Planning is already underway, through a \$1.4 million Light Rail Master Plan, to examine how light rail transit can be extended through the wider city and connect all residents to the city centre. Work is also underway to bring together elements such as initial engineering investigations and transport planning, along with economic and financial options, all of which guide the development of this project.

The ACT Government has currently committed \$17.3 million dollars to progress essential underpinning feasibility and design work for the projects and to establish the Capital Metro Agency.

Capital Metro - possible future design



The current parliamentary agreement between ACT Labor and ACT Greens indicates that construction will commence on the project in 2016.

Constitution Avenue Upgrade (Design and Delivery)

Constitution Avenue is a key element of the Griffin Plan and, as the base of the National Triangle, is significant in the implementation of the Griffin Legacy.

In celebration of the Centenary of Canberra in 2013, the Australian Government gifted \$42 million to the ACT Government for the upgrade of Constitution Avenue.

Artist's impression of Parkes Section 3, Constitution Avenue Upgrade. Image courtesy of TaMS



The upgrade project will deliver major transport infrastructure improvements along the road corridor including:

- a dedicated bus lane in each direction
- a separated cycle path
- improved pedestrian facilities, and
- a new central median planted with trees.

The upgrade of Constitution Avenue will provide the necessary infrastructure to support future development in the area. As commercial and residential development is progressed along Constitution Avenue the public realm spaces will be upgraded to achieve the visionary design for 2031.

Canberra City Action Plan

The Action Plan was released in 2010 with the aim of delivering a range of projects to increase the vitality and prosperity of the city centre.

Projects to the value of \$20 million have been delivered including: upgrades to the public realm; signalised pedestrian intersections; paving works; cycle works and bike racks; street lighting, furniture and art works; and tree planting. Substantial transport improvements have been made to the bus system including the new bus facility in City West and bus priority measures to the City Interchange.

These works have provided safe and easy pedestrian connectivity across the city centre and have improved opportunities for outdoor activity that bring life to the city and support the integration of public and private investment.

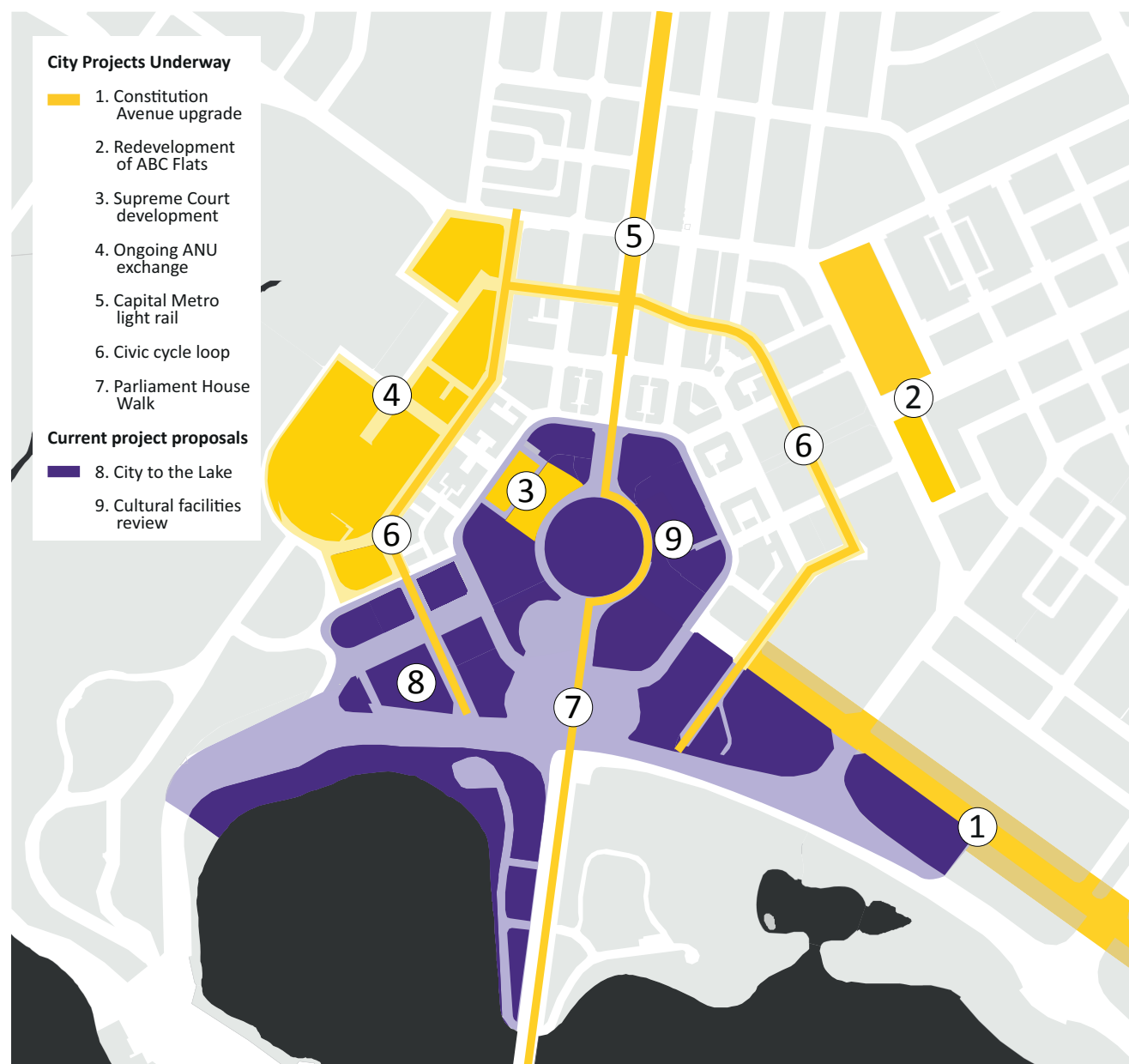


Figure 4 - Current city centre projects and proposals

City centre context

Redevelopment of Allawah, Bega and Currong flats (Design)

The Assembly is currently considering a draft Variation to the Territory Plan to facilitate the redevelopment of land in Braddon and Reid which is currently used for public housing at Allawah, Bega and Currong Flats and for various church uses. It is proposed to rezone the land to allow high density residential development and mixed-use development with some convenience retailing and office accommodation on part of the site. An area of urban open space is provided to protect a registered tree and improve amenity.

The variation considers codes to guide development of the area and ensure key planning outcomes including: the subdivision pattern; the provision of minimum floor space areas for community facilities; the location of on-street car parking; and the maximum height of buildings across the site.

Public transport investment and projects (Design and Delivery)

A number of key public transport and active travel initiatives are currently being delivered by government, all of which will help deliver better transport connections and outcomes for the city centre:

- The ACT Strategic Cycle Network Plan aims to integrate transport and land use to support a greater number of people cycling and walking to work. Improving active travel access to the city centre from surrounding centres will be supported by infrastructure investments in the 3.2 kilometre Civic Cycle Loop. Connecting Marcus Clarke, Rudd, Bunda and Allara streets will create a loop around the city centre and connect it to the main community routes leading to the City.
- \$8.5 million has constructed the Belconnen to City Transitway, which is delivering faster and more reliable connections to the city centre.

Civic Cycle Loop on Marcus Clarke Street



City Rapid bus interchange



City Plan community engagement

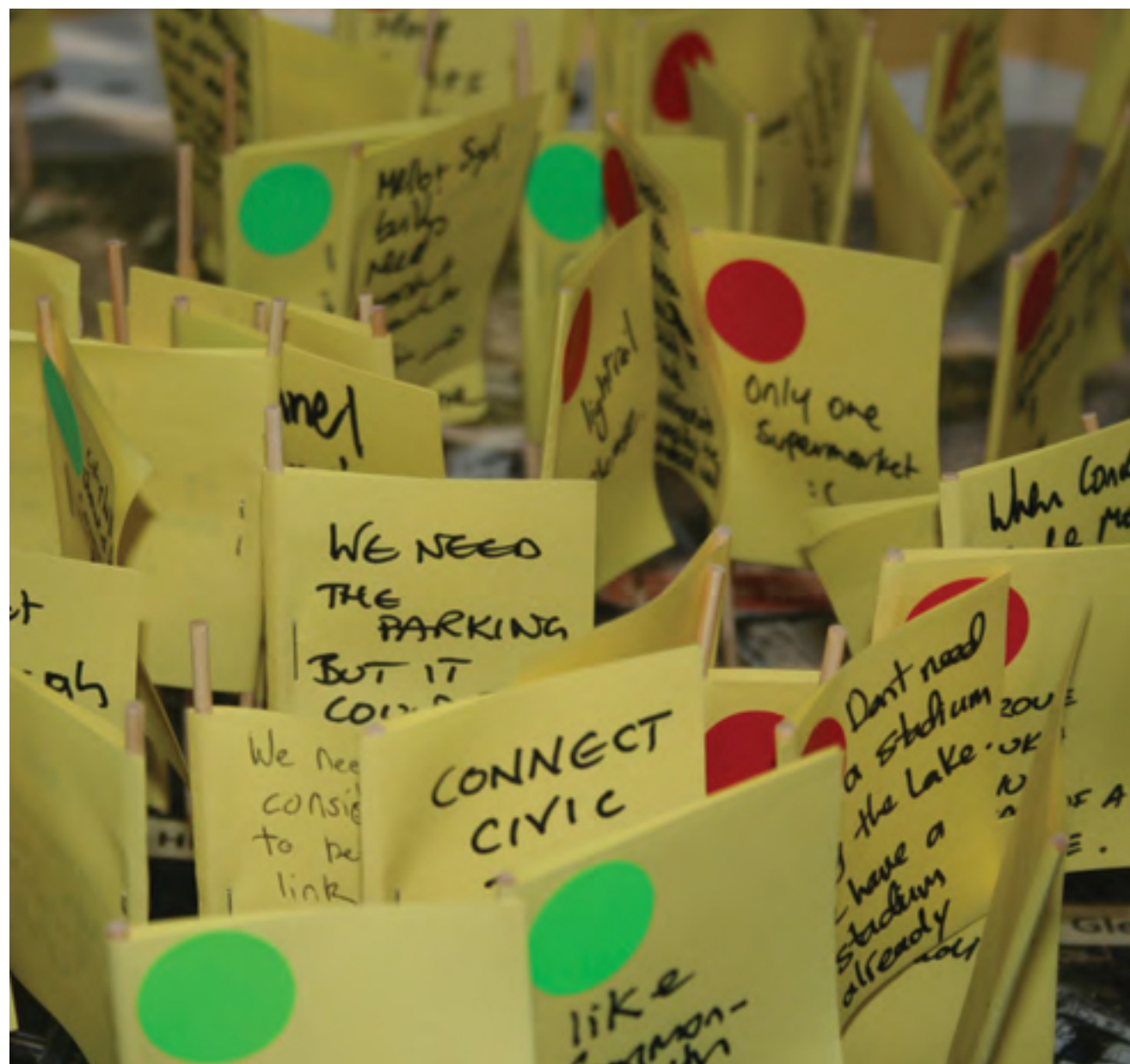


- A network of Park and Ride and Bike and Ride facilities along 'rapid' and 'frequent' bus service routes are being delivered through a \$4 million investment over four years from 2010-11. This initiative reduces the pressure on city centre parking spaces and traffic congestion on major access roads to the city centre.
- \$12.5 million is being invested on a real-time passenger information system on buses that will enhance the reliability of public transport services to and through the city centre.

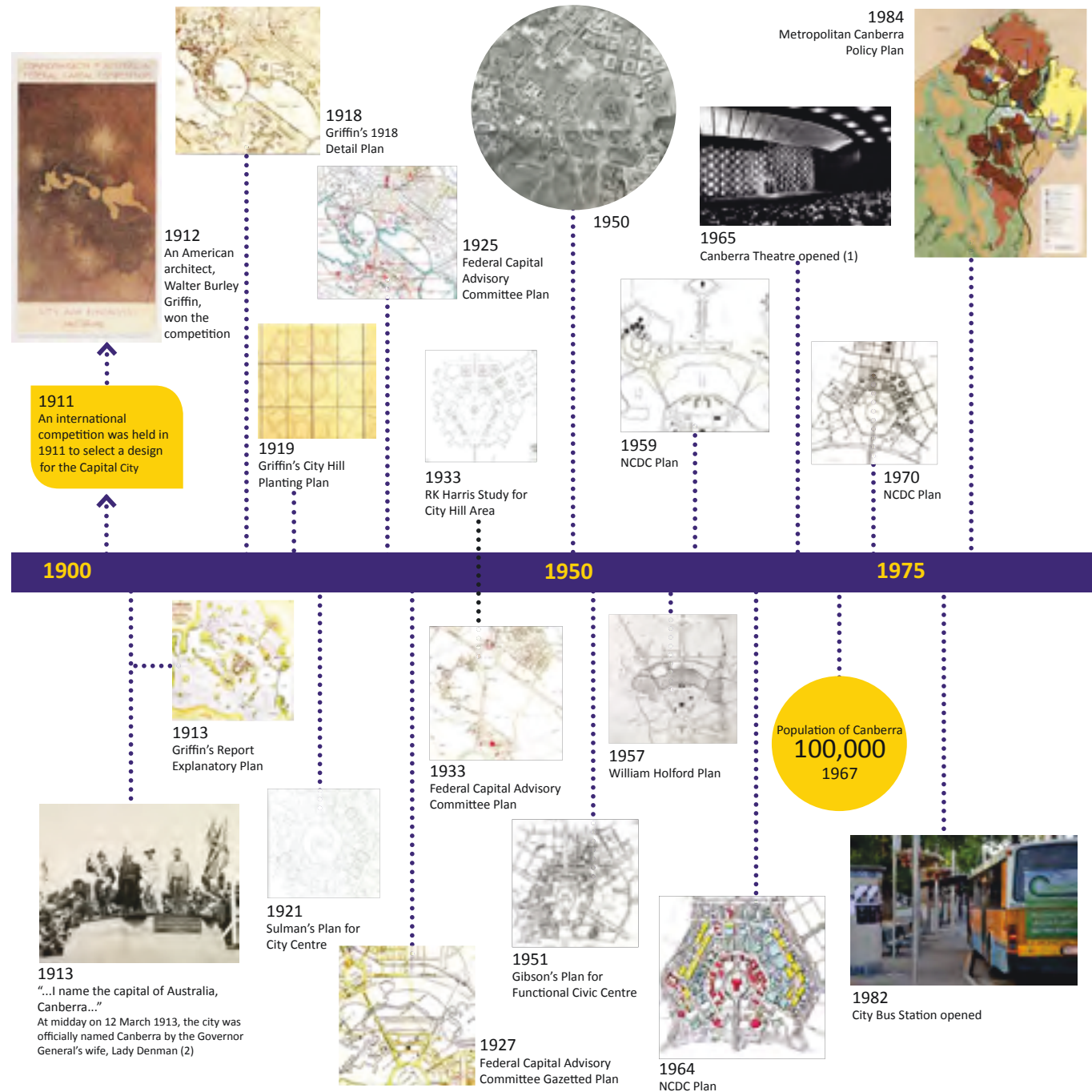
2.5 Community views

Community consultation informed the development of this Plan. Consultation identified a number of clear community issues that reflect the analysis undertaken as part of the Plan's development. Key community messages were that the city centre:

- lacks a clear identity and does not have an identifiable core for people to focus on
- is split by traffic, making it un-walkable and difficult to make cross-connections
- has mixed outcomes in terms of building design and quality and residential land use tends to favour the 'exclusive' end of the market
- needs to make the most of its best assets such as Garema Place and City Walk, its views and its landscaped setting
- should connect easily to the lake, and
- does not have 'attractors' to draw people to it and spend time in it.



Community responses to City Plan consultation



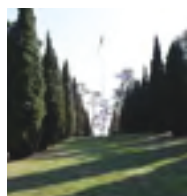
The City - Past to Present

1. Image ACT #007253 courtesy ACT Heritage Library, 2. National Archives of Australia

Population of Canberra
250,000
1986

1984 and 1989
Civic Centre Policy Plan

1994
NCPA Central National Area
Planning Study - Objectives for
City Hill



1993
City Hill: Review of the
Draft Master Plan by JSC

2001
Building Our City
(PALM)

2005
City Hill - A Concept for
the Future

2006
National Capital Authority
Griffin Legacy - Relevant
Amendments

2009
Braddon Public Realm
Guidelines

2007
Canberra Central
Design Manual

Population of Canberra
375,000
2012

2012
Transport for
Canberra

2013
Celebrating Canberra's
Centenary

2000

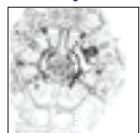
2013



1988



1990
NCDC Plan



1992
ACTPLA and
NCA Master
Plan (prepared
by MGT
Architects)



1992
NCA Plan for
West Basin
& Acton
Peninsula



2004
Section 84
City Master
Plan



2004
City West
Master Plan



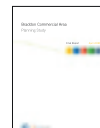
2004
Canberra
Central
Program



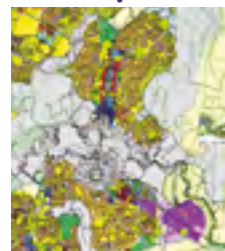
2006
canberra Central Movement Study



2007



2008
Braddon Commercial
Area Planning Study



2008
ACT Territory Plan



2010
Canberra City Area Action
Plan

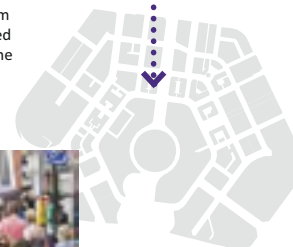


2012
ACT Planning Strategy



2012
Liveable Cities Program
supported and initiated
the development of the
City Plan

The
City
Plan



ANALYSIS

3

‘Cities are **cauldrons of creativity**. They have long been the vehicles for mobilising, concentrating, and **channeling human creative energy**. They turn that energy into technical and artistic innovations, new forms of commerce and new industries, and **evolving paradigms of community and civilization**’

Richard Florida, Cities and the Creative Class

Analysis

The city centre reflects the evolution of spatial planning and development patterns over time. The existing pedestrian and landscape outcomes reflect the Griffin Plan, while its form and operations reflect the fundamentally different 1960s Y-Plan that saw the ACT develop a polycentric urban structure linked by central and perimeter arterial roads. The city centre's historical, and future, form, function and development have been viewed through the six strategic themes that bring together a varied and broad range of urban planning, design, development and service and amenity issues for consideration:

- Growth
- Land use and development
- Transport and movement
- Public realm and design
- Community infrastructure
- Strengthening character.

These six themes were used to develop a city-wide understanding of the status and operation of the city centre. They also became the basis of a finer-grain look at the city centre's five character areas to understand how they operate within the broader framework.

3.1 Growth

Economic growth in the ACT has been above the national average over the past five years, with a key driver being the construction sector. In 2011, the value of construction work carried out was close to \$3.5 billion, more than 75% higher than the average of \$2 billion recorded in the first half of the 2000s. While the global financial crisis of 2008 did impact on the economy, more recent growth in 2010 and 2011 has been attributed to construction work responding to residential demand, particularly for inner city apartments.

City West development



Recent economic trends indicate that construction activity is slowing, with building approvals down on previous years. The government's 2013-14 budget papers highlight that while the ACT economy is fundamentally sound, risks like public sector job cuts, increasing vacancy rates and softer economic conditions nationally, could impact on demand over the forward estimates.

The key role the city centre plays as the business, commercial, retail and administrative hub of the ACT needs careful planning and strategic direction over the forward years.

Alinga Street



Analysis

Population

In 2012, the city centre had a residential population of 3,350 people or just under 1% of the ACT population (Figure 5). That number reflects significant resident growth of around 570% since 2002, at an annual growth rate of 260 new residents per year. The increase has largely resulted from growth in the government and education sectors with a corresponding rise in contract workers and overseas workers and students.

The city centre resident population is typified by its youth (50% is aged 18-24 years), ethnic diversity, student focus, the tendency to live in single or group households and work in retail or services industries.

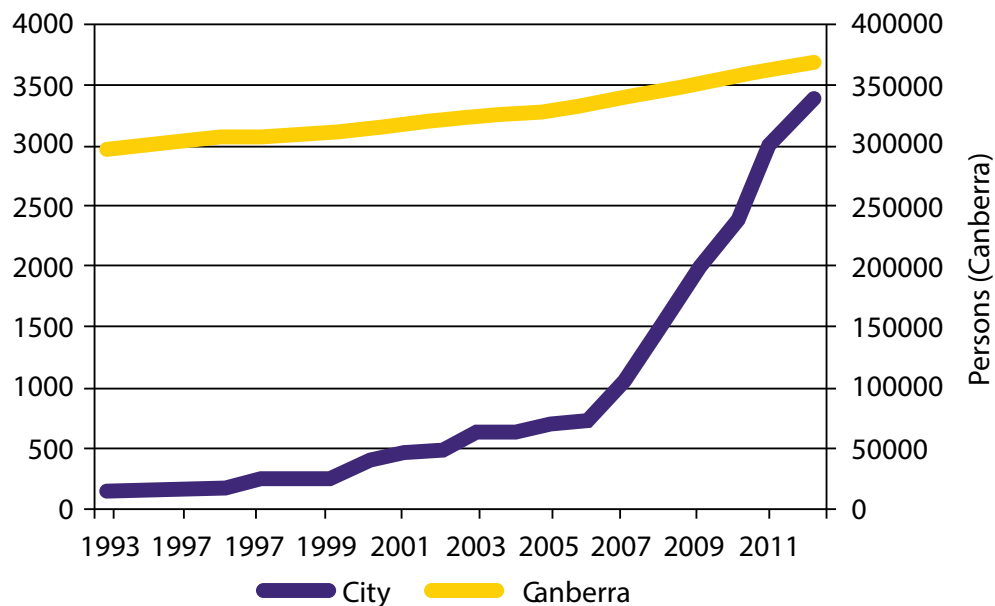
Families are not strongly represented. Sixty per cent of city centre residents were born in a country other than Australia. The young and ethnically diverse demographics of the city centre reflect the City's education and government focus, with a high proportion of residents being students and young professionals.

The ACT population is expected to increase from its current 374,435 to 453,343, an increase of 78,908 over the next 15-20 years. The City Plan is planning for accommodating 10% of that Territory wide growth – around 8,000 people – in the city centre.

The city centre is a key employment hub within the ACT, attracting large numbers of workers to the area every day. The city centre's workforce experienced a 67% growth in the ten years from 2001, rising from 19,000 workers to 38,000 in 2011. Growth in the city centre's employment workforce is attributable to growth in public sector employment and to location decisions made by public sector agencies. The Australian Public Service in Canberra expanded from 40,000 people in 2000, to 65,000 in 2012. Over the five years to 2011, public service growth averaged 2,645 persons per annum.

Figure 5 – City centre population relative to ACT population

Source: ACIL Allens, 2013



The city centre industries and occupations reflect the office based nature of the working environment of the city. Public administration is the main employment category (some 59% of the employment workforce is in public administration), with the next top sectors comprising retail (11%), accommodation and food services (5%), retail trade (5%) and financial and insurance services (4%). Professionals form the highest percentage of occupations (33%), followed by clerical and administrative (29%), managers (21%), community and personal service workers (6%) and sales workers (5%).

Retail

Overall in the ACT, retail turnover per capita is higher than the national average by around 15%, reflecting higher incomes and stronger job security. Retail floor space had very strong growth over the decade from 2001, increasing by 49%, most notably with the consolidation of retail into the Canberra Centre expansion in 2006.

The city centre has some 95,200m² of retail floorspace (including cafes, restaurants, vacant space, service areas and circulation space), equating to around 10% of Canberra's total stock. Relatively speaking, the proportion of CBD floorspace per capita is substantially higher in Canberra than in Australia's other capital cities (Table 1).

Table 1 - Capital City CBD retail floorspace per capita

City	Population	CBD retail floorspace (m ²)	CBD retail floorspace per person
Canberra	365,621	95,200	0.26
Sydney	4,627,345	500,000	0.11
Melbourne	4,137,432	475,000	0.11
Brisbane	2,074,222	325,000	0.16
Perth	1,738,807	200,000	0.12
Adelaide	1,212,982	310,000	0.26



Analysis

In Sydney, Melbourne and Perth for example, the amount of CBD retail floorspace per capita is around 0.11-0.12. Canberra, however, is much more similar to Adelaide — both at 0.26.

The Canberra Centre is the largest retail shopping centre in the ACT in terms of floor space (around 78,000m² NLA of retail floorspace) and moving annual turnover (\$550 million).

Department stores (Myer, David Jones) and chain stores (Target, Big W and the like) dominate retail floorspace.

Two major supermarkets (Aldi and Supabarn) service residential and workforce populations, with smaller convenience retail also available.

Among the speciality retail offerings, there is a lack of major 'high-end' international retail brands (such as Gucci, Tiffany and the like) or the more mainstream international stores (such as Topshop) that are found in other capital cities.

Like other centres, the city centre competes with direct factory outlets and retail services provided in areas outside the city such as at the Canberra Airport precinct and Belconnen and Woden town centres.

Commercial

The city centre commercial floor space is currently estimated to be around 887,000m² Gross Floor Area (GFA – or around 671,000m² Nett Lettable Area) (Figure 6). That floorspace is mostly located in the north-east and north-west areas, with several sections in these areas being limited to only commercial office use.

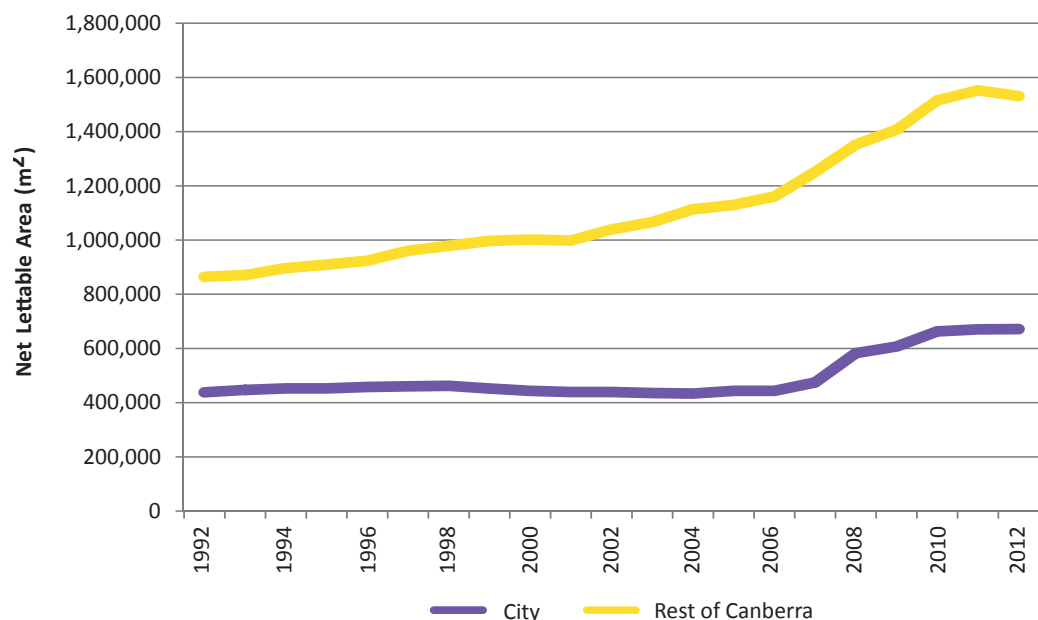
Broadly, the city centre's relevant position in the commercial sector has declined over the past 20 years, with significant developments at the Canberra Airport, Gungahlin, Phillip and Tuggeranong increasing the proportion of commercial floorspace outside the city centre. Commercial growth in the city centre has occurred at a rate of 2.2% against 2.9% in the rest of Canberra. Commercial office growth has been substantial over the past half decade, increasing by around 246,000m² (42%) between 2007 and 2012.

The city centre operates as a major employer for Canberra. Table 2 indicates the relative employment shares across the Territory by industry in 2006 and 2011, clearly showing a concentration of public service activities in the city centre.

City workers also enjoy more floorspace per worker than those in other areas of the ACT at 20.6m² and 12m² respectively.

Over the last five years commercial office space grew at a rate of 7.2% per annum. At January 2013, prime office space in the city centre had a 3.9% vacancy rate and secondary office space also indicated vacancy levels across all markets. Average gross face rents for prime office space were at \$415/m² while secondary space attracted average rents of \$358/m².

Figure 6 – City centre nett lettable commercial floor space area (NLA) Source: ACIL Allen Consulting



Over 60% of the city centre's commercial buildings are rated as B-grade or below. Higher vacancy rates are obvious for B-grade and below office space, with analysis indicating a shortage of contiguous A-grade stock in the city centre.

The City Plan assumes that over the life of the plan, the city centre's share of commercial space remains consistent with current levels. This would indicate that commercial office space will need to increase by some 94,000m² of GFA.

Table 2 - Employment by Industry, 2006 and 2011 - City centre and Rest of Canberra (ROC)

Source - Australian Bureau of Statistics

Industry	2006		2011	
	City	ROC	City	ROC
Construction	2.1%	3.9%	0.8%	4.8%
Retail trade	6.5%	9.1%	5.2%	8.2%
Accommodation and food services	6.0%	5.7%	4.7%	5.7%
Financial and insurance services	4.6%	1.7%	4.0%	1.5%
Professional, scientific and technical services	12.1%	9.9%	11.1%	10.3%
Administrative and support services	3.0%	2.2%	2.0%	2.0%
Public administration and safety	48.7%	29.6%	58.1%	30.5%
Education and training	1.5%	10.4%	1.1%	10.5%
Health care and social assistance	4.2%	9.6%	3.2%	10.3%
Other	11.2%	18.1%	9.8%	16.2%



Analysis

Residential

The recent growth in the city centre’s residential population is consistent with trends shown in the inner-city areas of other Australian capital cities. Total current dwellings in the city centre is 3,480. However, 55% of that is made up of student accommodation at ANU (approx 1,920).

Drivers underlying this growth include a shift towards contract-based work (particularly in the government arena) which has led to a demand for long-term rental accommodation in areas of high job density and networking.

Of the 1,560 (ono-student) dwellings in the city centre, 85% are in apartments of four storeys or higher. Some 86% of Canberrans outside of the city centre live in either detached houses or townhouses (Table 3).

The current increase in dwellings in the city centre is approximately 160 per annum.

Table 3 - Dwelling types as a percentage of the market for City and Rest of Canberra

Source - ACIL Allen Consulting

Region	City	Rest of Canberra
Separate house	0.2%	71.3%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc with one storey	0.2%	9.4%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc with two or more storeys	0.0%	5.6%
Flat, unit or apartment in a one or two storey block	1.8%	4.6%
Flat, unit or apartment in a three storey block	11.3%	5.0%
Flat, unit or apartment in a four or more storey block	85.2%	3.5%
Other	1.2%	0.6%

3.2 Land use and development

The location, type, mix and integration of land uses and development play a critical role in creating and maintaining a vibrant and viable city centre. This Plan takes account of the current planning controls and uses in the city centre.

Planning controls

Current land zonings in the city, under both the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan, allow for a wide and varied range of commercial, retail, community and residential uses.

New Acton development



Within the study area of the City Plan, the National Capital Plan applies to the City Hill, West Basin and City South-East character areas.

National Capital Plan (NCP)

The NCP establishes objectives, principles, policies and permissible land uses for areas under the National Capital Authority's planning control. The NCP applies to the southern half of the city centre, including City Hill, West Basin and Constitution Avenue.

Policies for Lake Burley Griffin and the lake foreshores generally envisage predominant open space parklands, with the lake and its foreshores

Artist's impression of City Hill, National Capital Plan



intended to provide a range of recreational, educational and symbolic experiences. Permissible land uses reflect this approach, including: aquatic and community facilities; parks and reserves; outdoor education or scientific research establishments; restaurants; and tourism facilities.

City Hill is seen as central to the implementation of the Griffin Legacy, and as the municipal heart of central Canberra that connects the significant main avenues and vistas. NCP objectives see it as a place of high density and strong mixed uses to attract people to live, work, play and stay. The highest standards of urban design, sustainability and exemplary architecture are sought for this area.

West Basin - Extending the city to the lake and waterfront promenade - An artist's impression, National Capital Plan



West Basin should also deliver the Griffin Legacy as a vibrant cultural and entertainment precinct on a waterfront promenade, with a new city neighbourhood that incorporates a cosmopolitan mix of shops, businesses, cafes and recreation and tourist activities and accommodation.

Constitution Avenue's role in implementing Griffin's vision is one of an elegant and vibrant mixed use grand boulevard linking London Circuit to Russell. Existing works being carried out by the ACT Government to upgrade Constitution Avenue are consistent with this desired outcome and will deliver a base for a range of uses including: administrative; cultural, recreation and education facilities; retail; cafe/bar/restaurant; hotel/motel; residential; and tourism.

Territory Plan

The Territory Plan applies to the north-eastern and north-western parts of the city centre. The city centre is primarily zoned CZ1 – Core, which has broad objectives that seek to encourage a mix of predominantly commercial land uses that contribute to a diverse and active character. That mix of uses should promote liveability, vitality, opportunities for business investment and employment, all of which support the development of a cultural and community identity for the centre. It allows a wide and varied mix of uses that are consistent with those supported by the NCP. The existing spread of land uses (Figure 7) indicates some clustering of retail and education uses in parts of the city centre, with remaining uses spread across the area. Car parking dominates the City Hill area but is also spread throughout the city centre.

Analysis

The City Precinct Code within the Territory Plan provides additional planning, design, environmental and development controls for land within the city centre. Particular controls that influence city centre outcomes include:

- building heights limited to RL617 for consistency with the NCP. Particular blocks and sections have more detailed building height controls, including in some sections a limit of one building per section developing to the maximum building height of RL617
- main pedestrian areas required to incorporate active uses at ground level. These areas are around the Sydney and Melbourne buildings, City Walk, East Row, Garema Place, Petrie Plaza, Ainslie Place, and Childers Street
- solar access, which limits heights of buildings fronting main pedestrian areas and routes
- zero setbacks are generally required unless there is an established pattern of alternative setbacks.

Development capacity

The total development capacity of the city centre under existing planning and building controls is conservatively calculated to be 3,300,000m² of GFA. Of that amount, some 1,495,000m² is used in the following ways:

- 887,000m² (approx. 59%)- commercial / office
- 225,000m² (approx. 15.0%)- residential
- 165,000m² (approx. 11.0%)- retail / services
- 101,000m² (approx. 7.0%)- community or civic-use facility uses

- 60,000m² (approx. 4.0%)- tourism / recreation uses, and
- 57,000m² (approx. 4.0%)- hotel / short-term residential.

The remaining estimated 1,810,000m² of developable space represents a quantum greater than the existing city centre and shows there is sufficient capacity to grow to meet the city centre's future identified needs and potential.

Figure 7 – City centre land use distribution

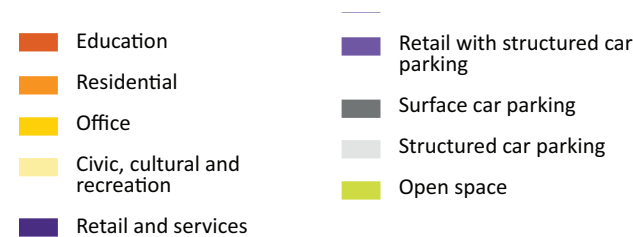
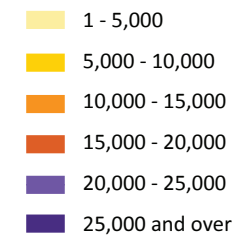


Figure 8 – GFA distribution in the city centre (m²)



Existing and built GFA is distributed across the city centre (Figure 8). The distribution reflects recent, more intensive development of smaller blocks and the floorspace of larger, single uses such as the ANU, Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) and the Canberra Centre. Blocks with a greater GFA are generally located on the outer areas of the city centre.

Figure 9 – Territory owned developable land

- Territory owned blocks with limited development constraints
- Territory owned blocks with development constraints



Government owned development sites

Most of the vacant or undeveloped land suitable for development within the city centre is owned by the ACT Government and is currently used as surface car parks, located between London Circuit and Vernon Circle. These car parks accommodate around 1,500 cars. However, they offer significant development potential with premier address opportunities to London Circuit and Vernon Circle.

Other sites also owned by the Territory, such as those in West Basin, are available for development after constraints (heritage, traffic and the like) are addressed (Figure 9). These sites take the total amount of land in the city centre owned by the Territory and possibly suitable for future development to approximately 400,000m².

Heritage

Griffin clearly identified the city centre as a commercial centre in terms of the scale, character, landmark potential, hierarchy of built forms, focal points and the close relationship of the built and natural environments. The design of the Sydney and Melbourne buildings, as two of the earliest buildings constructed in the new capital from 1926, has determined design guidelines for other buildings within the city centre. They are both listed on the ACT Heritage Register.

A number of other places within the city centre are entered on, or nominated to, the ACT or Commonwealth Heritage Registers for a variety of different heritage values, including Gus' Cafe, Glebe Park, City Hill, the ANZ Bank Building, Canberra Olympic Pool, Civic Square, Merry Go Round, Ian Potter House, Hotel Acton and the Shine Dome (Figure 10).

New developments of, beside or adjacent to, heritage items must consider their impacts on the identified significance of those heritage items.

Figure 10 – Heritage items in the city centre



Analysis

Waterways and stormwater

Two key water system catchments operate in the city centre.

The western catchment consists primarily of impervious surfaces and drains into Sullivans Creek, a concrete lined channel running approximately parallel to Northbourne Avenue and flowing directly into Lake Burley Griffin. It is supported by a series of water quality control ponds and wetlands to improve stormwater entering into Sullivans Creek.

The eastern catchment is much larger and contains a significant amount of pervious surfaces that generate a large amount of sediment when disturbed.

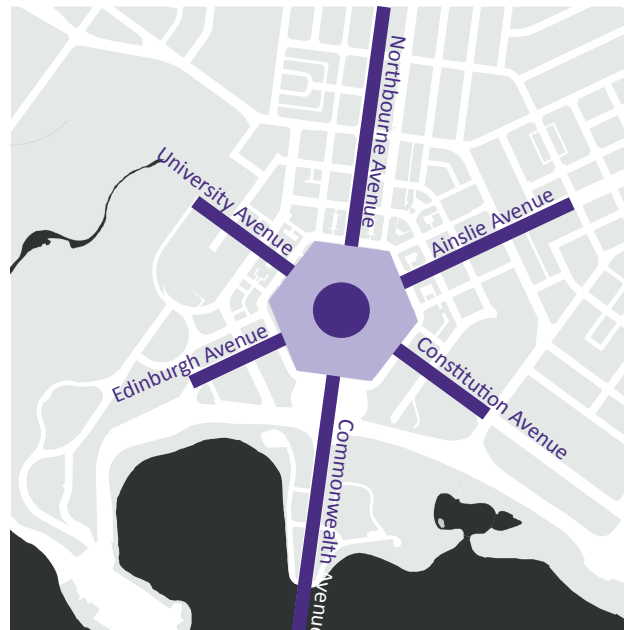
City Bus Interchange



Rond Pond in the roundabout of Coranderrk Street and Constitution Avenue acts as a trap to manage litter and sediment deposition which, during major storm events, can lead to flooding on Commonwealth Avenue and around the National Convention Centre.

Overall the stormwater system has sufficient capacity, although increased development in and around Turner, Braddon, Reid and Ainslie have the potential to generate increased stormwater runoff and place pressure on existing drainage systems. The incorporation of on-site detention as part of new development is reducing this risk.

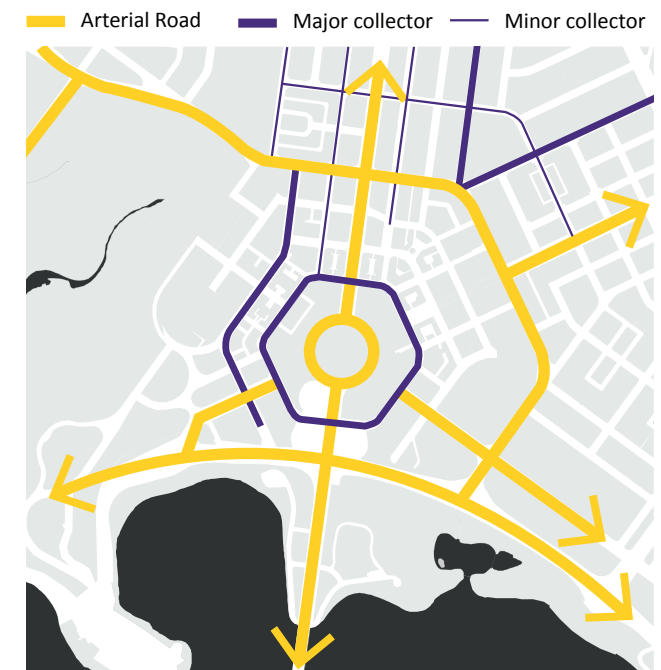
Figure 12 - Major entry points to the city centre



3.3 Transport and movement

The city centre is at the heart of Canberra's road and public transport network and is a key node for north-south and east-west road and public transport movements. The metropolitan road hierarchy channels east-west and north-south movements through the city centre in peak demand periods. Progressive improvements to the road network such as Gungahlin Drive extension and the Majura Parkway are designed to reduce north-south movements through the city centre.

Figure 13 - City centre road hierarchy



Given its role as a major employment, education and retail node, there is significant travel movement into the city centre throughout the day, but particularly during peak hour, as reflected in Figure 11.

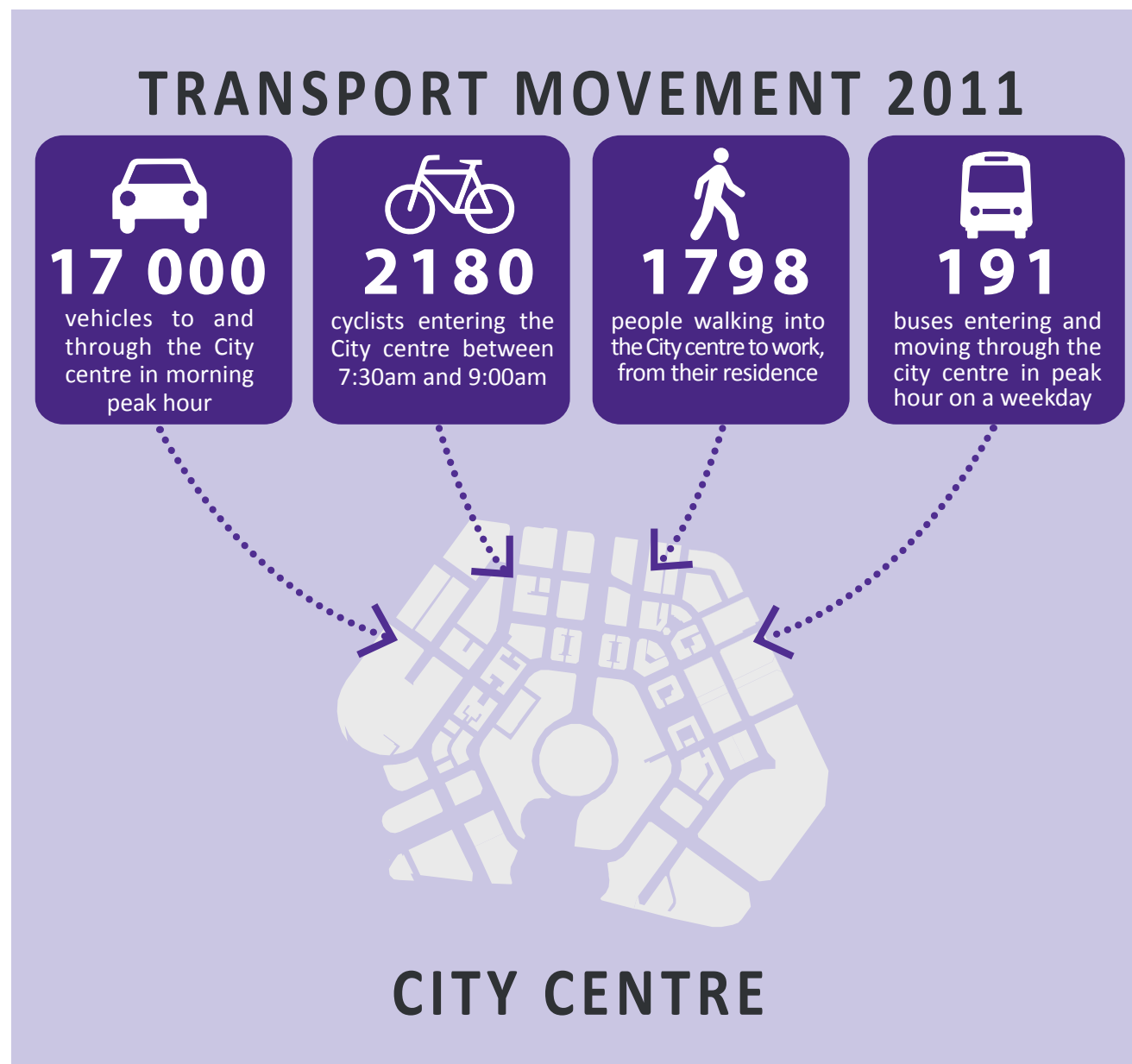
People driving cars represent 55% of all people travelling to the city centre, with an additional 15.8% arriving as car passengers.

Most arrive via Commonwealth Avenue, Barry Drive, Northbourne Avenue and Coranderrk Street (south) arterial routes (Figure 12). Current volumes on these roads represent 11 lanes of traffic in total, which at current car dependency levels, would become an additional five lanes of traffic or 4,147 car trips in peak hour if travel behaviour does not change.

Traffic modelling shows morning peak trip movements are dominated by southbound movements from Northbourne Avenue to Commonwealth Avenue through Vernon Circle. Approximately 55% of traffic – or about 1,700 vehicles per hour – goes through the city centre for destinations to the south of the lake.

The city centre's operation is impacted by its location on the intersection of two arterial routes. (Figure 13). East-west (Parkes Way) and north-south movements (Northbourne Avenue / Vernon Circle) across the broader metropolitan area are channelled through the city in peak demand periods. This heavy through-traffic constrains pedestrian and public transport movement and can act to limit development opportunities through poor access.

Figure 11 – Transport movements in to the city centre 2011



Analysis

Parkes Way was upgraded in 2013, but currently operates near capacity at points in peak periods, with eastbound movements between Clunies Ross Street and Anzac Parade estimated at about 1,300 vehicles per hour. Around 1,800 vehicles per hour cross Commonwealth bridge, with about 900 vehicles per hour heading west via Parkes Way and 900 vehicles per hour in the morning peak hour heading north via Northbourne Avenue.

Public transport and active travel

The 2011 Census indicates that sustainable transport modes are used for 29.4% of journeys to work (18.5% bus use, 10.9% walk or bike). Almost 200 buses enter the city centre on a weekday at peak time.

The frequent bus network is constrained by high traffic flows and delays along key city-bound corridors, with buses stuck in traffic at peak times. In the morning peak, buses experience delays on Northbourne, Commonwealth and Constitution avenues and on London Circuit. These constraints reduce reliability and would be improved by bus priority provisions within the city centre.

The south-west area of the city centre is currently poorly serviced in comparison with the northern and eastern parts of the city centre (Figure 14), largely due to the established routing of buses around London Circuit east and the existing location of the bus interchange at East Row. Pedestrian access analysis also indicates poor connections to and from the existing interchange to these areas.

Taxi services play a strong role in moving people to and from the city centre, particularly servicing the

Australian Parliament House and its operations. After hours, taxis provide the only form of public transport for the city centre.

Almost 3,000 people per day cycled or walked to the city centre on their journey to work in 2011. Many pedestrians enter the city from the surrounding residential suburbs to the north, with higher density residential developments in areas immediately north of the city centre supporting active travel.

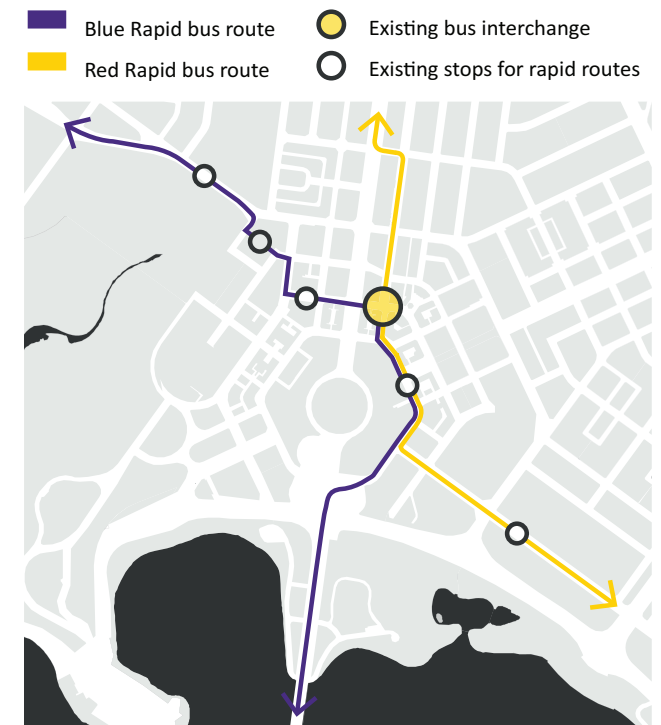
Once in the city centre, pedestrian movement currently concentrates around the core retail and employment areas in the north-west, around City

Vernon Circle



Walk, Alinga Street and Moore Street, representing a 'functional walking' network of around 1.7 km of street length with movement levels ranging from 1,530 people per hour (pph) on City Walk in the north to 730 pph by Akuna Street. City Hill and west London Circuit flow counts are under 30 pph. Figure 15 shows the focus of pedestrian activity being around the retail centre and indicates minimal cross-city pedestrian movement particularly in the southern parts of the city centre.

Figure 14 - Existing public transport routing



While parts of the city centre have a good standard of pedestrian facilities including wide footpaths, signalised crossings and a consistent network, a number of barriers exist to walking:

- The road network severs the connections between the existing retail hub, the lake and the western side of the city and City Hill creates a barrier to cross-city movement.
- Low levels of active frontage, few street entries on buildings, large areas of blank frontage, surface parking and inactive land are not attractive to pedestrians.

Figure 15 - Pedestrian activity 2011



- Commonwealth Avenue, Vernon Circle and Parkes Way can only be crossed in a few locations and it is not possible to cross informally. The clover leaf junctions and changes in level form a barrier to easy movement on foot.
- Vehicles in the city centre are given priority, with long wait-times for pedestrians between crossing signals.

Figure 16 - Publicly available parking in the city centre



Parking

The ease of parking availability in the past has supported older retail development that does not have access to its own parking. Over time vehicle reliant services and shopping facilities have tended to agglomerate into the city's centre's retail mall served by 'within-development' public parking.

The ample supply of public parking in and around the city centre encourages its use. Around 10,500 publicly accessible, long and short stay car parks are located in the city centre (Figure 16).

- Around 2,500 long-stay spaces are available in the city centre, many provided in the Canberra Centre retail mall. A similar number of off-street spaces exist in the suburbs surrounding the city centre in Turner, Reid, Braddon, Parkes and Acton.
- 1,450 government-provided parking spaces are located in the area within London Circuit on land that is suitable for development.
- There is spare capacity of approximately 1,000 public car spaces at the surface parking at West Basin in Acton and adjacent to CIT Reid in Parkes.
- 800 short-stay parking spaces are located in the city centre. Their key role is in supporting local and district access to services in the main metropolitan commercial centre.

Government car parks located on valuable, future development sites around City Hill and West Basin create barriers to functional walking and discourage cross-city access and connections.



Since May 2013, planning controls have not required minimum levels of parking to be provided, with a market-based approach determining its provision.

Capital Metro light rail

The Capital Metro project will deliver the ACT's first light rail route connecting Gungahlin Town Centre with the city centre via Northbourne Avenue as stage 1. The terminus of stage 1 is proposed to be located on Northbourne Avenue adjacent to the current bus station at West Row to provide ease of interchange. Planning for the future extension of light rail through the city is being considered, including the possibility of a multimodal transport hub in the City Hill area.

Griffin Centre Skate Park



Pending Commonwealth Government decisions on any future High Speed Rail system that include Canberra, a centrally placed multimodal hub could have a transformative effect in bringing tourists and visitors directly to the heart of Canberra.

3.4 Community infrastructure

Community facilities and services can deliver strong and active bonds between the community and their urban environments, serving as places and spaces where community interests, needs and skills can be expressed, encouraged and developed; where community programs and events can be held; and where people from a diverse range of backgrounds can learn, celebrate, socialise and support each other. Community infrastructure can include education facilities (schools, childcare, universities); healthcare facilities (medical clinics, health centres, hospitals); social, cultural and recreational facilities (community centres, libraries, theatres, sports facilities); and civic facilities (courts, government administration, police, emergency services).

The city centre serves the civic, cultural and community needs of people on local, district and regional levels (Figure 17).

The city centre provides a significant proportion of the ACT's community, cultural, educational and judicial services that attract people from across the ACT and the wider region. It also serves day-to-day needs for those living locally and in neighbouring districts and is generally well serviced in terms of the provision of a range of community facilities. While the city centre is well-serviced in terms of the number of physical

community facilities, many of these facilities are ageing or were not built-for-purpose.

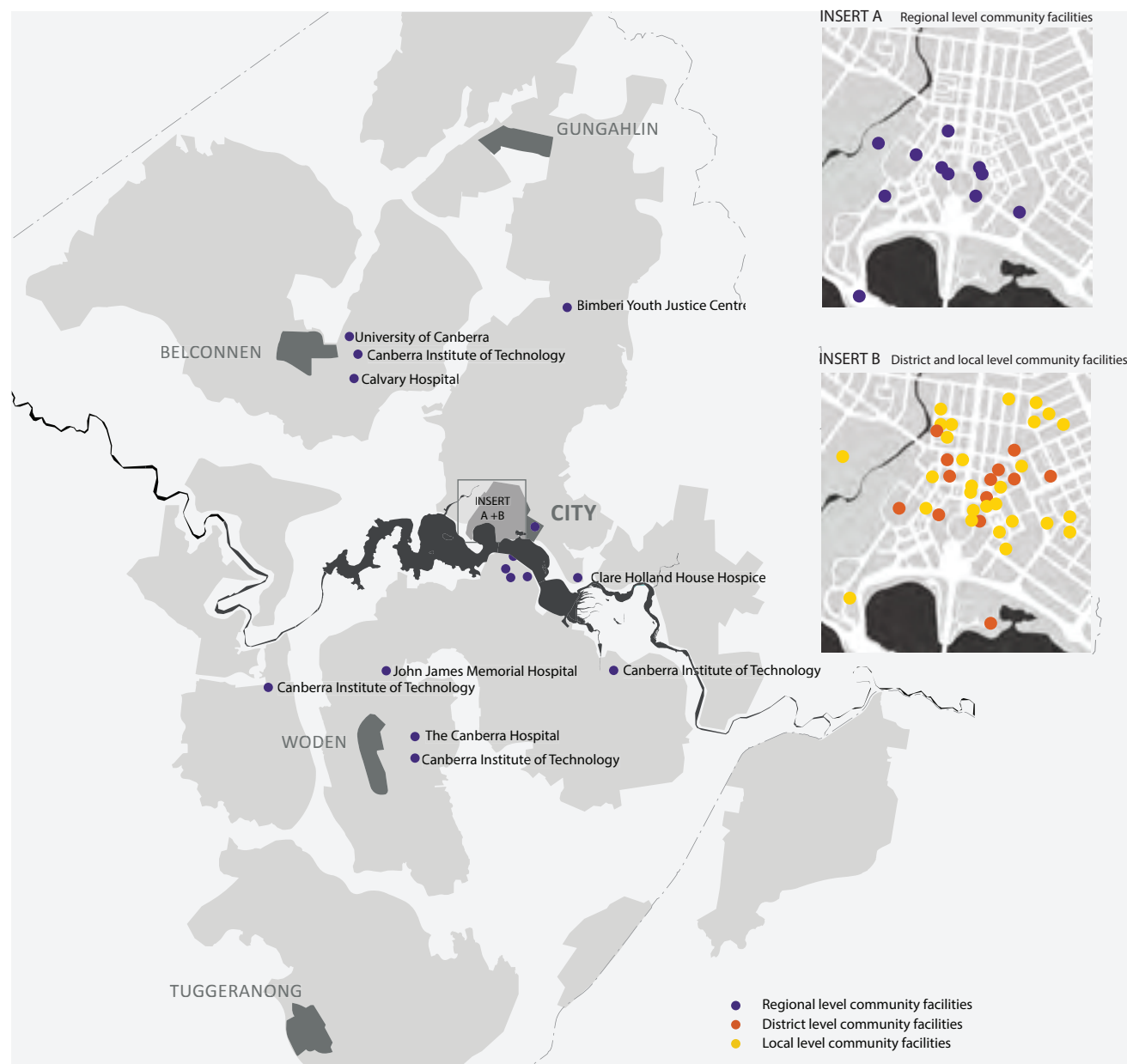
Existing community facilities are predominantly located in the north-east and north-west areas of the centre, with other 'facility hubs' such as the judiciary hub (centred on Knowles Place) and cultural facility hub (centred around Civic Square and Childers Street). Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT Reid campus) and the Australian National University (ANU) form education hubs to the east and west of the city centre respectively. Gorman House Arts Centre and Ainslie Arts Centre on the periphery of City's north-east area form community arts and cultural hubs.

The spread of community facility hubs across the city centre that are not served by clear and suitable links and connections reduces their service effectiveness. Where additional or new facilities are provided, there are real benefits in clustering the services near existing hubs and/or within the core of the city centre to activate and support key public realm areas.

A broad range of community facilities exist in the city centre:

- Education facilities – three childcare centres offer long day care services for the local residential population of the city centre, however their capacity to service the workforce population is not clear. There are no primary or high schools located within the city centre, and students in the area travel to nearby schools in the wider district. The ANU and CIT also fall within the city centre boundaries.

Figure 17 – City centre community infrastructure provision and services



Analysis

- Health facilities – appropriate levels of GP services exist for the current and future City population. A Community Health Centre also exists and means to enhance its services are currently under consideration by the ACT Government.
- Community meeting places – the Griffin Centre provides a community hub with meeting and office spaces for community organisations while other local meeting spaces are found in a number of facilities such as churches (e.g. Pilgrim House), Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, Youth Centre and Civic Library. Gorman House and Corroboree Park Hall on the outer edge of the city centre also serve as meeting spaces.

Bush Pack, City Walk



- Arts and cultural facilities – the city centre is the focus of the ACT's art and cultural institutions, including museums and galleries, the Civic Library, Canberra Theatre and Playhouse and the Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG). The Civic Library was refurbished approximately seven years ago and is an important district level facility, serving a broader community than just the local city centre residential and worker population. On the periphery of the city centre, the Ainslie and Gorman House arts centres provide rehearsal and performance space for community and youth music, as well as gallery spaces, artist studios and office space.
- Emergency services facilities – there is one police station within the city centre and a fire and rescue station is located in Ainslie.
- Judicial facilities – courts (Children's Court, Family Court of Australia, ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Magistrates Court and Supreme Court) are located in the city centre and are considered sufficient for the future population of the region.
- Targeted facilities – the city centre is served by a youth centre (Club 12/25), Canberra Seniors' Centre and a number of religious facilities.

3.5 Public realm and design

The public realm is the urban spaces that are shaped by streets, parks, open spaces and the built environment and that deliver character and amenity to a city and its precincts through streets, parks, plazas and open spaces. Distinctive spaces make cities memorable and can act as destinations themselves.

A well designed and maintained public realm provides a competitive edge for cities; tourists, residents and companies are drawn to active, popular spaces.

The public realm in the city centre is made up of a number of elements, each of which shows some distinctive characteristics.

Pedestrian network and activity

The pedestrian network is centred on City Walk and Alinga Street, while London Circuit connects the main retail area with areas in the west of the city centre. Recent developments in City West have created destinations to attract pedestrians to cross the city centre, with points of interest enroute to enhance the sense of safety and amenity. While pedestrian volume levels are less in City West, the frequency of movement between the ANU and the city centre is increasing.

The ACT Government has invested strongly in replacing aged and damaged public infrastructure and improving safety, amenity and accessibility, however real issues remain, including:

- Pedestrian movements east-west across the city centre are constrained as a result of traffic and poor accessibility. City Hill and the lake foreshore, in particular, are isolated by a lack of access; Parkes Way and the exit ramps around City Hill separate the active areas of the city and the lake.
- Large areas of blank building façades detract from amenity and discourage walking.

- There has been a decline in active edges, vitality and amenity along City Walk, Petrie Plaza and Garema Place with the shift of retail focus towards the Canberra Centre.
- The broad distribution of the city centre's entertainment and recreation facilities highlights the need for safe and legible pedestrian routes, particularly to public transport locations. The venues of City West, including the Street Theatre, Llewellyn Hall and the REP theatre lack convenient and safe after-hours access to public transport.

Landscape and vistas

The proximity of Black Mountain and Mount Ainslie have produced a building skyline dominated by bushland, a 'nature in the city' context that reflects Griffin's original plan and is highly valued by the community. While Griffin's intentions have been realised in areas such as Petrie Plaza, streets such as London Circuit and Marcus Clarke Street have areas with no street trees at all, even where upgrades have taken place.

The City structure provides a good basis for view corridors (Figure 18), however many are only evident when viewed from outside the city inwards, or from a height. The most important views are of City Hill from Northbourne Avenue, and of the Central National area from Vernon Circle.

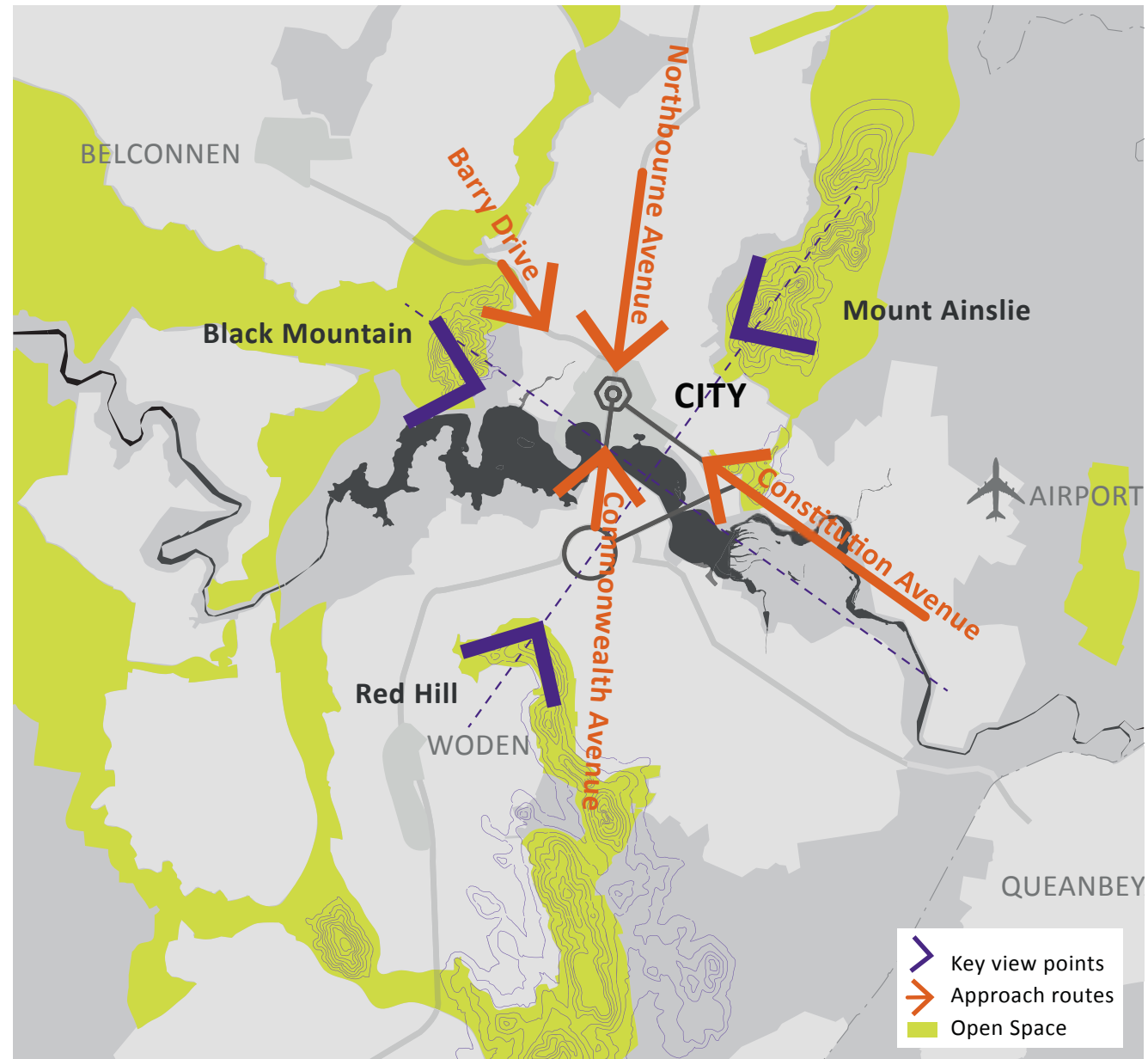


Figure 18 - View corridors and vistas

Analysis

Parks and plazas

The city centre's parks and plazas provide a good variety of spaces, from small pocket squares through to the larger Glebe and Commonwealth parks, linking the city centre to the landscape of the inner hills. While the formal nature and size of some of the plazas (such as Civic Square), contribute to the image and character of the city and parks may have a high landscape quality, they are often not readily accessible or suitable for a range of uses. Issues include:

Figure 19 - Pedestrian accessibility to open spaces



- Links between parks and their locations are often difficult to access (Figure 19). The foreshore parklands of West Basin and Commonwealth Park are close but largely inaccessible from the city centre.
- City Hill is underutilised, difficult to access and forms a barrier to east-west pedestrian movement. The heritage-listed plantings will influence future design outcomes for City Hill.
- Smaller parks such as Veterans Park provide for the open space needs of workers at lunch time, however Glebe Park is the only highly developed park with recreational facilities. Similarly, Hobart Place provides good amenity for office workers, but the lack of diverse surrounding uses and surveillance minimises after-hours activity.
- Civic Square is the established formal destination for recognition of achievements and civic action, but is not well used. There is limited spillage of adjoining activities into the square. The square fronting the Supreme Court provides visual formality, however is poorly used.
- There are areas or nodes of more intense activity that can create a destination such as the tighter urban spaces between Gus's Cafe and Garema Place or the restaurants along Bunda Street.
- Beyond being a space to walk through or sit in, many of the City's public spaces provide little infrastructure to encourage alternative activities. While the chess pit and projection screen are good initiatives, they are seldom used.

Garema Place and City Walk are perceived as the public heart of the City. The predominance of two storey buildings provides a human scale and supports solar access to the public spaces they surround. Buildings in this area are built to the boundary with active uses at ground level, providing continuity, activity and a sense of enclosure. The level of public amenity in Garema Place and the adjacent City Walk area is generally high, with wide canopied trees providing summer shade, seating and public art. There is a high level of active frontage with retail, cafes and restaurants that served a large and vibrant outdoor eating area in previous years, although this has diminished more recently.

Both Garema Place and City Walk have been rejuvenated several times, however have never quite attained a level of vitality that sustains both as the city's heart. This is partly due to competition from the successful expansion of outdoor eating areas associated with the Canberra Centre on Bunda Street.

Legibility of streets and spaces

A clear street hierarchy provides legibility to a city and is shaped by street layouts, levels of usage, pedestrian paths and traffic volumes. Other factors that assist in legibility of the street hierarchy are building heights and form, the amount of activity, street plantings and the proximity of buildings.

The volume of traffic on Northbourne Avenue and Vernon Circle divides the city centre and reduces the opportunity for a clear street hierarchy (Figure 20).

It is difficult to differentiate between streets in parts of the city centre.

When approaching the city, particularly from the north along Northbourne Avenue, there is no sense of arrival and few streets within the city centre stand out as memorable. The lack of hierarchy and signage to city centre features or areas contributes to a lack of legibility; it is difficult for visitors to understand where the main retail area is, for example.

The greater utilisation of Marcus Clark and Cooyong Streets as the main links to the arterial system (rather than Northbourne Avenue) would enable

Figure 20 - Legibility and pedestrian movement

- Arterial road
- High pedestrian use
- - - Pedestrian disconnection
- Uniform street appearance
- Lack of street trees
- ⊙ Lacks entry statement



Vernon Circle and London Circuit to become the premier location for commercial investment and help create a sense of the centre of the city. Slower moving local traffic would also support access to, and activity on, City Hill.

Another significant factor limiting a clear street hierarchy is the lack of defining street trees. Continuous plantings of large canopied trees on the main avenues and streets could create legibility and improve way-finding in the City.

Figure 21 - Distribution of building heights

- 1 - 2 storey
- 3 - 4 storey
- 5 - 6 storey
- 7 - 8 storey
- 9 - 10 storey
- 11 - 15 storey
- 16 - 19 storey



Built form and design

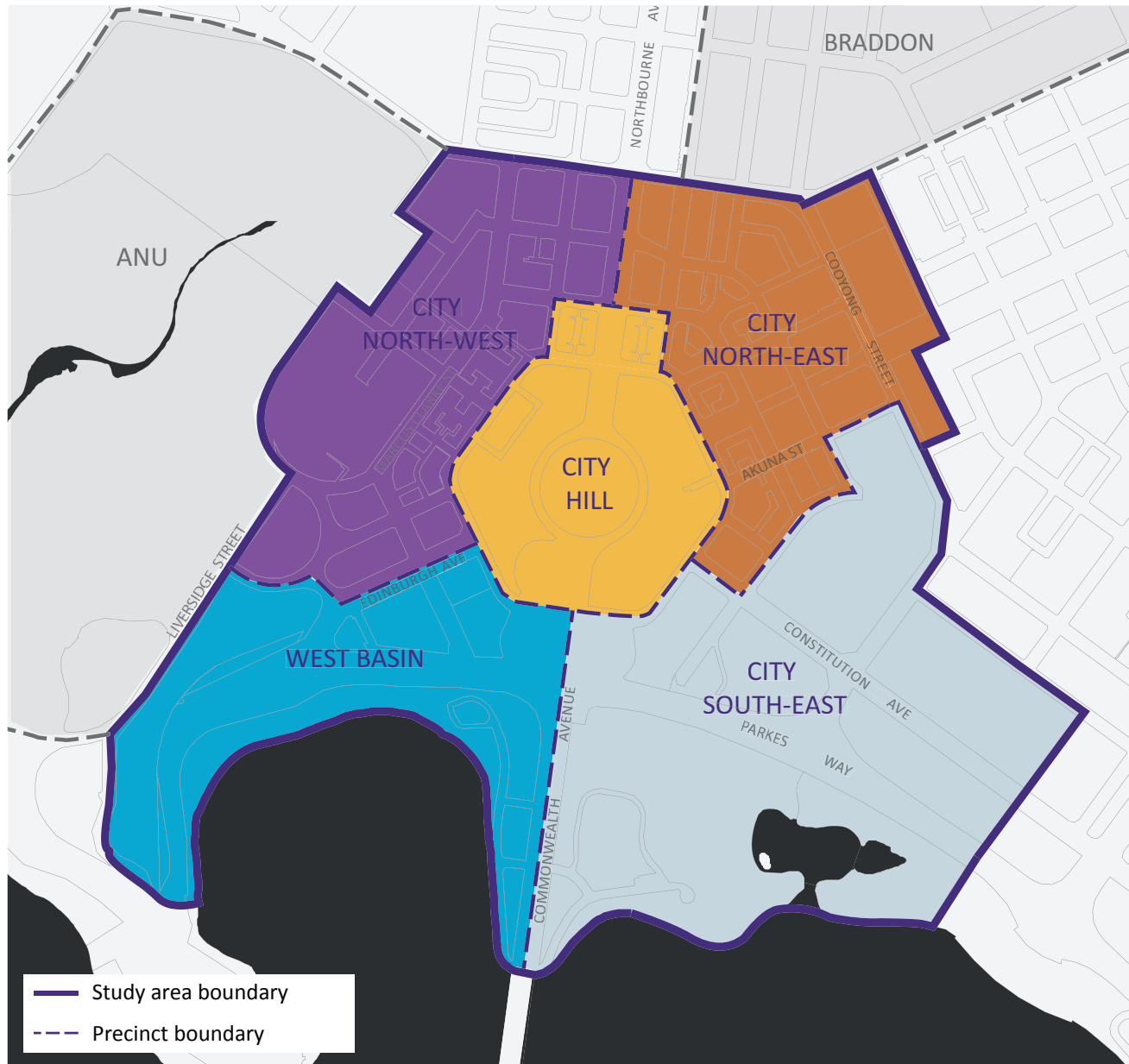
The current city form is compact (Figure 21), with mid-rise development responding to the hills behind. The density and scale of the city reflects a European tradition of urbanism where building heights are kept at 6-10 storeys with the intent of defining the public realm. Current height controls in the city centre give a unity to the built form, ensure the visual primacy of Parliament House and provide a strong relationship with the landscape and inner hills.

The predominant built form reflects architecture of the years between the 1950s and the 1970s, with large floor plates and heavy grain buildings creating a lack of diversity and activity at ground floor. Colonnades are common across the city centre and provide a potential unifying element, as well as providing weather protection.

Many blocks are characterised by multiple ownership, limiting opportunities to achieve best use or diversity (of design, use or investor profile) and can result in stagnation and reduced development capacity.

3.6 Strengthening character

Character areas are discrete parts of the city centre defined by the predominant use within them, or by features such as topography, views, public realm, built form and design, street pattern, and the population who live in, or use the area. Character can be positive or negative, strong or weak and be strengthened and used to differentiate areas as the city centre grows and accommodates different uses and users.



The natural topography of drainage ways, the natural rise of City Hill and the longer views and vistas to hills including Mt Ainslie provided Griffin with the features to organise the city centre as part of the National Triangle. The axes of avenues and a radial layout are features of the city centre and are the basis for the identification of its five character areas (in Figure 22). The character areas are identified as:

- West Basin
- City North-West
- City North-East
- City South-East, and
- City Hill.

In addition there are several other areas surrounding the city centre that have a distinct character and have important physical, social, economic and environmental relationships with the city centre. The surrounding areas of Braddon and ANU are important as they interact strongly with the city centre.

Key features of city centre character

- Northbourne Avenue straddles the eastern and western areas of the city centre. The Australian National University (ANU) campus defines the city centre's western boundary and marks a transition between campus and city centre urban character. The predominantly residential areas of Reid and Braddon define the eastern area boundaries.
- The base of City Hill is London Circuit and this radial street defines the City Hill area with City Hill Park at its centre. Edinburgh Avenue is a strong physical boundary that defines new and future development of West Basin with new and established development in City North-West.

Figure 22 - City centre character areas

- The south-east area includes Commonwealth Park.
- Land uses in all areas are generally mixed, however retail is focussed in north-east; education/research activities are focussed in the north-west and south-east; commercial/business and legal services are distributed around City Hill and in the north-west. Residential use is unevenly distributed throughout the city centre, although it has most recently increased density in the north-west with the provision of student housing associated with the ANU and in the northern part of West Basin. Table 4 indicates the proportion of current use in the character areas and the city centre as a whole.
- City Walk and Garema Place are older areas of the city centre much loved for their human scale. Colonnades and awnings and clarity of architectural language contribute to a consistency in urban structure and form that is positive.

- A fine grain is associated with the older areas of the city centre. Smaller blocks side-by-side on which low terraced buildings form continuous frontages are characteristic of this older development. A large number of owners/tenants and frequent entrances to shop front uses off streets define the earliest development in the city centre.
- Consolidated ownership and management has seen the development of internalised semi-public spaces. These internal spaces are high quality, well managed and weather protected and provide access to a mix of retail. This type of development has negative impacts on public space and neighbouring development, however.

Potential for change

The following section provides a summary of the current character in each of the character areas,

based around the remaining five strategic themes, including identification of opportunities for change and redevelopment.

An overall assessment of the character areas indicates that the more established areas of the city centre have the strongest character (Figure 23). Areas with the weakest or least developed character are those with the greatest potential for change.

Land ownership patterns are also an indicator of the development or redevelopment potential of the character areas. The established areas of the city have a mix of ownership patterns. Opportunities to refurbish and renew exist, while opportunities to redevelop are more constrained.

Undeveloped areas of City Hill, West Basin and the City South-East area are largely owned by the Territory. This presents a good opportunity to guide positive development outcomes.

Figure 23 - Character areas – potential for change

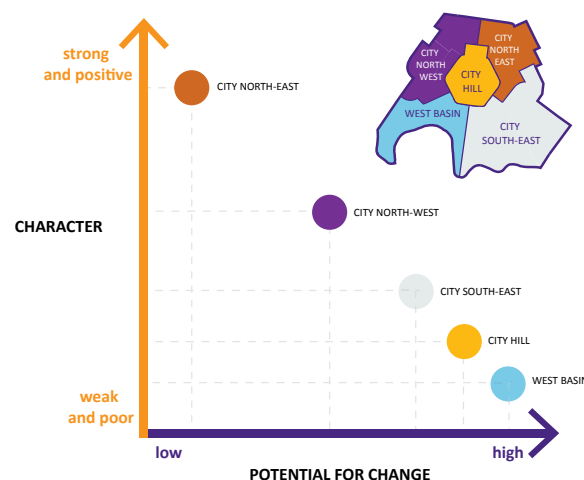


Table 4 - Land use distribution across character areas

	West Basin	City North-West	City North-East	City South-East	City Hill	City TOTAL
Community and civic use	0%	6%	1%	16%	50%	7%
Retail/services	4%	5%	24%	1%	0.5%	11%
Commercial	33%	63.5%	73 %	35%	21.5%	59%
Residential	44%	23%	0.5%	19%	0%	15%
Accommodation	15%	2.5%	1.5%	9%	0%	4%
Tourism/Recreation	4%	0%	0%	20%	28%	4%

Analysis

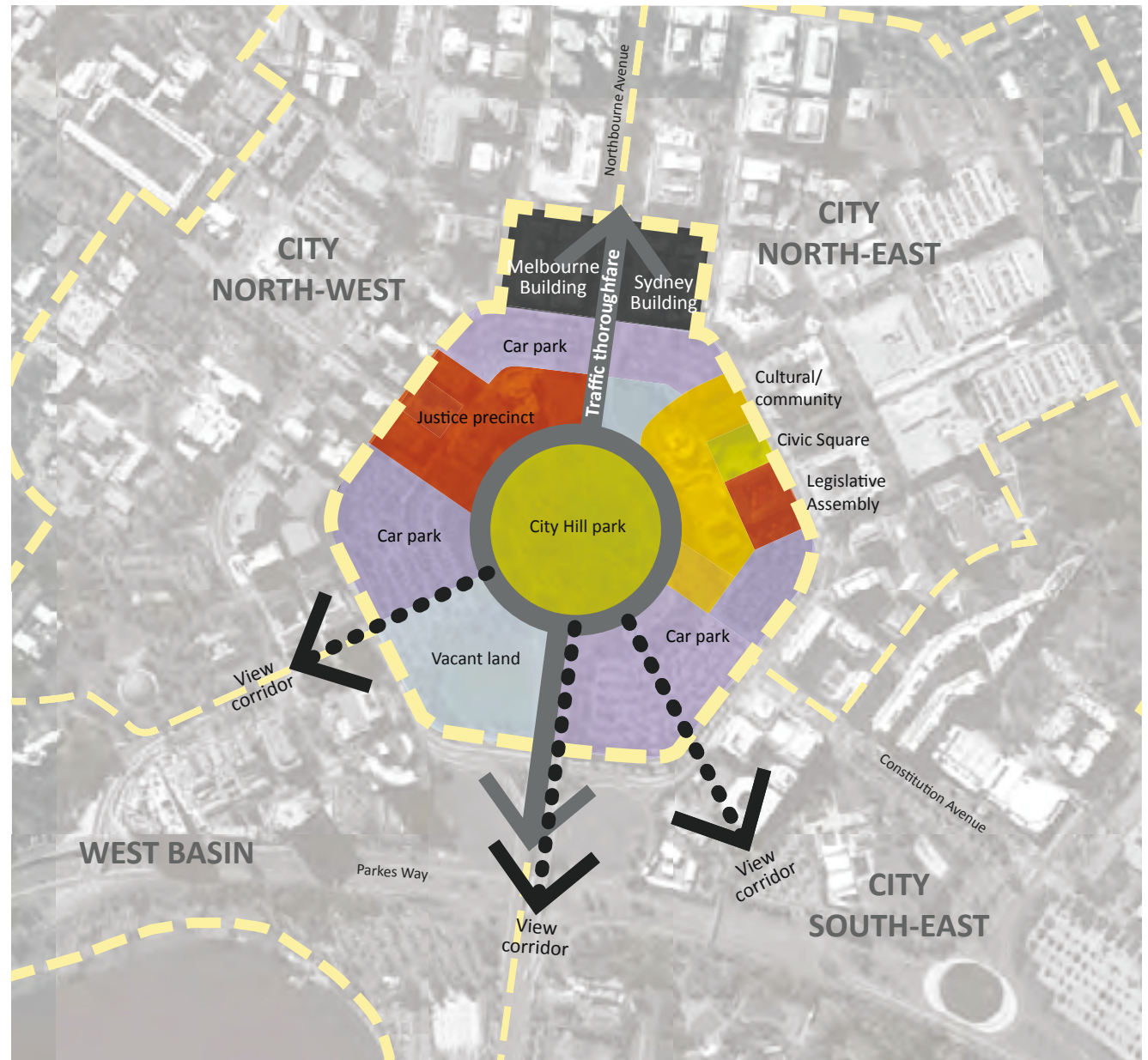
City Hill

The area around City Hill is largely undeveloped, providing significant opportunity to establish a positive character. Although the geographic centre of the city, City Hill is disconnected and does not appear or act as the city's core. This lack of a centre makes it difficult to understand the city centre form and is reflected in the disorientation experienced by visitors.

The disconnection of the built environment detracts from the area's positive cultural and civic uses and role. Providing additional uses, places and good connections to other parts of the city centre will benefit existing uses and ensure City Hill Park is an area of high value and symbolic importance.

This area is largely undeveloped, containing only a small proportion of the city's floor area. Cultural/community and civic uses make up half this floor area, centred around Civic Square and the law precinct around Knowles Square. The area also contains large areas of surface carparks.

City Hill character area contains the city centre's most identifiable structures – the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings. These buildings are heritage listed with many people identifying with them as a clear reference to the early planning for the city. Their location and significance provides clear opportunities for them to be considered as gateway sites and marked for particular treatment and design consideration as the area develops.



THEME	CITY HILL
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No residents; 400 employees. • 10,300m² GFA.
Land use and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly cultural and community uses and car parking. • A key established area in City yet to densify. Contains large future development sites (currently parking). • Grain of the built areas is generally coarse due to the types of uses (courts, theatre etc). Blocks are large while the scale is low, three storeys. • Limited active frontages due to types of use and arrangement of buildings onto formal squares, characteristic of era of construction.
Community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key location of higher-order cultural, judicial and governance facilities that service the ACT/wider region. • Under consideration for community facility upgrades. • City Hill Park, Vernon Circle and London Circuit are a physical barrier to accessing City Hill area facilities.
Transport and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vernon Circle is an arterial road: 2,500 vehicles travel through Vernon Circle during morning peak hour. • Has heavy through-traffic, constraining pedestrian and public transport movement. • Low pedestrian flow counts (under 30 people/hr) compared to other areas. • City Hill Park is a barrier to movement between the different sides of city centre. • Area provides the City's largest volume of government managed public parking (1,450 spaces).
Public realm and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of mix of uses and building frontage limits levels of activity. • Blank façades and the lack of building entries from Vernon Circle detract from amenity. • Civic Square is not inviting and not clearly linked to Vernon Circle and City Hill Park. • City Hill Park trees have symbolic and heritage value, but reduce usability and safety. • Pedestrian movements are constrained due to traffic volume, accessibility and lack of amenity. • Minimal tree canopy along Vernon Circle and London Circuit reduces character, framing of vistas and public realm shade. • No clear link from City Hill Park to the City's open space network including Commonwealth Park and Sullivan's Creek.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is sufficient capacity and vacant land to meet future growth requirements. • Increased residential development will improve the city's vitality and activity. • Potential to create a transport hub on/around City Hill, incorporating Capital Metro. • Removal of through traffic will support residential and more active land uses. • Improving pedestrian connections will enhance development potential. • City Hill can transform into a functional public park, with easy and safe access. • Opportunity to consolidate government activity. • City Hill can become the true core of the city and the focus of community life.

Analysis

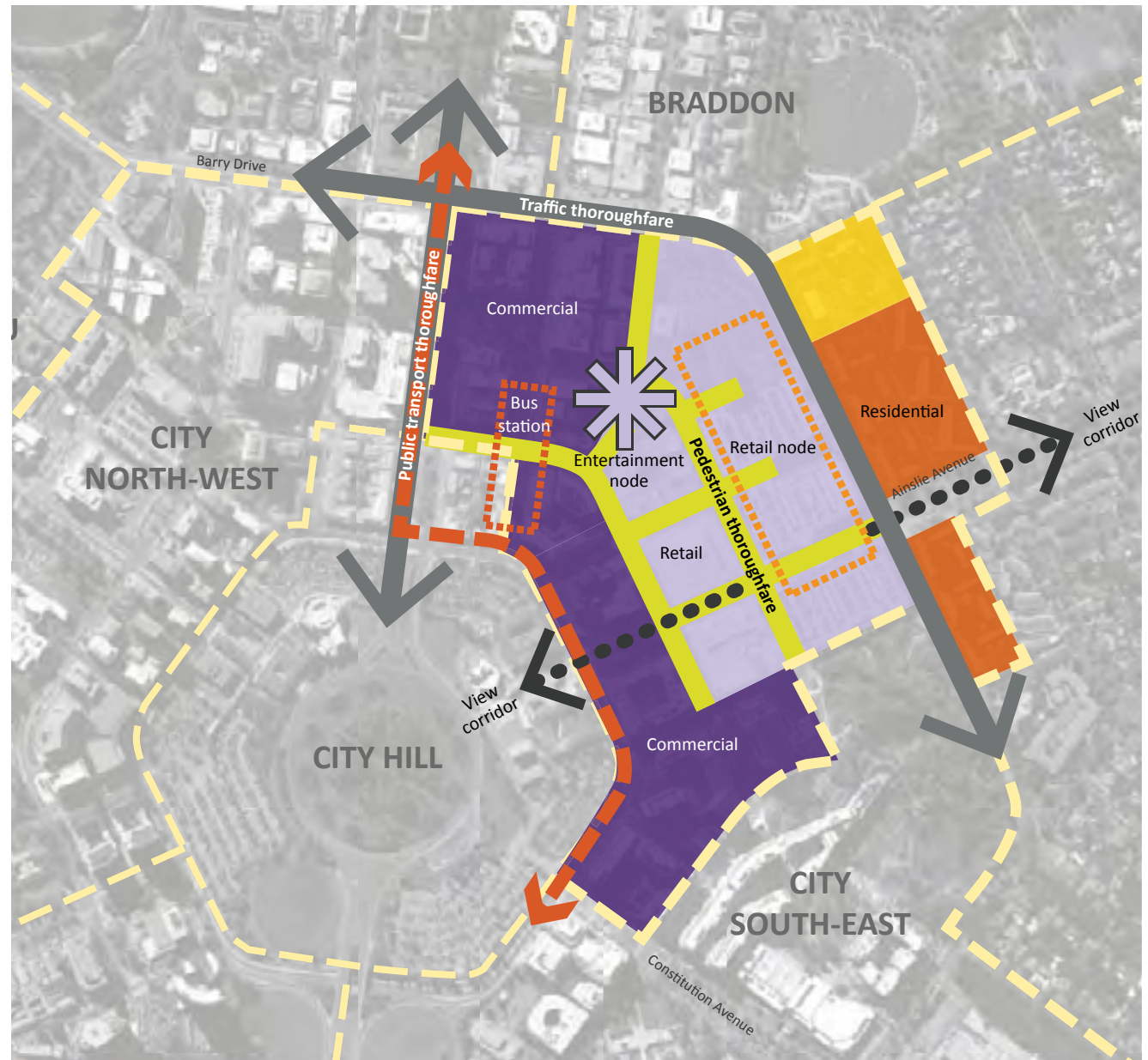
City North-East

This area is dominated by retail and commercial activities. It is also the entertainment area of the city centre.

City Walk, Garema Place and Petrie Plaza form an extensive area of pedestrianised streets that characterise the area as the focus of the city centre, with Garema Place a significant public square; it therefore has the highest levels of pedestrian use. A mix of fine grain, low scale buildings and larger floor area, low scale development with consistent setbacks are evident in the area.

The Canberra Centre retail mall (and car parking) is a major attractor. Despite being a large inward focussed development, it contributes to street and pedestrian activity. The development responds to the urban grid but some street frontages contribute little to the public realm. The high level of retail provision in the city centre has seen space in older areas struggle to be leased.

Connection to neighbouring areas of Braddon and Reid are constrained by the arterial traffic on Cooyong and Ballumbir streets. The urban environment of these streets suffers as a result and pedestrians experience delays at intersections. Ainslie Avenue and Lonsdale Street are important north-east area connection locations.



THEME	CITY NORTH-EAST
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx. 800 residents but significant employment population of 14,100. • 387,700m² commercial (GFA).
Land use and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly single-use commercial and retail with some entertainment areas e.g. dining, cinema. • Grain of the built areas is generally fine with low scale (older) developments alongside large floor plate retail and commercial. • Several new building to RL617, however majority of buildings low to medium height. • The Canberra Centre is a major attractor for the area, but forms a large internalised area. • The high level of retail provision in City North-East has seen space in older areas struggle to be leased.
Community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of key youth and community centre facilities that service those living locally and in neighbouring districts.
Transport and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatest volumes of vehicles arrive to the city centre through the key arterial routes including Barry Drive/Cooyong Street. • Connection to neighbouring areas of Braddon and Reid are constrained by the arterial traffic on Cooyong and Ballumbir streets. • Pedestrian movement within city centre is mainly concentrated around this retail and employment area, around City Walk, Alinga Street and Moore Street. Is a high 'functional' walking area, with City Walk recording high flow counts (1,530 people/hr) with very little everyday walking outside this area. • Provides the largest volume of privately operated public parking.
Public realm and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains highest level of public realm activity and pedestrian amenity in city centre. • High use of awnings, contrasting with colonnades elsewhere. • As the focus for retail moves north towards the Canberra Centre and Braddon, vacant shop fronts have reduced vitality and street level activity along City Walk, Petrie Plaza and Garema Place.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity exists to further enhance and activate key public realm areas including Garema Place and City Walk. • There is capacity to meet future growth requirements. • Proximity to future light rail alignment and stops. • Opportunity for entry statement on Northbourne Ave. • Core retail area could be enhanced with residential sites. • Concentration of bulk retail here supports boutique / niche retail in other areas.

Analysis

City South-East

The City South-East area has significant potential for intensification and character improvement.

Commonwealth and Glebe parks are significant features, however the benefits to the character of the area are only partially realised. The large scale festivities and events that occur periodically at Commonwealth Park are poorly supported by the south-east city area.

Larger block sizes in the area contribute to larger buildings and varied building types resulting in an inconsistency of grain and scale. Varied uses exist, however they provide low levels of activity. A lack of quality in several buildings and areas of public realm weaken the character of the area.

Land uses such as the casino, hotel, pool and convention centre distinguish the area. The Canberra Institute of Technology is a positive use in the area, however connections to the city centre are of poor quality. Future plans to develop Constitution Avenue into a grand boulevard with active uses at ground level support plans for the eventual expansion of light rail along this corridor.

This area has a strong focus on tourism and recreation with 20% of the total floor area. This is complemented by Glebe and Commonwealth parks. Very little retail use exists in this area.



THEME	CITY SOUTH-EAST
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 640 residents, 3,000 employees. • 81,200m² GFA.
Land use and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly tourism, recreation and commercial. • A key established area of the city centre yet to densify. • Contains large future development sites (currently parking). • Some mix of medium grain built form, although scale and extent of parts provides much coarser appearance, with larger blocks with large floor plate buildings. • Minimal active frontages produce little activity beyond entries. • Mixed uses but low levels of activity.
Community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) in neighbouring Reid is a key asset for the area; it brings people, activity and energy, but needs to connect to the city.
Transport and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area provides a proportion of periphery city centre all day public surface parking. • Greatest volumes of vehicles arrive to the city centre through the key arterial routes including Cooyong Street/Commonwealth Ave. • Very low pedestrian movement levels.
Public realm and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the city's key public parks (Glebe Park and Commonwealth Park), however there is no clear link between the parks and between parks and the city centre. Park locations are not legible to visitors. • Lack of active frontages and indirect or constricted pedestrian areas, together with lack of weather protection produces poor results. • Key city entry point and view corridor with Constitution Ave. • Parkes Way acts as a barrier to access the lake and foreshore.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key location for aquatic facility, exhibition and educational (secondary-level) facilities that service the ACT/wider region. • Area is in close proximity to commercial and retail core of the city centre. • Easy access to recreation facilities. • Contains large, government-owned future development sites. • Opportunity to connect with CIT and the wider city centre framework. • Proximity to future Constitution Ave public transport route.

Analysis

West Basin

Fronting the lake foreshore, West Basin connects Acton Peninsula with the more formal central basin of Lake Burley Griffin. Limited lake use activities exist and as open space, its quality is low. Temporary surface parking also weakens the character of the area. Connections between the city centre and West Basin are via a single pedestrian bridge over Parkes Way.

Development around the Acton Hotel has great character and is a good example for future development as structure and built form assessment of the area highlights positives such as the street level activity and within block public spaces. Like the City North-West, a local hub of activity is emerging as a residential neighbourhood establishes itself.

This area is also largely undeveloped, although it has significant development potential.



THEME	WEST BASIN
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 650 residents, 1200 employees. • Around 33 000m² GFA.
Land use and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly residential with hotel and commercial uses, public car parking and passive open space. • Contains large future development sites (currently parking). • Buildings generally setback from boundaries that allow landscaped perimeters. • Development around Acton Hotel has strong and modern character and is a good example for future development with high levels of street activity and within-block public spaces. • Undeveloped lake frontage.
Community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No community facility infrastructure present. • Not well connected to the National Museum or ANU facilities.
Transport and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor public transport service due to established routing of buses mainly around London Circuit. Poor pedestrian access to and from the existing bus interchange area. • Parkes Way can only be crossed by pedestrians from West Basin in a few locations. • Area provides a proportion of periphery city centre all day public surface parking. • Limited connection to eastern parts of city centre. • Surrounded by major roads.
Public realm and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older buildings setback from street on podiums, with some blank facades. • New Acton area provides good relationship to street with awning and active frontages, finer grain and shared ways. • Limited lakeside activation. • Design of new buildings provides variety, sustainability and facade articulation at a high quality.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An area with high potential for change where new development can establish a lively and diverse character. New Acton character provides a base for future. • Contains large future development sites (under NCP) and in the City to the Lake proposal. • Improving pedestrian connections from city centre to the lake will enhance development potential. • Opportunities to connect to University for greater creative industry growth. • Enhance the lake frontage and transform into a highly active space.

Analysis

City North-West

Development resulting from collaboration between the ANU and ACT Government, a concerted master planning effort and new development has seen significant change in City North-West over the last five years. It is the most intensely developed area of the city with an existing and growing residential population.

The area demonstrates a diverse character. Student, arts and theatre communities are establishing themselves and complementary uses have emerged. The proximity to the ANU and legal and commercial office employment within the area contributes to the diversity of character.

A strong east-west connection with City North-East exists along Alinga street, which has active and varied retail uses; Latin American Plaza forms a focus for what can be identified as the student neighbourhood.

The urban structure and form of the area is generally larger floor plate commercial buildings and student accommodation. A trend to larger development on larger blocks is evident.



THEME	CITY NORTH-WEST
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,030 residents (large student population), 13,600 employees. • 374,600m² commercial GFA.
Land use and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly commercial with limited retail at ground level. Some community-use and residential (incl. student housing). • Generally medium grain, high density. • Buildings built to street boundary, allowing public spaces between buildings. These spaces vary in size, quality and landscape.
Community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based theatre and arts facilities along with regional tertiary educational facilities. • Community facilities include judicial and cultural facilities. Close proximity to ANU facilities, the National Film Sound Archive and National Museum of Australia at Acton.
Transport and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatest volumes of vehicles arrive to the city centre through the key arterial routes including Barry Drive/Northbourne Ave. • A low 'functional' walking area, with low flow counts (under 30 people/hr). • The Street Theatre, Llewellyn Hall and the REP theatre venues lack convenient and safe after-hours access to public transport.
Public realm and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New developments are built to street and laneways, providing a potentially safer outcome. • Strong pattern of colonnades in both new and old developments. • New paving, lighting and street furniture is consistent, well designed and resilient, with wider verges and space for street trees. • Minimal tree canopy along Marcus Clarke Street reduces character, framing of vistas and public realm shade opportunities. • Wide streets and footpaths. • Recent upgrades resulting from City Action Plan.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergy and greater connectivity with ANU and CSIRO as major employers. • Expansion of the resident component and student housing in particular. • Creation of a vibrant street life. • Diverse uses in public realm.

3.7 Challenges and opportunities

Striking the balance between infrastructure, environmental, fiscal and social pressures is not easy. As this section has indicated, there are real pressure points for the City to become, and remain, truly viable, all of which have economic consequences.

Key emphases in current government planning policies are urban intensification, increasing the

mix of uses and the diversity of development types, sustainable transport use and emphasising the city centre preeminence in Canberra. A revitalised city centre can not only deliver on these key policy approaches for the city centre itself, but can act as a catalyst for their achievement across the broader metropolitan area.

Table 5 is a summary of the key opportunities

and challenges – factors that influence the future direction of the city centre – that have been identified for each of the six strategic themes. Responses and future actions to address the challenges and maximise the opportunities are identified in section 4 and form the City Plan.

The identified opportunities and challenges are summarised in figures 24 and 25.

Public transport on Northbourne Avenue



Underutilised City Hill park



Table 5 - Opportunities and challenges under City Plan themes

	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trend for city living will increase the residential population of the city centre over time. • Commercial growth can be accommodated by new and existing development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of the city centre may be affected over time by Australian Government decisions that influence the ACT economy. • Most commercial growth in ACT has occurred outside of the city centre (airport, Barton, Deakin, Philip). • There is currently an excess of commercial and retail capacity in the city centre.
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is sufficient development capacity and vacant land to meet future development growth. • Government ownership of land around City Hill and West Basin particularly, enables the sustainable and orderly phasing of development and land release. • Many buildings do not meet their sites' maximum development potential under existing planning controls and could be redeveloped over time. • Continued development of mixed land uses across the city centre and within developments can provide a diversity of businesses, activity, recreation, and urban living. • The city centre is the pre-eminent centre for the ACT and the region. • Current land use controls permit a wide range of uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market factors within the local and regional development market may limit growth over the life of the City Plan. • Growth and investment may be limited by insufficient investment in transforming the transport environment of the city centre. • Heritage listings limit redevelopment potential. • Built form controls, such as building heights and solar access provisions, can limit redevelopment potential in some areas of the city centre. • Street level economic vitality in the city centre is limited in some areas. • Housing affordability and housing diversity in the city centre is poor, deterring broad based household/employee residency. • The focus of retail activity is predominantly in north-east area, resulting in reduced levels of retail activity in other areas.

	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light rail will connect Gungahlin to the city centre via Northbourne Avenue. • There is potential to connect the city centre with other town centres and the Parliamentary Triangle with light rail. • The peripheral parkway and arterial road networks can enable traffic to bypass the city centre. • Less traffic through the city centre enables improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity. • The future introduction of light rail and high speed rail opens possibilities for a potential central inter-modal hub. • Locating public parking adjacent to arterial road access can minimise vehicular movement within the city. • Locating public parking on functional walking routes can provide good connections within the city and high volumes of street level activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North-south and east-west through traffic creates barriers for movement throughout the city centre. • There is a lack of clear and direct connectivity between parts of the city centre. • Congestion and mode conflict exist. • Lake Burley Griffin is disconnected from the city centre by Parkes Way. • Parking supply generates vehicle demand. • Large areas of surface car parks are barriers to walking.
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases in population will require additional local and district community facilities. • New developments have the potential to revitalise key community spaces – e.g. recent developments have resulted in the revitalisation of the ANU Exchange, Canberra Centre, Griffin Centre, Youth Centre and Civic Library. • Arts and cultural facilities play an important role in the economy, particularly the night time economy. • ANU and CIT are key assets for the area, bringing people and activity into the city centre. • Multi-use and shared use of facilities can improve the community's access to a range of facilities and reduce costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some community facilities are old and not built-for-purpose; many have issues that reduce accessibility by the elderly or those with a disability. • There is a low supply of accessible, affordable community spaces and ancillary office and administrative places especially at the local level. • There is a reliance on volunteers to manage local facilities. • There is an increased number of residents competing for space and uses within city centre.

	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
PUBLIC REALM AND DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a clear hierarchy of streets will provide legibility to the city centre. Creating a sense of arrival to the city will improve the identity of the city centre. Transforming City Hill into a functional public park will ensure access is easy and safe. Locating additional major cultural and civic uses in the City Hill area to reinforce it as the symbolic location for these uses in the Territory. Improving the streetscape and landscaping of street trees to increase the amenity, attractiveness and legibility of the public realm. Encouraging the development of nodes of activity, such as increased café/retail at significant points along key pedestrian routes. Providing additional infrastructure, such as play structures, will ensure the city is a destination for all ages. Expanding recreational opportunities by improving pedestrian and cycling links to open spaces. Programming more events to activate the public realm and increase the economic performance of retail, leisure and recreation. Protecting key views to the surrounding landscape and Central National Area through framed street corridors from encroachment, as has occurred on Ainslie Avenue, is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hierarchy of streets in the city is not clear due to factors including a lack of street trees on important streets, traffic volumes and location of active areas. There is no sense of arrival to the city, particularly coming from the north. The existing streetscape of London Circuit does not reflect its role as the premier business address. The street trees of the city centre require significant upgrading to reflect Griffin's intentions. Pedestrian connections to the parks at West Basin, City Hill and Commonwealth Park are all difficult and require improvement. Existing building controls, such as requirements for solar access to pedestrian areas, may reduce incentives for redevelopment. East-west pedestrian routes are inadequate and require improvement.
STRENGTHENING CHARACTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas within the city centre have a distinct area character – academia, performing arts, legal, governance. Areas of high pedestrian use are commercially resilient. High levels of pedestrian movement are achieved in areas of established development with numerous attractions for pedestrians to move between. Ensuring a mix of uses in areas and within developments is achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underdeveloped areas contribute poorly to the character of the city centre. Large areas of surface parking contribute to poor character. Large sections or blocks of single use development reduce positive character and, if inflexible, struggle to allow adaption. Older areas and buildings have positive character but are vulnerable to vacancy. The city lacks a clear, coherent core and identity that people see and understand.

Analysis



Figure 24 – City centre challenges

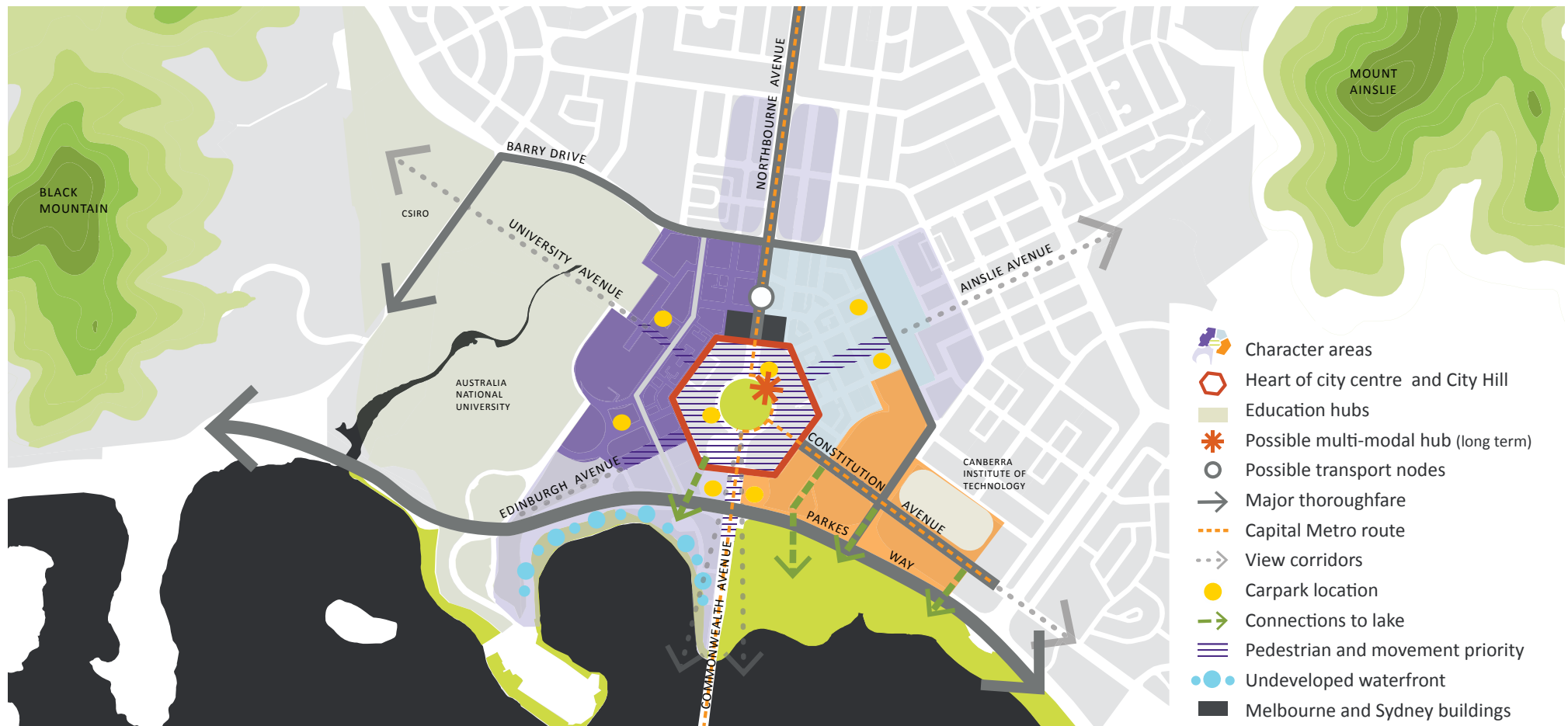


Figure 25 – City centre opportunities