



Inquiry into DPA-04 – Missing Middle Housing Reforms

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Reference: Planning

Hearing: 12 February 2026

In relation to: Governance of Missing Middle Reforms

Question received: 18 February 2026

Answer Due: 27 February 2026

Fiona Carrick MLA: Asked the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development -

- 1) Why were precinct planning and infrastructure assessments (schools, health services, drainage, transport, local parks) not completed to determine walkability to shops and services prior to proposing broad uplift across RZ1?
- 2) Why isn't there modelling showing cumulative impacts of the proposed uplift —on traffic, heat, canopy loss, overshadowing, parking and stormwater?
- 3) How will neighbourhood character and heritage be protected without precinct-scale planning or character overlays?
- 4) Will the Government introduce cumulative-impact and neighbourhood-scale design guidance, led by the Chief Landscape Architect, to manage the combined effects of dispersed infill?
- 5) Why aren't the details for important aspects for neighbours such as setbacks, privacy, solar access, and tree canopy, included in the assessment outcomes of the residential zone policy rather than the guidance document to create greater certainty?
- 6) Will the government provide quarterly dashboards on completions, approvals, typologies and prices to ensure transparency and inform future reforms?

Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The Missing Middle Housing Reforms are aimed at increasing housing supply through allowing additional development in existing residential areas. The changes proposed for RZ1

areas contain key limitations to control the extent of redevelopment and rate of change. As a result, it is considered that these areas can cater for additional, yet sensitive, residential development, utilising existing infrastructure. Change is likely to be incremental and occur over a longer period, allowing the City and Environment Directorate (CED) to monitor uptake and infrastructure capacity as redevelopment occurs.

Assessment of infrastructure capacity is also considered during the development application (DA) assessment process of each development proposal. This will continue to be considered and incorporated into ongoing strategic planning work, including through the ACT Planning Strategy, District Strategies and cross-agency engagement.

As outlined in my Statement of Planning Priorities, CED is undertaking targeted work to identify opportunities for further rezoning and reform in locations well suited for greater density, including in and around local and group centres and key transit routes. Infrastructure impacts will be assessed as part of these more focused reforms.

2. The Missing Middle Housing Reforms apply to all RZ1 and RZ2 land across the ACT. Modelling of traffic, heat, canopy loss, overshadowing, parking and stormwater cumulative impacts was not undertaken as part of DPA-04 as the location and extent of uptake of missing middle housing in these residential areas will be subject to market factors.

The potential impacts of infill redevelopment have been a key consideration in the reforms, highlighted by Territory Plan requirements and technical specifications to avoid and mitigate impacts. Examples include provisions relating to site coverage, canopy cover and planting area (permeable surfaces), overshadowing and overlooking and parking requirements.

These policy positions will support consideration of these matters in the development assessment process. The Territory Plan is also directly informed by the broader planning framework that compasses the hierarchy of strategic documents, including the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 and the nine District Strategies. These documents provide direction on a broad range of issues that have potential for cumulative impact, including items such as tree canopy cover, urban heat island effect, water management (i.e. water sensitive urban design). Many of these are effectively considered at the macro or landscape scale, where both privately-leased and public land contribute to the relevant policy objectives.

3. Please refer to the response to QON 17.
4. Please refer to the response to QON 11.
5. The Residential Zones Policy includes the Assessment Outcomes that must be met for a development application to be approved. These outcomes already cover:
 - The height, bulk and scale of the development is appropriate, noting the desired zone policy outcomes and the streetscape. This includes consideration of building envelope and setbacks.
 - Reasonable solar access to dwellings and private open space within a block and on adjoining residential blocks is achieved. This includes solar access into main living spaces within a dwelling.

- Reasonable levels of privacy to dwellings and private open space within a block and on adjoining residential blocks is achieved.
- Sufficient planting area, canopy trees, deep soil zones and water sensitive urban design measures are provided to enhance living infrastructure, support healthy tree growth and minimise stormwater runoff.

In demonstrating compliance with the assessment outcomes, consideration is to be given to the relevant design guides and may be given to planning technical specifications which may serve as a benchmark.

This flexibility is a feature of the new outcomes-focussed planning system, which moves away from strict rule-compliance which can limit innovation and design excellence, and ultimately lead to poorer outcomes.

6. The Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) keeps a public register relating to decisions on DAs, in accordance with section 497 of the *Planning Act 2023*.

Key statistics relating to the development applications and assessment timeframes are reported monthly on the Authority's website at <https://www.planning.act.gov.au/applications-and-assessments/development-applications/development-statistics/development-applications-da-statistics-2025-26> and also via the CED Annual Report.

A new eDevelopment system is currently in the development stage which will provide greater reporting capabilities. Once the system is in place, the Authority will provide further statistics on their website and provide feedback to relevant policy areas to inform future policy. The new system is expected to be operational in the second half of 2026.

Information relating to property prices is not reported on by the ACT Government but is available on various public real estate websites.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature:



Date:

2/3/26

By the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Chris Steel MLA