



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL

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## Submission Cover Sheet

Draft Variation 345 - Mawson Group Centre: Zone changes  
and amendments to the Mawson Precinct map and code

**Submission Number:** 012 - Stewart

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The Secretary  
Legislative Assembly Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal  
LACommitteePUR@parliament.act.gov.au

### **Submission on DV345 and Precinct plan for Mawson**

I am emailing to express my concern at changes facilitated by the Draft Variation and Precinct Plan.

#### **1 Inappropriate densification**

DV 345 provides for additional high-density housing along Athllon drive, opposite the Phillip service area. This is unfortunate for a number of reasons. Athllon Drive is already a congested road at peak-times. Adding additional population from Hindmarsh Drive through to the existing park and ride will exacerbate these problems. Furthermore, the new development areas are unfavourably located (between Athllon Drive and the drain). Because the functionality of Athllon Drive itself cannot be compromised, all these developments will require difficult and expensive new roadworks to provide access.

The bus stops on Athllon Drive adjacent to the group centre are already heavily used, (by south-Woden residents, park-and-riders and Melrose and Marist students). Adding additional population through development on the corner site, and on the park and ride site, will seriously overload these facilities.

Moving the park and ride away from its current location, where it has proved to be a successful and popular facility is a retrograde step. Neither government nor developers are likely to provide equivalent, readily accessible and convenient car parking elsewhere.

***Recommendation: that rezoning and precinct plans providing for development to the east of Athllon Drive opposite Phillip, and to the south of Mawson Drive, not be proceeded with, until transport and budgetary issues are fully discussed, analysed and coordinated both with the community (particularly nearby residents and the two colleges) and with TCCS. Retention of the existing park and ride facility on its current site is essential.***

#### **2 Alienation of public open space**

The proposed rezoning (from RZ2 to public open space opposite Marist College) to accommodate the water pond (already under construction) is welcomed. Unfortunately, the rezoning of existing public open space on the northern corner of Athllon and Mawson Drives removes a pleasing and attractive vista, which should be retained, and enhanced as a public park.

***Recommendation: that the existing zoning (open space) to the north of the intersection of Athllon and Mawson Drives) be retained. The vista to Black Mountain is a significant public asset which should be enhanced and preserved.***

### **3 Loss of convenient parking within the group centre**

Convenient parking is important to the community, and a vital part of the operation of the Group Centre. The Variation and associated Precinct Codes provide for elimination of virtually all the current ground-level carparks in and around the Group Centre (potentially including the park and ride), with replacement places to be provided within new developments (ie above, below or within a commercial or apartment building). This type of parking is much less accessible and convenient for supermarket shopping.

***Recommendation: Existing ground-level carparks should be specifically identified in the Precinct Plan and retained as such, in keeping with the Group Centre ethos.***

### **4 Need for improved pedestrian access to the Group Centre**

The Master Plan acknowledged problems with pedestrian access to the group centre. Unfortunately, the locations of the new walkways envisaged in the Master Plan (between Athllon Drive and Mawson Place) were determined by the requirements of the proposed commercial/residential buildings on Athllon Drive. The associated walkway covered in the precinct code runs between two six-storey commercial/office blocks. It is hard to see how this could be classed as a satisfactory (or safe) public walkway.

***Recommendation: Infrastructure planning for the Group Centre should prioritise attractive, safe and accessible pedestrian access to and through the Centre.***

### **5 Loss of low-rise character of Group Centre**

The community values pleasant and sunny places to shop, visit and meet with friends. Once inappropriate development takes place, this amenity can never be reclaimed.

***Recommendation: It is important to retain the existing character of the centre, in particular the low-scale (1 and 2 storey) building heights around the central courtyard to preserve human scale and solar access to the square.***

### **Conclusion: Better planning for Group Centres needed!**

Group centres are the forgotten elements in Canberra's planning. The loss of key parts of the Jamieson group centre and their replacement by ugly high-rise buildings is keenly felt. In Woden Valley, Curtin residents have voiced their strong opposition to redevelopment of their group centre which places profit ahead of community amenity.

## Stewart Submission re Mawson Group Centre

Similar mistakes should not be made in Mawson. The existing group centre has considerable public support as an area for shopping, recreation, dining, meeting with friends, and as a convenient park and drive location. The proposed changes threaten this functionality and amenity for little or no gain.

The proposals in the DV and precinct plan alienate existing open space and public car parks because these are areas that can potentially be built on, rather than taking a holistic view of the group centre's current and future needs. There has clearly been insufficient thought given to the interaction between development and the capacity of Athllon Drive.

As a policy and planning analyst, long-term resident of Torrens (and regular user of the group centre) I urge the Planning and Urban Renewal Committee, to reject DV 345 in its current form, and to require an improved precinct-planning process for Mawson.

Dr Jenny Stewart

22 July 2018

