

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE TERRITORY PLAN AND OTHER ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA



The Public Transport Association of Canberra (PTCBR) appreciates the opportunity to lodge this Expression of Interest to the Committee's *Inquiry into the Territory Plan and other associated documents*.

PTCBR's *Submission on the District Strategies* in March supported the ACT Government's stated policy of encouraging new homes adjacent to light rail and rapid public transport connections.¹ The success of light rail stage one and the associated increase in medium and higher-density housing options adjacent to light rail stations between the City and Gungahlin is an excellent model to apply to the rest of Canberra, and we encourage this approach for all future extensions of our city's light rail network.

We were therefore alarmed when the revised version of the Territory Plan released in September contained a significant, previously-unflagged change which prohibited new residential development in the Phillip Service Trades Area.² This decision was made without any public consultation, and seemingly without any studies being undertaken to determine its impact on future housing supply, the 70/30 infill target, and the future extension of light rail along the adjacent Athllon Drive.

Permitting Braddon-style medium-rise, mixed-use residential development around the central courts of the Phillip Service Trades Area has been ACT Government policy since the release of the 2004 *Woden Town Centre Master Plan*. This policy was subsequently reaffirmed in the 2015 *Woden Town Centre Master Plan* and formally implemented into the Territory Plan via Variation 344 in August 2018. While three development applications have sought to utilise these new provisions, none have yet been approved.³

Overturing a twenty-year old planning policy that has been in effect for five years requires more consideration and consultation. Providing opportunities for people to live in an existing commercial area, close to amenities, rapid buses, and the planned Light Rail Stage 2B extension to Mawson, is entirely consistent with the *2018 Planning Strategy's* commitment to "deliver more choice in housing and make sure it is well located to public transport, jobs and services".⁴ It is a major policy decision and should not be taken lightly.

We strongly recommend that this change be reversed in the final new Territory Plan, and if necessary, pursued instead via a major plan amendment. This will ensure the full effects of the change are known, and interested parties can make representations on whether this change is appropriate.

¹ <https://ptcbr.org/2023/03/05/act-planning-review-and-district-strategies-ptcbr-submission-on-how-we-can-get-better-transport-and-land-use/>

² https://hdp-au-prod-app-act-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/9016/9438/7493/ACT_Planning_system_-_Consultation_response_report.pdf

³ <https://the-riotact.com/a-touch-of-braddon-in-the-heart-of-phillip-plans-lodged-for-mixed-use-build-to-rent-project/647125>

⁴ *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*, page 28.