

National Capital Plan Draft 102- Hume Circle Precinct



Background Paper

December 2025

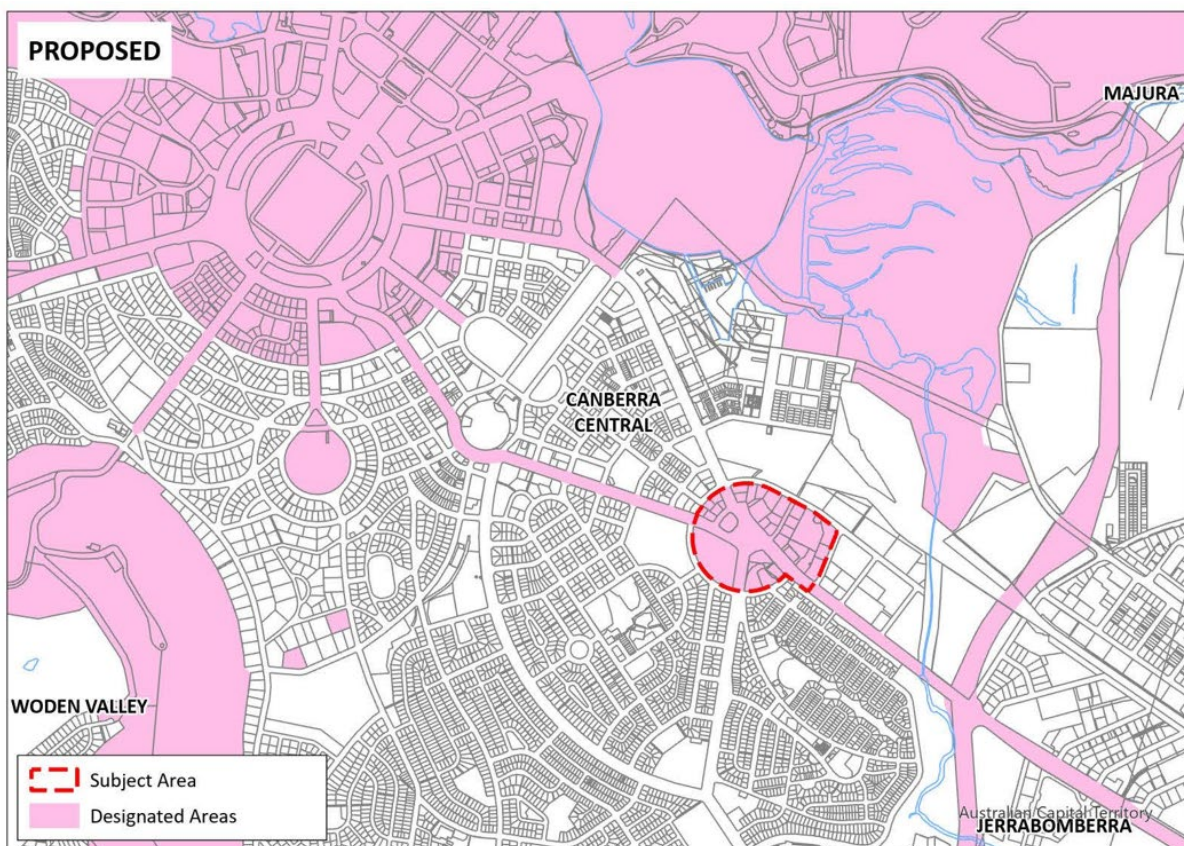
1 Introduction

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has released for consultation a draft Amendment to the National Capital Plan to establish a new Precinct Code for Hume Circle Precinct.

This draft Amendment:

- Defines the area proposed to be the Hume Circle Precinct (refer Figure 1)
- Establishes the proposed Hume Circle Precinct as a Designated Area, reflecting it as an area of national significance
- Outlines objectives for the Hume Circle Precinct and defines land uses in the precinct
- Requires that prior to any development proposals in the proposed precinct, Detailed Conditions of Planning Design and Development (DCPDD) must be provided for approval of the NCA including public consultation¹.

Figure 1: Proposed draft Amendment area - Hume Circle Precinct



This draft Amendment is a first stage – it is at its essence, a facilitating amendment – recognising and responding to the potential for significant urban renewal in this precinct and its national significance.

By establishing this precinct as a Designated Area under the National Capital Plan, it brings any future development proposals under the planning responsibility of the NCA. The draft

¹ Further detail discussed in s. 4.2 of this report.

Amendment will facilitate an efficient and streamlined approach to consideration of development proposals.

This draft Amendment has been developed in consultation with the ACT Government. It is noted that the lands in the precinct will remain Territory Land.

Following this consultation (5 January – 3 February 2026), feedback will be considered, and a Consultation Report will be prepared. The next steps will include finalising the draft Amendment and making a recommendation to the Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories to approve the draft Amendment. Once a decision has been made, the Consultation Report will be published on the NCA website.

If the draft Amendment is approved, the NCA and ACT Government will continue to work collaboratively to ensure development in the Hume Circle Precinct is considered and planned in the context of the overall district, and in particular the ACT Government East Lake Place Plan.

The objective will be a coordinated and integrated planning, design and development of this Inner South area, allowing a focus on different precincts within the area to achieve a balanced and diversified urban renewal outcome – an outcome that provides improved housing supply in a central location that is close to employment, recreation and sustainable transport options.

2 Draft Amendment 102 – Hume Circle Precinct

2.1 Why is this change being made?

In the earliest plans for Canberra, Hume Circle was proposed as a key gateway from the East - a place of urban density which frames the junction of the main avenues that define the eastern approach. This draft Amendment is proposed based on the special characteristics of this area in the Griffin Plan and the national significance of the precinct as an entry gateway and representation of the important Griffin Plan geometry.

As Canberra has evolved, many aspects of the Griffins' plan for Hume Circle remain unrealised. The experience of Hume Circle as Canberra's eastern arrival has not been achieved with land largely developed for low scale industrial uses. As the existing facilities age and become unsuitable for contemporary use, there is an opportunity to reimagine Hume Circle and land adjacent. Given this opportunity, there have been some proposals for sites within the proposed precinct. Consequently, it is timely and an opportunity to seek good planning outcomes and address national urban objectives, by planning for this area as a precinct.

The Griffins' plans for Canberra envisaged the main avenues and approach routes as axial lines and principal ordering elements of the city. The sequence of arrival to the National Capital and the Central National Area was consciously orchestrated in the Griffins' plans through a series of gateways and scenic approaches.

Figure 2: Extract from Griffin plans (Hume Circle referred to as Eastlake circle) – refer draft Amendment 102 Figure 1.



The Griffin design for Canberra incorporated elegant ‘rond points’ framed by mixed land use and higher-density urban form at the junctions of main avenues. These were envisaged as gateways to the National Capital marked by Hume Circle and part of the major eastern approach route, completing one corner of the triangle between Mount Ainslie, Capital Hill and Hume Circle. The ability to preserve and enhance the Mt Ainslie – Mugga Way axis that goes through the Causeway in East Lake, is an opportunity that this draft Amendment can affirm.

Within the 1918 Griffin Plan, a circular street layout was adopted for Hume Circle with surrounding blocks subdivided by a series of radial streets emanating from the centre of the Circle with urban density situated on land adjacent the Hume Circle circumference. By completing Hume Circle (through an extension of McMillan Crescent), establishing the radial geometry, and establishing a higher-density urban form, many aspects of the 1918 Griffin Plan can be retrieved in a modern context.

The NCP identifies Designated Areas (land that has special characteristics of the National Capital) and includes ‘Main Avenues and Approach Routes between the ACT border and the Central National Area’. This draft Amendment for Hume Circle Precinct is proposed as it will embed through planning, the national significance of this area as an important entry and design element of the Griffin Plan. It will further consolidate the significance of Canberra Avenue (from Hume Circle) as a main avenue linked to Capital Hill and the Central National Area, and Canberra Avenue (to Hume Circle) as an important approach route.

The Griffin plan and legacy is not meant to inhibit growth but is meant to protect the national capital’s cultural and environmental heritage, while providing strong structure to support the best contemporary urban development to realise the full potential as the National Capital.

2.2 Where does the Draft Amendment apply and what does it do?

Draft Amendment 102 extends the area over which the National Capital Authority has detailed planning control to the area identified in Figure 1 (and the aerial image on the front cover). The draft Amendment outlines changes to the National Capital Plan (NCP) including the addition of a precinct code to apply to the designated area (Hume Circle Precinct).

Structure

The draft Precinct Code sets out the long-term urban design structure proposed for the Hume Circle Precinct. It shows how land use, public domain and connections could be arranged and delivered. It articulates an integrated vision for the precinct.

The Land Use Plan (Figure 3) illustrates the key structural elements. It respects the original Griffin Plan in its layout and seeks to achieve the original intent of Hume Circle as a key gateway and axial connection. The layout indicates the proposed street configuration and the creation and distribution of public spaces and opportunities for renewal and confirmation of the significance of this entry point.

In response to the proposed Objectives for the precinct (s.4.19.3 of draft Amendment), the structure seeks to:

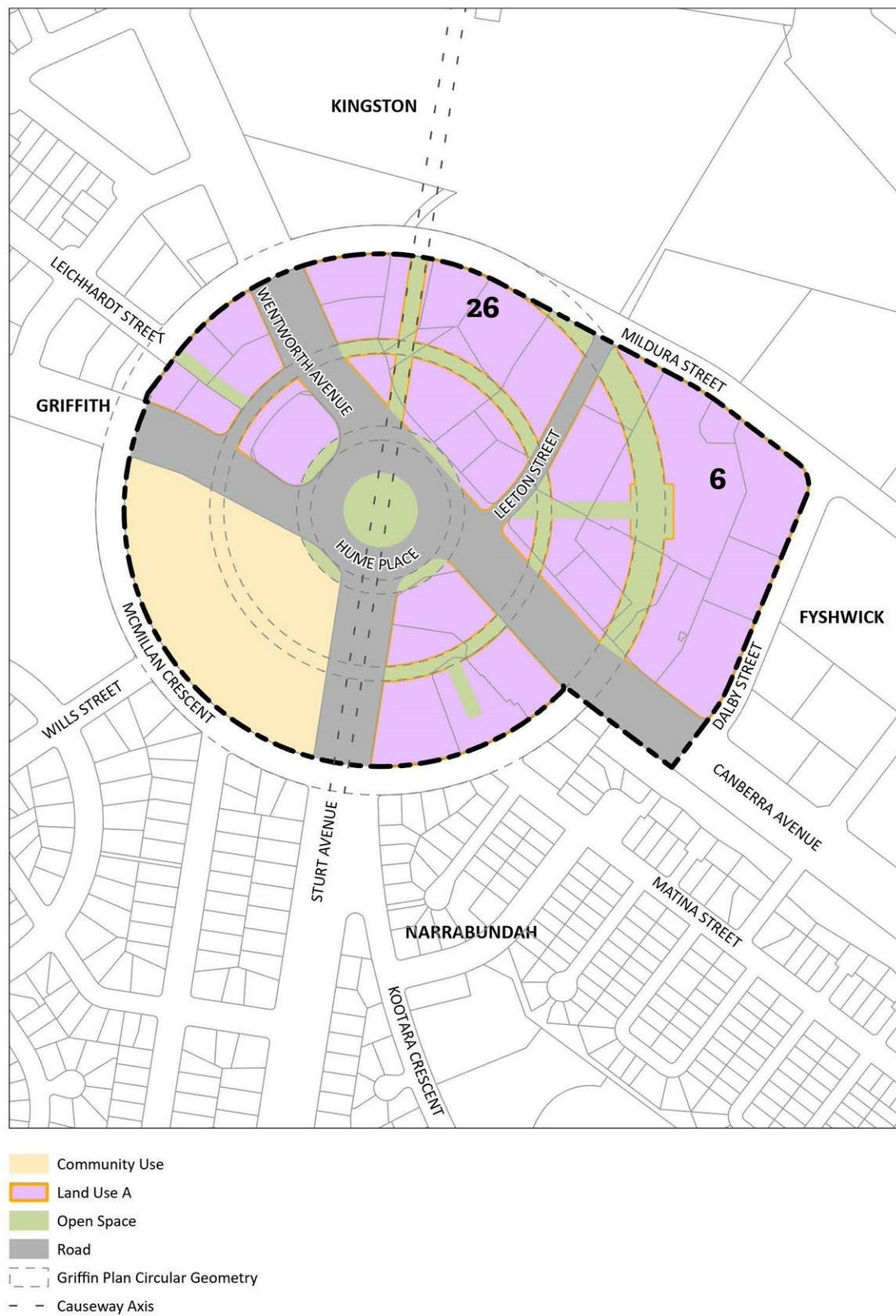
- complete 'The Circle' - by completing the extension of the McMillan Crescent geometry and the inner circle, through Section 6 Fyshwick and Section 26 Griffith (refer Fig 3);

- re-establish the radial geometry of the Griffin Plan to provide a visual connection through the Causeway alignment and another landscaped radial connection through Section 6 Fyshwick;
- respond to the Griffin Plan but also creates a legible structure with radial and curved geometry;
- Emphasise the significance of the avenues and entry to the Capital area and providing an opportunity to make Hume Circle a prominent location and not just a roundabout;
- realise the urban development and activity opportunities of the location on major transport routes with access to surrounding centres; and
- integrate with the surrounding area through design and a mix of uses, including the proposals within the East Lake Place Plan.

Zoning and Land Use

Identifying the land as ‘designated land’ will change the current zoning under the ACT Territory Plan to the proposed Land Use as indicated in Figure 3. This is largely a change from Commercial Zone 2 (CZ2) and Industrial Zone 2 (IZ2) to Land Use A and open space.

Figure 3: Proposed Zoning and Land Use – (Fig 146 of draft NCP Amendment 102)



Public Domain – Open Space

The representation of the circular geometry is proposed largely through curved open space passing through Section 6 from Canberra Avenue to Leeton Street before continuing to meet Mildura Street in Section 26. It then connects to the Causeway, helping to complete the McMillan Crescent circumference. These landscape and open space areas should be primarily pedestrian in nature and with surrounding built form and dimensions that provide for solar access, safe shared ways and strong landscaping.

The draft Amendment provides the opportunity to retain and reinforce the important view line from Mount Ainslie through the Causeway that was an important part of the Griffin Plan and the links between mountains. To balance this and support public domain access for future occupants of the area, another east-west axial open space link is proposed to join up with the McMillan Crescent open space.

This open space network will provide opportunities for community hubs, facilities and more significant neighbourhood landscape and trees.

Public Domain – Roads

The draft Amendment provides the opportunity to establish a clearer road hierarchy for the precinct based on a movement and place approach. The Hume Circle roundabout will be examined to support the importance of the gateway while also providing a safe and efficient through point with four key avenues feeding in and out of it. Leeton Street will provide a connection through to the East Lake precinct. The proposed open space connections in circular and radial form will provide opportunities for shared ways that respond to the movement and place hierarchy of spaces, and provide visual and physical connections and relief in the precinct.

Built Form and Height

As a key eastern gateway, the precinct's development will support the Griffin Legacy, by height in parts of the circle structure to emphasise its role as an urban gateway, alongside protections for solar access to the public realm. Height is identified in the draft Amendment at Figure 147.

Height between the centre of Hume Circle and the Hely Street alignment is lower allowing the existing dispersed "buildings within a landscape" to define the inner gateway experience.

Taller buildings up to RL 617 are to be focused on 'The Circle' (extension of McMillan Crescent) and to allow for adequate building separation and solar access to public and private space.

This reinforces the reading of the circular Griffin geometry at the gateway and enables future extension of the taller height zone around McMillan Crescent within the existing street and block network.

Heights to Dalby Street will step down with the falling topography providing a transition to the markets and light industrial precinct further east.

3 Planning Context

3.1 National Urban Policy

Australia's National Urban Policy was finalised in November 2024. The policy was jointly developed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments. It provides a national vision for Australia's cities and suburbs to be liveable, equitable, productive, and sustainable. It guides the Australian Government's investment and policy decisions, aiming to improve quality of life through collaboration with state and territory governments on housing, infrastructure, and climate adaptation, addressing challenges like housing affordability and rising temperatures.

The National Urban Policy builds upon the August 2023, National Cabinet agreement to a new national target to build 1.2 million new well-located homes over 5 years from 1 July 2024. National Cabinet also agreed to a National Planning Reform Blueprint with planning, zoning, land release and other measures to improve housing supply and affordability.

This proposed Amendment supports the national policy agenda. Through this the NCA will contribute to achieving National housing targets and will support the ACT Government commitment to enable 30,000 more homes by 2030 for Canberra's growing population.

3.2 National Capital Planning

The NCA's planning functions are set through the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (the PaLM Act) (s.6) and include:

- *to prepare and administer a National Capital Plan*
- *to keep the Plan under constant review and to propose amendments to it when necessary.*

The PaLM Act sets the object of the NCP (s.9) as:

- *to ensure that Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.*

The PaLM Act also sets out the matters to be covered in the Plan (s.10) and includes:

(1) *the Plan may specify areas of land that have the special characteristics of the National Capital to be Designated Areas.*

(2) *The Plan:*

- (a) *shall define the planning principles and policies for giving effect to the object of the Plan and, in particular, shall set standards for the maintenance and enhancement of the character of the National Capital and set general standards and aesthetic principles to be adhered to in the development of the National Capital;*
- (b) *shall set out the general policies to be implemented throughout the Territory, being policies of:*
 - (i) *land use (including the range and nature of permitted land use); and*
 - (ii) *the planning of national and arterial road systems;*
- (c) *may set out the detailed conditions of planning, design and development in Designated Areas and the priorities in carrying out such planning, design and development; and*

(d) may set out special requirements for the development of any area (not being a Designated Area), being requirements that are desirable in the interests of the National Capital.

This provides the regulatory framework for what is required for the Plan and what may also be provided to support the Plan.

Per s.10(1), this draft Amendment is seeking to designate the Hume Circle Precinct based on its special characteristics (discussed further in s.2.1 of this report).

As indicated above, the NCP is the statutory plan that applies to all land within the Australian Capital Territory. The NCP includes detailed provisions that apply to land over which the Commonwealth maintains a high level of interest. Within Designated Areas the NCA has sole responsibility for determining Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development and for Works Approval.

The Planning Framework

Draft NCP Amendment

The draft Amendment establishes the objectives, planning framework and directions for the Hume Circle Precinct. It includes the precinct as a Designated Area under the Plan and thereby applying planning to reflect the national significance and special characteristics of the area. The Precinct Code will form part of the National Capital Plan and become statutory requirements.

Precinct Code

The draft Precinct Code identifies objectives for the precinct envisaging the Hume Circle Precinct, for future urban renewal that is facilitated over time. The draft Precinct Code sets the overarching framework and key elements of land use and building heights.

The draft Precinct Code includes a provision (under Implementation) that requires that any proposal for development in the Precinct (other than for land zoned Community use) must provide Detailed Conditions for Planning Design and Development (DCPDD) to the NCA for approval prior to any application for works approval.

Detailed Conditions of Planning Design and Development (DCPDD)

As noted above the DCPDD are required prior to any works approval applications. The DCPDD will provide more detailed provisions, requirements and expectations focused on more specific elements of the planning, design and development. The DCPDD will be developed in consultation with the ACT Government, land holders and community and are subject to NCA approval. This is discussed further in s. 4 of this report.

Apartment Design

High quality housing has a vital role to play in ensuring the Hume Circle Precinct attracts long-term residents and becomes one of Canberra's most liveable areas. Without a focus on design quality, there is a risk new homes will compromise residents' living experience and not be adaptable or flexible for future needs. Future work will codify the NCA's expectations regarding the quality of living environments created within Hume Circle.

3.3 ACT Government Planning context

The PaLM Act Part 5 refers to the Territory Planning Authority (TPA) and Territory Plan and requires that the Territory Plan is not to be inconsistent with the NCP.

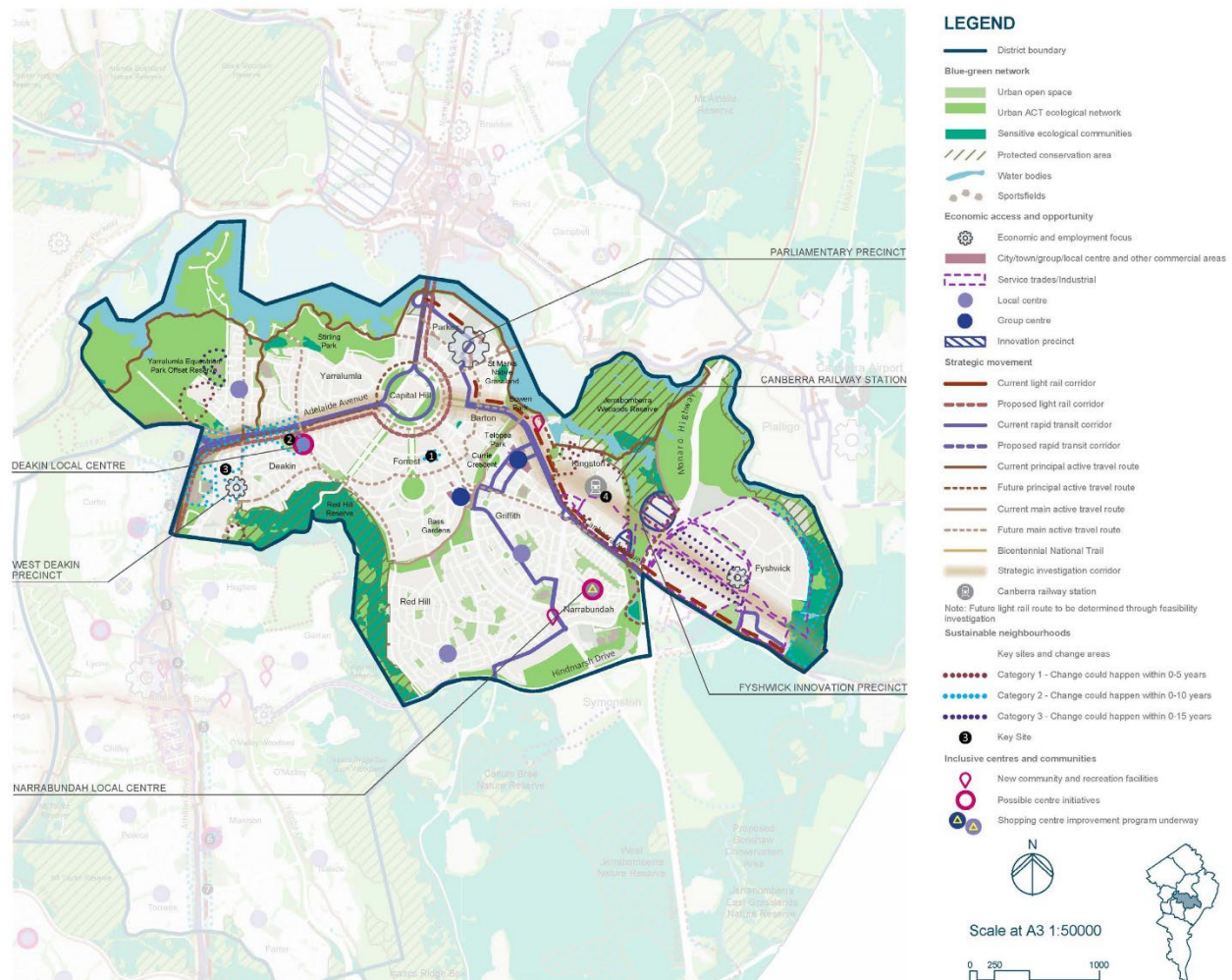
Strategic Planning

The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 outlines the key principles and directions for the ACT. This strategic document set a key direction around ‘compact city’ and with a target of 70% of growth to occur within the existing urban footprint. This is also underpinned by the importance of preserving the important attributes of the ACT and Canberra that are highly valued – including attributes of national significance. It is also built on the important structure of a city of centres (and hierarchy), as articulated in the NCP. The Planning Strategy identified areas for investigation for potential urban intensification, with a focus on land around centres and transport corridors and the area around East Lake including the Hume Circle Precinct was identified.

The District Strategies (for 9 districts of urban Canberra) built on this and examined a range of environmental, social, economic and cultural factors in identifying areas for preservation and areas for change. The district strategies reinforce the location of the elements that contribute to Canberra’s role as the national capital. They maintain the Griffin design for the City Centre and surrounds, landscape, vistas and views. They promote ease of access to, and provision of, services and facilities for the functions of the Australian Government and associated office areas.

The Inner South District Strategy identifies some key attributes of the area within the precinct and within the inner south of Canberra and includes areas that were in the Griffin Plan. Canberra Avenue is identified as a key transit corridor. The proposed precinct is also captured within a broader area identified for change (category one – change could happen within 0-5 years – see Figure 4 below), that has had more detailed planning through the East Lake Place Plan (discussed below). Management of the evolving character of areas to provide greater density and mix of uses, will be important as the proposed Hume Circle Precinct develops and as the broader planning and development of East Lake and across Canberra occurs.

Figure 4: Inner South District - Strategy Plan (excerpt from ACT Government Inner South District Strategy 2023)



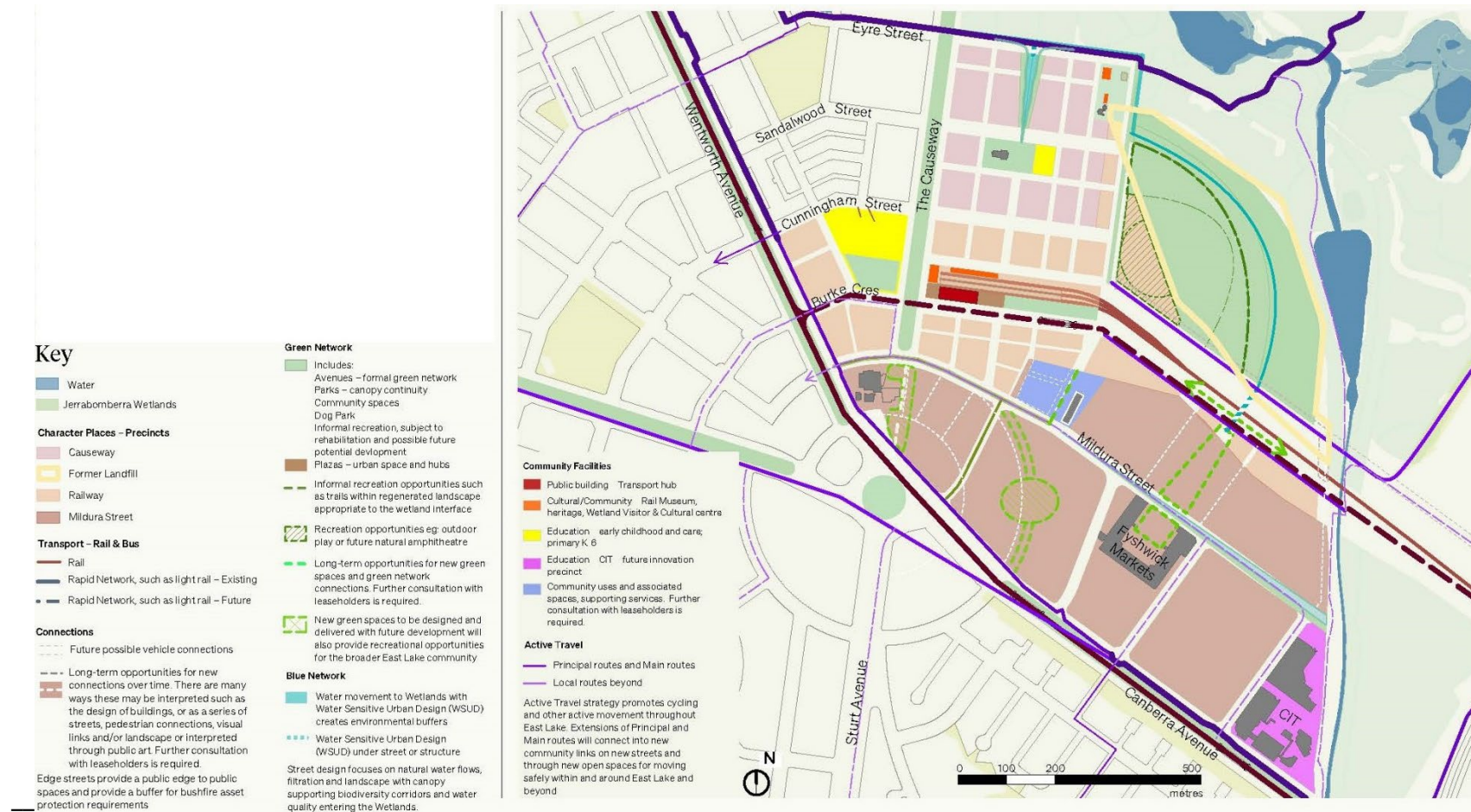
Source: p.14 Inner South District Strategy 2023

<https://www.planning.act.gov.au/professionals/our-planning-system/district-strategies#district-strategies>

East Lake Place Plan

The East Lake Place Plan (ELPP) prepared by the ACT planning directorate was released publicly February 2024 (following considerable community consultation) and provides an urban design concept for a larger area with three precincts within it. One of these precincts in called 'Mildura Street' and includes land within the proposed Hume Circle Precinct (refer Figure 5).

Figure 5: East Lake Place Plan – Urban Design Concept Overview



Source: East Lake Place Plan 2024 p.68 (<https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/east-lake-place-plan>)

The East Lake Place Plan notes that urban areas around Hume Circle will become a new mixed-use precinct integrated with the surrounding area. This includes land further east to the Majura highway and notes the Fyshwick food markets and CIT and small industrial uses as important to the character of the area.

The ELPP also refers to ‘celebrating history’ as a key principle for the Mildura precinct and specifically notes the following with regard to the Griffin plan and Hume Circle:

- *The Causeway -Griffin's axis linking Hume Circle to Mt Ainslie presents aspirational opportunities that may arise over time facilitated by community-led initiatives. Many opportunities for interpreting, expressing, and representing the Griffin vision can be explored by the community that may be through progressive short-term, mid-term and long-term visions.*
- *Hume Circle -opportunities may be facilitated through community-led initiatives that can interpret and express the vision of Griffin's Plan coordinated with The Causeway affirmation and broader Hume Circle road and transport upgrades.*
- *A mixed-use axis has the potential to provide spatial connections from the Hume Circle to the Transport hub as opportunities arise over the long-term inviting collaboration with community initiatives.*

The ELPP also recommends strong east-west connections to be maintained for transport including cycleways, connections with the Railway precinct, potential for new public space and public realm, provision of future housing and where mixed-use if introduced to provide appropriate buffer with industrial uses.

These are all relevant considerations for the proposed Hume Circle Precinct and will be important to connecting the proposed precinct with that planned development for East Lake. This will involve ongoing collaboration with the ACT Government and the community to deliver high-quality, accessible, sustainable development in this area.

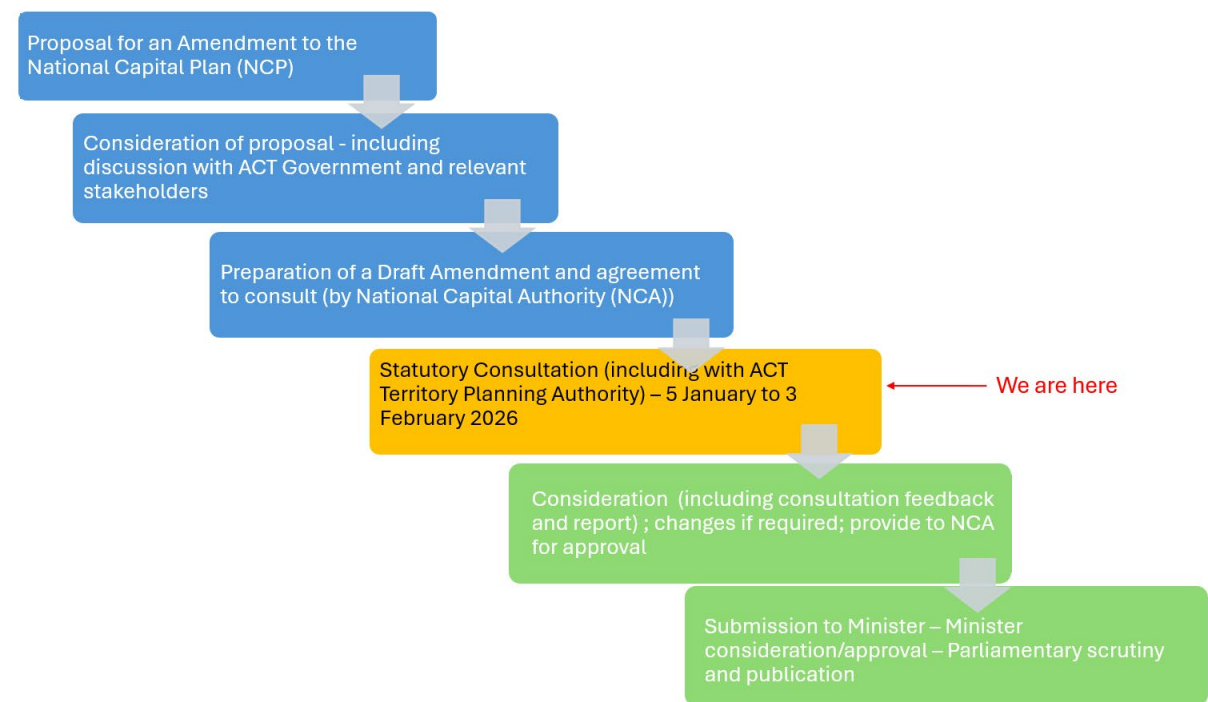
4 Process and Next Steps

4.1 Process

The PaLM Act (Part3, Division 2) sets out the process for making the National Capital Plan (the Plan), which is also taken as the process for making amendments to the Plan (s.24).

Figure 6 below provides a general overview of the process in preparing a draft NCP amendment and what stage this draft Amendment is currently at.

Figure 6: NCP Amendment process (simplified) – illustrating what stage this draft Amendment is at



A draft Amendment is subject to public consultation (s.15 of PaLM Act) and includes formal consultation with the ACT Territory Planning Authority (TPA). The Authority notifies the draft Amendment in the primary local newspaper, on the NCA website, through the Commonwealth gazette and through letters to lessees.

Following consultation, the Authority will prepare a consultation report on matters raised and determine if further changes to the draft Amendment are required. The Authority will have regard to comments from both the public and the TPA.

The Authority must provide a report to the Minister noting consultation and the views from the TPA. The Minister may approve the amendment or refer the draft Amendment back to the Authority to address particular matters.

If approved, the amendment will be registered on the Federal Register of Legislation and tabled in Parliament. Relevant changes will then be made to the mapping and the Territory Plan and on ACTmap.i.

4.2 Next Steps

As noted earlier, prior to any development proposals for works approval, further planning and design detailed requirements must be prepared and approved by the Authority. These Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development (DCPDD) will indicate the expectations and provisions required for the future development. These DCPDD will be consulted on. The following provides an indication of key matters and principles that will need to be addressed in the future DCPDD.

Detailed Conditions of Planning Design and Development

This DCPDD will be the key document that ensures delivery of high-quality living environment(s) for residents of the Hume Circle Precinct. It will ensure the housing, public realm, streetscape and amenities support a vibrant and sustainable neighbourhood.

The DCPDD must be prepared and considered within the broader context of the proposed precinct and its surrounding area. The DCPDD will need to address the following as a minimum.

Land use

Land uses are to reflect a mix of uses (and in compliance with relevant zoning) that provides for a diverse, active, sustainable precinct that includes places to live, places for innovation and employment and places to recreate and support healthy lifestyles for a diverse population. The land uses are to connect with and consider surrounding land uses and development of surrounding precincts and where centres of activity are best located.

Built form

The built form is to respond to the significance of the precinct and Griffin Plan geometry and provide diversity in height, bulk and scale distribution that enhances character, articulates landmarks, reduces urban heat, provides for solar access and useable public spaces. The height and massing is to be varied and respond to the surrounding development that is proposed in adjacent precincts and provide for visual and physical permeability.

The built form is to respond appropriately to its site (through proportions, typology, articulation, height and bulk distribution in its context) and contribute to the character of the streetscape. Building separation is expected to enhance urban form, landscape quality, and resident amenity and usable open spaces, privacy, natural ventilation, and daylight access.

Architectural design and Design Quality

The design of buildings and public realm is to reflect the importance of the precinct and be expressed through high-quality design and materiality. Application of best practice design and construction to support sustainable design and development is to be illustrated.

Urban marker buildings may be identified at key intersections and designed to reflect prominence and wayfinding.

Subdivision and staging

Where land is amalgamated the provision of open space and aspects of the geometry as reflected in the plan is expected. Where amalgamation and/or subdivision is proposed, a plan indicating how the land relates to the overall precinct and to infrastructure provision is also

expected. Proposed staging of works will be necessary so that infrastructure provision and management of change can be outlined to minimise disruption and provide efficiencies.

Access, Road layout and Parking arrangements and Streetscape

The access, road layout and parking arrangements need to consider the context of the surrounding network and contribute to a safe arrangement. A hierarchy of roads and public ways is expected to be identified through streetscape design (and sections) reflecting a movement and place approach. Identification of provision for a range of modes of transport and movement and parking that reflects good planning and design will be necessary.

Development of each lot will need to demonstrate the access and parking capacity of the proposed development, and its impacts on the transport network and surrounding area.

Public realm, landscape structure and open space, Lighting

The landscape design is to reinforce the importance of the city in the landscape and landscape character of the Griffin Plan. The landscape design is to respond to the unique climate with plant species chosen for their effectiveness and adaptability to Canberra's climate.

The Landscape design will support natural systems and biodiversity, whilst managing urban heat, water reticulation and quality.

The design of the public domain is to be responsive to place, character and context, referencing both the natural environment and urban framework. The spatial layout of the public domain will enable ease of use by people, and be accessible, legible and navigable.

Lighting design and delivery that integrates with the streetscape and supports safe and accessible public and private spaces is expected.

Housing Diversity, including social and affordable housing

Providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and budgets will need to be delivered. Planning and design is to consider location and distribution of diversity of housing with access to facilities, spaces for interaction to support a community of a broad range of people.

Landscape requirements for development blocks

Private developments are to supplement the public domain with outdoor areas for residents to enjoy, including private and communal spaces such as gardens, accessible rooftops and courtyards.

Proposals are to illustrate connections and contributions to the surrounding public realm.

Heritage

Where heritage registration applies the relevant heritage requirements will need to be reflected in proposals. For proposals adjacent to heritage sites, consideration of the heritage significance is expected to be articulated in planning and design and how a proposal respects and responds to the heritage significance.

Proposals need to illustrate how the national significance of the precinct, in reflecting, responding to and reimagining the Griffin Plan geometry and elements, is considered and delivered.

Infrastructure

Given the changing nature of the precinct and surrounding precincts in the future, the identification of impacts on infrastructure (social and utility) are to be indicated for all proposals and reflect consideration in a broader context and area. It is expected that there will be a need for social and utility infrastructure upgrades, and provision to support the growing and diverse population is to be considered in proposals.

Coordination in identifying what infrastructure will be necessary to support proposals (in and of the broader area) and of delivery of that infrastructure, and to be part of proposals. This will require working with NCA and the ACT Government.