

# Draft North Curtin Residential Area Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development (DCPDD)



## Draft North Curtin Residential Area - Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development

### Explanatory Document

April 2026

# **Table of Contents**

**Introduction – 3**

**Location and Site – 4**

**Planning Context – 7**

**Background – 13**

**The draft DCPDD – 17**

**Next Steps – 20**

**Appendix A - 23**

# 1. Introduction

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has released for consultation draft Detailed Conditions of Planning Design and Development (DCPDD) for the North Curtin Residential Area.

The purpose of this explanatory document is to provide background to the preparation of the draft DCPDD, and to explain the intent and role of the draft DCPDD and how it will be used.

Amendment 95 to the National Capital Plan (2020-2021) identified land as a designated area for the Curtin Diplomatic Precinct including land for diplomatic mission, residential, road and open space (Figure 1 in Section 2). The NCA has responsibility for planning (including works approval) for designated areas.

Amendment 95 involved a land transfer from the ACT Government to the Commonwealth to facilitate projected future demand for diplomatic missions. Part of the site was identified for future residential, open space and road use, this part is territory land in a designated area. This means the ACT Government is responsible for development and management of that part of the land, but the NCA is the planning authority.

The National Capital Plan (NCP) in section 4.14.5 requires that, for Residential Land in the Diplomatic Precinct, site specific detailed conditions of planning, design and development must be approved by the National Capital Authority prior to development proposals (refer Appendix A – excerpt from the NCP s4.14.5).

The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) has been progressing the proposal for the Residential Area (and open space and road areas) on behalf of the ACT Government and developing draft DCPDD for the site. The NCA has been working with the ACT Government in this context and is now presenting draft DCPDD for consultation prior to considering the DCPDD for approval under the NCP.

The draft DCPDD presents site-wide elements (urban structure) and directions as well as more detailed provisions for public realm, movement and access, and built form.

These draft DCPDD do not relate to the diplomatic area of the Curtin Diplomatic Precinct. However, the relationship with the future diplomatic area has been considered so that the developments integrate but also preserve the qualities required for diplomatic missions.

Consultation on the draft DCPDD will occur for eight weeks (15 April to 10 June 2026) and will include a range of events and formats for people to be informed and respond about the proposed directions for this area. Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered, and a Consultation Report will be prepared and made public.

The next steps will include seeking approval of the DCPDD by the National Capital Authority. Once approved, the DCPDD and the Consultation Report will be published on the NCA website. The final DCPDD will be used as the basis to guide development proposals for the site as well as the basis for assessment of proposals (works approval) by the NCA.

## 2. Location and the site

The North Curtin Residential Area was initially identified through Amendment 95 to the National Capital Plan (NCP) 2020-21. Amendment 95 changed the land use policy to provide for diplomatic mission land, residential land, open space and road areas and included the whole area within Designated Areas (Figure 1). The North Curtin Residential Area forms part of the wider Curtin Diplomatic Precinct which is a designated area.

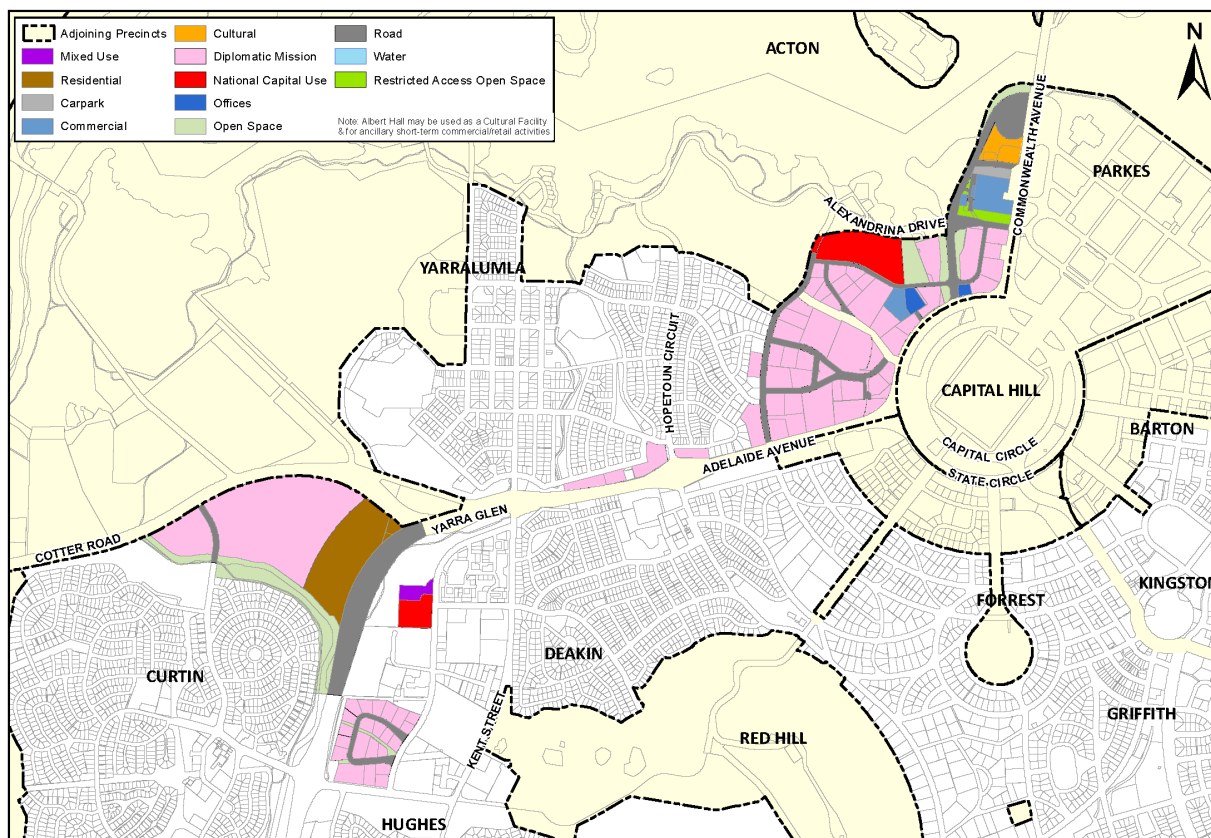


Figure 1. Location of precinct in the NCP and proposed land uses

The site is bounded by Cotter Road to the north, Yarra Glen to the east and Yarralumla Creek to the south. The site is located south-west of Adelaide Avenue, which is identified as a major avenue in the NCP. Adelaide Avenue changes to Yarra Glenn which runs to the east of the site and is a major arterial road connecting south to Woden. Cotter Road is a primary access route to the west to Molonglo Valley and provides an access to Curtin (via McCulloch Street).

Neighbouring suburbs are Yarralumla to the north, Deakin to the east and Curtin to the south. Curtin is largely made up of single dwellings and has a group centre where there are medium-density developments.

As a result of consideration of land uses, services and infrastructure in developing the DCPDD, this draft DCPDD illustrates a refined area for the residential land and open space (including a proposed water ecology park along Yarralumla Creek). The proposed refined site configuration is illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure.2 Surrounding area, context considerations and refined configuration of site

The site is well-located in relation to existing employment, services and facilities and is considered suitable land to support and take advantage of these aspects and the proposed light rail extension to Woden. The site is part of the City to Woden Southern Gateway <sup>1</sup>corridor.

The draft DCPDD apply to the area identified in red in Figure 2 which includes the residential area and proposed water ecology park along Yarralumla Creek.

The draft DCPDD do not apply to the diplomatic area - the development of the diplomatic estate will progress over a different time frame than the development of the subject site. However, the draft DCPDD has been prepared considering the requirements of the future diplomatic estate, including utilities and road infrastructure, and facilitates efficient and appropriate delivery of works to enable both areas to be developed and reduce encumbrances on the diplomatic estate land.

<sup>1</sup> The ACT Government is undertaking planning for the Southern Gateway corridor and this site is considered in that context and the opportunities to support housing supply in well-located areas. The ACT Government will provide further detail on the Southern Gateway planning separately.

## 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. Locations around existing centres and with good access to transport are considered 'well-located' and positive opportunities for delivering housing. National Cabinet also agreed to a National Planning Reform Blueprint with planning, zoning, land release and other measures to improve housing supply and affordability.

Residential development in this location supports the national policy agenda. Through the draft DCPDD the National Capital Authority (NCA) is delivering planning to support the achievement of National housing targets and also support the ACT Government commitment to enable 30,000 more homes by 2030 for Canberra's growing population.

### 3.2 National Capital Plan and the National Capital Authority

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:

*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;*

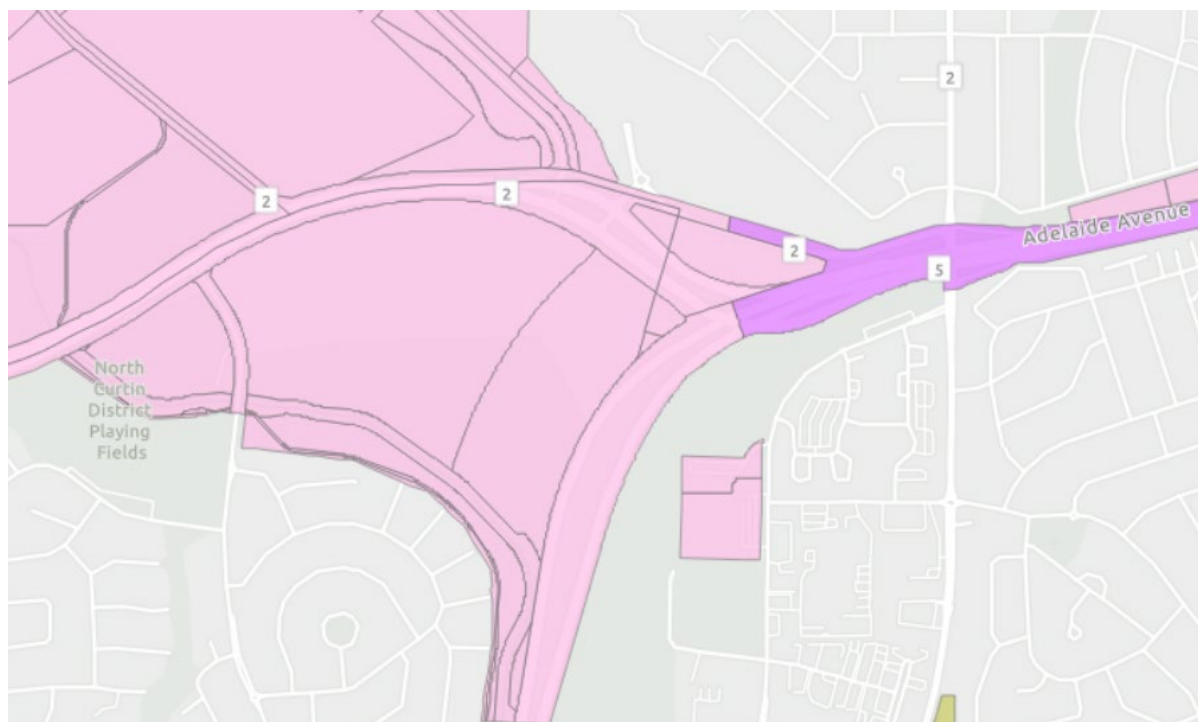
*(c) may set out the detailed conditions of planning, design and development in Designated Areas and the priorities in carrying out such planning, design and development; and*

*(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.*

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. The NCP specifies areas of land that have the special characteristics of the National Capital to be Designated Areas.

As identified in Figure 3 the whole area of the diplomatic estate and the site (subject of the draft DCPDD) is identified as Designated Area. The land subject of the draft DCPDD (residential land and open space) while in a designated area, is Territory land and the ACT Government is for development and management of the land.

Within Designated Areas, Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development (DCPDD) set the requirements for proposed development. Works within Designated Areas require approval from the NCA. The requirements of the NCP, including DCPDD, are used to assess applications for works approval.



**Figure 3** – Designated areas including this site (pink)

The NCP in section 4.14.5 outlines detailed conditions of planning, design and development for the Diplomatic Precinct. The final part of s.4.14.5 refers to 'site specific' requirements and this applies to the North Curtin non-diplomatic land i.e. the residential land in the precinct (refer Appendix A). This requires DCPDD to be prepared for this part of the site – which is the draft DCPDD document subject of this consultation. The draft DCPDD is intended to support the NCP. The NCP and the DCPDD will be considered by the NCA in assessing works approval.

### 3.3 ACT Planning

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. The NCA and ACT planning systems interact to deliver the strategic and statutory planning framework for the ACT. As noted earlier, given the site is within a designated area under the NCP, the NCP (including the DCPDD) provide the planning requirements for the site and works approval is required from the NCA for development.

The [ACT Planning Strategy 2018](#) prepared by the Act Government, 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 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, including the potential corridor for light rail from Civic to Woden (see Figure 4).

This map outlines the strategic direction for the development of Canberra over the next 30 years and beyond. Policy boundaries are not to be regarded as precise and are intended to inform more detailed planning.

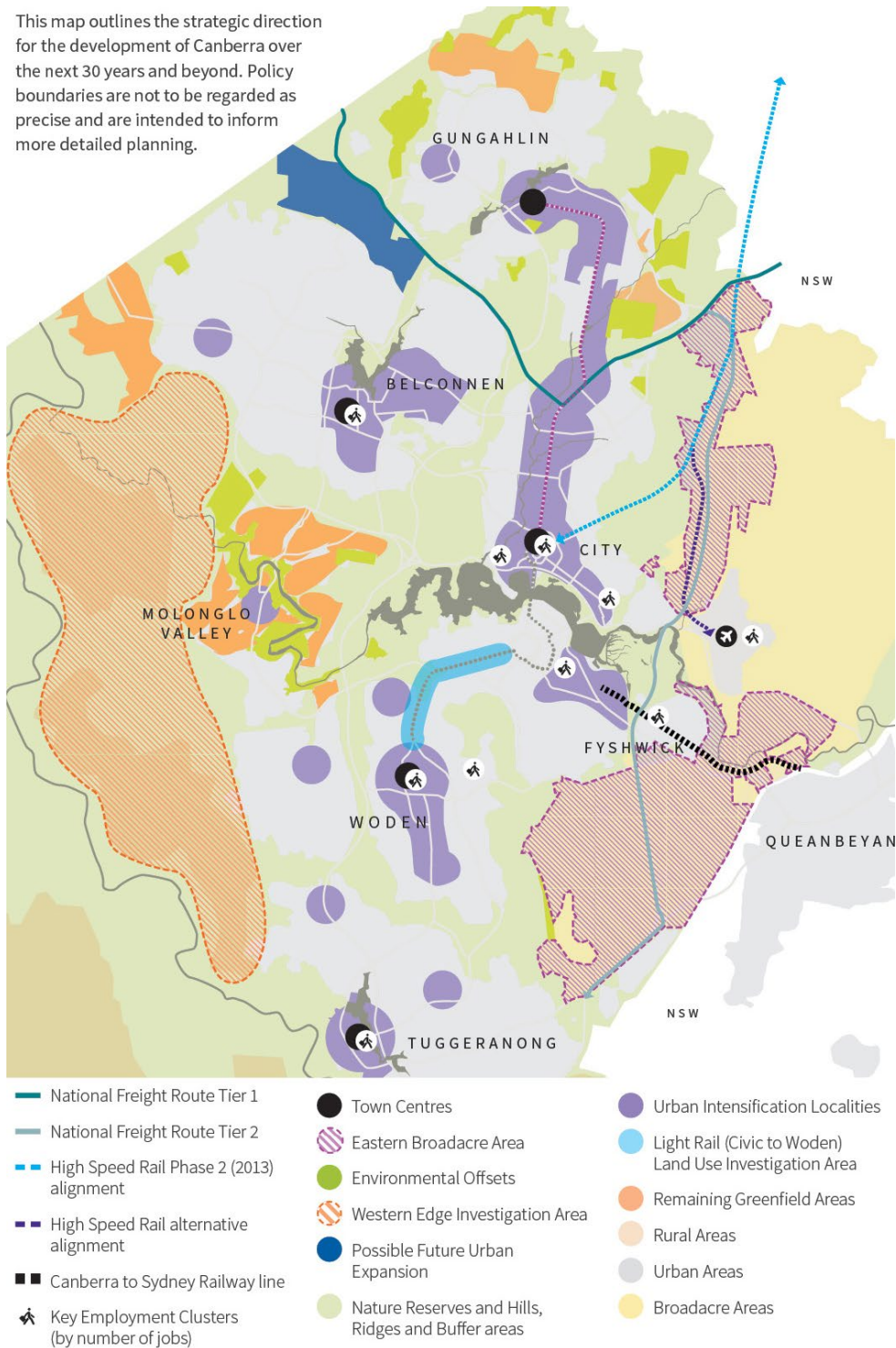


Figure 4. ACT Planning Strategy 2018 – policy plan

The District Strategies (for 9 districts of urban Canberra) released in 2023 built on the Planning Strategy and examined a range of environmental, social, economic and cultural factors in identifying areas for preservation and areas for change at a finer grain scale. The district strategies reinforce the location of the elements that contribute to Canberra’s role as the national capital.

The Woden District Strategy<sup>2</sup> includes this site (Figure 5). The site is identified as a key site and change area category 2 (change could happen in 0-10 years). It is noted that category 2 change areas primarily relate to planning for growth and change along the future light rail corridor from the City Centre to Woden and along the Athllon Drive corridor.

The district strategy outlined a number of possibilities that could be explored in relation to the light rail corridor which are relevant to the planning and development for this site. The Strategy outlined principles to apply in planning for this site (refer p.43 of Woden District Strategy) which have also been explored in developing the DCPDD and site investigations and also as part of the ACT planning work for the Southern Gateway corridor.

The ACT Government Minister for Planning released a Statement of Planning Priorities in 2025 which refers to development of a Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework related to this corridor (indicated within Priority 1). The ACT Government has been undertaking investigations and planning work to deliver the Framework that is intended to inform and support delivery of light rail from the city to Woden.

The NCA and ACT Government have been collaborating so that there is a positive relationship between this site and the broader framework and proposals.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.planning.act.gov.au/professionals/our-planning-system/district-strategies#district-strategies>



**Legend**

- District boundary
  - Blue-green network**
    - Urban open space
    - Urban ACT ecological network
    - Sensitive ecological communities
    - ▨ Protected conservation area
    - Water bodies
    - Sportsfields
  - Economic access and opportunity**
    - ⊙ Economic and employment focus
    - City/town/group/local centre and ott
    - ▨ Service trades/Industrial
  - Innovation precinct**
    - Local centre
    - Group centre
    - ⊗ Land zoned C24 - Local Centre but functioning as a local centre
  - Strategic movement**
    - - - Proposed light rail corridor
    - - - Potential future light rail corridor
    - Current rapid transit corridor
    - Current principal active travel route
    - Current main active travel route
    - - - Future main active travel route
    - Strategic investigation corridor
  - Sustainable neighbourhoods**
    - Key sites and change areas**
      - Category 1 - Change could happen within 0-5 years
      - Category 2 - Change could happen within 0-10 years
      - Category 3 - Change could happen within 0-15 years
      - ⊙ Key Site
    - Inclusive centres and communities**
      - ⊗ New community and recreation facilities
      - ⊗ Possible centre initiatives
- Note: Future light rail route to be determined through feasibility investigation

**Figure 5. Woden Valley District Strategy Plan**

### **3.4 Planning Framework that applies to the North Curtin Residential Area**

As outlined in s.3.2 and 3.3, both the National Capital planning and the ACT planning frameworks are relevant to the future development of this site.

The site has been identified as part of a designated area under the NCP and therefore the NCP applies to the site and the NCA is the relevant statutory authority for works approvals for the site.

Within the NCP, 'Site Specific' requirements apply to this site (refer Appendix A). They require

- that site specific DCPDD be prepared for the residential area of the site
- that the site specific DCPDD be prepared in the context of a strategic planning exercise for the Adelaide Avenue/Yarra Glen corridor

As discussed in s3.3 the planning (and draft DCPDD) for the site has been developed in consideration of the broader strategic planning applicable to this area (in particular the Woden District Strategy, and Southern Gateway Urban Design Framework work underway, and Light Rail Stage 2B works proposed) and working with the ACT government.

## 4. Background

### 4.1 Background

While the NCA is responsible for the DCPDD, the draft DCPDD being consulted on is the result of analysis and planning undertaken by the ACT Government (including the previous version of DCPDD that the ACT Government consulted on) in collaboration with the NCA.

### 4.2 Site and context analysis

As discussed in section 3, the strategic planning context has been examined and supports the identification of this site for future urban development that is well-located.

An understanding of the conditions of the existing site and context including surrounding centres, land uses, environment, infrastructure and transport and connections has informed the structure and form expressed in the draft DCPDD for the site.

Figure 2 identifies some of the surrounding amenities and uses and the positive proximity to existing centres that the draft DCPDD draws on.

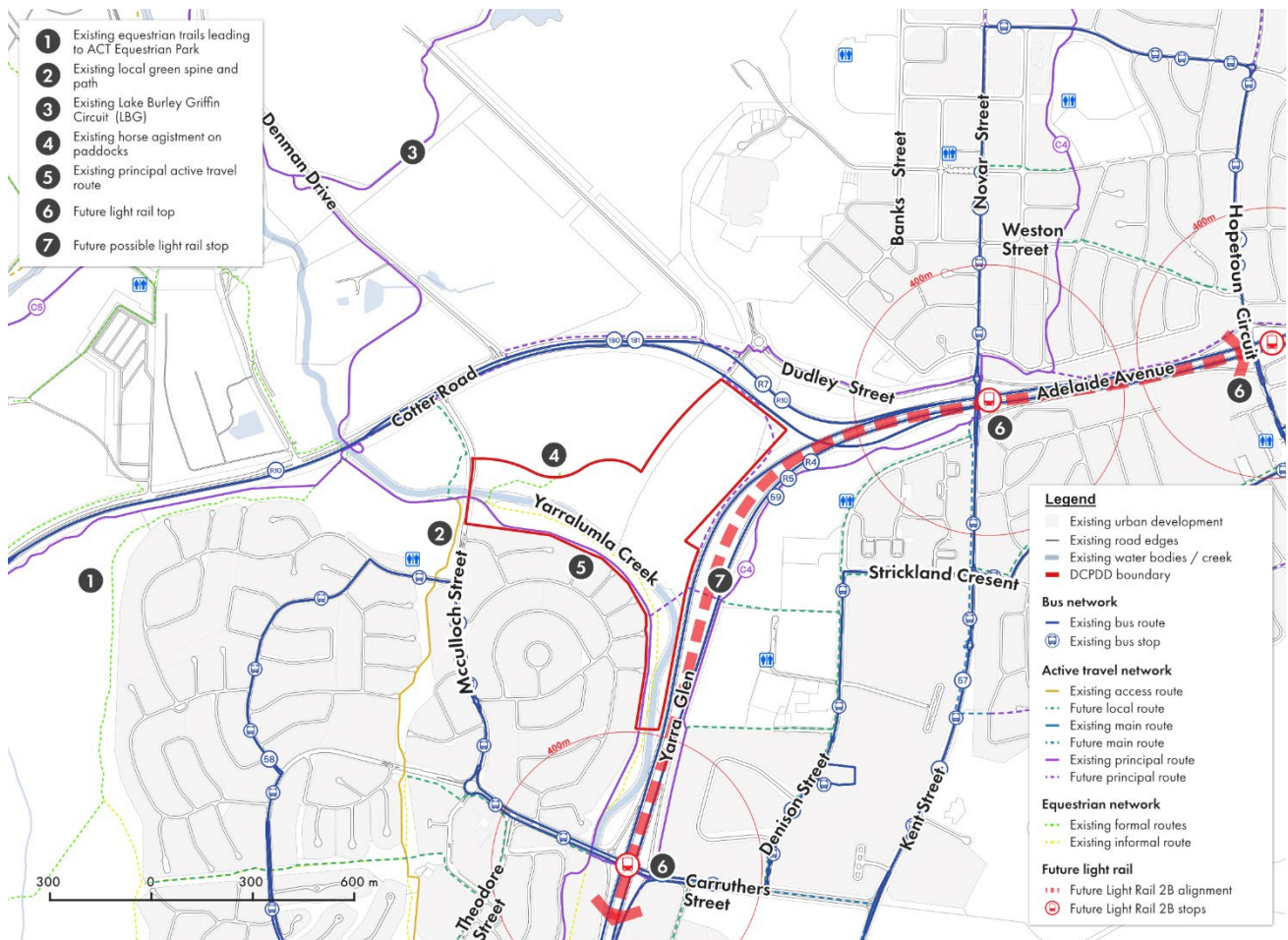
Figure 6 indicates the surrounding open space and recreation locations. The surrounding area features some existing and proposed public and private recreational facilities and amenities that are at local and district scale. The draft DCPDD presents an opportunity to include local and district open space to support the development in this area. The draft DCPDD includes proposals to provide local parks for residents and provide a significant open space area and enhancement of Yarralumla Creek that will also include improved connections with other parts of Curtin and Yarralumla.



**Figure 6** Public open space, recreation and amenities

Given the importance of this site on the southern gateway corridor and near major roads (Adelaide Avenue to Yarra Glen and Cotter Road) understanding the transport, access and active travel opportunities and challenges have informed the draft DCPDD. Figure 7 provides a summary of relevant existing conditions. .

As the site is currently undeveloped there is limited public transport that services the site, but future access through light rail and bus routes could respond to and support the future development.



**Figure 7** Transport, access and active travel

Currently the only road access to the site is via McCulloch Street, providing gravel road access to the North Curtin Horse Paddocks car park. It is the main connection link to Curtin from Cotter Road. An access for the residential area is necessary and will need to be provided off Cotter Road. The residential area and diplomatic estate will need some separation which is proposed via an entrance avenue that also provides a main access to Cotter Rd. This will require a traffic signalled intersection to accommodate the potential volumes and reduce impact on the east-west traffic flow of Cotter Road.

The NCP notes that access to Yarra Glen is not to be provided and the current conditions of Yarra Glen as an 80km/hr arterial road do not support an easy access point.

The physical conditions of the site particularly in relation to the topography, whether there are any matters of environmental significance and where there are opportunities to enhance and improve the site conditions, have informed the proposed layout. As part of development on the site, consideration of relevant *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC)* requirements will apply.

## Light rail

Light Rail Stage 2B (LRS2B), extending Canberra's network from the City to Woden along the Adelaide Avenue / Yarra Glen corridor will make a positive contribution to the development of North Curtin (Figure 8).

Figure 7 indicates a possible future light rail stop near the Mint , opposite the North Curtin Residential Area. Should this stop proceed it would be a positive location to capture residents of North Curtin, with access provided. The ACT Government has indicated that the current design of Light Rail Stage 2B is progressing to not preclude this option in the future.

The ACT Government is now preparing the revised, final EIS which will consider and respond to the submissions it received on the draft EIS. The final EIS is proposed to be lodged to the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and the Territory Planning Authority (TPA) for consideration and approval later in 2026. This process will influence next steps for the light rail.

## Utilities

Initial investigations have been undertaken to identify utilities on the site and where utilities may need to be moved and or augmented to support the future development. Existing utilities under the diplomatic estate land currently impact some land. The NCA has been liaising with the ACT Government to identify a whole of site approach to addressing utilities to support future development.

## 5. The draft DCPDD

The draft DCPDD provides an indication of the expectations and provisions required for future development and will be the key document that guides delivery of high-quality living environment(s) for residents of the North Curtin Residential Area.

The draft DCPDD is the main document that will be used to guide proposals for the residential and open space (proposed ecology park) areas. This will be used to assess works approvals within this area.

The draft DCPDD include objectives guiding the development that have been identified with an understanding of the site, context, feedback from previous consultation and delivering good urban outcomes. Consideration of the objectives will be required in preparing and assessing proposals for the site.

The draft DCPDD has two main sections that address site-wide matters in Urban Structure (section 1) and more detailed provisions in section 2 around three key areas: i) public domain and open space; ii) access, movement and connections; and iii) development and built form.

### 5.1 Site wide

The section on urban structure identifies four key elements of public domain, land use/built form, movement, infrastructure/delivery that have informed and underpin the proposed layout for the whole site. Principles related to these four elements are noted and assist in understanding the influences and directions for the development.

#### Public Domain

A large park (ecology park) is proposed along Yarralumla Creek that could provide public realm for this local community and surrounding areas, connections across the creek with Curtin, improvements to flood and water management, connections with broader blue-green network, and expanded tree canopy. This will connect with internal public realm of local open space areas within the residential area.

#### Land Use / Built Form

The residential area is to include a mix of housing types (townhouses, apartments) distributed to optimise proximity to future public transport and include provision for local amenities at ground level in key locations. Building heights are lower near the diplomatic estate and have graduated building heights with taller buildings on edges. Building heights range from 3 storeys to 8 storeys.

#### Movement

A street grid is proposed to consider solar access, topography and permeability for the site. Internal connections and connections to public transport and through improved public realm for active travel is proposed at street and site wide scale. Cotter Road is the main access point with a connection to McCulloch Street via a park side road. Proximity to light rail and active travel options are key influences.

#### Infrastructure / delivery

Early works are needed to address the infrastructure needs of the residential and open space and enable future development of the diplomatic estate. The delivery is proposed to be phased to prepare the site and deliver the open space (water ecology park) and civil works in tandem with the release of land.

A structure plan and indicative rendered plan illustrate the proposed layout and development form for the site including blocks, internal road network, internal open space, development arrangement and connections to the site and from the site (Figure 8).



**Figure 8** Structure Plan

## 5.2 Detailed provisions

The detailed provisions apply more at a project, block, area scale and will be the basis for preparing works approval applications and assessing them. The provisions are written with objectives which indicate the intent, followed by specific ‘development conditions’ which outline specific requirements.

### Public Domain and Open Space

- This provides detail on design for the water ecology park and provides an indicative cross-section which illustrates potential connections and naturalisation of the channel. This requires consideration of a broader water sensitive urban design approach that should also be applied at a site-wide scale.
- Provisions also indicate treatments for local open space for areas identified within the residential blocks.
- Provisions include landscape treatment, deep soil planting requirements, lighting and safety.
- Indicative streetscape sections are provided for a number of proposed internal streets which also illustrates interface between public and private areas.

## **Access, movement and connections**

- This provides an overview of the proposed internal network and external connection points for vehicles and for active travel. Noting the proximity to future light rail, the intention is to have reduced car-dependency and private parking.
- It is proposed to be a 40km/hr internal speed limit.

## **Development and Built Form**

- This provides an indication of the mix of housing types and sizes (bedrooms) and that supporting uses should occur at particular locations in the development at ground level.
- These provisions relate to building heights, separation distances between buildings, building depth and provides an indication of the built form across the area.
- Provisions related to the design and materials are included to support quality development in terms of layout, solar access, ventilation, circulation, acoustics, safety and communal and private open space.

## 6. Next Steps

### 6.1 Consultation and post-consultation

Consultation on the draft DCPDD will run for eight weeks and include a range of events and formats for people to interact and provide feedback. Information is available on the NCA website including a program of events.

Following consultation, the NCA will prepare a consultation report on matters raised that will indicate how feedback has been considered.

The NCA will finalise the DCPDD after this and the final DCPDD will be available on the NCA website.

The final DCPDD is a statutory instrument that supplements and is intended to be used in conjunction with the NCP. Any works on the site are subject to approval by the NCA and assessment against the NCP and the DCPDD.

### 6.2 Development

The North Curtin Residential Area is planned to be delivered by the ACT Government - Suburban Land Agency (SLA) in accordance with the ACT Government's Indicative Housing Supply and Land Release Program (IHSLRP).

The SLA has indicated that the land release is proposed to occur over a 4 year timeframe commencing 2027/2028.

### National Capital Plan s.4.15.4 – Site Specific requirements (vol 4. P.50)

#### Site specific

Buildings and major structures on land identified for Residential use must be set back a minimum of 15 metres from Yarra Glen road reserve boundary.

No access to Residential land is permitted from Yarra Glen.

For Residential land, detailed conditions of planning, design and development must be approved by the National Capital Authority prior to development. Detailed conditions of planning, design and development must address (at a minimum):

- refined land uses
- building heights and setbacks to roads and boundaries other than those already identified in the National Capital Plan
- impact on, and interface with, the diplomatic estate
- subdivision
- access, road layout and car parking
- building form
- landscape structure and open space
- streetscape
- lighting
- design quality.

Detailed conditions of planning, design and development must be prepared in the context of a strategic planning exercise for the Adelaide Avenue/Yarra Glen corridor, and are subject to public consultation.