

Inner south launches new bid to ward off further densification

Ian Bushnell - 5 September 2021 number of comments 1

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One of the inner south's leafy streetscapes, Grant Crescent in Griffith. Photo: Christine Waslin.

The ACT Government has been put on notice about any proposed densification of the inner south, with the area's community council issuing its own district plan rejecting any attempt to rezone residential areas for multi-unit development.

In May, Planning Minister Mick Gentleman announced that the planning review currently underway would include district plans that would allow for the character of each district to be reflected in the planning system.

In a pre-emptive strike, the Inner South Canberra Community Council has posted a draft district plan for residents to consider.

Council chair Gary Kent said the inner south was a unique, diverse and much-loved part of Canberra, but the ACT Planning Strategy's aim of continuing 'urban intensification' threatened its amenity and character that should be preserved for future generations.

He said this was particularly of concern near the major Avenues and along the Light Rail Stage 2 Civic to Woden route through the Parliamentary Zone.

"Inner South Canberra already is the highest density district in Canberra and there are plenty of opportunities for more high-density development without incursions into the long-established, characterful suburban areas which must be protected and nurtured," he said.

The council's district plan says the redevelopment of existing low-density residential areas will severely impact high-value streetscapes through loss of tree cover, privacy and amenity, and more traffic and car parking pressures.



Canberra Railway Station at Kingston should be upgraded or relocated. Photo: File.

It says multi-unit redevelopments should not be permitted in RZ1 zones.

The draft plan calls for the inner south's heritage areas to be protected, the assessment of nominated areas to be fast-tracked, and any other potential heritage areas to be identified and nominated.

Manuka Shopping Precinct, Kingston Shops, Kingston Post Office and Jardine Street Commercial Row are all awaiting heritage assessments.

It also calls for all heritage requirements for the Kingston Power House Historic Precinct to be met in the Kingston Arts Precinct development.

After inner south groups' victory in its battle against waste processing plans for Fyshwick, the draft plan wants support for the commercial and light industrial area to transition to a diverse mixed-use area and the phasing out of heavy industry and polluting activities.

It says the transport of waste in and out of the ACT, including construction waste from Sydney, should be tracked to ensure that ACT Government legislation to prevent the growth of waste industries in Fyshwick is adhered to.

The plan highlights the inner south’s diversity, calling for existing public housing to be retained and enhanced, including OAKS estate which needs redevelopment.

It says the East Lake urban renewal area should be a mix of public and private medium to high-density housing.




The Kingston Railway station should also be upgraded or relocated to create a district transport hub, including park and ride.

The plans generally call for better transport links, including light rail to be fully integrated with existing bus routes.

The plans also cover a range of other planning issues, and the Inner South Canberra Community Council is seeking comment from residents.

Tags act government densification east lake urban renewal area fyshwick gary kent inner south canberra community council kingston arts precinct light rail stage 2 manuka mick gentleman railway station

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Inner south residents have a lot of business and political connections in Canberra, so this will be a tough road for the ACT Government to keep up the densification battle.

When inner south schools and the library were slated for closure, inner south residents quickly shut that down. Tuggeranong residents facing far bigger closures had no ability to persuade the government to keep their facilities open and were unable to mount the same political pressure.

The inner south residents through legal and lobbying connections can drag out cutting down a single tree for a decade, they will make an extra fifty thousand residents in the same Spatial footprint a tough battle.

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