

From: Brendan [bboesen@tpg.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 6 July 2015 10:12 AM
To: Terrplan
Subject: Comment on Draft Variation No. 351 - Proposed West Belconnen Urban Development

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you to express some concerns about the Planning and Development (Draft Variation No 351) Consultation Notice 2015.

I live in Higgins, approximately 5 minutes walk from Drake Brockman Drive. The suburb has a nice, quiet character stemming from its older nature and its location on the 'fringe' of Canberra. The walking trail along Drake Brockman Drive is a delightful place to walk, marred only by the difficulty of crossing the road due to the constant flow of traffic along the road. I have several concerns with the proposal in the Draft Variation which I outline below.

1. Where is the 'investigation'?

The 2012 Canberra Spatial Plan only indicates that this West Belconnen area is a "Future urban investigation area" and that "The layout and extent of future suburbs are subject to detail review...". The Draft Variation indicates to me that someone has decided that West Belconnen will get two new Higgins-sized suburbs (and possibly two to three more in the future) without there really having been an 'investigation' or a 'detail[ed] review' in accordance with the Spatial Plan. Where is the investigation? Where is the detailed review?

2. The Variation is at odds with certain principles of the 2012 Canberra Spatial Plan

One of the major strategies of the 2012 Canberra Spatial Plan, following on from the 2004 Plan, is to ensure we have a 'compact city'. Just placing more suburbs on the fringe of Canberra would seem to be significantly at odds with this plan. Higgins and Holt are on the existing fringe of Canberra and access to these suburbs by public transport, whilst improved in recent years, is inconvenient enough that many people in these suburbs drive. I think these new proposed suburbs will see an even lower use of public transport.

The 2012 Spatial Plan states "Each of Canberra's suburbs and districts has a subtly different urban character that must be recognised. These differences are derived from many things, including the views to the mountains, the road pattern, the landform, the trees and the cultural expression of the community itself." I don't believe the impact on the residents of Higgins and Holt have been taken into consideration in this regard. The significantly increased traffic flow along Drake Brockman Drive that will be the result of the new suburbs will significantly change the character of the area.

3. Increased traffic flow along Drake Brockman Drive will have a significant negative impact on the usage of the walking trail and motor vehicle access from Higgins and Holt

One has to be extremely careful crossing Drake Brockman Drive to use the walking trail due to the current traffic flow, even for an able-bodied adult. People who are less mobile (children and the elderly) would find crossing the road now to be even more hazardous.

According to the 2012 Spatial Plan:

"Providing easy access to reserves, play areas and parks will be particularly important in areas of urban intensification. As renewal and redevelopment occurs, so must investment in parks and reserves designed to meet the needs of a range of users, including the very young wanting a place to play, adolescents seeking more challenging sport activities, dog

owners looking for a place to exercise their animal companions, and the elderly seeking a place to sit comfortably in the sun."

The proposed new suburbs would increase this traffic significantly to the point where usage of the trail would significantly decline.

4. Building right on the ACT/NSW border leaves the ACT little control over future development in the area (in NSW)

The advantage of having a significant buffer zone between urban areas of the ACT and the border (as is the existing situation) is that the ACT has control over its practical urban boundary. The Draft Variation has Canberra extend right up to the NSW border (albeit with a 300 m 'buffer' zone). Once the urban boundary is the border, there is little to prevent a current or future NSW government from effectively extending Canberra into NSW through the creation of abutting residential areas. This plan is strategically unsound.

I hope you will give my comments due consideration. If you have any further questions you may contact me by mail, phone, or email:

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