

Mr Andrew Smith
Chief Planner, National Capital Authority
GPO Box 373
CANBERRA ACT 2600



SUBMISSION ON NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN DRAFT AMENDMENT 95 – NORTH CURTIN DIPLOMATIC ESTATE AND URBAN AREA

Public Transport Association of Canberra

Dear Mr Smith,

The Public Transport Association of Canberra (PTCBR) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on Draft Amendment 95 – North Curtin Diplomatic Estate and Urban Areas (DA95). This submission provides our views on the proposed changes to the National Capital Plan to facilitate the development of a diplomatic and residential estate on Block 4, Section 106 and part of Block 5, Section 121 Curtin.

In summary, PTCBR is broadly supportive of the intended DA95. This amendment brings to a head years of debate on the future of the Curtin Horse Paddocks, which were originally excluded from urban development pending resolution of the proposed Yarra Glen extension via Black Mountain Peninsula (see [Figure 1](#)).

With minor amendments to the land use settings, future provision of open space and the establishment of long-term infrastructure funding arrangements, PTCBR believes that this site has the potential to become an example of best-practice urban infill that benefits the wider Canberra community.

Recommendation 1: Broaden the list of permissible uses on the area of land currently zoned for residential use only

As drafted, this amendment will rezone approximately 130,000m² of land adjacent to Yarra Glen to permit residential development. This was undertaken at the behest of the ACT Government and is consistent with the 2018 ACT Planning Strategy's strong emphasis on urban consolidation on social, economic and environmental grounds.

While PTCBR is supportive of this approach, it is our view that a better long term outcome would be achieved if a greater variety of land uses were permitted on this site, as is the case for other infill precincts outlined in the National Capital Plan, such as West Basin, Constitution Avenue and City Hill.

Allowing additional land uses, such as shops, offices, cafes, hotels and community facilities, will add amenity to the adjacent diplomatic estate and make it a destination in its own right, benefiting residents of the surrounding urban areas and solidifying the economics of the proposed light rail line between the City and Woden.

Recommendation 2: Include principles to encourage active travel and naturalise Yarralumla Creek

As a significant infill development on a major ceremonial route, DA95 presents the National Capital Authority with an opportunity to showcase best practice in sustainable urban and landscape design in a manner befitting Australia's National Capital.

Given the estate's proximity to Yarralumla Creek and the future City to Woden light rail corridor, PTCBR recommends that DA95 requires future planning work to incorporate a variety of measures to encourage active travel in and around the estate. This should include small parks, pedestrian priority areas, cycle ways and broad canopy trees designed to ensure the estate meets the ACT Government's 30 per cent canopy cover targets.¹

Longer term, DA95 should also encourage the naturalisation of Yarralumla Creek. In combination with high amenity walking and cycling connections, this has the potential to transform a concrete barrier into a green spine connecting the National Arboretum, the National Zoo & Aquarium and Lake Burley Griffin to the Woden Town Centre and surrounding suburbs.

Recommendation 3: Identify infrastructure requirements to minimise the impact of the estate on adjacent residential areas

DA95 is the latest in a long line of proposals for the area around the Curtin Horse Paddocks, each of which has required varying degrees of new infrastructure to enable future land releases. In terms of scale, the proposal with the greatest number of similarities to DA95 would be the ACT Government's original plans for an expanded redevelopment of the Canberra Brickworks precinct.

To facilitate future traffic flows anticipated from the new Brickworks development and the growing district of Molonglo, the former Land Development Agency proposed a new grade-separated "Mint Interchange" extending from the Cotter Road to Denison Street.² This piece of infrastructure was estimated to cost between \$50 and \$150 million and was intended to redirect southbound traffic flows away from the narrow McCulloch and Kent Streets.

Given the scale of DA95, it can be anticipated that similar levels of infrastructure investment will be required to limit adverse impacts on existing residential areas. One possible arrangement is illustrated in [Figure 2](#), with both the Mint Interchange and the extension of Canberra's light rail network to Woden servicing the new diplomatic and residential estate.

¹ *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City*, ACT Government, p 4.

² https://suburbanland.act.gov.au/uploads/ckfinder/files/pdf/3_Commercial/Canberra_Brickworks/Consultation_Boards/CB%26E%20Consultation%20board%205_TRAFFIC.pdf

To avoid a repeat of the public stoushes on the alignments of Light Rail Stage 2 and the Gungahlin Drive Extension, PTCBR recommends that the National Capital Authority works with the ACT Government to ensure these future infrastructure requirements are identified, incorporated into the National Capital Plan and provided with long-term joint funding arrangements as part of detailed design work for the estate.

PTCBR is available to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Sincerely,

Ryan Hemsley
Chair,
Public Transport Association of Canberra
chair@ptcbr.org.au

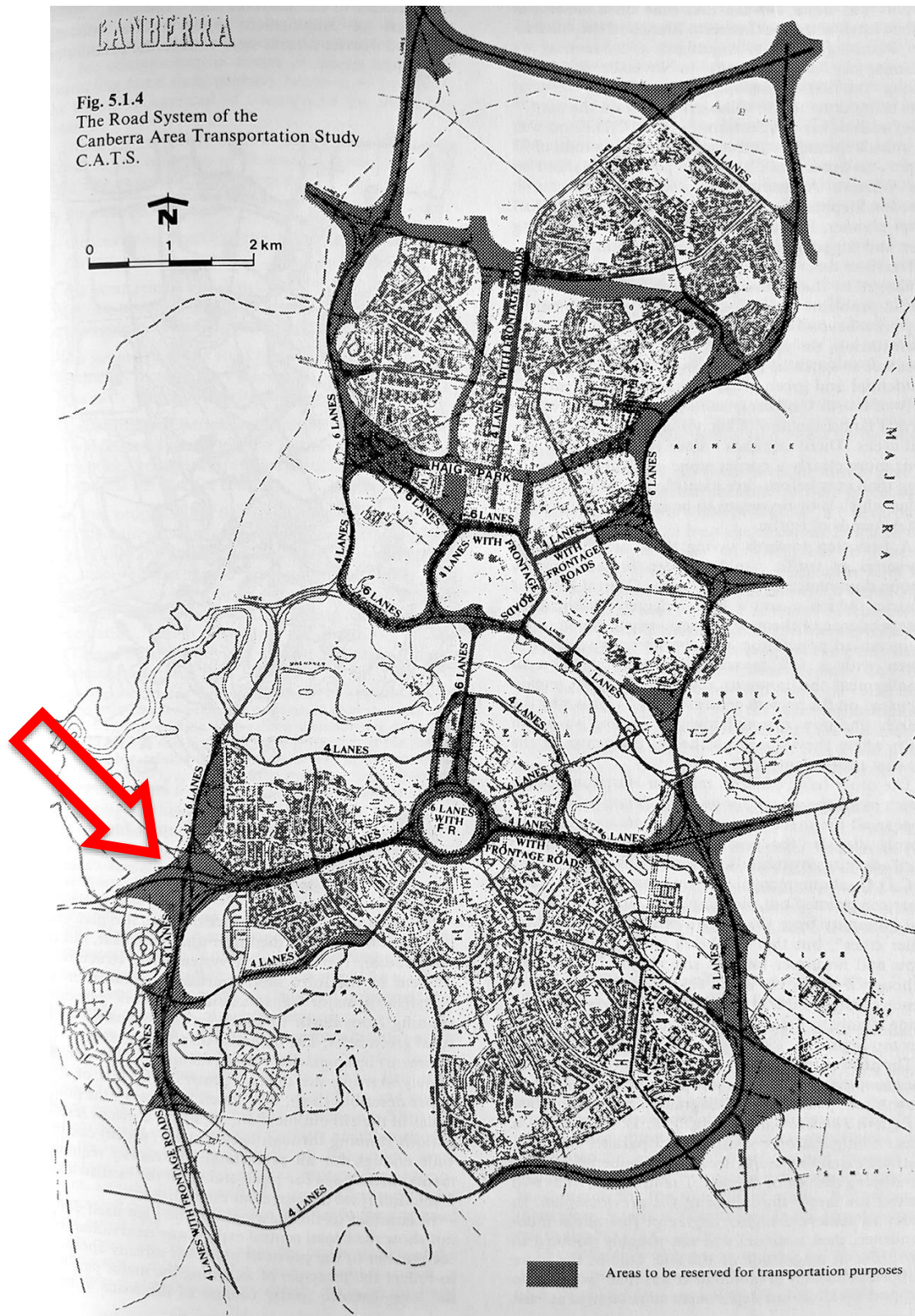


Figure 1: Reservation of the Curtin Horse Paddocks for "transportation purposes" as part of the 1963 *Canberra Area Transportation Study*. Many of the proposed freeways would later be abandoned as part of the 1966 *Canberra Land Use and Transport Study*.

Source: *Canberra: Myths and Models – Forces at work in the formation of the Australian capital*, Institute of Asian Affairs, Hamburg, 1984, p 83.



Figure 2: Illustration of potential infrastructure to service the new diplomatic and residential estate

Source: Modified image, from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-17/revised-plan-for-yarralumla-brickworks/6325170?nw=0>