



Belconnen Community Council submission on the Kippax Master Plan

The Belconnen Community Council (BCC) is pleased to make a submission on the draft Kippax Master Plan (KMP). We acknowledge that with the large increase in population over the coming decades from West Macgregor, the Riverview development and urban infill, that good forward planning is required to ensure good planning outcomes.

We also acknowledge the extensive preparation that has occurred in the lead up to the KMP including the contribution of the Riverview group, the owners of Kippax Fair, community consultation conducted by EPD, and the contribution of residents of West Belconnen and greater Belconnen at forums held by the BCC and other community groups.

Broadly the BCC is supportive of the draft KMP and the strategies proposed. The draft has considered and provided reasonable options that encourage growth, greater access and community as well as enhancing the public domain. We feel that expansion of the retail area in the Kippax group centre is warranted, and that extra parking and enhanced road access is needed. We also believe that enhanced pedestrian and cycle access is important, and that the loss of any existing green space is to be avoided if possible. An opportunity exists for improved community facilities to be developed in any upgrade or reuse of existing government owned property.

If extra retail space is to be made available, we suggest that either of the large government owned carparks serving the Kippax group centre be considered for conversion to retail space and multilevel carpark structures. We also suggest that any extra retail space not be of the mall type with people forced to shop in a controlled environment, we recommend a combination of the existing Kippax Fair and extra street frontage retail.

We acknowledge that the government building at the rear of Kippax Fair is at the end of its useful life, and that space could be better used for retail purposes. If that was to occur, we would expect a replacement government building to be built with equal access to that of the retail space, and offering extra government services to West Belconnen residents such as an Access Canberra shopfront, health facilities or some other service identified through community consultation.

Retail Expansion

Increased population growth will require an expansion of existing retail facilities at the Kippax group centre to meet that demand. The existing retail centre has several access points and frontages and it is important that any upgrade and expansion must

maintain the linkage between the large carpark, Kippax Fair and shopfronts on Hardwick crescent.

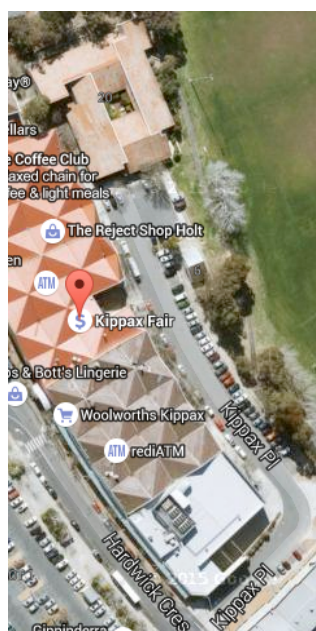
The Kippax Fair shopping centre has evolved over time and the owners have firm ideas on its future configuration and design. The BCC do not have a position on their private alternative master plan. We acknowledge their rights as property owners to develop their centre in accordance with their commercial objectives and ACT building and planning regulations. We support enhanced access to the Kippax group centre from Moyes crescent, if it benefits the community as well as retail interests.

The BCC feel that it would be better to preserve green space for community use and that expansion of Kippax Fair onto existing green space is not the best option. The first option that should be explored is expansion using either of the large carparks facing Hardwick Crescent, or replacing buildings that have outlived their purpose.

The carpark on Kippax Place at the rear of Kippax Fair could also be used in any retail expansion. The sale of this territory owned carpark would be acceptable to the community instead of using existing green space. The car parking spaces currently on that site could be replaced through the construction of a larger parking facility in the Kippax group centre.

As the government owns the two large carparks on Hardwick Crescent, an opportunity to use one of these carparks as the location for an expanded Kippax Fair coupled with multi-level car parking exists. If this was to occur, it is important that street frontage retail be mandated in addition to any internal retail presence similar to the existing Kippax Fair arrangement.

The BCC are also supportive of maintaining existing height restrictions. If any further changes were planned to building height regulations for retail or residential buildings in the Kippax group centre, we would expect extensive community consultation to occur before any variations to the Territory Plan were recommended.



Kippax Place at rear of Kippax Fair. This surface car parking could be used for retail expansion, while enhancing access to green space.



Territory owned building currently used for community services. If a replacement building was located within the Kippax group centre, this could be reused for retail expansion.

Existing businesses

The local community appreciates the current mix of independent and smaller retailers at the Kippax group centre. It is important that commercial conditions are not manipulated to bring about a Belconnen Mall like feel where every retailer is a franchise. Expansion of Kippax Fair brings about the opportunity to increase retail offerings, and increase local employment and the BCC support this. If business on Hardwick Crescent can be expanded by building street facing retail at the ground floor of a multi storey car park, this would benefit many.



Impacts on the businesses along Hardwick Crescent must be minimised in any expansion of Kippax Fair. This includes configuring future access and car parking for Kippax Fair that may disadvantage smaller retailers. The existing car parking serves both Kippax Fair and Hardwick Crescent retailers equally.

The BCC appreciate independent and locally owned businesses form vital parts of the community and offer services and products that may not be available at other retail complexes, including dining, drinking and fast food provision that can remain open long after retail complexes have closed at the end of the standard business day.

A walkable and liveable community needs business at street level that encourages people to visit at all hours of the day.

Street facing local business on Hardwick Crescent are vital to the community and their future viability must be ensured.

Community facilities

The public domain is of primary importance. It is acknowledged that the existing community facility at the rear of Kippax Fair may need replacing and may no longer be in a useful position. The BCC feel that this space could be used for retail purposes, on the condition that a new community facility with equal or greater size is located in the footprint of the Kippax group centre.

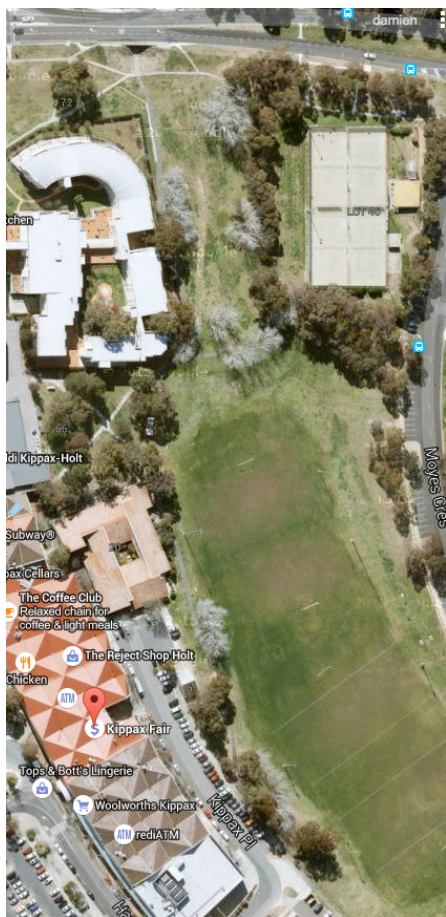
As the population will grow considerably, the community facility must be configurable for a range of future uses as the demographics of the area change. The BCC encourage the government to engage in community consultation and utilise the expertise of Belconnen Community Services and other local community service providers when planning a future community facility at the Kippax group centre.

The library is in an excellent location, although it is between two disjointed car parking spaces. Building a new community facility adjacent to the library should be considered. Access to retail and community facilities should be given equal priority.

Green space

The large green space in Kippax that stretches from Southern Cross Drive to Starke Street is greatly valued by the local community and is in high use by residents and local sporting groups. Both the Holt District playing fields and open areas behind Kippax Fair are much loved. Maintaining this large green space is important.

The identification of appropriate off-leash areas within the precinct is yet to be fully realised and is an area of little mention in the draft KMP, yet the ACT Government holds this important community activity facility in high regard. The BCC has championed a number of similar areas across the district and encourages further exploration of this facility into the future.



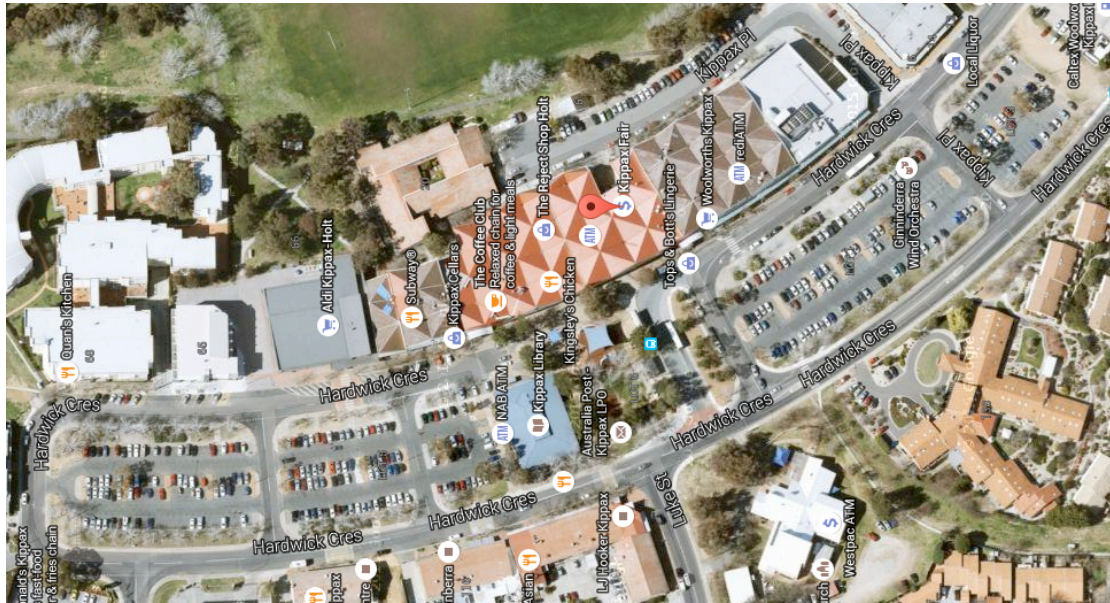
There are a number of ways in which improvement and community use of this green space can be realised.

Better access to and between the Holt District playing fields, the green space and the retail area is needed. Better more organised parking for the playing fields is required. All weather walking and cycling paths through this area are required, and they should be well lit so people feel secure when using them. More seating and seating located around both the playing field area and the green space behind Kippax Fair is required. Facilities for casual picnicking could also be provided. Some public art and robust children's recreational equipment could also improve this area.

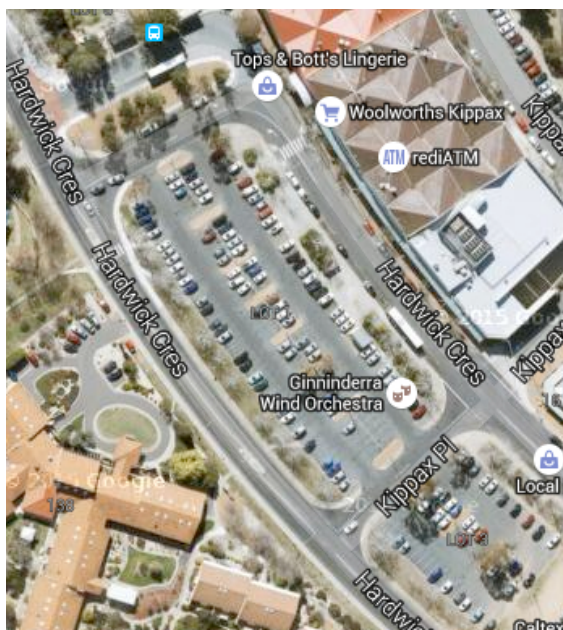
Although it may be inevitable that the community could lose some territory owned green space for retail expansion, this must be planned in a way that prevent disaggregated pockets of unusable green space. Further community consultation would assist this.

Parking

Adequate parking is important for the long-term viability of the Kippax group centre. Although the two large surface car parks may appear to adequately service the area, they are often at capacity. An opportunity exists to reconfigure both the roads and car parks to provide safer car parking, better access to retail and community buildings and increase car parking. This can be achieved through conversion of one of the surface car parks to a multistorey car park.



The two large territory owned carparks. Using one of these for a combination of expansion of retail space and to create extra car parks is a sensible use of territory owned land.



The lack of street frontage retail on the Woolworths wall makes this part of the Kippax group centre stark and unfriendly. Out of standard retail hours this area is little used. The street front retail on Hardwick Crescent enhances and creates community.

A multistorey carpark could be constructed that could include a retail component at ground level and a public transport interchange. Multiple access points could be provided so that access is from Moyes or Hardwick Crescent.

Building a Park and Ride into a multi storey car park adjacent to retail would encourage Park and Ride uptake, and increased public transport use.

It is vital that adequate on street short term parking for the retail businesses fronting Hardwick Crescent is maintained. Using the territory owned car parks to expand retail space would create some community concern if there were no expansion of overall parking space. Building a multi storey carpark would mitigate that concern.

Extra roads and footpaths

Although greater access could be provided through all weather walking and cycling paths, unease exists in the community regarding a new road between Moyes Crescent and Kippax Fair to link with Hardwick Crescent. Many residents see the

advantage of this road, but it needs to be constructed so that the pedestrian and cyclist are the priority, and not the speeding motorist.

A mixed-use zone with well designed speed control devices and sympathetic street amenities would assist this. The BCC support a road between Moyes and Hardwick Crescents, as long as it provides access to the green space as well as the retail space. Getting this balance right will be a challenge.

This master plan and any development proposals arising from it provide an opportunity to reconfigure an awkwardly designed area that prioritises road traffic, to an area that prioritises pedestrians while improving road access and parking.

Future traffic management

The enormous volume of traffic that uses Southern Cross Drive will only increase. Although significant work has occurred at the intersection of Southern Cross Drive and Starke Street, the BCC acknowledge that an access road to Kippax group centre from Moyes Crescent could provide the opportunity to make this dangerous intersection more manageable and safer.



Southern Cross Drive with access from Starke St, Florey Dr and Moyes Crescent

Access to Southern Cross Drive from both Florey Drive and Starke Street remains dangerous and time consuming. Redesigning this entire area in the context of rapid transit access and better access to the Kippax group centre should be explored. It should be noted that an opportunity has been lost by selling the triangle of land between Hardwick Crescent and Southern Cross Drive that could have been used in any road and traffic management upgrade.

The draft KMP identifies access for rapid transit from Southern Cross Drive to the Kippax group centre from Moyes Crescent. This would require major changes to the Kippax group centre and existing traffic access along Moyes Crescent, especially if a proposed access road between Moyes Crescent, the Kippax group centre and Hardwick Crescent is constructed.

It is possible that the existing bus interchange could be relocated either north or south of its present location. It is essential that wherever this main bus stop is located, that it still provide access to retail and community facilities, and the Park and Ride.

It is unsure what upgrades to Flack street are planned. It is a major thoroughfare for local residents seeking to access the Kippax group centre. If a further road is planned from Moyes Crescent to the Kippax group centre, this needs to be modelled and those options presented for community consultation so that informed comment can be made.

As there are many different ways these options can be modelled, the BCC urge more detailed community consultation be performed and alternative traffic management models, including future rapid transit access and Park and Ride options be presented before any firm plans are made.

Future light rail access

The Light Rail Network Plan identifies a future stage of light rail running from Civic to Kippax via the Belconnen Town Centre. The BCC support this proposal. If light rail is to terminate at the Kippax group centre, it is essential that a proper public transport interchange connected to both a Park and Ride and Kippax Fair be built.

The draft KMP indicates this light rail access will turn off Southern Cross Drive onto Moyes Crescent to connect with the Kippax group centre. This would require the use of existing green space or have an impact upon the tennis club on the corner of Southern Cross Drive and Moyes Crescent. We are unaware of any consultation with the tennis club on this issue.

While supportive of the light rail access proposal, the BCC would appreciate more detailed modelling of access from Moyes Crescent, Hardwick Crescent, and Southern Cross Drive (behind the Tennis Club).

Park and Ride

Existing Park and Ride at the Kippax Group centre must be expanded. If light rail to the Kippax Group centre from Southern Cross Drive is built, then it must be via an integrated bus and light rail interchange with direct Park and Ride access.

In the draft KMP the proposed location of the Park and Ride is on Moyes Street. Keeping it on Hardwick Crescent could be a better option; it could be built into a multi storey carpark on one of the large Hardwick Crescent carparks.

To ensure this remains an option, flexibility must be built into any proposed design resulting from the master plan process.