# **Dickson Centre traffic and car parking study**

#### **Budget**

Budget available to complete the works = \$75,000 (GST excl)

Land use, urban design and transportation planning are all linked. It is necessary to assess the traffic and parking effects of the Dickson Centre Master Plan.

#### Items to be covered by the study

- Investigate in regards to traffic:
  - the effects of the additional development proposed by the master plan on traffic and roads in and immediately surrounding the centre such as Cowper, Antill and Morphett Streets (i.e. queuing, conflict points, congestion)
  - where road improvements will be necessary as a result of increased development rights outlined in the master plan, and
  - if some development in the master plan needs reconsidering in light of potential traffic implications.
- 2. Investigate in regards to car parking:
  - creating a parking plan
  - the feasibility of reducing Territory Plan car parking requirements for the Dickson Centre
  - the maximum number of car parks which will be required under current Territory
     Plan car parking requirements if all proposed development in the implementation plan is realised
  - the possibility of establishing a parking contributions fund
  - the provision of signage to existing car parks so that legibility and improve usage of existing car parking spaces
  - the feasibility of extending on-street parking:
    - o along the northern end of Challis Street adjacent to Block 6 Section 32
    - o Challis Street south adjacent to Block 3 Section 34, and
    - o Cape Street adjacent to Block 9 Section
  - the feasibility of establishing a parking bank (trust fund) in the Dickson Centre to meet anticipated future demand including the following options:
    - o developing a parking structure on Block 20 Section 34; and
    - amalgamating Block 20 Section 34 with Blocks 28 and 29 Section 34 and developing a parking structure on these Blocks in conjunction with broader development. Any development of a parking structure on any of these Blocks is to ensure a frontage to Dickson Place.

A parking bank should only be considered for blocks where they can't be developed with required levels of parking owing to their small size.

#### Things to consider as part of the study:

- Challis Street is a Connector Street in the Cycling & Pedestrian Network (Cardno, May 2010). This continues the role of Challis Street as Connector Street. Refer to DS13 Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities: http://www.tams.act.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0020/34670/DS13\_Standard\_Draw ings.pdf
- The study needs to acknowledge the impacts traffic and parking (including on-street) of the proposed Dickson Bus station. A capital works item is proposed for forward design & construction in 11/12. This is likely to affect Challis Street and intersections from Northbourne. An on-street facility is expected in the short term.
- The Cape Street to Northbourne Avenue road connection shown on the master plan may not necessarily be able to be realised without participation from the Block lessee.

#### **TAMS** comments

<u>Stephan Walter</u> - Study to Include integration of short and long term Dickson station requirements. The context of this work is the Strategic public Transport Network Plan, network planning, and Northbourne Avenue Rapid transport project. The short term street based station requirement will likely have impact on car parking numbers in Challis Street. Longer term integration in a mixed use development the goal for a station in Dickson. (reminder money in the 11/12 budget for Dickson bus station design)

<u>Paul Isaks</u> - beneficial to undertake microsimulation modelling for the Dickson Commercial Centre

I do not agree with the inclusion of elements associated with parking contributions, nor for a parking bank, as part of the work associated with the Dickson Master Plan. These are issues to be addressed at a higher level.

I also do not agree with the implicit assumption that parking supply can easily be reduced and would prefer the second point under 2 in the outline below to establish the parking supply needed to support the effective functioning of the centre. (This may allow for either reduction of expansion of the parking supply.)

It is quite likely that an outline parking plan will be the outcome of work which is currently proceeding within the LDA on the arrangements necessary to be able to release the existing surface carparks for redevelopment. The work proposed may duplicate this work. Helena should contact Graeme Walker.

#### **Graeme Walker - LDA**

Traffic Report in progress

Whole of Dickson parking study – Impact of Blocks 19 and 21 Section 30.

Temporary parking studies as well.

# **Traffic study for Dickson centre**

Land use, urban design and transportation planning are all linked. It is necessary to assess the traffic effects of the Dickson centre master plan.

#### **Project objectives**

The objectives of the traffic study are to:

- provide clear traffic network recommendations relevant for the next 30 years, assuming developments as proposed in the Dickson centre master plan,
- investigate the effects of the additional development proposed by the master plan on traffic and roads in and immediately surrounding the centre such as Challis, Cowper, Antill and Morphett Streets (i.e. queuing, conflict points, congestion). Look at the levels of service pre and post master plan arrangements and offer solutions accordingly,
- determine where road improvements will be necessary as a result of increased development rights outlined in the master plan, and
- if some development in the master plan needs reconsidering in light of potential traffic implications.

#### **Tasks**

The following tasks are included in the scope of this proposal:

- inception meeting to allow discussion of proposed options and clarification of any issues before any work starts,
- collection of traffic, pedestrian and parking data for AM, PM and weekend and evening peaks,
- analysis of long term traffic issues including:
  - o Micro-simulation modelling
  - o Intersection analysis
- recommendations to address traffic issues, and
- two workshops to discuss identified issues and modelling results.

#### Things to consider as part of the study:

- Consider peak traffic times and changes in traffic needs over time.
- Challis Street is a Connector Street in the Cycling & Pedestrian Network (Cardno, May 2010). This continues the role of Challis Street as Connector Street. Refer to DS13 Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities: http://www.tams.act.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0020/34670/DS13\_Standard\_Draw ings.pdf
- The study needs to acknowledge the impacts the proposed Dickson bus station (both short term and long term) will have on traffic. A capital works item is proposed for forward design & construction in 11/12. This is likely to affect Challis Street and intersections from Northbourne Avenue. The context of this work is the Strategic Public Transport Network Plan, network planning, and Northbourne Avenue Rapid transport project. An on street facility is expected in the short term. The short term street based station requirement will likely have impact on car parking numbers in Challis Street. Longer term integration of the bus station in a mixed use development is the ultimate goal.
- The Cape Street to Northbourne Avenue road connection shown on the master plan may not necessarily be able to be realised without participation from the Block lessee.

# Dickson Centre Urban Planning and Design Framework

# **Draft Report**

12 February 2010















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Figure 1: Aerial view of Dickson



# 1.1 Why prepare a framework

involved and the community participated enthusiastically and constructively.

#### 1.1.1 Background

This report is the result of the Dickson Centre Planning Project that was undertaken in response to the changes in population, development pressures on the centre and findings from current research that showed additional supermarket space is required in the inner north of Canberra.

This report has two parts:

- Part 1 The Urban Planning and Design Framework (the framework). The framework outlines the vision, themes, strategies and actions for the future development and redevelopment of the centre. It also identifies priorities for action and the main implementation strategies. The framework should be read in conjunction with the Background Report in Part 2.
- Part 2 The Background Report. This report reviews the existing situation and identifies the challenges and opportunities for the centre.

#### 1.1.2 Project scope

The Dickson Centre Planning Project required that technical studies and community consultation be undertaken. The outcomes of this work have been used to develop this framework.

#### **Technical studies**

The development of the framework has been informed by several technical studies:

- background research about the history of the centre and the way it currently operates
- review of previous planning studies and other policies affecting the centre
- broad market assessment of development opportunities
- review of current retail assessments
- traffic and parking assessment, and
- urban design assessment.

These assessments included discussions with lessees and business owners in the centre, people who use the centre and government agencies.

#### **Community consultation**

Community consultation was a major part of the overall Dickson Centre Planning Project and was undertaken in two stages. The initial stage sought information about issues affecting the centre and developed and tested a vision for the centre. The second stage involved the community in the development of options to address issues facing the centre.

A large number of people attended each consultation activity. Attendance at the consultations included local residents, representatives from a wide range of community groups, business owners and lessees. The project provided extensive opportunities to be

Figure 2: Study area





Dickson Centre in the early 1970s, looking westward – (Photo courtesy ACT Heritage Library, Department of Capital Territory Collection)



# **The Vision**

Dickson Centre will be a multicultural, progressive and safe hub with a diversity of services and amenities for the local and wider community: a place where people live, work and socialise (play).

# 2.1 The vision

The vision for Dickson Centre was developed in conjunction with the community and in the context of the vision for the suburb developed in 2002 as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process.

The vision for the Dickson Centre is:

Dickson Centre will be a multicultural, progressive and safe hub with a diversity of services and amenities for the local and wider community: a place where people live, work and socialise (play).

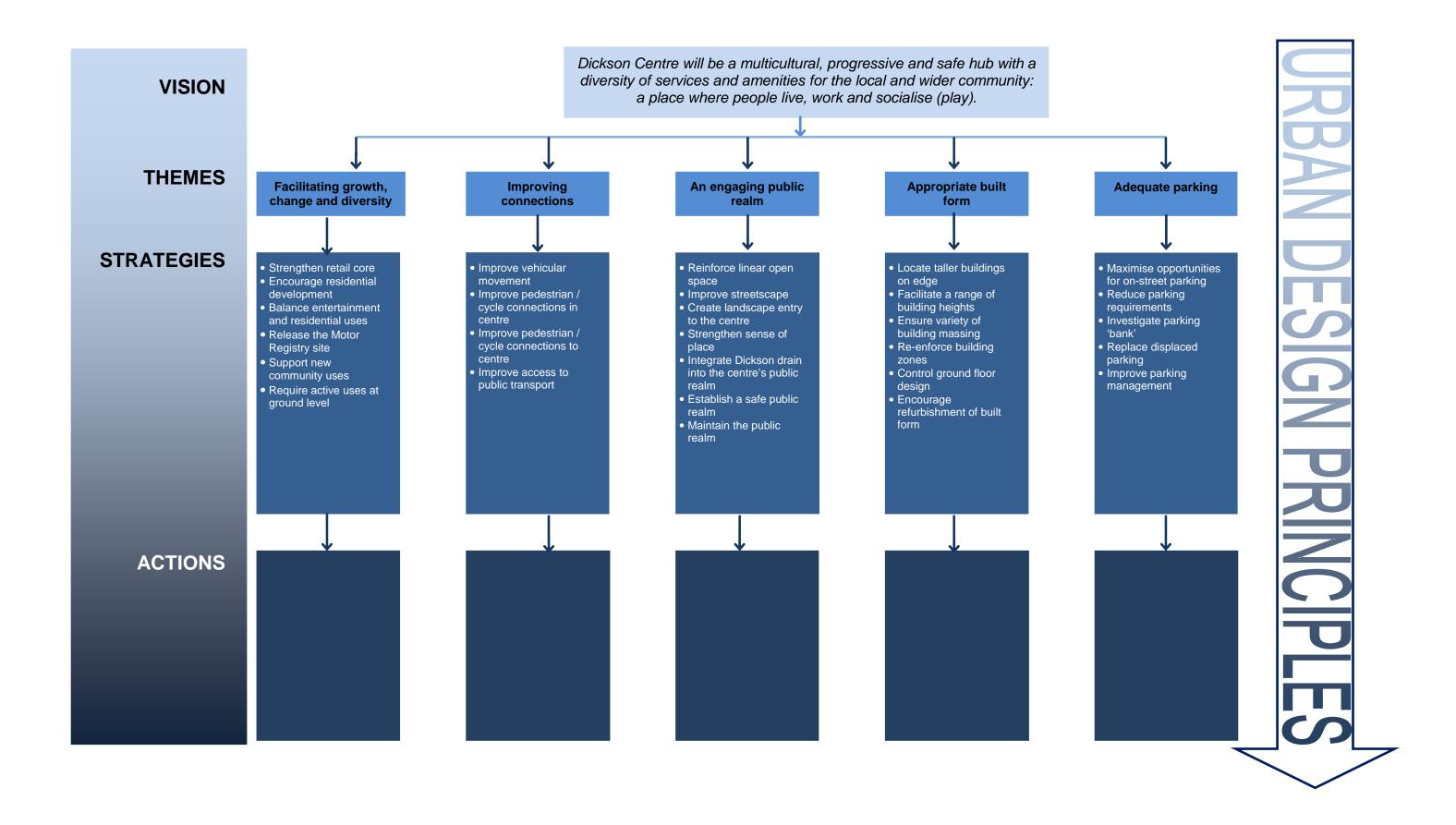
The vision summarises the community's goals and aspirations for the centre. The vision is the overarching intent that should guide the planning and operational decisions for the centre in the long term. The vision has been used to develop the objectives, principles, strategies and actions which form the Urban Planning and Design Framework for the Dickson Centre.

The framework develops one approach to achieving the vision. It is inevitable that other directions and opportunities will arise in the future.

The vision is supported by:

- urban design principles which will guide planning and development of all aspects of the future centre, and
- themes that amplify the vision and underpin the strategies.

The diagram over the page shows how the vision overarches the principles, themes, strategies and actions which form the framework.



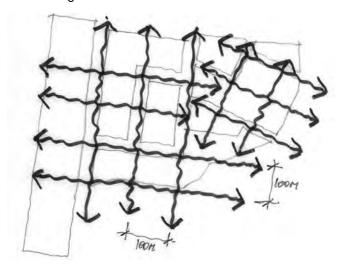
# 2.2 Urban design principles

The objectives for the framework for the Dickson Centre are to set benchmarks in sustainable design, facilitate public realm improvements, facilitate increased connectivity and circulation, improve access to public transport, identify sufficient parking and encourage mixed use development.

The urban design principles translate the vision into a spatial framework.

#### 2.2.1 Permeable

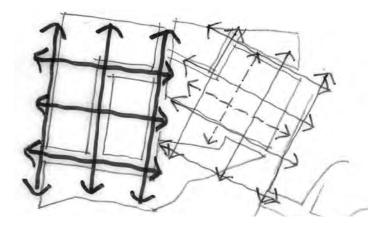
Centres depend on the ability of people to move around easily, safely and comfortably. Permeable centres offer a choice of routes and facilitate social interaction. Walkability will be maximised if there is a choice of routes every 80-100 metres. New roads will increase access and frontage in the centre.



Pedestrian movement will be reinforced in the core and to connect hubs of activity. A hierarchy of streets will concentrate through traffic on the edge roads.

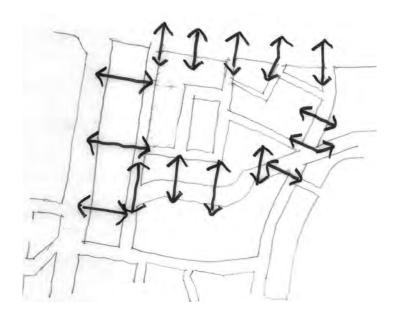
#### 2.2.2 Grid

The clashing grid street pattern is distinctive to the Dickson Centre and maximises frontage opportunities and access. The geometry is to be the basis for any necessary site definition.



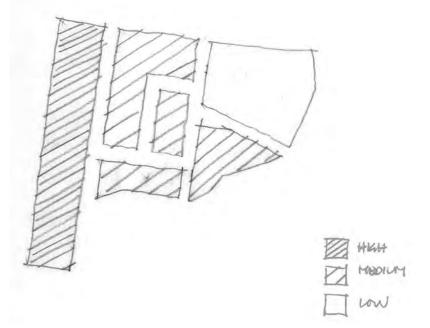
#### 2.2.3 Connected

Successful centres are well linked to the surrounding area and accessible from their catchment.



#### 2.2.4 Height

The relationship between the height of buildings and the width of the street influences the character of the built environment. Buildings that are between 0.5 and 1 times as high as a road is wide will generally be in scale with the immediate environment. In Dickson the relationship is generally to be between 0.5 and 0.8.

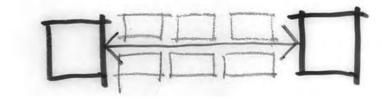


#### 2.2.5 **Edges**

To achieve good spatial definition, higher buildings will be located on the edges of the centre where they do not overshadow other uses.

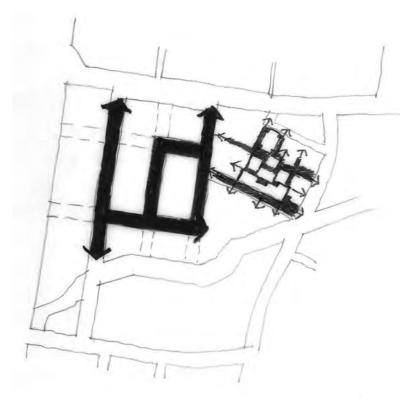
#### 2.2.6 Anchors

The majority of the community visits supermarkets regularly. Supermarkets and many other large retailers attract large numbers of people to a centre and are therefore important anchors. They should be located to maximise pedestrian movement past specialty/small scale retailing.



#### 2.2.7 Scale and grain

The distinctive scale and grain of the different precincts is to be promoted. The fine grain and low scale of the retail core will be retained and enhanced. The coarse grain and larger scale of the peripheral areas will be retained and enhanced.

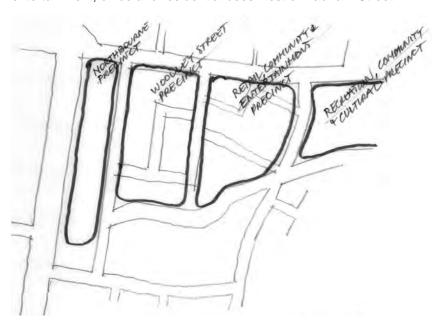


#### 2.2.8 Precincts

A dynamic mix of uses will be encouraged, focused on linked precincts of activity in which some uses will be more dominant. The precincts will reinforce the land use pattern based on the different character, flavour and history of precincts in the centre.

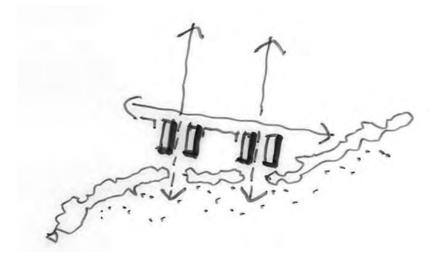
The hubs will be in walking distance of each other.

The retail and service core will be retained east of Badham Street and entertainment, office and residential uses west of Badham Street.



#### 2.2.9 Views and vistas

Buildings will be oriented to create visual and physical connections to surrounding areas and to maximise views into the centre.



#### 2.2.10 Non-spatial principles

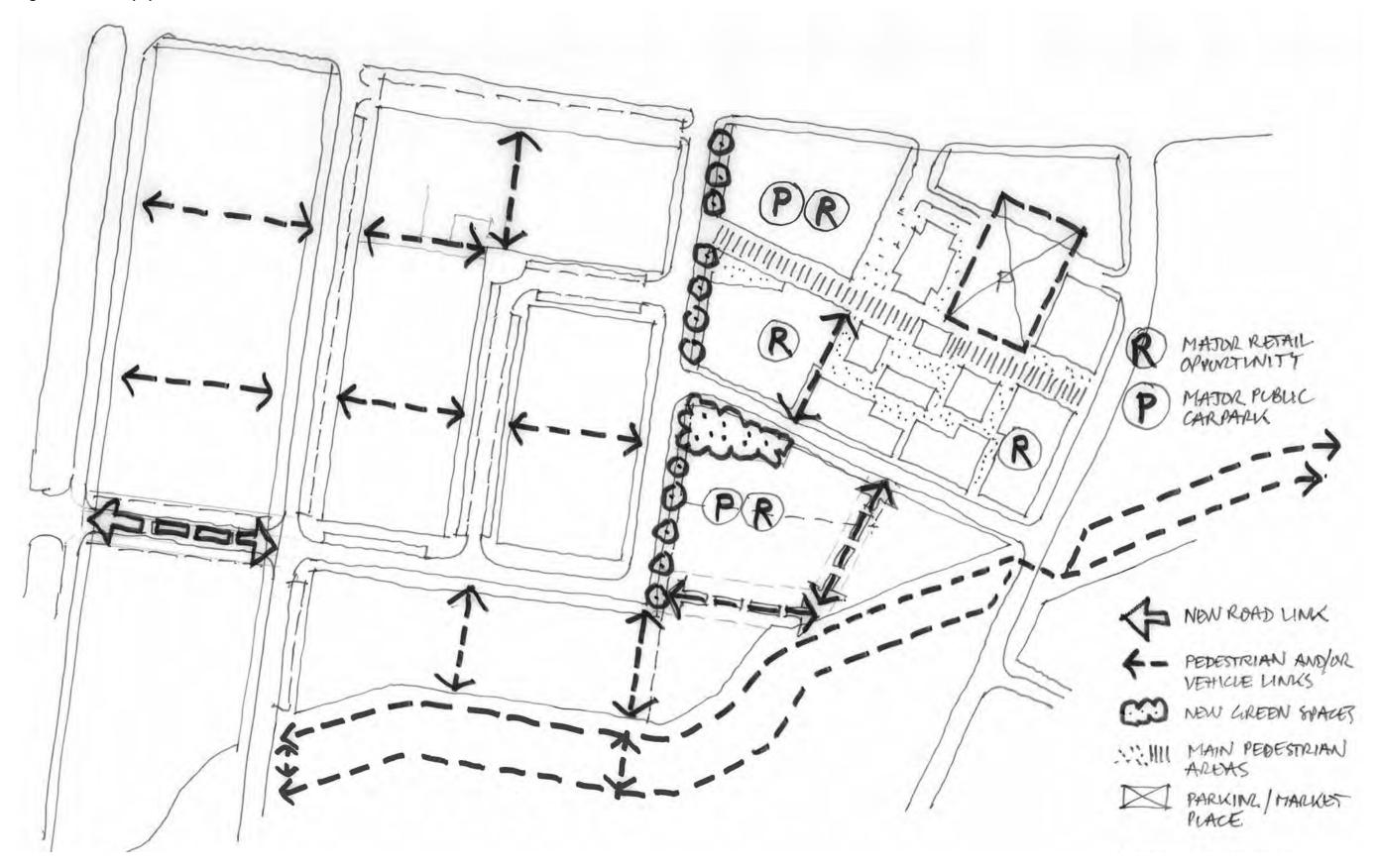
Five non-spatial principles also guide the strategies and achievement of the vision:

- development on car parks should not preclude future development elsewhere in the centre
- future retail development should benefit the whole centre and particularly small scale and local businesses in the retail core
- large scale retail development should not extend across
   Badham Street until development opportunities in the core have been utilised
- all development is to be undertaken in a way that maximises safety and security and contributes positively to the public realm
- development will contribute towards the amenity and liveability of the centre, and
- key land uses are located in walking distance of each other.

# 2.3 Concept plan

The concept plan has been developed based on the results of the analysis of the centre and the community consultations, particularly the community's vision for the future of the centre. It embodies the spatial principles and represents the structure on which the strategies and actions have been developed.

Figure 3: Concept plan







This section sets out the key themes, strategies and actions for achieving the vision for the centre.

The themes establish the framework for long term change and growth aimed at maximising the potential of the centre as a hub in North Canberra. The themes encompass the public and private realm. Their achievement will be dependent on public and private investment decisions. They will necessitate changes to the Territory Plan but are consistent with the objectives for group centres.

The proposed framework enables the centre to grow and change and provides directions regarding the location and scale of development. It supports a wide range of uses and seeks to encourage private sector investment. The framework also identifies directions for public sector investment, particularly in the public realm. The framework recognises that successful centres offer a high quality attractive public realm that people want to visit.

The centre-wide themes for the future development of the Dickson Centre are:

- facilitating growth
- a diversity of uses
- improving connections
- an engaging public realm
- an appropriate built form, and
- adequate parking.

Each theme will be achieved through the adoption of a set of strategies and each strategy includes a number of actions. These include actions relating to land release, changing the planning controls, rezoning, capital works, operational improvements and further investigations.

The following sections have a similar format. The existing situation, overall intent of the theme and the strategies are described.

# 3.1 Theme 1 – Reinforcing a mixed use centre

#### 3.1.1 Existing situation

Successful centres consist of different activities that help maintain economic activity, extend centre use into the evenings and weekends and encourage multi-purpose trips.

Dickson is one of the largest and most diverse group centres in the city and, beyond Civic, the major activity hub in North Canberra.

The centre is widely recognised as a social hub and the primary convenience retail centre in North Canberra. It is also a significant employment centre and many community services and recreation activities are located there. Food/entertainment activities are of metropolitan significance and contribute to the multicultural atmosphere, attracting many people who would not otherwise visit the centre.

While the development potential of many sites has not yet been realised, there are few available opportunities for the private sector to initiate major development. At the same time there are ongoing development pressures in response to growth and change in the catchment.

The community supports the expansion of the centre. They have identified the need for an additional supermarket and additional specialty retailing provided that other local suburban centres are not adversely affected and new development is not located in a mall. The assessment of retail performance of the centre supports the need for at least one additional supermarket.

The community has also identified the centre rather than the existing residential areas as the preferred location for medium and higher density housing. Development of additional housing in the centre would be consistent with the policies of the Canberra Spatial Plan.

The key theme of the framework is to reinforce the centre as a mixed use centre by enabling it to grow and respond to market demand.

The strategies and actions proposed under this theme seek the development of additional supermarket space and encourage more residential development in the centre. They anticipate that future development would be predominantly mixed use, achieved vertically by stacking different uses and horizontally by encouraging different activity mixes in different parts of the centre.

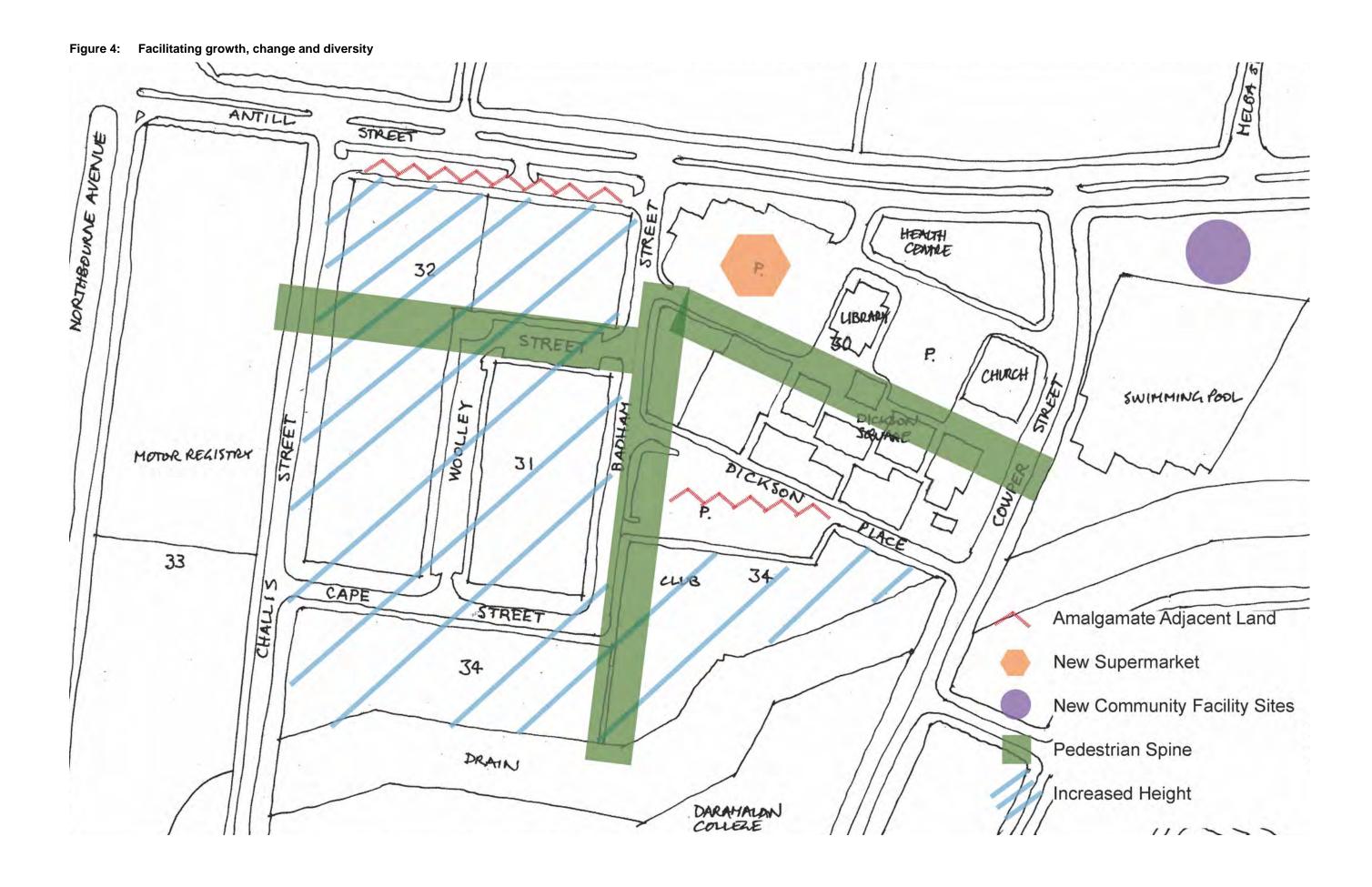
The strategies and actions are intended as catalysts for public and private sector actions and investment that will progressively build a revitalised and more attractive centre that better responds to the needs of its catchment population.

Figure 4 identifies the major growth opportunities.

#### 3.1.2 Intent

The overall intent of the theme of reinforcing the centre is to further diversify the mix of uses and encourage revitalisation by facilitating expansion of the centre. It is intended to:

- encourage revitalisation of the centre
- strengthen the retail core
- encourage more residential development
- reinforce the role of the centre as a community hub
- establish a significant mixed use node that will support upgrading of the public transport infrastructure at Dickson, including a new bus interchange, and
- activate ground floor uses.



#### 3.1.3 Strategies

The growth opportunities included in the framework are:

- provide sites for a full-line supermarket and additional specialty retailing in the retail core
- facilitate expansion of the existing secondary anchor in the retail core, if required
- establish a target population of 1,000 residents living in the centre (including the area adjacent to Northbourne Avenue)
- develop new sites for community uses in the area east of Cowper Street, and
- subject to a decision about the location of the bus interchange, create a major development site on the Motor Registry Office site (and relocate the Registry to Mitchell).

#### Strengthen the retail core

Several actions are proposed to achieve the strategy of strengthening the retail core.

The retail assessment identified a need for at least one additional full-line supermarket. The strategy proposes the development of a new full-line supermarket to be located in the retail core (east of Badham Street). The proposed location has been selected to ensure that existing small scale retailers receive the maximise benefits of the additional retail trade that will be generated, to revitalise the retail core and to diversify retailing in the centre.

The proposed full-line supermarket would be located on the Section 30 car park.

The proposal to develop additional supermarket space is considered in section 0 below.

In the retail core it is recognised that that many buildings could be updated. Therefore it is proposed that limited redevelopment be allowed in this area provided that it is not more than three storeys and does not overshadow the courtyards. The parking generated by the addition development would be met through a combination of a contribution to a parking fund, the purchase of parking spaces in a parking bank (refer to section 3.5) or waiving of some or all of the parking requirement.

An overarching spatial principle is that retailing, especially retail anchors be located in the retail core to the east of Badham Street. The Territory Plan restricts the size of individual shops to the west of Badham Street to a maximum of  $100m^2$  or  $300m^2$  depending on the

location. The Framework proposes that limitations on the size of individual shops outside of the retail core be retained.

#### Encourage residential development

Residential development in the centre is limited. Increasing the supply of dwellings would enliven the centre and support other uses. It would increase pedestrian activity and reduce reliance on cars. Increasing residential development in the centre is a fundamental component of the framework and will have many benefits.

The framework establishes a target of 1000 people living in the centre.

In the event that the Tradies Club proposes to redevelop their existing sites within the centre it would be appropriate to include the public parking area on Block 20 Section 34 as part of the development site provided that certain public benefits were achieved. These would include replacement of the existing public parking, development of a small open space area at the intersection of Dickson Place and Badham Street, establishment of new connections through the site and an increased setback to Badham Street. These strategies are considered elsewhere.

If the site is not included in any redevelopment of the Tradies Club the use of the land as public car park should be retained.

#### Balance entertainment and residential uses

It is not unusual for conflicts between residential activities and food/entertainment activities when they are near each other. The amenity of living environments can be reduced as a result of night-time noise. Particular attention will be required to ensure that entertainment activities are compatible with residential development.

The strategy proposes planning and other measures to minimise noise impacts from late night activities.

#### Release the Motor Registry site

The Motor Registry site represents a major development opportunity in the centre. The site is a possible location for a bus interchange.

The strategy proposes that following a decision about the location of a bus interchange, all or part of the site should be sold for a mixed use development.

#### Support development of new community uses

There is a strong demand for sites for community use in North Canberra. Few sites are available.

The strategy proposes that unleased land adjacent to the pool be released for this purpose.

#### Reinforce active frontages

Active frontages add interest, life and vitality to the public realm as well as contributing to community safety. Active frontages are achieved through the combination of uses that generate pedestrian activity and the built form including frequent entrances and windows to achieve physical and visual permeability between public and private domains, few blank walls and internal uses visible from the outside.

The Territory Plan requires uses that generate activity in public places to be located on the ground floor. The Plan does not include specific built form provisions to encourage the development of active frontage oriented to the street. It is proposed to reinforce active frontages through the introduction of built form controls including a requirement for transparent glass, no blank walls and direct entries from the street.

The strategy also proposes that active frontages be retained and required as part of future development. In addition it is proposed that future development fronting the eastern side of Badham Street include active frontages in conjunction with the increased setbacks proposed along this frontage.

#### Allow some residential development at ground level

The Territory Plan generally restricts residential development on the ground floor throughout most of the centre.

In some parts of the centre, usually on the periphery, ground floor residential development is an appropriate use. In some peripheral locations residential development could address the street and in other locations commercial uses could address the street with residential uses permissible to the rear.

#### Maintain character and diversity

Development in the retail core is small scale and generally fine grained, especially fronting the courtyards. In contrast development in other parts of the centre is larger scale and coarse grained with the scale increasing to the west and south. It is intended to retain this diversity.

It is intended to retain the character of the retail core. This will be achieved by generally retaining the scale of development but allowing for some additional development.

#### Theme 1 - Facilitating growth, change and diversity

#### Strategy 1 - Strengthen the retail core

#### Actions

#### Land release

- Release Block 21 Section 30 car park for a mixed use development that includes a full-line supermarket.
- Amalgamate Block 20 Section 34 with Blocks 28 and 29 Section 34 in the event that Blocks 28 and 29 are redeveloped subject to the public parking being replaced, establishment of new connections through the site, an increased setback to Badham Street and the development of an open space at the intersection of Badham Street and Dickson Place.

#### Territory Plan

- Retain the floor space limits on the maximum size of shops in the mixed services zone other than for bulky goods retailing.
- Allow limited redevelopment of sites with a maximum of three storeys. Parking to be reduced or waived.

#### Strategy 2 - Encourage residential development

#### Actions

#### Territory Plan

- Allow residential development:
  - on Block 4, 6, 15, 16, 28 and 29 of Section 34
  - on Block 6 and 7 of Section 32
  - on Block 21 Section 30 (subject to more detailed investigations about the feasibility of three levels of basement parking), and
  - next to the centre between Challis Street and Northbourne Avenue.
- Encourage residential development on the above listed sites by increasing development rights i.e. increase allowable heights.
- Ensure residential development in the centre is a product that people want to live in long term by:
  - providing sufficient storage (including individual not communal bicycle storage in multi-unit housing)
  - providing sufficient outdoor entertainment areas in multi-unit housing (i.e. bigger balconies), and
- providing green outlook for multi-unit housing.

#### Strategy 3 - Balance entertainment and residential uses

#### Actions

#### Territory Plan

Encourage ongoing restaurant use in the mixed services area through concessions for parking and enhanced availability of alfresco dining in footpath areas.

#### Operational

- Proactively monitor noise levels in relation to legislative requirements and ensure noise levels are well managed by:
  - regulating bin pick up hours of other uses and sealing bin corrals of all future/renovated pubs/food establishments
  - requiring the shut down of outdoor areas i.e. dining areas/defined outdoor smoking areas, after a certain time
  - requiring that pubs/food establishments shut windows at certain time to stop the sound of music escaping, and
  - changing liquor licensing laws to allow publicans to control patrons on leaving venue.

#### Further investigation

Investigate the feasibility of increasing noise amelioration measures for multi-unit housing in the Dickson Centre, i.e. increase requirements for thicker glass and sound insulation in the Dickson Centre Precinct Code.

#### Strategy 4 - Sites for community uses

#### Actions

#### Further investigation

Investigate if there are any appropriate community use sites on Block 13 Section 72 (next to the Dickson swimming pool).

#### Strategy 5 - Release Motor Registry site

#### Actions

### Further investigation

Undertake site investigations prior to releasing the Motor Registry as a development site (following decision regarding location of bus interchange).

#### Strategy 6 - Generally require active uses at ground level

#### Actions

#### Territory Plan

- Residential uses may be located on the ground floor of any residential developments located on:
  - Section 34, except Block 20
  - Blocks 6 and 7 Section 32.

#### Strategy 6 - Maintain character and diversity

#### Actions

#### Territory Plan

- Maintain the human scale, variation in uses and built form and general character of the retail core by:
  - prohibiting the amalgamation of blocks, and
  - prohibiting malls and covered walkways.
- Maintain the character of Woolley Street by:
  - allowing some development but protecting and enhancing the quality of the streetscape, and
  - incorporating distinguishing design elements such as the awnings and building diversity into planning controls.

# 3.2 Theme 2 – Improving connections

#### 3.2.1 Existing situation

A connected centre is internally permeable and well-linked to the areas it serves with safe convenient footpaths, cycle ways, roads and public transport.

The Strategic Public Transport Network Plan proposes major changes to the public transport network around Dickson. If implemented, these changes would benefit the centre.

Notwithstanding these proposed changes, connections between the centre and the surrounding areas could be improved, particularly through better pedestrian and cycle path connections.

Similarly, permeability could be improved in the centre. The community has expressed a strong desire for better integration between the eastern and western parts of the centre.

The size of blocks in the western part of the centre inhibits direct pedestrian and vehicular movement in that part of the centre.

The large sections also constrain vehicular movement as do the limited and indirect connections with Northbourne Avenue.

Permeability in the centre could be noticeably improved by creating new linkages and extending the existing pattern of streets/laneways, paths and public places to create a more legible, safe and attractive centre. The main opportunities include:

- new road connections
- new pedestrian and shared linkages (pedestrian spaces combined with parking areas), and
- new pedestrian bridges across the Dickson drain.

The outcome of these proposals would be a more permeable centre and a modified urban structure capable of accommodating growth and change.

Over time a more diverse and flexible movement system would be established offering increased levels of accessibility.

#### 3.2.2 Intent

The overall intent of this theme is to improve permeability in and to all parts of the centre, making it easier for visitors to move around and offering the pedestrian, cyclist and motorist a choice of routes.

Within this context, the objectives are to:

- improve permeability and legibility of the centre
- improve the ease and safety of walking and cycling in the centre, and
- integrate parts of the centre and the centre with the surrounding areas.