

***Reflecting Braddon:
a summary***

**Moving towards the
Braddon Neighbourhood
Plan.**

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief summary that reflects Planning and Land Management's (PALM's) recent collaborations with the people who live, work, play, learn or invest in Braddon in order to develop a draft Braddon Neighbourhood Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan is a document that provides a future direction for a neighbourhood, and the actions and initiatives required in order to create that future.

There are four core principals of neighbourhood planning in the ACT:

- *collaboration* – communities, interest groups and the Government working to identify issues and possible options to resolve those issues;
- *representatives* – the process is open to all those who live, work, learn, play and invest in a neighbourhood;
- *sustainability* – achieving a sustainable future for the city and its neighbourhoods; and
- *dynamism* – the plan is not static and will be reviewed in order to respond to change.

So far, the following collaborative techniques have been undertaken:

- an Open Forum Workshop at the Ainslie Primary School;
- face-to-face interviews held at the Braddon shops one Saturday morning;
- a two-hour Focus Group attended by a number of invited Braddon based community groups;
- activities held at the Ainslie Primary School and Merici Catholic College; and
- a Householder Survey and Business Owner and Employee Survey.

The Neighbourhood Planning team would like to take this opportunity to warmly acknowledge and thank all those who have shared their views, concerns, aspirations and suggested actions and to all those who have provided venues for the various forms of collaborations. The results of the collaboration have provided a spirit of community in enhancing the Braddon neighbourhood.

Please note that this paper only provides a brief summary of the issues that the above activities have revealed. A complete set of the collaboration results is available by contacting Planning and Land Management's Neighbourhood Planning and Community Partnerships Team on 6205 0087.

WHAT IS THE BRADDON NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Braddon is one of the older and more established suburbs of Canberra and was first settled in 1922. Braddon was gazetted as a Division Name on 20 September 1928. It was named after Sir Edward Braddon who was a Legislator, Federalist and one of the Founders of the Constitution. He was also a Member of the State House of Assembly, Premier of Tasmania between 1894 and 1899 and was elected as a Tasmanian Member of the first House of representatives in 1901.

The themes used for street names in Braddon are sourced from Aboriginal words, Legislators and Pioneers.

Braddon is located in inner north Canberra, adjacent to the city centre known as Civic, providing convenient access to jobs and substantial recreation, entertainment and community facilities. The suburb of Braddon is physically bounded by Northbourne Avenue to the east (which is the major transport corridor through Canberra), Wakefield Avenue to the north, Limestone Avenue to the west and Cooyong, Ballumbir Streets and Ainslie Avenue towards the south.

Braddon is situated roughly half way between two significant and well known Canberra landmarks – Black Mountain to the west and Mount Ainslie to the east. There are some excellent views of these hills from a number of vantage points within Braddon.

Braddon also has a unique shopping centre compared with most other neighbourhoods. There is a huge variety of both retail, professional, trade and businesses including for example everything from specialist shops (eg outdoor shops, bike shops, galleries and antiques) to a post office/newsagent, a supermarket, a number of excellent cafes and restaurants, a gymnasium, car yards and solicitors.

In 1967 Braddon's population peaked at 3,780 and has gradually declined since then to 2,878 in June 1999 and 2,871 in June 2000. However, it is forecast to grow to 4,250 in 2010.

As at June 1999, 16.5% of people in Braddon were aged 55 and over. This compares with 21.5% for North Canberra and 16% for the ACT. The majority of residents were in the 20 to 54 age group and 14% were between the 0 to 19 years of age. It is worth noting that the Canberra's population is aging and at an increasing rate. In 2000, the largest number of people aged 65 years and over were living in North Canberra when compared to other areas of Canberra. (Sourced from Chief Minister's Department, 2000). For Braddon however, the median age is 28 years which is less than the average of 32.4 years of age for the ACT.

Of historical significance in the suburb are the Braddon Housing Precinct, Haig Park, Northbourne Oval and Ainslie Primary School. These are included on the Heritage Places Register in the Territory Plan. The Braddon Housing Precinct is historically significant as the first permanent government housing in Canberra and the first expression of the "Garden City" concept in the building of Canberra. The customs, way of life and design of private buildings in the 1920s in the Federal Capital are clearly reflected in the Precinct. Features that make up the heritage significance of the place comprise of an intact Garden City subdivision, houses, street trees, verges, block boundary hedges and communal gardens.

Considerable change has occurred in Braddon over the last few years due to the redevelopment of sites for multi-unit development. It is clear that in Braddon there is concern about some of this change.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO LIVE, WORK, LEARN, PLAY AND INVEST IN BRADDON?

Accessibility to shops and facilities

Participants at the various forms of collaborations have expressed that they value easy access to a wide variety of community facilities, shops and services. Braddon's central location helps to explain why a very large proportion of participants liked the accessibility to shops and facilities. This includes access to Civic and their local shops and to sporting, recreational and cultural and community facilities. Residents may also be adopting central Canberra facilities rather than limiting facilities to purely those within the suburb.

A degree of satisfaction has been expressed with regard to the quantity and quality of shops, cafes and restaurants services and facilities in Braddon. However, it is worth noting that there were some recommendations for improvements. These included a desire for a greater variety of specialty shops, restaurants, cafes, commercial and sporting and recreational facilities for youth. Additionally the results of the Householder Survey indicate that attention needs to be paid to aged care, medical and social facilities in Braddon. The Householder Survey also identified that there is dissatisfaction with the quality of public housing.

- *Issues statement: Any future changes to Braddon should enhance the proximity and variety/viability of shops, facilities and services.*

Transport related issues: Traffic, Parking and Cyclepaths

Traffic

Traffic has been identified as a significant problem in Braddon in all forms of collaboration undertaken. The responses included a need for improved traffic management and control, limits to through traffic, extension of traffic calming measures and lower speed limits with more enforcement. Girrahween and Torrens Streets were identified as problem areas in the Workshop. In the Shopping Centre Surveys there were a number of comments made with regard to stopping the "hoon" (as stated by

participants) element and taking measures that will slow the flow of traffic. In both the Householder and the Business and Employee Surveys, Torrens Street was the focal point for general dissatisfaction with regard to speeding, through traffic, “rat-running” (ie using a street as a short cut to a particular destination to avoid using other main routes which may be congested) and traffic to commercial premises. Concern for Torrens Street was closely followed by Limestone Avenue.

- *Issue statement: There is concern about speeding and “rat-running”, particularly on Torrens Street and also for Limestone Avenue.*

Parking

Response to this issue indicates some dissatisfaction with parking arrangements in Braddon. There are two aspects to parking in Braddon. One is residential and the other is commercial/retail parking at the shops/commercial area.

Residents have relatively polarised views of all day parking on residential streets. This may be impacted by the amount of all day parking on a respondent’s own street as to whether they feel a problem exists or not. It can be assumed from the Householder Survey results that all day parking does present problems for a significant number of residents. A number of respondents interviewed at the shopping centre raised the need for extra car parks at the shops and the difficulty of parking outside their homes on the street.

There was a range of views regarding the lack of enforcement of parking limits in Braddon. While only some streets may have all day parking problems due to lack of enforcement of parking limits, the majority of residents who responded to the Householder Survey regard this to be a medium to major problem in the suburb. This may be especially so given the amount of businesses in the suburb and proximity to the Civic. Concern has also been raised in the Focus Group meeting about the possible impact in Braddon from the redevelopment of the Griffin Centre (Section 84) and the additional demand for parking spaces which this redevelopment may create and how this may overflow into Braddon.

With regard to parking at the shops, respondents in the Business and Employee Survey indicated that there was insufficient parking and that nearly half of the respondents considered it rated as a large to major problem. However, a majority of responses in the Householder Survey felt that there are only small or no problems with parking at the shops.

- *Issue statement: There is concern expressed regarding parking - particularly in residential areas. Parking at the local shopping centre may need further investigation or a change of parking enforcements/regulations. There is a perception that parking enforcement is minimally monitored throughout the suburb.*

Cyclepaths

There are no dedicated cyclepaths in Braddon. There is general dissatisfaction in all forms of collaborations about cyclepaths except the Business and Employee survey. Many also mentioned that cyclepaths would be present in their ideal neighbourhood.

- *Issue statement: There is concern regarding availability and amount of cyclepaths in Braddon.*

Security and Safety

There has been a high level of dissatisfaction with the existing perceptions of security and safety in all forms of collaborations undertaken. Crime, violence, drug dealing and usage, together with problems of disposal of syringes, “hoon” (as stated by participants) behaviour in cars, vandalism and graffiti and safety within Haig Park are some of the issues that have been highlighted. Comment regarding the lack of police presence (which is seen as discouraging crime and undesirable behaviour in the neighbourhood) has also been made in several forms of collaboration.

The Householder Survey tried to gauge what might contribute to the perceptions of safety in the Braddon neighbourhood. The survey provided a number of options to respond to, including:

- Visible police presence
- Sense of community
- Street design

- Appearance of the suburb
- Lighting
- Footpaths

The neighbourhood did not single out any one option in particular.

In the Business and Employee Survey only the appearance of Braddon was perceived as making some contribution to the overall feeling of safety.

At the Workshop, a significant number of participants asked for improved street lighting and this was made in reference to two issues: security and safety. This would suggest there may be both inadequate lighting and maintenance problems.

- *Issue statement: There appears to be a high level of dissatisfaction with perceptions of security and safety in Braddon. Drug dealing and related crime activity needs to be addressed.*

Adequacy and maintenance of public assets (eg footpaths, parks and open spaces, lighting, stormwater, sewerage)

The majority of comments under this issue in all forms of collaborations were in the form of recommendations for improvement. Participants asked for improved street lighting, cyclepaths, bus shelters and better maintenance of public areas including footpaths and parks. Some mention was also made about stormwater and sewerage failing on occasions.

The Householder survey shows that respondents regard maintenance of Braddon's public assets as good for power lines, parks, trees, playgrounds, street signs, street gutters and roads. Maintenance was seen to be inadequate for lighting. There was an even split in perceptions of adequacy for drains, median strips, cycle- and footpaths. A similar response was reflected in the Business and Employee Survey.

There were also suggestions made for powerlines to be located underground rather than overhead.

- *Issue statement: Maintenance of footpaths and inadequate lighting and cyclepaths are areas of concern for the Braddon neighbourhood. Respondents are generally satisfied with the adequacy and maintenance of most of the other public assets in Braddon.*

Housing

The Braddon neighbourhood says that heritage values should be preserved and that development should be sympathetic to the existing character of the suburb. Participants at the Workshop called for restrictions on housing density, less large scale development and elimination of dual occupancy development. The Business and Employee and the Household Surveys indicates that new development is generally seen to be sympathetic to the established feel of Braddon. However the Householder Survey shows that residents are split regarding their satisfaction with recent property developments. The slight majority did not like them. At a more detailed level, they see low density housing development as being a mix of both good and bad. The neighbourhood has mixed feelings about medium density housing. There were equal numbers of satisfied and dissatisfied responses. For high density housing, the opinion swings to a majority expressing dissatisfaction.

A number of Shopping Centre Survey responses asked for no more town houses to be built and restrictions placed on high density and multi-storey housing. All other forms of collaborations indicate a major concern about recent development changes in the suburb.

The Workshop response emphasised the government's responsibilities to ensure planning decisions are appropriate and in accordance with existing regulations and guidelines. In addition, heritage sites should be preserved and development should be sympathetic to the existing character of the suburb.

- *Issue statement: Concern centres around medium to high density housing and suggestions have been made to restrict this type of development. There is support for ensuring developments are of a high quality design and are sympathetic to the character and heritage of the suburb.*

Open space and landscape

Open space and landscape includes the appearance of the street (trees, hedges, verges) and quality of the parks and open spaces. There is overwhelming evidence that people,

including the school students, appreciate and value the green and leafy aspect and current amounts of open space in Braddon and have made it quite clear in all the forms of collaborative activities that they want these maintained and preserved. However, there was dissatisfaction with those interviewed at the shops with regard to the lack of greenery in the commercial areas of Braddon (in particular in Lonsdale and Mort Streets) and it is considered that there is room for improvement in this area of the neighbourhood.

- *Issue statement: The Braddon neighbourhood wish to see the retention, improved maintenance and enhancement of its street trees, verges, parklands and open spaces.*

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The critical issues requiring resolution through the Braddon Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Access to shops and facilities: Maintain and enhance the proximity and variety/viability of shops, facilities (community, recreational, sporting, cultural etc) and services (medical, aged care, schools etc) to the Braddon neighbourhood.

Transport: Traffic, Parking and Cyclepaths:

Traffic. Attention needs to be given to speeding and “rat-running”, particularly on Torrens Street but also for Limestone Avenue.

Parking. Access by residents in residential areas is an issue. Parking at the shops may need further investigation and consideration given to parking enforcements/regulations.

Cyclepaths. There is a lack of dedicated cyclepaths in Braddon. There is a need to establish dedicated bike path linkages with other suburbs and to facilities such as schools/shops etc and adjacent to major transport corridors to encourage city wide cycling.

Security and Safety: There is a high level of dissatisfaction with regard to security and safety in Braddon. Drug dealing, undesirable behaviour and crime needs to be addressed. Suggestions were made to improve the street lighting in Braddon. This would be viewed as enhancing safety in this neighbourhood.

Adequacy and maintenance of public assets: Maintenance of footpaths and insufficient street lighting and cyclepath were identified as needing attention. Respondents are generally satisfied with the adequacy and maintenance of most of the other public assets in Braddon. Requests were also made for improved maintenance of public areas including parks, laneways and open spaces.

Open space and landscape: Maintain and enhance Braddon’s street-trees, verges and parklands and open spaces.

Housing: Restrict multi storey development and ensure development meets high quality sustainable standards and is in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.