

# CITY SERVICES FOR BETTER SUBURBS

## Kitchen Table Discussion – 22 July 2018

### OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

#### Different situations for consideration

- A Parent with young children
- B New resident in Canberra
- C Elderly resident whose neighbourhood is changing
- D Working professional or student living in a flat
- E Those with a Physical or Mental Disability
- F Teenager

#### Areas covered by City Services

1. Abandoned vehicles
2. Legal graffiti site
3. Potholes
4. Skate parks
5. Safe paths
6. Drains and stormwater
7. Irrigation
8. Libraries
9. Shopping centres
10. Bike stop program
11. Graffiti
12. Mowing
13. Shopping centre carpark
14. Outdoor fitness equipment
15. Community parks
16. Barbecues
17. Dog parks
18. Lakes
19. Shared paths
20. Public bins
21. Playgrounds
22. Urban forest
23. Toilet blocks
24. Community gardens
25. Walking your dog
26. Waste and recycling
27. Street sweeping
28. Roads
29. Public transport
30. Weed program
31. Verges
32. Illegal dumping
33. Streetlight

**Five people participated. After discussion, the five “most popular” features were identified by the group, given a rating of 1-5 (‘not acceptable’ to ‘excellent’) and seven questions were answered.**

**QUESTION 1.**

- List the five most popular features identified;
- Rank experience on scale 1-5 ('not acceptable' – 'excellent');
- Describe your experience with each.

**QUESTION 2.** For each feature:

- what should we start doing to improve it?
- What should we stop doing?
- What should we continue doing?

**QUESTION 3.** For each feature, what opportunities should be explored to share responsibility with the community to deliver services/make decisions?

**QUESTION 4.** The Better Suburbs survey result indicated that respondents would rather have less infrastructure across Canberra but it should be of higher quality and better serviced:

- What would be the potential benefits from this approach?
- What are the potential impacts from this and how could they be addressed?

**QUESTION 5.** Circle up to five points most important for services:

- Available – at a time and place that meets needs;
- Dependable – delivered regularly and on time;
- Useful – meets needs and/or serves a community purpose;
- Resilient – can respond to climate change impacts;
- responsible and flexible – can be delivered differently at times of greater need/crisis;
- adaptable – can respond to technological changes;
- credible – decisions to deliver services in a certain way are clear and communicated to the community;
- authentic – the service has been designed with community input/involvement;
- sustainable – affordable and can be delivered in the same manner for some time.

**QUESTION 6.** Sharing information better. What information should be provided and how should it be provided?

**QUESTION 7.** What are the important details to include in the outcomes document from the Citizens' Forum to be held in August?

**FOHV RESPONSES**

Answers were constrained by character limit for online submission.

**QUESTION 1**

**A.** Priority: Safe paths – surface, lighting and security

Rating 2

We have an excellent network of footpaths that should facilitate active travel, as well as exercise. Experience, however, is unsatisfactory in many areas where necessary maintenance has not occurred. Our local footpaths are now over 40 years-old and are so cracked and subject to uplifted slabs as to present a hazard to all, especially the elderly and those with a disability. They also make it difficult to push strollers/prams, especially uphill.

**B. Priority: Drains and stormwater – street sweeping, water quality in the lake      Rating 2**

Densification in R22 areas is overstressing the local sewerage and stormwater systems. Infrequent street-sweeping results in accumulation of leaves, gravel and other debris around the entrance to stormwater drains, which is then washed into the lake and stream system during storms, thus impacting water quality, especially in the lake.

**C. Priority: Community parks, playgrounds and lake foreshores      Rating 4**

The lake foreshores should be preserved in their entirety for community use and long-distance exercise. Local playgrounds tend to have minimal equipment, sometimes only two swings as the traditional seesaw, slippery dip and monkey bars are presumably deemed to be too dangerous for the modern child. Many local community parks and playgrounds seem to have received little attention in terms of upgrades but will become more important as private outdoor space declines.

**D. Priority: Toilet blocks      Rating 3**

Toilet blocks are essential to facilitate active travel and are particularly valued by older people and by families with young children. There should be a public toilet accessible for most of the day in each suburb, either at the local shops or, in the case of Weetangera, adjacent to the oval which is used for dog walking and such, not just for sports.

**E. Priority: Urban forest – grass, trees and shrubs on public and private lands      Rating 3**

Trees are invaluable to giving our suburbs their character and in mitigating heat effects. Recently, the critical shade cover and infiltration capacity of Canberra suburbs has been gradually reduced by coverage of the ground with buildings, concrete driveways and paved outdoor areas, as well as gravelled verges. This increases runoff during storms and the heat island effect in summer leading to temperatures up to ten degrees higher than in adjoining natural areas.

**QUESTION 2.**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Start doing</b>	<b>Stop doing</b>	<b>Continue doing</b>
<b>A</b>	More money to repair of footpaths and more frequent removal of weeds from the cracks	Issuing contracts for fragmented repair work that is inefficient and means repairs can take two years	Supporting our footpath system
<b>B</b>	More frequent sweeping of roads to remove leaves, gravel and other debris	Approving densification projects before assessing infrastructure capacity	Cleaning our lake and foreshore
<b>C</b>	Improve local playgrounds with more interactive equipment for children	Treating children as if they need to be wrapped in cottonwool	Supporting local parks for use by all ages for exercise and walking dogs
<b>D</b>	Installing toilet blocks at regular distances for the convenience of young and old walking or riding.	Regarding toilets as an expense that can be done without	Filling the need for toilets by people of all ages and to encourage more active travel.
<b>E</b>	Recognising the importance of the urban forest and its understorey, including grass and shrubs	Removing trees on public land without replacing them and allowing verges to be covered in gravel 100%	Supporting public trees and lawns to mitigate against climate change and control storm runoff.

### **QUESTION 3.**

- A. Footpath care, no parking, gravel must be kept away from footpath for pedestrian safety
- B. Sweep street gutter to remove leaves, gravel and tanbark before it clogs the drain
- C. Discuss the benefit of providing barbecue or shaded area with benches where people could gather in parks
- D. Consult with residents to ascertain those areas lacking in toilet facilities that discourage walking any distance by older residents
- E. Highlight need to maintain grass cover on verges

### **QUESTION 4.**

It is obvious that limiting the number of places that are better equipped will be economically more feasible. This is already the practice around Lake Ginninderra where there is a range of excellent facilities central to all Belconnen suburbs. People will travel further for these better facilities but it will only be on special occasions or less frequently than using local facilities.

It is still necessary to have reasonable facilities close to home for those who cannot travel far for one reason or another. Local facilities encourage people to walk and to do so more frequently. More remote facilities require driving. Public transport is not necessarily convenient to get to all locations in a reasonable fashion, especially when young children are involved or for anyone with a disability.

If active travel is to be encouraged, then local parks and shops should be reasonably equipped and be readily accessible to encourage regular small trips. Larger shopping expeditions will require driving to handle large purchases and weekly groceries/fruit and veg. This necessitates the provision of adequate parking facilities to encourage use of smaller centres.

### **QUESTION 5.**

The most important service levels of city services are considered to be:

**Available**

**Dependable**

**Useful**

**Authentic**

### **QUESTION 6.**

Not everyone uses any particular form of communication. Online avenues suffer in that a person can glance at something and then forget it as he/she moves on to the next item. Only the dedicated make a point of checking on a regular basis for desired information. Possibly, the most likely way to successfully spread the word is a leaflet distributed to every household, which is also the most expensive. Some leaflets are automatically junked without reading by residents but the vast majority are reached in this way and, having something concrete in their hand, are more likely to absorb its contents, especially if it is a one-pager. Nevertheless, there is benefit from persisting with efforts to engage the local community. At the very least, this enables residents to provide their local knowledge of an area and their behaviour patterns that should assist with achieving the best outcomes for the long-term.

As mentioned in Question 1, there is benefit in explaining to residents why their actions are important in determining their local environment, e.g. protecting their verge and public footpath from vehicles, cleaning their street gutter, and maintaining lawn, shrubs and trees.

### **QUESTION 7.**

Firstly, it is essential to factor in the different needs and behaviour patterns of different members of the community. Bus routes and timetables, for instance, seem to be designed to cater for the individual active person going to and from work.

Secondly, it is critical to acknowledge the needs of dual-income families with children of different ages participating in different activities at different locations at different times.

There is a need to support the flexibility of individual transport in facilitating the completion of several activities in one journey for efficiency of operation.

Our road system should be well-maintained at all times to avoid damage to vehicles, injury to people and inconvenience from traffic jams and other delays.

Our footpath system should be well-maintained at all times with more speedy repairs to avoid injury and discouragement of walking.

Sufficient funding should be allocated to maintain existing infrastructure as a priority rather than a reluctant afterthought from the emphasis on new development.

Maintenance of our urban forest should be entrenched as a major priority in acknowledgment of our local climate and global warming.