



**SUBMISSION TO THE ACT PLANNING SYSTEM REVIEW AND REFORM PROJECT,
DRAFT GUNGAHLIN DISTRICT STRATEGY**

THE VILLAGE OF HALL AND DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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The Village of Hall and District Progress Association (VHDPA) is an incorporated, not-for-profit community association which promotes the interests of Hall Village and District community members. The objects and purposes of the Association are to further the interest and welfare of the community of the Village of Hall and District, to protect and progress the amenity and heritage character of the Village of Hall and, to facilitate the recreational, educational, environmental, heritage, artistic, occupational and other interests of members and residents of Hall Village and District.

The VHDPA is the Australian Capital Territory's oldest community association and represents a community that appreciates the Ngambri-Ngunnawal, historic and natural heritage values of its surrounding environment.

HALL VILLAGE

Hall Village was set out in 1881, while Gungahlin's modern development began 110 years later. This particular "village urban character" has been enshrined for protection in the VHDPA constitution, and the village has been recognised in the ACT Heritage Places Register since 2001.

In the Hall Village Master Plan dated May 2001 (number 20011438) then Minister for Planning, Simon Corbell, wrote that Hall is a special place that is valued by both its residents and the broad ACT community. To its local residents Hall provides a special ambience and village lifestyle. To the broad ACT community it provides a tangible link to the region's history.

Minister Corbell further noted that the Hall Village Master Plan recognised Hall as a discrete village, and established principles to protect its distinctive qualities by creating a rural buffer to any future development and providing a set of development control guidelines that respond to the natural and cultural identity of the area.

The VHDPA recognises that for the purposes of administration and service delivery within the ACT government, Hall will be attached to a larger "district" in the ACT. Nevertheless, when considering matters of planning, environment, character, watershed, heritage, conservation and recreation, Hall Village is an unique community and cannot be appropriately compared with, or incorporated in, any other district within the ACT.

Because of the uniqueness of Hall Village, the VHDPA recommends that the Gungahlin District Strategy include specific and unambiguous reference to this uniqueness. The Gungahlin District Strategy should specifically enshrine the provisions of the Hall Village Master Plan and the Hall Precinct Code 2013 (NI2008-27).

GUNG AHLIN DISTRICT STRATEGY 5 BIG DRIVERS

The draft ACT Planning District Strategies 2022 identify “5 Big Drivers”. The VHDP A has the following comments and recommendations on the Gungahlin District Strategy under the framework of the 5 Big Drivers.

Blue-Green Network

Hall Village has an unique position with respect to restoring and protecting nature reserves and the network of natural corridors, where conservation values can be protected, to contribute to a living blue-green network. The Hall Village Buffers as identified in the Hall Village Master Plan include the Kinlyside Reserve, Gold Creek Rural Lease, the Nature Park areas to the East, agistment and agricultural areas to the West, the Hall Showground, Polocrosse ground, sports fields, playground and nature area surrounding Halls Creek. These Blue-Green areas are key watershed and habitat for a range of rare or endangered species of flora and fauna including the Golden Sun Moth, Gang-Gang Cockatoo and remnant patches of Yellow Box/ Red Gum grassy woodland known to be associated with the Superb Parrot, Hooded Robin, Brown Tree Creeper, Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater. The Hall Cemetery includes the habitat of the endangered Leek Orchid.

The protected Aboriginal sites within the grassy woodland and along Hall’s Creek demonstrate a relative lack of physical disturbance within these areas, and reflect a natural and Aboriginal cultural landscape prior to European settlement.

In order to advance the Blue-Green Network of the Gungahlin District Strategy, the VHDP A recommends:

The Boundaries and Buffers as specified in the Hall Village Master Plan be explicitly included in the Gungahlin District Strategy and further development excluded from all Boundary and Buffer areas including the current conservation areas and agricultural leases.

Establishment of storm water drainage infrastructure in Hall Village to address current and future needs, cognisant of the increasing frequency and severity of storm events resulting from global climate change and consistent with the parameters of the Hall Master Plan and the Hall Precinct Code. This will make a significant contribution to water shed management within the Blue-Green Network.

Maintain the linkage of Kinlyside Reserve with the agricultural lease of Gold Creek Station for the ongoing conservation and protection of the Golden Sun Moth, Gang-Gang Cockatoo and remnant patches of Yellow Box/ Red Gum grassy woodland. This will enable the maintenance of the connectivity corridors from Halls Creek to Kinlyside Reserve and beyond.

Economic Access and Opportunity Across the City

There are numerous small businesses located in Hall Village. These currently include five hospitality businesses (three cafes, a licensed restaurant/ bar and a function centre set in an agricultural environment), motor mechanic, technology and engineering consultants, retail premises (jewellery, novelty, two hairdressers, accountant, beauty therapy, stock feeds), photographer, electricians, carpenters, plumbers, landscapers, veterinary clinic, medical centre and individual consultants in environment, heritage, education and international development, and others.

The unique rural heritage character of Hall Village, its position as a track head on the Centenary Trail, the Hall School Museum and Heritage Centre and the presence of eight locations of Canberra Tracks heritage signage in the Village, the Pony Club, Polocrosse, Axe Men's Club and monthly Hall Markets continue to attract local, interstate and international visitors.

Small business and sole-traders in Hall Village represent a meaningful contribution to the economic Access and Opportunity target of more jobs accessible to home. The attraction of visitors further contributes to economic activity of the ACT. In order to support small business activity in Hall Village, the VHDPa makes the following recommendations.

The VHDPa recommends a review of the current Commercial Rates that are applied in Hall Village present a substantial disincentive to further development of small business in the Hall Village commercial area of Victoria Street.

Although not directly part of the ACT planning system, the current state of internet broadband service in Hall Village presents an impediment to the viability of small business economic activity. The existing "fibre-to-the-node" and dated node-to-premises wire connections result in poor continuity of service and slow internet speeds. Businesses regularly face internet outages, affecting productivity and turnover. Similarly, mobile 'phone signal is also extremely weak, in spite of the towers in Kinlyside and One Tree Hill. This also results in the uselessness of "smart modems" that cannot function due to the strength of the mobile signal. The VHDPa recommends that priority be given to improved telecommunications in Hall Village include "fibre-to-the-premises" and addressing the ineffective mobile 'phone signal.

Strategic Movement

In 2019, a very rudimentary walking and cycle track was scaped alongside Victoria Street but has never been suitable for anything other than mountain bikes and is unusable by other cyclists or casual walkers. Despite the best efforts of ACT government staff responsible for track maintenance, this track continues to deteriorate and recently even those riding mountain bikes are avoiding the eroded track with where culvert covers are also damaged and dangerous. Numerous cyclists and walkers continue to travel on the road along Victoria Street between Hall Village and the formed cycle and pedestrian path at Clarrie Hermes Drive. Victoria St is narrow, has no formed shoulder and very rough edges. The VHDPa has been advised that construction of a fully formed and sealed cycle/ pedestrian path has been placed on a priority listing for future works but it has not been identified as an immediate priority.

Currently, the only public transport serving Hall Village is CDC Transport (formerly QCity, Deanes, Transborder) providing school bus services connecting NSW communities to schools in the ACT using Hall Village as an interchange. This is also one morning public service by CDC from Yass via Hall to Belconnen and an on-request service through Hall to Yass in the afternoon.

In order to achieve the targets of reducing car dependence and increasing active transport, the VHDPa makes the following recommendations.

The VHDPa recommends that the construction of a fully formed cycle/ pedestrian path from Gladstone St Hall to Clarrie Hermes Drive be undertaken as an immediate priority to establish active travel links between Hall Village and Casey, Nicholls and Spence and reduce the current road safety risks. In the interim it is important to maintain and stabilise the current scraped strip that requires regular maintenance and is only suited to Mountain Bike riders (except when torrential rain excludes them).

While enhancing public transport network connections within Gungahlin District and between Gungahlin and other districts, a regular ACT public bus service be established to service Hall Village.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods

The Indigenous history of Hall stretches thousands of years as evidenced in the Protected Aboriginal Sites along Halls Creek. The European settlement of Hall Village dates from gazetting of the community in 1882. Over the last 140 years, Hall Village has evolved into the vibrant community that exists today where residents, businesses and visitors enjoy the unique rural environment, parks, sports grounds, equestrian facilities and walking trails.

To protect and enhance Hall Village to be enjoyed by residents and the wider ACT community, the VHDPa recommends that the Gungahlin District Strategy should specifically enshrine the provisions of the Hall Village Master Plan dated May 2001 (number 20011438) and the Hall Precinct Code 2013 (NI2008-27).

Inclusive Centres and Communities

Hall Village makes a distinctive contribution to activities that enhance the well-being of the ACT Community. The monthly Hall Markets, annual National Sheep Dog Trials, host to Sri Chinmoy races, equestrian activities, men's and women's Rugby Union, woodchopping, Men's Shed, Museum and Heritage Centre, public accessible tennis courts and Centennial Trail provide a diverse range of recreational and sporting opportunities for all ages of the ACT community. A small children's playground and the aging play equipment at the former Hall Primary School site are much used by residents and visitors to Hall Village.

To further contribute to the Gungahlin District strategy target of Improved Community Wellbeing, the VHDPa makes the following recommendations.

ACT TCCS fully implement the improvements to the Gladstone St playground as outlined in the Hall Adventure Trail design (27 Sep 2019) as approved by Act Heritage (15 Oct 2019) to provide enhanced and varied play activities for children.

Restore the century-old heritage clay-surface tennis courts originally built in Hall in the 1920s. Although the Hall Men's Shed of the VHDPa has done some repairs and weed control on one of the two courts, the courts need further work beyond the means of the VHDPa to be fully restored.

Establish changing facilities for the sports ground (rugby field) that are consistent with the Hall Precinct Code, are sympathetic to the existing Hall Pavilion and barbeque shed in materials and form and comply with heritage requirements of the Aboriginal sites zone along the Halls Creek.

CONCLUSION

The Village of Hall and District Progress Association welcomes the development of the Gungahlin District Strategy while recognising that Hall Village remains an unique community and cannot be appropriately compared with or incorporated in any other district within the ACT.

The VHDPA considers that there a number of opportunities where modest action and investment in Hall Village will contribute significantly to the identified targets within the Gungahlin District Strategy while conserving Hall's distinctive environmental and heritage qualities.