

# 9. challenges and opportunities

## 9 Challenges and opportunities

### ***The changing role of Kingston: reflections and directions***

As part of the second community workshop, Mr John Notaras discussed his recollections of Kingston Centre and how it has changed. This is reproduced below

*Kingston was established in the early to mid 1920s along Giles Street and Kennedy Street. Green Square and the banks along Jardine Street were developed in the mid-1950s. Kingston serviced the south side and many Queanbeyan shoppers.*

*During 1950s the tenancy mix incorporated a wide range of shops including JB Young's department store, Cusacks furniture store, two supermarkets, three chemists, two sports stores, two jewellers, three butchers, two greengrocers, various men's and women's fashion stores, a fish shop and a newsagency. These shops, together with a multitude of other specialty shops, created an extremely vibrant centre. After the much anticipated Monaro Mall opened in Civic, Kingston was flat and in a malaise during the late sixties and through the 1970s and many shops closed. It survived because of the presence of JB Young's, Cusacks, the banks, custom from Fyshwick and public servants in Barton.*

*Redevelopment of the surrounding residential units also assisted as there was a large permanent workforce and people were taking up residency.*

*So Kingston essentially was holding together. However changes were occurring which limited its position as a group centre. At that time Fyshwick was developing its own range of food outlets, service providers, retail outlets and banking facilities. In Kingston the department store closed and the banks moved out. All this resulted in customers drifting away and Kingston evolving into a café and restaurant centre interspersed with limited specialty retailers and service providers.*

*In moving forward there are assumptions and observations.*

*Competition facing Kingston will certainly not diminish nor remain static but will increase. The Kingston Foreshore will challenge the cafes, restaurants, some service providers and will perhaps provide some limited retail.*

*The Governments emphasis on establishing Civic as the predominant centre for Canberra will put additional pressure on all inner Canberra group centres.*

*The clear success of the Dendy cinema complex, cafes and eateries in Civic has already had a noticeable impact on Kingston and Manuka.*

*Fyshwick Markets are upgrading and expanding. In time will their trading hours be extended? Recent changes to the Territory Plan enable retail development to occur in areas within the Fyshwick industrial precinct.*

*ACTPLA has assessed that South Canberra can sustain another major supermarket. If located in the precinct of the Fyshwick Markets, another commercial centre will evolve. This would be the most significant competition for Kingston, which will in all probability enter another period of decline. Many believe the current tenancy mix of Kingston is unbalanced and unsustainable into the future. For Kingston to be a successful group centre it requires a significant retail anchor.*

*This will attract a broader demographic not currently patronising the centre, particularly families who have children at the local schools and young professionals seeking a greater range of goods and services. Appropriate planning will ensure Kingston's future as a viable and relevant centre whilst maintaining its ambience and High Street appeal.*

## 9.1 Performance and future role

The future role of the Kingston Centre is a fundamental component of the vision for the centre. Several factors will influence the centre's future role, including how it performs and the way it addresses competition from other places.

### 9.1.1 Centre performance

The current performance of the centre influences its future role. Indicators of current performance include valuations, rental levels and retail trends.

#### Valuations

The core retail area is almost 30% larger than Manuka, but it is significantly outperformed by Manuka, which more effectively maximises the use of available land. (Table 8).

Table 8: Comparison of Kingston and Manuka

Characteristic	Manuka (Section 1)	Kingston (Section 21)
Rateable land	12,589m <sup>2</sup>	16,184m <sup>2</sup>
No. of rateable properties	19	18
Unimproved Values (Jan 09)	\$51.2million	\$23.9million
Increase in value (2000-2009)	155%	127%
General Rates and Land Tax	\$1.3million pa	\$0.62million pa

#### Rents

Rents in Kingston are relatively low and are about 60% - 80% of the rents for comparable space in Manuka. Rental levels vary considerably throughout the centre because of the varying size, quality and position of the premises. In general rents are highest around the mid-point of Giles Street and in Green Square and lowest in some arcades and along Kennedy Street. Cafes/drink establishments have located in this part of the centre because of the availability of large floor areas and low rents that are the result of lower retail demand and the unsuitability of this space for retail purposes.

#### Vacancy rates

In 2007, about 10% of total floorspace was vacant, which is relatively high. The pattern of vacancies includes:

- most of the vacant space is located on the upper level in Sections 21 and 22. The demand is lower partly because of the lack of on-site parking and increasing competition from office accommodation at Kingston Foreshore, and
- only two vacancies on the ground floor reflecting the relatively higher demand for low rent premises for café/entertainment activities.

### **Operational trends**

The significance of Kingston as a retail centre has declined over time. Very few new retail businesses have established in Kingston in the last 10 years and several have closed. These have typically been replaced with cafes/drink establishments, thus shifting the balance between the retail function and the entertainment function.

The centre is primarily a destination for household goods retailing and cafes/drink establishments. Other than a few destination type shops, there is little diversity in retailing and services to attract weekday visitors. The major retailers currently located in the centre do not generate large numbers of shoppers or pedestrian activity.

Although the catchment population and workforce is growing, the centre has not benefitted to the same extent as other centres that offer a wider range of retailing.

### **9.1.2 Future role**

The role of the centre as a mixed use group centre is to be retained and enhanced. The existing functions are mutually supportive and it is not proposed to introduce new functions into the centre. Strengthening the mix of uses will contribute to the vitality of the centre. In particular the retail function should be strengthened and residential activity encouraged.

### **Community voices**

The community is aware of the ongoing changes in the centre. They have identified that over the last five years the retail mix and diversity has declined and there are more cafes and restaurants. They consider there is no longer a balanced range of shopping.

The centre should be reinvented as a daytime destination which will attract like-minded businesses/traders.

*Design any new development to ensure that a lively street front character is kept and that small businesses such as cafes, restaurants, florists, bakers, etc are not priced out of the market.*

*Kingston is less busy than it once was and is becoming more and more coffee shops as other shops close.*

*I want the same atmosphere, yet do not want the centre to stagnate through lack of development.*

*What we need is an attractive, commercially diverse group centre with a range of services – not just hospitality and real estate agencies.*

*An ageing area should be revitalised while maintaining character.*

*A diversity of uses/activities should be developed to serve the needs of young and old alike.*

## Retail function

Overall the centre is not performing well as a retail centre, even though this is its major function. The challenge is to strengthen this function. As discussed in chapter 7 this project has concluded that the proposed full-line supermarket should be located in the Kingston Centre.

The intent of locating a full-line supermarket in the centre is to introduce an anchor store that generates a large volume of pedestrian traffic. This will reverse the long-term decline of retailing, re-establish the centre as a retail destination that attracts more people and strengthen the retail function.

As part of the project, two siting options were assessed:

- to locate the supermarket within the retail core of the centre, and
  - to develop Blocks 47 and 48 Section 19 for a mixed use development including a supermarket.
- The project has concluded that it is not feasible to develop a full-line supermarket within the retail core for the following reasons:
- the area of blocks held in a single ownership and the individual blocks are too small to accommodate a supermarket. Therefore blocks would have to be consolidated, which would be difficult to achieve
  - the parking required for a full-line supermarket could not be accommodated on-site, and
  - Highgate Lane could not accommodate the traffic generated and access/egress to streets fronting the core would have an adverse impact on the amenity of the centre.

On the other hand there are no major constraints restricting the development of Blocks 47 and 48 Section 19 (and possibly Block 29) for a mixed use development including a full-line supermarket and associated parking as well as replacement parking. This project has therefore identified this site as the preferred location for full-line supermarket and associated development.

In developing this site the major challenges will be to ensure that:

- the supermarket is integrated into the rest of the centre
- the heritage values and village character are respected, and
- shoppers visit other parts of the centre and not only the supermarket so that existing retailers benefit from the additional trade.

If these challenges are addressed the retail function of the centre will be strengthened.

### Community voices

Initially some people supported the development of a full-line supermarket in the Kingston centre, but many members of the community were opposed. Apart from the strategic reasons outlined in chapter 7, residents were concerned that the form of Manuka Plaza would be replicated in Kingston. They were also concerned about traffic impacts.

During the consultations this sentiment changed most participants supported the development of a supermarket. In supporting this option the community emphasised the importance of integrating the supermarket into the centre and developing a facility that is consistent with the scale of the centre. The community generally do not want a development that consists of a 'big box' or a retail mall.

Sadly the Kingston group centre is looking tired and run down with no real reason to shop there as it is not offering a full food offering.

*Everything is here to maintain daily life.*

*[Without a supermarket] Kingston will become a mixture of things people do not like, e.g., night life, lack of maintenance/redevelopment, vacancies, crime and vandalism.*

*It's a very friendly centre whereby local traders know their customers by name. Notwithstanding this, I feel there should be a better variety of shops including a new supermarket.*

*For a centre of its size and the catchment area it attracts, I think a bigger supermarket is required. More car parking would also be necessary.*

*A supermarket must be designed to integrate with Kingston and should have active shop fronts, no walls and generate pedestrian flow to the rest of the centre.*

### Cafe/entertainment

As noted previously Kingston is a major eating out/entertainment destination of district and metropolitan significance. This role should continue because:

- this function is consistent with the ongoing role of the centre as a meeting place,
- these uses generate street activity and contribute to a lively and distinctive atmosphere, and
- the dimensions of much ground floorspace within the centre is suitable for dining/entertainment activities, the spaces would not meet modern retail requirements and it is unlikely that there would be sufficient retail demand to occupy all ground floorspace.

It will therefore be important to ensure that the centre remains an attractive location dining/entertainment activities. In proposing that this role be retained, two challenges are recognised:

- the centre has emerged as an attractive location for dining/entertainment businesses because rents have been low. Over time, the hospitality industry has demonstrated a high level of mobility and moved into and out of different locations in the city. If rents increase markedly as a result of growth in the centre, businesses could progressively move adversely affecting the centre, and
- the need to address and manage the tensions caused by the proximity of residential areas to the centre and the noise and anti-social behaviour that can be associated with the dining/entertainment function.

### **Community voices**

In general the community does not object to the role of the centre as an entertainment hub. However, many people are concerned about the impacts of entertainment uses on surrounding residents and thus believe that residential amenity needs to be taken into account.

*The area should be designed to encourage fun for younger people as well as older people but not to encourage late night/early morning drunkenness.*

*Noise and antisocial behaviour arising from the proximity of residential areas to the centre is a major concern and source of tension for residents.*

*Without detracting from the vibrancy of the centre, the amenity of nearby residential areas should be protected.*

### **Residential**

More residential accommodation would support retailing and entertainment uses and consolidate the relationship between the centre and the rest of the suburb. It would be consistent with development in areas such as Dickson and Braddon and with the objectives of the Spatial Plan.

On the other hand, noise management measures will ensure the residential/entertainment uses are compatible in the centre.

### **Small scale professional offices**

Expansion of this function would increase employment opportunities and support a growing retail function. This function is more likely to grow if new office developments include some on-site parking.

Amendments to the National Capital Plan mean that it is no longer necessary to limit the amount of office floorspace to 2000m<sup>2</sup>. However it is unlikely that office developments in the centre would exceed this area.

### **Visitor accommodation**

Anecdotally, demand for visitor accommodation is strong in Kingston and surrounding areas. Additional visitor accommodation would increase the diversity of the centre and attract people who might otherwise not visit.

## 9.2 Built form

### 9.2.1 Development of rear of blocks

In general the rear of blocks fronting Kennedy Street and Giles Street has not been developed or is underutilised (Figure 44). The blocks are too deep to be developed efficiently with frontage to Giles Street and Kennedy Street. However, development of this land provides one of the few opportunities for the centre to be revitalised and grow. Currently, several factors prevent this occurring:

- the unattractive appearance of the lane
- many sites have little or no development potential under the existing planning controls, and
- parking requirements cannot be met on-site.

A detailed assessment would be required to demonstrate that there is surplus parking in the centre but the scale of development that is possible is too small to warrant this level of assessment.

### 9.2.2 Draft heritage nomination

The draft heritage nomination recommends that modifications to the area above awning built form Blocks 3 to 10 Section 21 not be allowed.

The nomination has no legal effect and does not protect the built form. On the other hand the existing arrangements produce a level of uncertainty for lessees and the community about if or how the building fabric can be altered or redeveloped and act as a barrier to the revitalisation of the centre.

The status of the heritage nomination should be resolved and those elements of the built form, if any, that have heritage significance identified.

The potential release of Blocks 47 and 48 Section 19 is likely to be a catalyst for change and development elsewhere in the centre. Therefore the heritage status of the centre should be determined before development pressures emerge.

Figure 44: Existing building footprint



### **Community voices**

The community values the heritage of the Kingston Centre, recognising that it is rare and a major attribute of the character of the centre. They believe that should be retained even if the centre is modernised and upgraded.

*The centre should be modernised but with respect for its heritage, perhaps through refurbishment. The challenge will be to maintain the heritage values while still enabling growth to occur.*

*The history behind the businesses and buildings is a major strength of the centre.*

*Kingston's history should be reflected in the buildings and services. Many of the shops have been run by the same families for many decades. This is a part of its charm. Many long term Canberra residents can remember shopping there as children.*

*Kingston is one of the few centres that have been able to retain a sense of history.*

*Kingston's unique character as the oldest suburb should be reinforced.*

### **9.2.3 Respecting the built form**

The built form within the original part of the centre contributes strongly to its character and creates a distinctive centrescape. As Kingston responds to changing needs, lessees will seek to redevelop and refurbish their buildings. Insensitive development and redevelopment could substantially alter the character, resulting in a place that is no longer distinctive.

The challenge will be to retain the character and atmosphere of the place but allow buildings to be modernised and new development to occur.

The character of the centre is most likely to be retained if new development and redevelopment respect those elements that define that character. In the case of the Kingston Centre these elements include:

- the continuity of the front building line
- the vertical articulation (narrow frontages) and horizontal articulation (parapet line and awning)
- scale of development, and
- active frontages.

This does not mean that development cannot vary or that it should mimic existing development. However, any departures from these elements would have to be carefully assessed to ensure that they contributed in a positive way to the built form.

### **Community voices**

Many people in the community like the low-density scale of buildings. While it is recognised that the centre needs to be modernised, most people wanted the character of the built form retained.

*Keep street scale amenity of Kingston in new development and any future development. Retain and protect the façade of existing shops in the centre.*

*The width of the awnings over the footpaths should be extended.*

*Be brave and go for a more eclectic style in Kingston – funky, colourful and green as an antidote to the ultra modern development at the Foreshore.*

*Current Kingston shops planned for a very simple early stage Canberra. Now need a completely new and imaginative approach for fast growing Canberra in the 21st century.*

#### 9.2.4 Place-specific planning controls

The application of the existing Group Centre Precinct Code to the Kingston Centre has several limitations:

- the controls apply to all group centres irrespective of location, function or size
- the existing controls limit the capacity to redevelop sites
- the controls do not ensure that future developments respect the distinctive character of the centre, and
- the controls do not articulate what the character of the centre is, or is intended to be, even though the character is to be taken into account in assessing development potential.

The planning controls should establish a framework that facilitates development and redevelopment that is appropriate to the centre and respects its character and atmosphere.

A Kingston Centre Precinct Code would overcome these limitations and allow planning controls to be tailored to the role, location and character of the centre.

#### **Community voices**

The community considers that connections to Telopea Park and the Foreshore should be improved.

*The centre is disconnected from the surrounding areas and it can be difficult getting across Wentworth Avenue.*

*The centre is accessible but could be better connected to surrounding areas. Safe walking routes are needed.*

#### 9.3 Upgrading the public realm

The public realm is one of the major and defining attributes of the centre and contributes to its success. The structure of the public realm is one of its strengths but could be improved and more coherent.

The main features of concern and potential opportunities are summarised below.

- The soft landscaping detracts from the quality of the public realm. The public realm would be improved if:
  - trees in poor health were replaced
  - the gaps in street trees were planted
  - maintenance of some planter boxes was improved, and
  - the planter boxes adjacent to the bus stops were modified to allow improved pedestrian access to the bus stops.
- The design of the street furniture throughout the centre is not consistent with the character of the centre. Street furniture would make a greater contribution to the public realm if:
  - a common theme was adopted for each element and applied uniformly
  - maintenance was improved, and
  - seating was placed adjacent to some street trees.
- The relatively high quality of the public realm adjacent to Section 21 contrasts with the degraded and poorly maintained character of the edges on the opposite side of three of the surrounding four streets.
  - The appearance of these edge areas could be substantially improved by introducing a landscape treatment that is consistent with the core edges.

### Community voices

Many members of the community consider that the Kingston public realm is poorly maintained, including the planter beds in Giles Street and Kennedy Street.

*Kingston used to be much better in terms of outside eating environment at night, outside dining, multi-cultural, local place for locals to meet - I feel it has moved away from that.*

*As the density of development increases the public realm will need more attention.*

*The public spaces are poorly maintained and look rundown.*

*Street plantings have deteriorated and are depressing.*

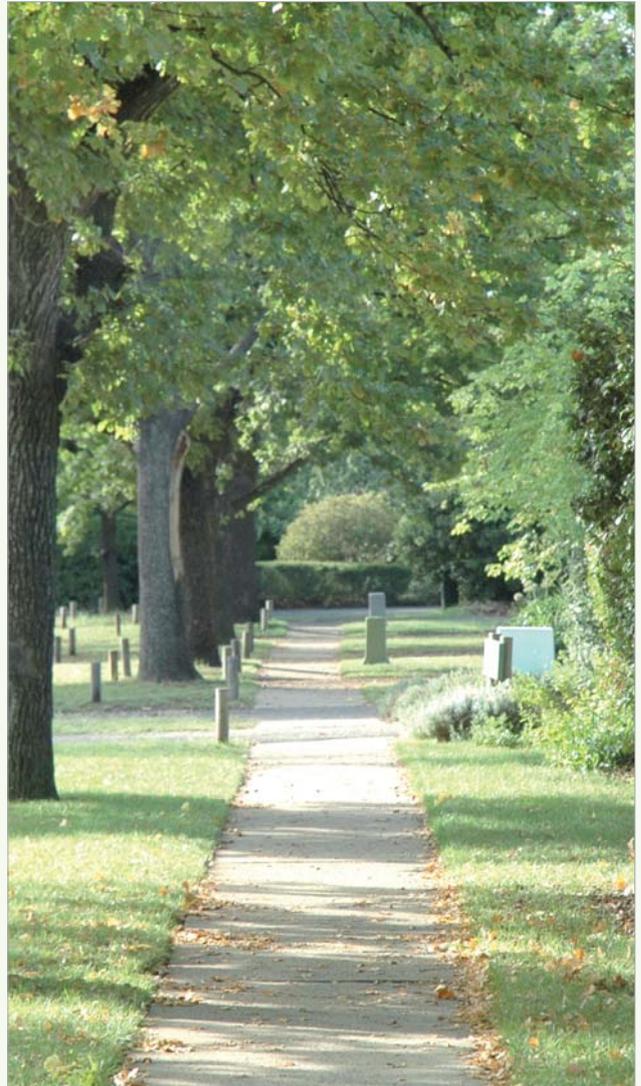
*Development needs to add to the public realm.*

## 9.4 Connectivity

### Access to the centre

The analysis of the existing access arrangements identified a number of challenges and opportunities:

- Two bus routes pass through the Kingston Centre. One route to the City stops at the Eyre Street bus stop and the other route at the Giles Street bus stop. Conversely the route which stops in Eyre Street on the way to the City, stops in Giles Street when travelling from the City and vice versa. This arrangement is confusing and detracts from public transport use.
- Other factors also reduce the attractiveness of public transport:
  - there are no signs at either stop directing patrons to the alternative stop
  - patrons may not know or be unwilling to use Highgate Lane to walk between the two routes, and
  - the scheduling of routes means it is not always possible to walk between the two in time to catch the next bus.
- The situation could be improved if:
  - the routes stopped at same stop when travelling in one direction and at the other stop when travelling in the opposite direction, or
  - all routes were altered to stop in Kennedy Street.
- There are no direct bicycle connections to the centre. Dedicated on-street cycle ways cannot be easily accommodated because of the extent of on-street parking and the resultant conflict between the different travel modes.
  - The wide verges on all roads to the centre offer opportunities to establish off-road bicycle routes by widening the existing footpath and allowing bicycle use.
- The footpaths along Giles Street and Eyre Street from Wentworth Avenue to the Foreshore have been deliberately planned as wide pedestrian promenades. The wide verges offer an opportunity to extend these footpaths into 'old' Kingston to reinforce the link between the Foreshore and the centre thus focusing the Foreshore on the group centre.
- The centre is not well connected to Telopea Park and areas beyond.
  - The development of more direct pedestrian crossings across Telopea Park from the centre could improve connections.



### **Movement within the centre**

Centres which offer a choice of internal connections and movement opportunities are likely to be more successful.

The lack of permeability is one of its main weaknesses of the centre. There are few mid-block connections, most pedestrian movement is via the perimeter of the centre and distances are extended:

- the distance between each corner on the perimeter of the retail core is about 160 metres, and
- the distance between the main off-street public parking and the furthest parts of the centre is about 280 metres.

Although Highgate Lane offers an alternative east-west route, it is not well used by pedestrians as there is no particular reason to pass through the space. In addition the Lane is isolated from the rest of the centre, has poor lighting and is not overlooked from surrounding buildings. It is seen by few visitors to the centre and there is no clear ownership of the space. These factors contribute to the perception that it is unsafe.

There are no internal connections between Kennedy Street and other parts of the centre.

### **Community voices**

The community considers that Highgate Lane should be more accessible and improved.

*Highgate Lane is an eyesore that is poorly maintained and sometimes unsafe.*

*Highgate Lane should be clean and vibrant with pedestrians and small shop fronts, like Melbourne.*

*Highgate Lane is dirty and needs to be cleaned up and developed so that it is not a health hazard.*

*Highgate Lane should be re-invented to become a clean pedestrian walkway lined with small shops and cafes.*

*Improving the laneway, including better use of areas, would improve the centre.*



It will be difficult to increasing the permeability and movement choices because the centre is fully developed. The main opportunities to improve permeability focus on Highgate Lane.

Permeability could be increased by:

- improving the attractiveness of Highgate Lane as a pedestrian thoroughfare (and retaining the service function) by:
  - encouraging development that overlooks the Lane
  - establishing active frontages along the Lane
  - improving the appearance of the Lane by consolidating waste collection facilities, removing parking areas and preventing storage spilling out of private leases onto the road reservation, and
  - encouraging destinations at either end of the Lane and giving people a reason to use the Lane
- new lighting, paving would improve the appearance of the Lane
- encouraging more arcades connecting the Lane to the surrounding streets. This will require:
  - encouraging arcades in locations that reflect probable pedestrian desire lines
  - lessees who are willing to redevelop
  - commercially viable activities seeking an arcade location
  - attractive arcades that are places people want to be and where they feel comfortable.

It is generally recognised that a spacing of about 80 metres to 100 metres between pedestrian connections allows adequate permeability.

Movement within the centre could also be improved by giving pedestrians equal or higher priority than vehicle movements:

- Highgate Lane will function as and should be designed to be a shared way.
- the proposed development of (part) Section 19 would generate significant pedestrian movement and offers an opportunity to establish a shared zone in part of Eyre Street and Jardine Street.

This approach would have several advantages:

- improved pedestrian amenity without adversely affecting vehicular access
- increased pedestrian and cyclist safety
- free pedestrian movement, and
- connection of activities on opposite street edges resulting in better integration of activities.

### Community voices

The centre is regarded as pedestrian friendly and walkable but the community believes that permeability should be improved.

*One of the main problems with Kingston is the isolation of one part from another. There are some good spots on Kennedy Street but it feels totally out of 'mainstream' Kingston.*

*The arcade and lanes need to be reviewed to open the centre up so there is more cross-flow of people – not just around the outside.*

*The centre must be welcoming to people cycling and walking, with low vehicle speeds throughout the centre.*

*Different parts of the centre feel a bit disconnected.*

*Better traffic circulation measures are required and Jardine Street could be a pedestrian walk.*

## 9.5 Parking

The previous sections have identified several development opportunities that would assist to revitalise the centre including development in (part) Section 19, redevelopment of blocks on (part) Section 21 and redevelopment in Section 20. It is anticipated that parking demand arising from redevelopment in Section 20 would be met on-site and therefore this development is not considered further in this section.

The availability of adequate parking that is accessible to all parts of the centre is essential to its viability. Similarly realising the development opportunities in Sections 19 and 21 is linked to the capacity to provide adequate parking. Notwithstanding the need for additional parking there is some evidence that there is surplus parking in the centre.

Thus the major parking issues confronting the centre are the challenge of meeting parking requirements arising from redevelopment and the possible opportunity afforded by the availability of surplus parking. These issues are considered below.

### 9.5.1 Parking requirements

#### **Section 21 parking**

Existing development on blocks fronting Kennedy Street and Giles Street with a rear boundary to Highgate Lane have limited on-site parking usually provided as surface parking on the undeveloped portion of a block. Parking requirements for these blocks are met through public parking on Block 48 Section 19.

In general these blocks have limited potential to provide on-site parking. A review of on-site parking capacity has concluded that only five blocks (in three holdings) are large enough to accommodate a single level basement. Multi-level basements would be inefficient and uneconomic. Even if the basements were extended under Highgate Lane they would not be large enough to accommodate all parking generated.

Alternatively, some ground floor parking could be provided at the rear of (shallow) active frontages to the Lane. The potential capacity is slightly higher than the capacity of basement parking. This approach would be more cost-effective but would reduce pedestrian amenity and increase traffic volumes in Highgate Lane.

Therefore most parking will have to be provided off-site and/or parking standards reduced or waived if redevelopment in Section 21 is to be encouraged.

Block 48 Section 19 is the only site where additional off-site parking could be provided in the centre. As noted elsewhere in this report it is proposed that this site be released for a mixed use development (including supermarket). Once the site is released, the opportunity to develop additional parking on Block 48 Section 19 to support redevelopment in Section 21 would no longer exist and hence it would also not be possible to redevelop blocks in Section 21.

Unless parking provision is resolved, redevelopment of Block 48 Section 19 is likely to prevent extensive redevelopment of Section 21.

#### **Section 19 parking**

As noted previously, the Territory Plan identifies Block 48 Section 19 as a designated parking area and therefore existing spaces are to be replaced as part of redevelopment of the site, unless it can be demonstrated that existing parking is underutilised.

It is envisaged that Blocks 47 and 48 (and possibly Block 29) Section 19 could be released for a mixed use development of about 10,000m<sup>2</sup>. Based on code requirements about 550 car spaces would be required to meet the parking demand from the development and to replace existing spaces. This issue was considered in more detail in section 3.4. Up to three basements would be required to accommodate this number of spaces. It may be possible to reduce parking requirements if there is an existing oversupply of spaces.

### Community voices

Parking was a significant issue for many people and there were varying views.

*It will never be possible to satisfy parking demand and [we] should not try. It would be better to encourage walking and cycling.*

*Parking facilities should be improved and more spaces provided.*

*I rarely have any difficulty finding parking in Kingston.*

*Parking in residential areas needs to be protected and parking is already overflowing into residential streets.*

### 9.5.2 Possible approaches to meeting demand

#### Surplus parking

There is some evidence that existing parking is underutilised and could be oversupplied. Subject to quantifying supply taking some peak demand into account, the availability of surplus public parking offers an opportunity to reduce future parking provision but also presents the challenge of determining the best way to utilise any surplus parking to support revitalisation of the centre. Options include:

- reducing the number of public parking spaces that have to be replaced as part of redevelopment of Section 19
- allocating the surplus spaces to meet demand from future redevelopment in Section 21, or
- a combination of the above.

#### Establish a parking bank

The Government is investigating establishment of a parking contributions scheme to fund off-site parking. Under such an arrangement, developers would pay into a public parking fund at the time of (re)development. Theoretically this approach could be used to fund off-site parking for redevelopment in Section 21. However, redevelopment of Block 47 Section 19 is likely to occur before redevelopment in Section 21 is complete.

An alternative approach would be to introduce a 'parking bank', where parking spaces are developed ahead of the actual requirement and developers 'purchase' these spaces as part of a development approval. The requirement to develop a parking bank could be included as a condition of approval for the redevelopment of Blocks 47 and 48 Section 19.

This approach would facilitate redevelopment in the centre but has several implications:

- initial revenue from the sale of Blocks 47 and 48 Section 19 would be reduced if a developer was required to provide additional parking spaces (in excess of demand from the proposed development and replacement parking), and
- the revenue foregone may not be recouped for several years

#### Reduce parking code requirements

The Sustainable Transport Plan aims to manage parking to achieve mode split targets and reduce reliance on the car. As part of the implementation of this plan parking standards are likely to be reduced in the future.

Several factors suggest that it could be appropriate to reduce parking code requirements in the Kingston Centre:

- redevelopment will be occurring in an environment where parking standards are likely to be reduced in the longer term and it would be appropriate to anticipate these trends
- many trips are likely to be multi-purpose and it may not be necessary to provide code compliant parking for each use:
  - a full line supermarket would be the major parking generator, and
  - specialty retailing would 'feed-off' the supermarket trade and would generate little additional parking demand
- there is some evidence that many people walk to the centre, and
- high density residential development and are large workforce are within walking distance of the centre.

Under these circumstances it may be possible and appropriate to adopt lower rates of parking provision than the parking code requires. This issue requires further investigation.

## 9.6 Enhancing environmental sustainability

Kingston Centre has a number of elements and attributes that can be regarded as sustainable in terms of current policy, including:

- **Proximity to residential areas and jobs.** The centre is within easy walking/cycling distance of a significant population catchment (residents, office workers and tourist accommodation units) which will grow over time. Encouraging people in the catchment to visit the centre without using private vehicles will have many benefits, including lower demand for parking spaces and a healthier community. Ways to achieve this include improved external connections to the centre (wider footpaths for cyclists and pedestrians, pedestrian crossings on Wentworth Ave, more bicycle stands in the centre).
- **Higher density development.** Continued redevelopment of residential properties and new development sites (for example, Section 19 car park) will add more residents to the catchment that are within easy walk/cycle distance, thus improving commercial viability as well as reducing reliance on private vehicle use.
- **Public transport services.** There are two bus stops in the centre providing services to other parts of the city. Rationalisation of bus services, better information about services and provision of bus shelters will increase patronage and reduce reliance on private vehicles.
- **Capture and re-use of storm water.** There are opportunities to capture water from roofs and grey water from buildings to use on irrigation of public realm vegetation. Any new development will be mandated to introduce new water saving and reuse strategies, and incentives for conversion of existing structures should also be explored. Use of non-potable water for public purposes remains a public health issue that has to be addressed. Co-operative ventures between lessees and the Government in the re-use of non-potable water sources also require attention but could become models for co-operative sustainability initiatives across Canberra.
- **Waste minimisation.** The unleased land (Block 26 Section 21) at the L-bend of Highgate Lane is used to store hopper bins for individual businesses and is used in preference to the on-site waste storage areas available on most blocks. The storage arrangements are unsightly and the bins occupy a relatively large area. More importantly they do not encourage waste minimisation. A communal system of waste management would be more efficient and sustainable.
- **Energy efficient buildings.** While it is difficult to retrofit old buildings with more energy efficient systems, incentives should be explored to facilitate this policy. All new development will be mandated to provide energy efficiency measures in building design and construction.
- **Awnings.** Retention of awnings as part of the built form not only maintains the character of the centre but provides shelter for pedestrians. All new development will be mandated to include awnings for these purposes.
- **Noise.** Finding the right balance between noise generating activities (for example, pubs/clubs) and adjoining residents is always difficult in a centre like Kingston, but the former are an important part of the centre's overall life and vitality. Measures to reduce sound transmission and to restrict operating hours need further consideration.
- **Community safety.** There are some places in the centre that are poorly lit at night (for example, Highgate Lane) or where improved lighting standards would assist pedestrian movement and amenity. Use of solar powered lighting sourced from roof top PVC technology could provide energy efficient lighting and help create a 'greener' image for the centre. All new development will have lighting to current Australian standards.
- **More shade trees.** Deciduous street trees provide summer shade and winter sun to public spaces. These add character and interest to the centre. Jardine Street is a good example of this kind of environment, and there are opportunities for improved planting around the other tree streets to reinforce the landscape character of the centre.
- **No overshadowing.** All new development should be designed to avoid overshadowing of public spaces.

Addressing these sustainability issues will create a centre that is more environmentally sustainable but with improved amenity and a stronger pedestrian friendly character. It also provides the basis for demonstration projects that could be adopted in other commercial centres across Canberra.

