

Dear Minister Steel,

Cc: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate,

**Re: Community input – Duffy Shops Upgrade**

During April and May 2021, I undertook community consultation for the ACT Government's \$2.5million upgrade to the Duffy Shops. As a local member for Murrumbidgee, I sought comment from local residents to better understand their desire for future improvements that would enhance their sense of community and amenity; with local shopping areas often forming the heart and hub of a local area.

Over 180 comments were received across Facebook, mobile offices, phone calls and emails. This document provides a summary of the comments received, grouping them into key themes.

Duffy residents in general are supportive of, and welcome, upgrades to their local shopping area. It is currently regarded as a community space where people come together to meet and socialise. In particular, the café and children's playground – and their proximity to one another – enables this, as does ample and freely available carparking. The community values the relaxed feel of the shopping centre, and the availability of space for families, people of all ages, bike riders and dogs. Connectivity between the various elements was considered important with comments including:

“Utopia for parents of young kids is good coffee next to a decent park with shade, and being able to park nearby”;

“Please consider: either a complete rebuild, or - solid general clean-up, painting, outdoor seating areas with pretty pot plants and shade sails, covered playground, upgrade to current shopfronts - use Chifley shops as an example. Please make it attractive”;

“The community wants social family friendly space. Somewhere inviting parents can congregate for coffee and a play before school or an early dinner and a play after school (think Friday arvo live music, affordable wood fired pizzas, kids playing happily”); and

“The Duffy shops would be a lovely place for some live music/jazzers on a weekend afternoon if the seating area was tidied. Would be wonderful for people to listen to live music and for musicians following Covid”.

Residents would like to see greater ambience and amenity in the local shop area. In comments provided to me, it is apparent that most residents feel this will be best achieved through a facelift to the existing shop building and by the introduction of new and improved businesses. These are matters which are outside of the scope for the ACT Government's funding, but are, none the less, worth noting. Concerns about current empty and passive business premises were voiced by the vast majority of residents who provided comment; with overwhelming request that all premises be occupied by quality businesses who will actively contribute to the vibrancy of, and attract people to, the area. The convenience of the existing local Post Office was appreciated by many.

Other shopping areas in the ACT were noted as good examples from which Duffy could emulate including Chapman, Cook, Chifley, Fisher, Watson, Scullin and Ainslie:

“Have a look at Watson Shops, there is a lot more seating and they have (before COVID) a Thursday night event where people come to perform music, maybe a kind of mini amphitheatre at Duffy shops will encourage schools to perform, community music groups, exercise groups, small dog training groups, craft groups, book club groups, and Saturday morning buskers.”

The importance of attracting a wide range of ages and demographics to the Duffy shops was considered important, including that the play equipment offers something for children of all ages and abilities; and that there are spaces for people to meet without needing to buy coffee and sit at the café.

One idea that came through the consultation was that streets in Duffy are named after dams, maybe the developments could have a water theme.

In pointing to other local shopping areas as good examples for Duffy, there appear to be common elements that are of relevance for Duffy, including contemporary outdoor seating, landscaping and other aspects that introduce amenity, ambience, colour and vibrancy. Connectivity and a holistic approach that brings together carparking, landscaping, facilities, amenities and attractive shops were recognised as critical in many comments:

“Would like to ensure the space retains a community vibe; with good connections between the cafe and playground. A market would be good”;

“Coffee shop is great; the sense of community is great. Want to see more trees, and ensure connections between playground, space for dogs, so that it continues to be a communal, inclusive space where everyone is together. Keen to support local businesses. It already feels like a nice, safe area. let's keep it that way.”

Other practical elements that the community request are public toilets and shade over the playground.

The community does not want a reduction in the amount or location of carparking currently available. Some members of the community also requested that money not be spent on artwork, on the basis that this can be expensive and would detract from other upgrades, stating that artwork does not represent value amongst other improvements that could be achieved.

In providing this summary analysis on behalf of the local residents of Duffy, the key points that came through were:

- Retain the existing number and location of carparking;
- Install public toilets that are open during daylight hours;
- Upgrade the existing playground, ensuring play equipment for children of all ages and abilities;
- Ensure appropriate shade is provided for the playground and other outdoor spaces;
- Install outdoor seating and picnic/BBQ facilities that are comfortable and attractive, with clear visibility to and from the playground;
- Install improved lighting;
- Improve the general amenity of the area through low maintenance landscaping and garden elements which provide colour;

As possible, I would like to be kept up to date with how things are progressing, and I look forward to the developments as they happen! I would like to be able to feedback what is happening to the community as much as is possible.



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA  
Member for Murrumbidgee

11 May 2021

**COMMUNITY COMMENT SUMMARY – DUFFY SHOP UPGRADES, Dr Marisa Paterson MLA**

Theme	# comments	Summary of nature of comments
Playground	69	<p>We would love to see a bigger playground with an undercover area. Somewhere mothers' groups or small birthday parties could be held.</p> <p>Expand the playground.</p> <p>An upgrade to the playground would be great! Making it more age and ability accessible would be wonderful for the community.</p> <p>It would be great to have the playground upgraded as it currently is not inclusive of younger kids.</p> <p>Would love to see the playground upgraded to be a bit safer/in line with modern design and (as many playgrounds could do with) some little things for older babies and mini toddlers who are just starting to get into playgrounds - especially along the lines of natural materials, nature discovery and even games the community can play together.</p> <p>Would love an all-ages playground. We stop at the coffee shop a bit and the pre - early teen kids still like to play on the equipment.</p> <p>Modernize and expand the play area – this often operates beyond capacity.</p>
Shade for playground and other spaces	39	<p>Top priority is upgrading the playground and putting in a shade sale.</p> <p>Adventure playground, shade over the playground.</p> <p>But number one improvement for us would be some shade over the playground, please!</p> <p>Shade for the children's play equipment</p> <p>It would be great to start covering the open spaces with shading. It might also be a great chance to capture run off to water some plantings.</p>

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		<p>Any playground upgrades don't forget the shade sails OVER the metal slides. Ouch in summer!</p> <p>Shade covering above the playground is an obvious necessity, however it needs to be much bigger than the pocket handkerchief shade cloths installed at some of the other playgrounds. Such shade coverings only provide cover when the sun is directly overhead and hence are next to useless.</p>
Landscaping and general amenity	59	<p>Love to see a community gardening project there.</p> <p>Duffy Shops: water fountain, a small, fenced area for dogs to wait for owners in the shops would be very cool if these things exist, anything to support the awesome cafe owners.</p> <p>Landscaping is the key to having a space that is used, particularly softening the stark building facades by changing colour and textures to compliment the landscaping.</p> <p>Much more shade required, preferably using deciduous trees, for carpark and playground.</p> <p>The most important thing is to make it a comfortable environment. At the moment it is too hot in summer and too cold in winter to want to spend time there. Well thought out shade and heating/wind shelter would be a good starting point.</p> <p>Much clearer street sign for Duffy shops; upgrade public seating; keep big gum trees; murals on brick walls; extend parking at rear of shops.</p> <p>We do not need tubs of pot plants that soon die because no one waters them.</p> <p>I would like to see community driven plant spaces such as the new raised planter boxes at Dickson shops. There are many gardening enthusiasts here and what's proven successful at Dickson shops are succulents - abundant and hardy!</p> <p>I think some major work landscaping the grassy patch to the east of the shops would help, as would more space for outdoor eating.</p> <p>Shaded kids play area, garden with flowers, water fountain, shaded outdoor seating.</p> <p>The park next to the playground is frequently overgrown. This needs better maintenance also.</p> <p>Plants, greenery making it more inviting and a Lil Street Library.</p>

		<p>Large natural rocks and dry rock faced walls to incorporate the change in levels in conjunction with the play areas to minimise erosion. Take advantage of the vacant lower green spaces and extend the new playground throughout to incorporate multiple covered seating areas with barbecues. A lovely large spread-out playground would be amazing and a great use of space for the community.</p> <p>Green and drought tolerant plantings with a combination of ground cover and shade. Non-native trees are preferable to provide colour and an opportunity to teach our children about changing seasons.</p> <p>I trust the majority, if not all, of the existing native trees will be retained. The plans are not clear on this and indeed would appear to be somewhat deceptive, particularly in relation to the mature gum tree in front of the cafe.</p> <p>Grassy areas next to park needs to be improved.</p> <p>Path across the grass area.</p> <p>The whole area is really important as a kid and dog friendly space.</p> <p>There's a large amount of empty space beyond the playground that needs to be better utilised.</p> <p>Water theme to tie in with Duffy Street names related to dams.</p> <p>Landscape the vacant land next to the supermarket – this land is both an eyesore and is hazardous, depositing erosion on footpaths after each rain event.</p>
Artworks	4	<p>I would also love to see some local art. Dan Maginnity from Byrd and Kurt Laurenson from Stylized Impact have done a great job capturing the essence of the Australian environment with our native birds at Coleman Court.</p> <p>Overall the whole shopping centre needs a good paint job. One attention to detail, I'd like to see changed is the 'Duffy Shops' sign. Perhaps like the one at Holder? Something eye catching and artistic. Ours is so embarrassing 🙄</p> <p>Please do not drop a large amount of the budget on an expensive piece of art that will not provide practical fun and joy to our local community.</p>
Public toilets	30	<p>Put in public toilets.</p> <p>Toilet so people don't have to keep asking the shop owners.</p>

		<p>Toilets and outdoor workout equipment.</p> <p>We have many people each day asking to use our private bathrooms which is frustrating and detracts from the privacy of our clients. Public toilets would be wonderful.</p> <p>A toilet is urgently needed. It's terrible that there's no public toilet.</p> <p>Oh one more thing that I neglected to put right at the top of my list of what the community at the Duffy shops needs – public toilets!</p>
Outdoor furniture And alfresco dining	13	<p>More comfortable outdoor space for the coffee shop, playground and public.</p> <p>Upgrade the space for nicer seating outside the cafe.</p> <p>I would like to see Cafes with outdoor seating, some being close to playground others for older folk in pleasant garden area.</p> <p>Several outdoor tables and chairs similar to those at Chapman shops.</p> <p>Better outdoor area for coffee shop seating, near impossible to get a table on the weekends (I'm stoked that the business is doing well though).</p> <p>A space for community members to gather even if in the grass area near the playground like somewhere shaded with benches and toilet because not everyone can afford to meet at cafes.</p> <p>Practical and artistic covered seating areas around the cafe with creative concrete bollards to replace the existing. Bring colour and creative natural materials into the common areas to replace the existing damaged asbestos areas. These include the existing eaves and wall cladding to the shops.</p> <p>Would be great to have a few more tables and chairs in the reserve next to the playground for families and kids to stop for morning tea etc. after a play, or to help with cafe overflow for people to sit with takeaways.</p> <p>the installation of a number of picnic tables in the vacant ground beside the playground would encourage further use of the area and enable the playground and possible bike track to be supervised in comfort.</p> <p>BBQs please.</p>
Carparking	10	Do not get rid of parking as older people who love to go to Duffy for a coffee etc. must be able to park.

		<p>Not happy with the plan &amp; makes no sense if you take out 6 car parks. There is so much green space why would you take car parks to create more garden beds? Fixing all the broken concrete is a priority.</p> <p>It is a good idea to include disability car parking spaces, however I see no need to also add some type of garden or whatever adjacent to these spaces. This will seemingly result in the loss of at least a further 2 or 3 car spaces, which makes no sense at all. The existing shop awning provides plenty of shade in summer, so there is no need for additional trees. In addition, while some customers may not have a disability parking permit, there are still those with mobility issues. Having as many parking spaces as possible directly in front of the shops can only assist them. It also reduces the risk for people having to negotiate the road in front of the shops.</p> <p>The current carpark is good - it's important to retain current parking numbers.</p> <p>What the Duffy shops do not need is considerable resources to be spent on replacing carpark spaces with plantings.</p>
Lighting	5	As a business owner- running a psychology practice at the shops, I would love to see more lighting in the area. I no longer work evenings, as it is dark and scary to be a female on my own in the area once it's dark.
Rubbish bins	4	
Outdoor workout equipment	3	A bike pump track would be ideal given children too young to attend Duffy primary do not have access to such a fun and healthy activity.
Library (including a Little Street Library)	4	A small or even narrow library similar to the one in Kingston would be fabulous.
<b>OUT OF SCOPE BUT OF RELEVANCE:</b>		
Local shop businesses	59	<p>Renovated and improved grocery store: the current mini-mart is dark, dank and limited. An IGA or organic grocer (e.g. Choku Bai Jo) would provide a much better standard of presentation and quality of food.</p> <p>I have lived in Duffy for 20 years. The cafe and shop are very important to me and my welfare. Please don't close either during the upgrade.</p> <p>A small but decent supermarket nearby would be fabulous too.</p> <p>Main issue is the long-closed Sun Doo restaurant, which was excellent when there.</p> <p>I'd like to see more vibrant businesses at Duffy shops, the cafe and Grocer are great, but it lacks atmosphere in the form of a restaurant, bar or other business to bring people to the shops.</p>

		<p>Fresh fruit and veg would be super great too.</p> <p>The existing empty restaurant needs to go and be replaced with a functional restaurant that provides a nice place to sit. Even a shared arrangement where in the daytime there is seating all along the outside for the cafe and at night-time the seating is available to the restaurant. An upgrade needed to the supermarket. The Chapman supermarket feels cleaner including its fridges.</p> <p>If there are no new shops included, then it seems that this is mostly a waste of time and money. We need new retail attractions at the shops so that people will come to enjoy any new amenities. This plan still shows the sterile areas around the current shops which need more than footpath upgrades and some grass to make them usable. The shops need people rather than pavements.</p> <p>Agreed the building needs more shops to draw people in. The IGA is very expensive, and the fast food has been shut for over a year. There's nothing to actually bring people to the shops.</p> <p>Implement the lease terms of the Crown Lease which requires that lessees maintain their property in good order – this has clearly fallen away in the restaurant tenancy.</p>
Shop buildings	23	<p>It would be great if this new upgrade or knockdown rebuild could result in a more ecologically sustainable building and very pleasing on the eye with lots of greenery.</p> <p>Upgrade of supermarket - it's cramped and uninviting and sells out of date stock. Get rid of closed Chinese takeaway. Whole building is shabby and unsightly. Probably should be replaced. More space for coffee shop. A bakery?</p> <p>Bulldozing and starting again!</p> <p>Landscaping upgrades are one thing, and nice. But attracting tenants to privately owned premises isn't easy and can't really be done with government money. The only long-term solution I can see is to work with owners, developers and community to demolish what's there and build a new low rise apartment block or two with ground level retail for lease, surrounded by new landscaping encompassing the entire worn out park block, with play and seating amenities.</p>