



ACT Light Rail

An effective light rail network for the Capital Region.

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Submission by ACT Light Rail on the proposed Canberra Airport Master Plan

Response to: 'Canberra Airport Master Plan - Preliminary Draft - February 2009'

Who is ACT Light Rail:

ACT Light Rail - is a community based, not for profit public transport lobby group comprised of members, (both individuals and representatives of other community groups) who share the common goal of promoting and achieving the ideal of Light Rail as the primary mode of mass public transit in the Capital Region.

ACT Light Rail recommendations summary:

1. The Canberra Airport Master Plan 2009 needs to be revised to clearly illustrate where future Light Rail infrastructure linkages could be located to **connect the Airport Precinct**¹ to Civic, Fyshwick and the NSW township of Queanbeyan. These ingress/egress points to the Airport Precinct will need to be fully protected and preserved through the Master Planning process to ensure viable future Light Rail based alternatives to the current road only based passenger transport solutions.
2. The Canberra Airport Master Plan 2009 needs to be revised to demonstrate where provision will be made **within the Airport Precinct** for any potential Light Rail services and their supporting transport corridors. This is required in order for the Master Planning process to be able to demonstrate a fully integrated multi-mode passenger transport solution.

Environmental sustainability:

The preliminary master plan document argues that the Canberra Airport is a leader in environmental sustainability. ACT Light Rail submits that Canberra Airport needs to support this claim of environmental leadership by further demonstrating its credentials by provisioning for future Light Rail implementation as part of an integrated passenger transport solution in/out of and within the Airport Precinct.

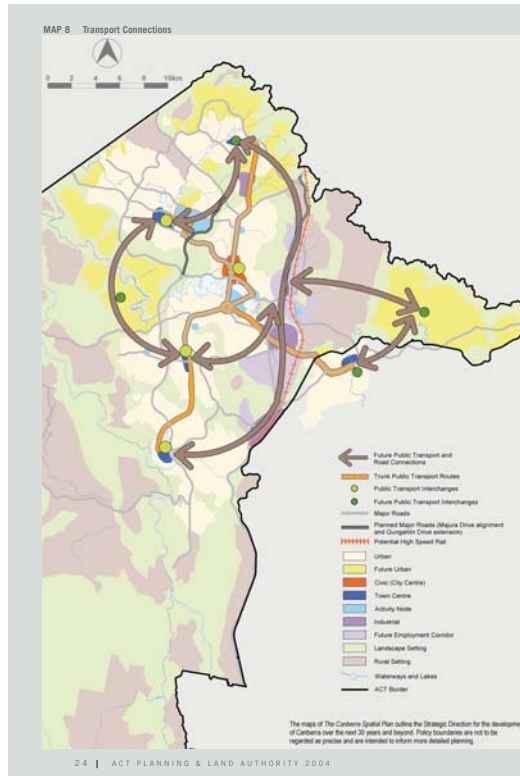
Light Rail has a proven record of being able to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing highly efficient and high capacity passenger transport options.

If appropriate provision is made at the Airport, this transport option could be utilized by both air travelers and workers (servicing the terminal, Brindabella Park, Majura Park and the commercial offices at Fairbairn) at some future date to reduce the reliance on carbon fuel based private/public road transport.

1

ACT Light Rail define the "**Airport Precinct**" as all land coming under the direct control of Canberra Airport Pty Limited, delineated by the Airport property lines incorporating all land within this boundary, including the Airport terminal buildings, all associated aerospace related infrastructure, Brindabella Business Park, Majura Park retail and commercial zone and the Fairbairn commercial zones.

Integration with Local Planning strategies:



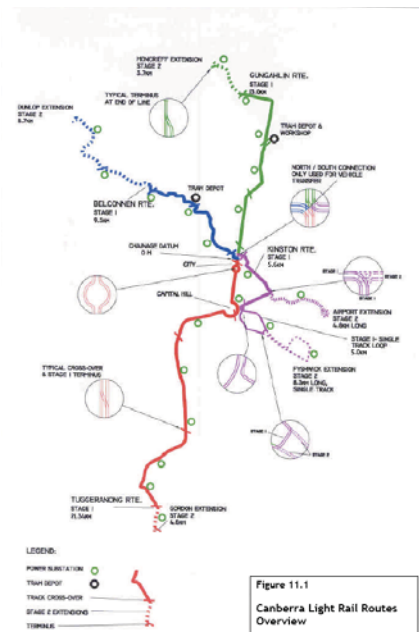
ACT Light Rail submits that from a passenger transport perspective, the Canberra Spatial Plan (Transport Connections plan - left) has clearly shown that the ACT Government has recognized that the Airport should be properly serviced by future Public Transport and road connections.

The future development of the Airport Precinct to cater for an increasing ACT employment base is a tremendous opportunity to plan for an environment which is attractive to workers and which can lay the basis of part of an enhanced, and fully integrated public transport system for the Capital Region.

It should be noted that the future implementation of Light Rail is now a clearly stated public transport objective of the current ACT Government².

Indirectly it should be noted that the recent ACT Government submission to Infrastructure Australia, due to time constraints, was based solely on the Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study - Final Report: Economic and Financial Implications of Transport Options (Prepared for ACTPLA by Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd in January 2004).³ Refer right for map of routes.

At the time when the KBR original study was undertaken it failed to fully recognize the considerable continuing employment growth at the Airport and possibility of the new Town Centre in the Molonglo Valley.



²

ACT Government Light Rail submission to Infrastructure Australia

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/move/light_rail

Video evidence:

ACT Labor Commitment to Light Rail - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdAjnwldHFw>,

Jon Stanhope (Chief Minister) supporting Light Rail - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHdSZTfNrCE>

³

Refer: <http://www.actlightrail.info/documents/CanberraEconomicImplicationsofTransportOptions.pdf>

The Canberra Airport master plan as it is currently stands fails to clearly demonstrate where Light Rail **could** be implemented in/out of and within the Airport Precinct. Thus ACT Light Rail submits that the Airport is failing in its stated objective to integrate with current local planning strategies.

Failure to allocate and reserve sufficient land and appropriate “light rail transport corridor” entry points (connecting Civic, Fyshwick and neighbouring NSW township of Queanbeyan) and similarly failure to identify and preserve “light rail transport corridors” within the Airport Precinct could potentially stifle any future effective ACT wide Light Rail implementation.

ACT Light Rail believes that as the Canberra Airport is entirely privately owned and operated, it should ultimately be the responsibility of the Airport owners to allocate land within the Airport Precinct at their own cost and fund all light rail infrastructure required within those boundaries. Additionally there could be a valid argument to insist that the Airport owners also provide infrastructure investment contributions in order to **connect** the Airport to any ACT Light Rail network beyond the Airport Precinct boundaries as there will be significant private benefit derived from provision of such services.

Clearly transport remains an issue which concerns everyone. It is what people use everyday to get from A to B, to and from work. The existing ACT public transport system is not coping with the demands placed upon it and is clearly not scalable. Critically, it is not attractive to many users in its current form and service levels.

Preventing future road congestion by implementing a Light Rail public transport alternative to/from and within the Airport Precinct:



The Airport has indicated that they expect a significant increase in air travelers and on-site employment through expansion of aeronautical services as well as increased office and retail development. Clearly this will place a serious load upon existing road infrastructure around the airport.

Recent road upgrades have already demonstrated that road congestion is a significant problem, and whilst the current road works will alleviate the issue for a short period of time these problems will ultimately reemerge as the airport becomes busier through an

increased number of air travelers and offers increased on-site employment opportunities. Unfortunately without any long term planning foresight the majority of air travelers and workers will remain predominately reliant upon the motor car (which includes taxis) to serve as their primary or only transportation means.

The Airport has a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate clear leadership in urban design and public transport provision. By planning a properly **integrated air, road and light rail infrastructure**, air travelers and workers alike will know with certainty that they can use and rely on public transport for their primary travel to and from the Airport Precinct thus minimizing the use of (private) motor vehicles.

Planning for the future provisioning of grade separated light rail services in and out of the Airport Precinct will mean that the increasingly congested roads will have no impact upon travel times to and from the airport, providing further certainty to public transport users when planning their trips.

Light Rail presents an opportunity for better Airport land utilization:

By giving air travelers and workers a reliable and viable alternative to get to and from the Airport Precinct without requiring a motor vehicle, this will allow the Airport owners to re-task vast tracks of underutilized land currently allocated to the provision of car parking. The re-tasked land can then be allocated to higher economic value business and retail development opportunities.

References:

- ACT Light Rail (<http://www.actlightrail.info/>)
- [Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study - Final Report: Economic and Financial Implications of Transport Options](#) (Prepared for ACTPLA by Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd in January 2004)
- [ACT Government: Light Rail Proposal to Infrastructure Australia - December 2008](#) (Prepared for the ACT Government by PricewaterhouseCoopers)
- The Canberra Spatial Plan - March 2004 (<http://apps.actpla.act.gov.au/spatialplan/index.html>)