

24 September 2013

Linking the Heart of Canberra with Light Rail

Canberrans are invited to comment on a proposal to extend the Light Rail network across central Canberra, linking the CBD with major residential, employment, transport and tourism precincts.

Canberra Airport today launched a staged plan for Light Rail, encouraging community feedback that will inform development of the ground transportation plan to be included in the Airport's 2014 Master Plan.

Managing Director Stephen Byron said recent public discussion around developing the city centre and key infrastructure, cultural and recreational facilities made it timely to contribute to the conversation around the future form of public transport in the ACT.

“The ACT Government has committed to Light Rail, with the City to Gungahlin route designed to relieve congestion along the arterial roads that deliver residents from Gungahlin to the city. The backbone of a Light Rail network is people travelling from home to their workplace and back.

“However, a great opportunity exists to deliver a compact, sustainable, productive city, as envisaged by Walter Burley Griffin, by linking all the major employment nodes and emerging high density residential developments within a few kilometres of the CBD. You cannot have urban infill without supporting it with appropriate public transport.”

Mr Byron said getting residents, workers and visitors around in a timely and efficient way would be increasingly important as Canberra continued to grow. The visions of the City to the Lake project and Canberra Business Council-initiated Australia Forum, further residential development along Constitution Avenue and south of the lake at the Kingston Foreshore and East Lake were developments that would transform central Canberra and strengthen the need for supporting transport infrastructure that made the city accessible without the need for motor traffic.

The key features of the proposal include the design and siting of a Light Rail network that will service major, existing and future employment, residential, hotel accommodation, national tourist attraction and transport hub locations of the Central National Area (National Capital Plan), including Canberra's CBD, the Airport and the Parliamentary Triangle.

“This includes consideration of how the currently disbursed precincts flanking and nearby the West, Central and East Basins of Lake Burley Griffin can be interconnected and energised by scheduled, frequent Light Rail services,” Mr Byron said.

“The opportunity for mixed-use development along the new routes of the Light Rail will provide incentive for prospective private investors.

“Like the City to Gungahlin Light Rail, this network would be taken forward ultimately by the ACT Government; but with Public-Private Partnerships proposed for the northern route, it makes sense for other routes to use the same model.

“The expanded Light Rail network will strengthen land values for residences in the catchment area and increase the value of adjoining land sales by the ACT Government, thus boosting revenue to the government.”

The expanded Light Rail network proposed will:

- Accommodate the increasing transport needs of Canberrans and visitors
- Build capacity in Canberra’s transport choices
- Add life to the heart of Canberra
- Help realise the vision for Canberra as a compact, sustainable and productive city
- Enhance existing public transport systems through complementary scheduling and routes
- Help deliver the ACT Government’s major planning and development projects for the National Capital: City to the Lake, Kingston Foreshore, the Griffin Legacy and the East Lake development, as well as other development proposals like the Australia Forum
- Drive economic activity along the proposed routes
- Boost ACT Government revenue from land sales
- Appeal to private investors due to its staged approach and usage potential.

“We encourage comments from individuals and organisations addressing any issues related to this proposal including, but not limited to, patronage, frequency, engineering, costing, funding, environmental impacts and integration with the land around the network,”
Mr Byron said.

“We want to encourage public discussion around this proposal to advance the dialogue on how Light Rail might deliver the public transport needs of a growing, globally-linked city.

“As the authority responsible for public transport in Canberra, the ACT Government has taken the lead on Light Rail and we will certainly share with them findings relevant to assist in that process.”

More information is available on the website at www.canberraairport/corporate/lightrail including a Light Rail fact sheet, brochure, and route map.

Submissions may be made via the website or emailed directly. We have allowed four weeks for the consultation period and will review all submissions received by 22 October 2013.

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