

**SUBMISSION CONCERNING AN INQUIRY INTO ACTION
BUSES
BY
THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF THE
ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

From:

Mr Doug Laing

14 Tiwi Place

Waramanga ACT 2611

telephone: 02 62877700

e-mail: doug.laing@environment.gov.au

Date of closure for submissions: 18 May 2007

Date of submission: 9 May 2007

Introduction:

This submission has been prompted primarily by introduction of new bus timetables which became effective on 4 December 2006. As a member of a one car family and a regular bus user, my experiences with the new timetables have not been happy. It is written entirely in a personal capacity, and examples and case studies are drawn from personal experience, mainly focussed on my residential and commuting spheres of interest.

As a strong advocate of an efficient, regular and reliable public transport service for the ACT, I am anecdotally reminded that the three golden rules for good service (originally devised for use in the US hotel industry) are "service, service and..... service"! Like most slogans, this one might be entertaining and catchy but is not without a kernel of truth.

General introductory observations:

As a general point I find it astonishing that, at a time when many people appear to be looking to use buses as an alternative to multiple car ownership and high fuel prices, the company has effectively gutted off peak services, and somehow created relative timetable chaos in inter town peak hour and a near peak hour services. In addition, service reductions came just as school closures were confirmed, with the likelihood that many parents would be looking for convenient bus transport for children who previously walked to their neighbourhood school, and when major roadworks are making bus transport between Belconnen and South Canberra an attractive option to driving.

Taxis are an option to buses (albeit an expensive one), especially during off-peak periods. However taxi supply appears to be increasingly at a premium, particularly during parliamentary sitting weeks. This reinforces the need for regular and reliable bus services, including between expanding office-based work nodes. In this context, I would note that numbers of Commonwealth departments are now physically located in multiple locations distant from one another (a trend that is increasing), and that a shuttle bus service between major centres of office accommodation would be a viable option to taxis and departmental vehicles, particularly during periods of high demand.

In summary, the basic infrastructure of a good system is already in place but has been allowed to run down over the years so that the company is now confronted with a classic conundrum: save money by letting the system run down further or invest to make it a serious and appealing, and *the* major component of the city's transport infrastructure. To do the former is no option if only because it would contravene the government's own planning policies and

implementation of those plans. Good and effective marketing and publicity and information has to be an integral part of improvements to the system.

As this inquiry proceeds, it might like to bear in mind my strong perception, from talking with other travellers, that the public does not want excuses, blame shifting or bland statements of good intent at its end. Most people, in my experience, do not care whether ACTION is a private or public company, what its current legal status is as a majority publicly funded instrumentality, or if it is subjected to commercial competition (though there could be compelling reason for this to happen). Most people simply want a properly funded frequent, reliable, efficient, non-polluting and courteous bus service.

Context:

According to the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA), the purpose of the Territory Plan is to manage land use change and development in a manner consistent with strategic directions set by the ACT Government and the community, and the National Capital Plan”.

The Canberra Spatial Plan outlines a strategic direction to achieve the social, environmental and economic sustainability of Canberra as part of the Canberra Plan. Then Minister for Planning, Simon Corbell described the Spatial Plan as a key part of a more accessible Canberra, with an economically competitive and culturally vibrant city centre and much greater opportunities for people to walk, ride or use public transport.

On election the government claimed that a three-pronged vision for the Territory would guide its policies – its Economic White Paper, the Spatial Plan and the Social Plan.

It is not evident that current public transport arrangements have, in any way, been designed to be made consistent with the Territory Plan, the National Capital Plan and the Griffin Legacy, the Spatial Plan, the Economic White Paper or the Social Plan. The main planning instrument is, however, the Sustainable Transport Plan; in its present state there seems little likelihood that ACTION could contribute its anticipated share to realisation of this plan and the targets therein.

oooOOooo

This submission now addresses each term of reference in the order presented, using examples and case studies drawn from personal experience, where appropriate.

(a) examining how well it (ACTION) meets the needs of different segments of the community, while recognising that ACTION’s role is a mass transport provider;

(a.1) Do ACTION services meet the needs of different segments of the community?

At a basic level, the answer is probably yes. As a more comprehensive and inclusive level, the answer is no, particularly given the impacts of the December 2006 changes. While restoration of some of the abolished services in April 2007 are undoubtedly welcome, they will not satisfy all users, will not necessarily increase patronage and would put further pressure on company resources.

(a.1.1) School hour services

The closure of schools within the Weston Creek cluster has exacerbated current school hour traffic problems. School closures appeared to proceed without an assurance of more convenient configuration and scheduling of school bus routes. This still does not appear to be a priority by education and/or transport authorities in this area.

Moreover, the likelihood that school closures are forcing more parents to use cars to transport children to school appears not to be consistent with the environmental sustainability component of the Territory Plan or the Sustainable Transport Plan, and related greenhouse gas reduction policies.

Examples:

Primary grade students travelling from and to Weston, where the primary school closed are still without a school bus, well into second term. I understand the majority of students from the Weston primary school have come to Arawang primary at Waramanga. Primary students from Rivett also appear to be without a dedicated school bus. There is, however, an option to use a route 227 public service arriving at Waramanga at 8:39 a.m., although many families with primary age children are reluctant to take this option. On the return journey, however, this option no longer exists. This is because a once convenient public service no longer operates, post-December 2006 (see next paragraph).

I was a regular user of the Route 27 bus, which on the old timetable, conveniently left Woden at 2:49 p.m. arriving at Waramanga at 2:56 p.m. just in time for me to collect my child from Arawang primary school. The replacement services now leave Woden at 2:20 p.m. or 3:31 p.m. neither of which is convenient for a working parent with childcare responsibilities such as myself. With children now coming to Arawang from the closed primary schools in Rivett and Weston more parents have indicated that they are looking for a convenient bus for after-school transport, but they will not find it with the current timetable.

I make a strong appeal for priority restoration of the old 2.49 p.m Route 27 timetable, as a start towards instituting a reasonable level of school hour services within the Weston Creek cluster of schools.

(a.1.2) Off peak services

Half hour frequencies are the minimum if a service is to be provided, especially where there is no alternative.

(A.1.3) Creative routing

Patronage at off-peak times is a concern for any provider of public transport, anywhere in Australia. In Canberra, the problem is compounded by primarily low density living. It has to be accepted that these services will never be profitable but they could be made better and potentially more profitable by creative routing.

In my experience, off peak users are often much less concerned about journey time than they are frequency. Better frequency can almost always offset the disadvantages of longer routes and travel times.

Example 1:

Off-peak restoration of routes 30 and 31 (as an addition to or replacement for Route 32?) will no doubt be welcomed by their users. However, the restoration appears to be a knee-jerk reaction to community or political pressures and might not necessarily improve patronage, while putting further pressure on the resources of the company. A more creative off-peak option might be combination of these routes into a longer route with a minimum 20 minute to half-hour schedule. What ever options are decided, they must include the Parliamentary Triangle area.

Example 2:

Hourly frequencies, off-peak, in our Weston Creek area is proving to be a real inconvenience. If off-peak travellers are able to accept slightly longer travel times in return

for improved frequencies (as I am), there would be an option to institute reverse circular hourly (but preferably half hourly) services in the Weston, Waramanga, Rivett, Fisher areas using the existing routes 27 and 25. Passengers could therefore use an inbound or outbound service to eventually reach Woden, with the outbound route travelling via Coolamon Court/Weston Creek Centre. The only disadvantage is a longer journey to Woden in one direction, but, if travel time is not a pressing issue, at least a more regular service would exist, which is not the case at present.

Such an arrangement would, however, necessitate good publicity and some guidance, particularly for elderly users.

The existing Route 75 might be quite useful as an addition to the current scheduling but I know of no regular bus user that knows of its existence, or the route it takes. Three services in one direction and two in the other (at least one that is close to an existing Route 27 service) would hardly constitute a comprehensive service; patronage is poor but could be increased if more people knew about it. Alternatively it could be absorbed into an improved route 27/25 service.

Example 3:

Within reasonable walking distance of my residence there are numerous services travelling along Hindmarsh Drive, including Tuggeranong Parkway services. These are routes 26, 60, 62 and 249. For example, a fellow passenger must take a service from Waramanga to Woden in order to connect with a 249 service that brings him almost back home before turning off onto the Tuggeranong Parkway to travel to Belconnen. With two or three strategically placed stops these services could additionally service parts of Waramanga, Weston, Lyons and Chifley.

(a.1.4) Off Peak Ticketing

Off-peak tickets are an attractive option and should be maintained. However, there seems little point in penalising users wanting to use these tickets during the afternoon peak, particularly on feeder services. If they are unable or unwilling to pay the higher fare, passengers may have to wait upwards of an hour to use an off-peak service. Many drivers in my experience will offer passengers the benefit of the doubt, especially where the vehicle is not full, rather than delaying the bus by entering into debate or long explanation (sometimes with people whose first language is not English).

(a.2) recognising that ACTION's role is a mass transport provider;

This must be a major part of a company's service charter. While inter town services are well and sometimes over patronised, commuter services through the Parliamentary Triangle are generally under patronised, even as parking pressures increase. There are other areas of rapidly increasing office accommodation, such as the airport precinct, which appear to have no public transport services at all. Regular and reliable services are the key if Canberra is to avoid the peak hour traffic gridlock so evident in other cities, and which is becoming a feature in some pockets here (for example, around the airport).

(a.2.1) General observations

Buses from Woden to the city appear to routinely run late in the half hour between 8:30 a.m. and 9 a.m., which is when a lot of people are travelling after dropping children at school and using the park-and-ride facility, which we do. There is, as it stands, a relatively large gap between the 8:46 a.m. and 8:51 a.m. services from Woden to the city, and judging by the number of people waiting at that time, probably a good case for an additional service. On

numerous recent occasions one or other of these services has not materialised without explanation to the waiting crowd, inconveniencing users and compounding overcrowding.

I am scheduled to change workplaces in the latter half of 2007 from my current location in the Parliamentary Triangle to a new location in a building currently under construction on the western side of the city near the Lakeside Hotel. Given the already limited parking in the city, the situation is going to be made much worse when these new buildings are fully occupied. I will have no choice but to use the bus, and indeed would do so as a first choice, but I notice that none of the inter-town services are currently routed around this western side of the city. I would hope that this will change as these new buildings and office spaces come on line.

Example 1:

I have been regularly inconvenienced by the late running or non appearance of inter-town services since the new timetable began. As noted above, there are problems at Woden in the late morning peak hour but also in the afternoons in the reverse direction in the 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. timeslot

Case study 1

Tuesday 19 December 2006: location; Albert Hall Adelaide Avenue, South.

On 19 December at 1:30 p.m. a route 312 bus and a route 300 bus arrived at my stop on Adelaide Avenue at exactly the same time, one overflowing and the other almost empty. According to the timetable the first was running at least 12 minutes late.

Case study 2

Wednesday 20 March 2007: location; Albert Hall Adelaide Avenue, South.

I arrived at this stop at 3:50 p.m. to join a route 300 bus at 3:53 p.m.. The Route 300 bus did not arrive, nor did the following Route 315 bus, which was due at 4 p.m.. The first bus to arrive was the Route 314 bus at 4.13 p.m. (due at 4:07 p.m.). It was so full on arrival that it could not even accommodate all of the six or so people waiting at the stop. There was no sign of a route 117 bus due at 4.13 p.m.

Case study 3

Tuesday 1 May 2007: location; Albert Hall Adelaide Avenue, South.

I arrived at this stop at 4.05 p.m. to connect with Route 314 at 4:07 p.m. This bus did not arrive on schedule. At 4:14 p.m. a route 312 bus passed the stop without stopping as it was full. Finally, at 4:26 p.m. a Route 314 bus arrived (presumably the one due at 4:07 p.m.), together with a route 117 bus, which had been due at 4.13 p.m.. Both were overcrowded. As a consequence, I missed my route 27 connection at Woden, which departed at 4:28 p.m.

Example 2:

Route 227 – Waramanga-Barton-City. This service is due to Waramanga at 8.14 a.m. but, during school terms, is chronically late. On Friday 29 March it arrived at Waramanga at 8.21 a.m, not 8.14 a.m as scheduled. As usual for a school term day, it was full to overflowing. There would seem to be demand for an additional service, say about 8.00 a.m at Waramanga.

At 7:45 a.m. and 7:47 a.m. there are two services (227 and 27) passing Waramanga during school terms. One of these could possibly be rescheduled to arrive at about 8 a.m., therefore spreading the load and increasing convenience.

Example 3:

See comments about regarding routes 26, 60, 62 and 249 and the possibility of peak hour availability along Hindmarsh Drive/Tuggeranong Parkway.

(a.2.2) Driver rostering and employment flexibility

Given the variable demands on staff and resources over 24-hour period, serious consideration could be given to a rostering and employment flexibility so that part time drivers are part of

the employment equation to ensure adequate coverage peak mass transport periods and staff absences.

(a.2.3) Breakdowns and communication

Occasional breakdowns are inevitable and tolerated by most reasonable travellers . However there needs to be a better way of communicating such difficulties (at interchanges to begin with), rather than the current bush telegraph system, and rapidly replacing failed vehicles (see also above).

The company could also consider installation of electronic communication equipment at key locations to indicate arrival times of the next three or four services. I have seen this system in place in the Melbourne city area and it appears to work very well.

(a.2.4) Park 'n Ride flexibility

Our family is a regular user of this facility at Woden. It is good, particularly for working parents working approximately to school hours, but is underutilised. When the buses run to schedule it is very good. However, we are surprised at how few people even know that this facility exists, and how to use it.

These facilities will need to be a well promoted integral part of a future transport plan. For this to happen, however, administration will need to be streamlined and computerised. At present, users are required to fill out a form with the same information, every month. Computerised records would be a considerable timesaver for all concerned. The system will also need to be a more flexible (at present permits are only available on a month by month basis with the purchase in advance of four multiple ride tickets. This does not allow for family absences at school holiday or at other times, or a desire to commence using the system at any time other than the first of the month).

(b) incorporating comparative analysis of other bus transport operators in Australian jurisdictions;

No substantial comment. However, in comparison to other cities, Canberra is quite unique in population size and layout. Comparison could not be easily made with high-density urban areas such as inner Sydney or Melbourne, which enjoy a mix of train, tram and bus services. Some comparison could be made with bus services in the lower density areas of these cities, although these largely service hubs connected to city and other rail services.

ACTION is Canberra's sole public transport service and must increasingly service commuter demand to Civic, Woden and Belconnen and other areas such as the airport, where office and residential density is quickly increasing without a commensurate increase in parking facilities. It could be compellingly argued that improvements to the current system will stall or be half-hearted until genuine commercial competition is a reality but until this happens the government has an obligation and responsibility to direct the company in accordance with current projected demand and its own social and economic priorities and planning policies.

(c) focussing on ACTION's services within the context of the sustainable transport plan with particular reference to:

(c.1) the appropriateness of the plan especially targets;

(c.2) measures needed to ensure targets are met

(c.3) progress towards implementation;

The sustainable transport plan appears to be basically sound, with suggestions of many good technical innovations to improve the existing public transport system. However this will require significant investment. The state of the service at present and the level of customer dissatisfaction suggests a need for some radical action or resignation by the community that the plan, while containing noble aspirations, will not be achieved in practice.

It is acknowledged that the targets are ambitious. This implies that they may not be met but they are nevertheless useful as an aspirational goal. It is stated that these targets represent a more than doubling of the current proportion of trips used by environmentally-friendly modes — walking, cycling and public transport and will reverse the downward trend in public transport usage that has occurred to 2001.

It is further acknowledged that the targets will involve a 16.0 per cent reduction in car use in 2026 (see text attached to figure 19). Given the demographics and the physical layout of this city, private motor transport is clearly the main competitor to public transport and meeting this target can only be achieved with a commensurate improvement in public transport, most importantly the frequency, reliability, relevance and suitability of bus services. Primarily for reasons of physical fitness, I choose to walk between my home and the bus at Woden two to three times per week, but I still rely daily on a good bus service. Regular walking or cycling to work will continue to be limited to those economically privileged enough to live within the city's inner ring or those living elsewhere within a manageable distance of their workplace.

The submission now examines each of the key factors to be addressed to achieve increased public transport usage (see under part 4: Targets; figure 20).

Travel time

Generally satisfactory providing waiting time is kept to an absolute minimum (which means that buses must run on time)

Passenger information

Generally unsatisfactory (see, for example, experience with Route 32 below). Following timetable changes in December, it took days and sometimes longer to replace timetables at stops.

Case study:

On 5 December, the day following the timetable changes, I needed to travel from the Parliamentary Triangle to John James Hospital. As the number 30 route had been cancelled during off-peak periods, I rang the information number to find out which bus I should be using. I was told the only route I could use was number 32 which I could pick up in front of old Parliament house. Unfortunately the only services I could use were those that would get me to my appointment 15 minutes late or 45 minutes early. Nevertheless, I waited at the stop at the appointed time but no bus arrived. When I rang the information number again, I was informed that I had been given the wrong information and that route 32 called at the new Parliament house, not Old Parliament house as I had been advised. Fortunately a fellow passenger at the bus stop told me that route 34 would drop me close to the hospital and with a quick change between one bus stop and another I was able to eventually make a connection and the appointment.

Densification of urban area or around nodes

See comment above noting rapid densification particularly in Civic and Woden and rapidly increasing commuter demand. The government has the choice either to incorporate greatly increased parking precincts in these areas or rapidly improve public transport. For aesthetic, health and environmental reasons I would strongly prefer the latter.

Bus priority measures

Generally satisfactory from Woden although priority arrangements need urgent review between the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and Civic.

Safety after hours

The interchanges appear to be the main problem after hours. See comment below.

More frequent services

This has to be a given in any consideration or aspiration towards the ACT's sustainable transport plan and the spatial plan, and targets contained therein.

Case study:

One of the major reasons for provision of more frequent services is that Canberra no longer operates on a traditional public service nine to five day. Many public servants are regularly working days that do not finish before 6:30 p.m.. Express buses to Woden through the Parliamentary Triangle currently finish before 6 p.m.. Once in Woden there is currently a longer than normal gap between 6:20 p.m. and 7:04 p.m. in Route 27 services outwards, then a convenient short gap to a Route 927 bus at 7:20 p.m.. However, if I miss this connection or am later than this I would face a wait of up to an hour.

More frequent services must also be accompanied by some imaginative thinking in the meeting of peak and off peak demand (see under creative routing above), school service demand and commuter demand.

Example:

With densification, particularly in Civic, and the growth of office accommodation in the ribbon between the Parliamentary Triangle and well along Northbourne Avenue, there is a clear emerging need for a continuous hop on-hop off circular service between these points, through Civic.

Interchanges

interchanges are unattractive, draughty and, at times, unsafe. Hooligan and antisocial behaviour is a feature of the Woden interchange at various times of the day and in the evenings. The need to transit through in this interchange will be an important consideration in the choice of high school for our son. The condition of the interchanges is not a good incentive for increasing patronage.

In addition

(i) Park n' Ride

See comments above. To reiterate, the system is good in theory but the current facilities are underutilised at Woden, and the permit system is inflexible. When the buses run to schedule it is very good. However, these facilities will need to be expanded and a well promoted integral part of a future transport plan.

(ii) Bike racks

these are a very good innovation but it requires improvement and promotion of bike storage facilities at interchanges.

(d) providing guidance on principles and key priorities for future service planning

If there is not one already there needs to be a service charter. This should be designed with public input, through, for example, focus groups, and communicated to the general public on completion. Importantly, it must be a guard against apparently knee-jerk responses to changed financial circumstances, (which appeared to be the case with the December 2006 timetable changes).

Annexes for reference
(excerpted from the Sustainable Transport Plan)

Part 4 — Targets

The modal priorities in the plan are based on *The Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning in the ACT* (Department of Urban Services 1999) which established guiding principle of transport mode priority in the following order of precedence:

- walking
- cycling
- public transport
- commercial vehicles
- private cars.

The plan is also supported by the strategic direction of *The Canberra Spatial Plan* which will accommodate future population growth in the ACT within 7.5 km of the city centre over the next 15 years together with strategies to improve pedestrian and cycle access. Targets help to identify the level of commitment and resources required to achieve goals. They also allow progress towards these goals to be monitored. The modal split targets for work trips for the ACT are shown in Figure 18.

FIGURE 18 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN TARGETS: PERCENTAGE OF TRIPS BY WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT (JOURNEY TO WORK TRIPS)

MODE	2001	2011	2026
Walking	4.1%	6%	7%
Cycling	2.3%	5%	7%
Public Transport	6.7%	9%	16%
Total	13.1%	20%	30%

Work trip targets are used in this plan because they are the most reliable data source and can be monitored using Australian Bureau of Statistics Journey to Work data. It is however, expected that similar mode shifts will be achieved for total trips.

These targets are ambitious and challenging and will require significant commitment and resources to achieve them. However they provide a focus for efforts towards a more sustainable system — showing what is required to make this shift.

A range of issues needs to be addressed to achieve the targets for each mode and for overall achievement of the targets. The following table shows the key factors that are important to address to achieve these targets for each mode.

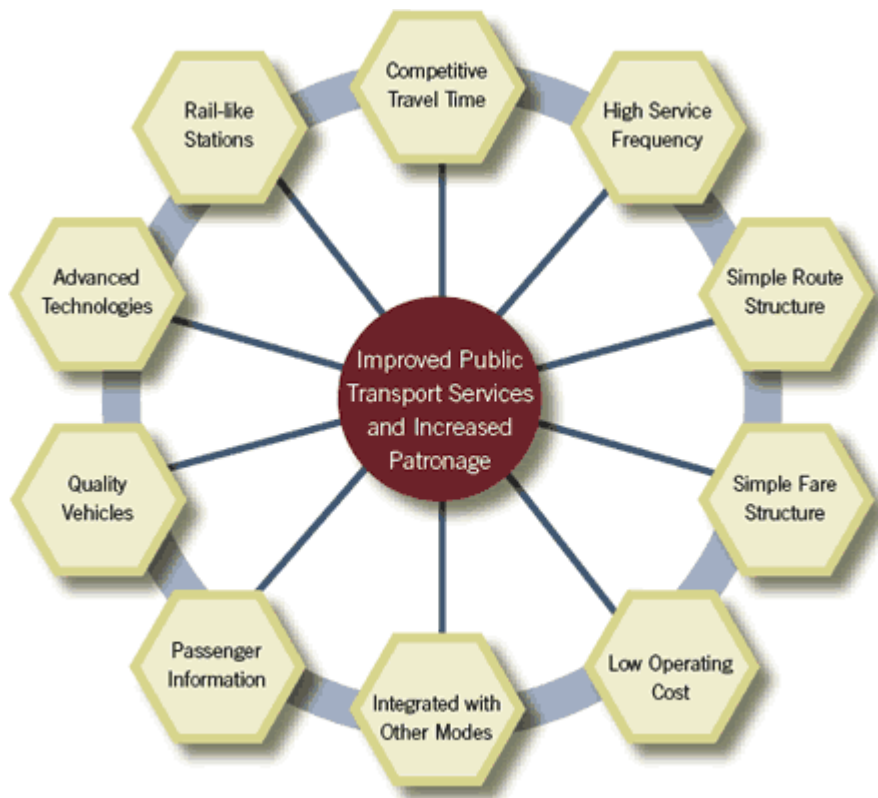
FIGURE 20 KEY FACTORS TO BE ADDRESSED TO ACHIEVE MODE-SPLIT TARGETS

Increased Walking	Increased Cycling	Increased Public Transport	Reduced Car Usage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safety ▪ Local walking infrastructure: lighting, signage etc ▪ Urban design for 'permeability' and 'legibility' ▪ Attitudes to walking ▪ Walking programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel time ▪ Safety ▪ Attitudes to cycling ▪ Cycle paths and routes: surfaces, lighting signage etc ▪ Trip end facilities ▪ Links to public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel time ▪ Passenger information ▪ Densification of urban area or around nodes ▪ Bus priority measures ▪ Safety after hours ▪ More frequent services ▪ Interchanges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management of parking ▪ Pricing of transport and parking ▪ Community commitment ▪ Community attitudes

The Sustainable Transport Plan recommends that Canberra's public transport system should be based on an integrated bus-based rapid transit system on its trunk routes. The system will combine exclusive busways, bus priority measures, frequent services, better passenger information and improved access to services.

It is the combination and synergy between the following traits that will make the public transport system successful in attracting patronage.

FIGURE 21 FACTORS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT



⊕ ENLARGE

To ensure the system appeals to a broader range of the community it must be more competitive with the car and less focused on a mobility service for those who cannot afford other options. However the public transport system will continue to have an important social and equity role.



These targets represent a more than doubling of the current proportion of trips used by environmentally-friendly modes — walking, cycling and public transport and will reverse the downward trend in public transport usage that has occurred to 2001.

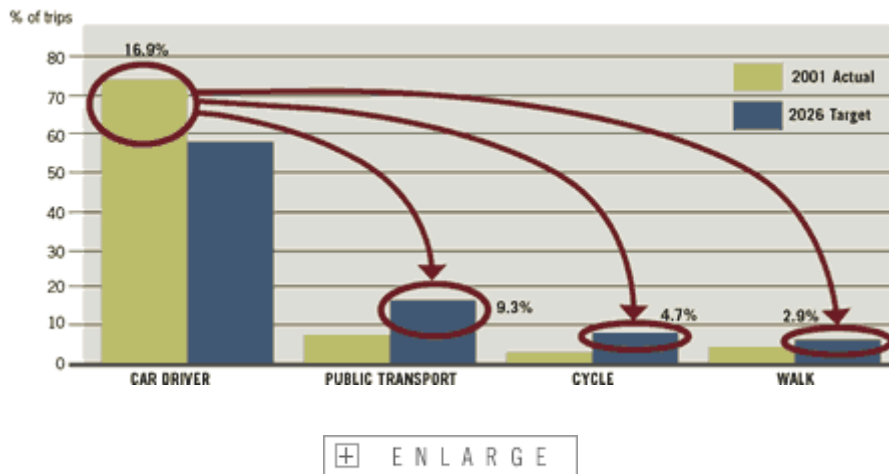
Achieving the targets will depend on the level of travel demand as a result of population growth, urban consolidation and Government investment in sustainable transport.

The above targets recognise that a proportion of total trips are not suitable for each mode as they involve physical or objective limitations. For example trips over two kilometres are not considered suitable for walking and trips over ten kilometres are not considered suitable for cycling. Trips involving carrying luggage, goods or shopping, involving multiple destinations or dropping off other people are not considered suitable for public transport.

The total potential (there is no physical barrier) for additional walking and cycling trips in the ACT is estimated to be 23 per cent and 13 per cent of trips respectively, while public transport trips have the potential to be 21 per cent of total trips. Together there is potential for 40 per cent of trips to be taken by one of these modes, indicating that the Plan targets are possible to achieve.

Figure 19 shows that achieving these modal targets will involve a 16.0 per cent reduction in car use in 2026. Note that there are other trips, such as 'car as passenger trips' that are not included in this table.

FIGURE 19 SHIFT IN MODE SPLIT THROUGH ACHIEVING TARGETS



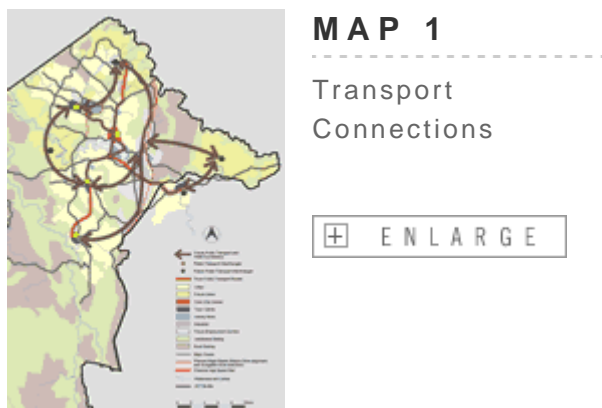
Part 7 — Priorities and projects

Short-term (five years) priorities

Key short-term priorities are projects that provide strong direction and momentum towards achieving *The Sustainable Transport Plan* outcomes. These will include investment in:

- the trunk public transport routes leading to a corridor transit system on key routes using buses and allowing for light rail and other technologies in the future;
- projects that lay the ground-work for significant improvement and mode shift to public transport, walking and cycling;
- opportunities that encourage transit-oriented development;
- initiatives that are a catalyst for land use that supports public transport and greater use of walking and cycling; and
- initiatives identified in the 2003/04 *ACT Road Safety Strategy* that provide a safety benefit for road users.

Map 1 shows the key transport connections for Canberra from *The Canberra Spatial Plan*. Map 2 shows the priorities identified in the plan.



Specific key short-term priorities are:

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
Belconnen to Civic busway	Construction of busway, bus priority measures and stops. This project will connect the major activity nodes along this key route.
Gungahlin to Civic	Construction of busways, bus priority

busway	measures and stations on Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue. This will encourage land use development along the route and bus use by new residents of Gungahlin and Inner North Canberra.
Woden to Civic bus priority measures	Measures to improve bus priority and travel times along this key route.
Tuggeranong to Woden bus priority measures	Measures to improve bus priority and travel times along the route.
Other bus priority measures	Measures to improve bus priority at key 'choke points' throughout Canberra.
Traffic signal management co-ordination	Active management of traffic signals during peak periods to optimise traffic flow and reduce congestion.
Belconnen interchange upgrade	Integration of new bus interchange into town centre retail development to improve passenger comfort and security.
Woden interchange upgrade	Integration of new bus interchange into town centre retail development to improve passenger comfort and security.
Gungahlin bus interchange	On-street interchange and stops in Gungahlin Town Centre.
Pensioner concessions	Extend existing off-peak pensioner concessions to peak periods.
Additional bus services	Additional services, peak and off-peak, to meet demand and achieve <i>The Sustainable Transport Plan</i> targets.
Accessible public transport	Continued transport infrastructure improvements to meet accessible transport standards.
Real time information	Implementation of a real-time information system for public transport. This will improve passenger

	<p>information and encourage use by new and infrequent public transport users. Real-time information systems will be incorporated into new and existing interchanges and major stops. Customer access to the information will be through displays at stops and interchanges and also through the web and via SMS and WAP technology.</p>
SmartCard ticketing	Use of smart card technology for public transport ticketing.
SMS text messaging service	Use SMS technology for accessing information on public transport services.
Trunk cycle network improvements	Construct cycle and walking paths identified as 'missing links' in the network. Further on-road cycle lanes will be provided on all new and upgraded arterial roads.
Suburban cycle and path networks	Ensure new suburbs have safe, direct walking and cycling routes for local, district and trunk trips.
Walking strategy	Develop a walking strategy for Canberra including transport, urban design, physical activity and recreation components.
Bike racks on buses	Install bike racks on buses on some services to encourage cycling and use of public transport.
Mode shift initiatives	Implement TravelSmart and Pedestrian Access Plans for households, workplaces and schools. Related to new public transport, walking and cycling initiatives. A new cycling map will be produced and further investment will be made in promoting cycling.
Road safety initiatives	Investments will be made to eliminate hazardous roadside objects, with highest priority given to road accident blackspots.

Taxi and hire car reform	Complete the reform of the taxi and hire car industries to remove barriers to entry and exit, increase competition, provide greater choice for customers and reduce the cost of services.
ACT Government policies and procedures	Implementation of policies and procedures, including vehicle fleets, parking, human resource and employee arrangements to encourage ACT Government agencies and employees to support public transport, walking and cycling.
Transport needs of the aging population	Investigate the transport needs of the ageing population including private, public and community-based transport.
Parking requirements	Revise the guidelines for parking requirements associated with development in Civic and the town centres to achieve sustainable transport goals as well as to support accessibility and the viability of centres. Review of parking pricing.
Bus patronage data	Survey of bus patronage to determine passenger loadings on specific sections of routes to facilitate better service planning.
Park and ride	Implementation of park and ride facilities to support busways and key public transport routes.
Variable pricing of vehicle charges	Investigate the use of more resource-efficient and low emission private motor vehicles through regulation and pricing of vehicle registration, reduction in stamp duty etc.
Demand responsive feeder services	Investigation of demand responsive feeder services.

Medium and long term priorities

In the medium and long term, projects should build on the short-term measures, and increase patronage of the public transport system and use of walking and cycling.

These include:

- Further investment on the trunk public transport routes leading to a corridor transit system on key routes;
- Transport supporting the revitalisation of Central Canberra and encouraging residential population and employment in Civic and the town centres to support greater use of walking, cycling and public transport;
- Public transport cycling and walking infrastructure provided 'up-front' in areas of new development;
- Improvements to transport vehicles and infrastructure to meet accessible transport standards; and
- New public transport services for new areas and new 'niche markets' such as commuters and tertiary students.

The following are key medium to long-term priorities. They require further investigation and feasibility studies.