

Deakin Residents Association

Submission to consultation on Light Rail Stage II - May 2017

The Deakin Residents Association thanks the ACT Planning for the opportunity to consult on elements of the Canberra Light Rail Stage 2.

The DRA's interest in the delivery of CLR Stage 2 concerns:

- Minimising the impact of Light Rail on environmental amenity;
- Maximising the transportation options and benefits for Deakin residents;
- Promoting active transport options from and through Deakin; and
- Leveraging the infrastructure investments made in relation light rail to build a more connected local community.

Environmental Amenity

As an older inner suburb adjoining the Parliamentary, Deakin is blessed with established trees and landscaping, purposefully designed vistas, and heritage streets and avenues.

The DRA maintains that any development in relation to light rail should be consistent with the heritage and environmental setting of Deakin.

This applies not only to the installation of light rail, and its ancillary infrastructure such as stations and alignment, but also any proposed development along the light rail corridor. The DRA opposes any development that would result in a loss of green park space for Deakin residents. This includes areas adjoining the Lodge, the Mint and the Mint Oval,

The vista from Yarra Glen to Parliament house is a procession of national significance. Any development along the Adelaide Avenue or Yarra Glen corridor, particularly resulting in densification of Deakin and surrounding suburbs, should be done in a way that complements the existing built environment.

To maintain the national procession status of Adelaide Avenue overhead power lines for light rail should be avoided on Adelaide Avenue until the road continues on to Yarra Glen at Kent Street.

Transportation Options

As a suburb Deakin comprises a higher proportion of elderly residents (over 65) than almost any other ACT suburb, and also has a higher proportion of children than the average suburb. These groups are more likely to rely on public transport for their transportation needs.

Deakin is currently well served by a number of buses whose routes transverse through Deakin – Routes one, two and three. These buses travel to the City, ANU, the University of Canberra and in the other direction, Woden and Canberra Hospital. They stop within 10 metres of the Deakin Shops and provide easy access to John James Hospital. In addition, as part of the Government's re-election commitment a further bus route through Deakin to Russell and Canberra Airport has also been promised.

Neither route proposed as part of the consultation provide a complete alternative to these bus routes.

The DRA recommends that these buses be maintained even after the light rail is operational.

Active Transport and Light Rail Axillary Infrastructure

A key aim of the DRA is the promotion of active transport options for residents and commuters travelling through Deakin. Investments in signage, pedestrian crossings, shared paths and cycle ways, limiting traffic, speeds and pedestrian safety infrastructure all contribute to encouraging active transport for leisure or as a commuting alternative.

To this end, the DRA has continued to pursue lower speed limits along Hopetoun Crescent, more pedestrian crossings to the Deakin Shops, and safety improvements in crossing the Adelaide Avenue underpass and off-ramps. The proposed station on Hopetoun Cres would be in walking distance of the Deakin Shops.

While it is unclear at this stage what the Deakin station would look like, it would be a timely opportunity to consider significant improvements to the Deakin Shops to Adelaide Avenue zone to make pedestrian access to the proposed station easy and safe.

The DRA recommends that Transport ACT consider improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along the Deakin Shops to Adelaide Avenue zone in determining the position and location of the Deakin Light Rail Station.

Route Options

We also note that stations at Kent St and Carruthers St are not close to the Deakin medical and office precincts. Further consideration could be given for the Light Rail to veer through Denison Street to service patients and visitors to Calvary John James Hospital, numerous other Medical Centres in West Deakin, the West Deakin Business Park, and Alfred Deakin High School. This option caters for some of the most vulnerable in our community and would help alleviate commuter overflow parking into Deakin. In addition, a connection between the West Deakin Medical precinct and Canberra Hospital in Garran would provide a logical transport link.

The DRA understands the benefits and limitations of both routes through Parliament House and the Barton precinct. Further detailed economic and social analysis is required before the route is selected weighing up the increased patronage of clients accessing Barton, with the longer travel time that route would entail.

Alignment

The alignment of the light rail should provide safe and quick access for passengers. Whether this is along the centre, verge or median is dependant on the station and access infrastructure proposed. As stated previously, the DRA is keen to be engaged in the development of station infrastructure to ensure it meets the local residents needs of local residents.

The DRA is keen to continue to engage on the siting and access to stations at Hopetoun Cres and Kent St.

The DRA is grateful for the opportunity to express its views on Canberra Light Rail Stage 2. We are hopeful that all social and economic modelling conducted as part of the development of Stage 2 will be made public so the community can continue to have an informed discussion about the project, route, station locations and other aspects of Light Rail. We note the potential Light Rail can make to residents living in south Canberra, and for Deakin residents in particular and are confident that Stage 2, if

designed appropriately and with community involvement, can benefit residents into the future.

At the May 10 information day, when asked whether there was ceiling on costs or an unacceptable benefit ratio that would preclude further work on the light rail, presenters deferred to the vague notion of 'city building' to justify unlimited expenditure.

DRA ponders that if Light Rail Stage II is the answer, what is the question?