

Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister & Treasurer
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601



2020-21 ACT BUDGET CONSULTATION
Public Transport Association of Canberra

Dear Chief Minister,

The Public Transport Association of Canberra (PTCBR) thanks you for the opportunity to participate in the 2020-21 Budget Consultation process. This submission provides our views on the revenue and expenditure priorities of the ACT with a focus on public transport and active transport, including how the ACT's resources are allocated, what services could be enhanced and where possible efficiencies could be made.

The successful delivery of public transport in Canberra is a complex task that requires regular engagement with a broad range of stakeholders. PTCBR recommends that a Ministerial Reference Group on public transport be established in order to bring together the disparate interest groups and ensure that Canberra's public transport network is meeting the diverse needs of the wider community.

PTCBR is fully supportive of the ACT Government's active travel and public transport programs, including the introduction and expansion of light rail and integrated public transport services. The continued budget focus placed by this government on these areas will improve the lives of Canberrans both in the immediate and longer terms.

PTCBR's submission addresses the specific questions posed as part of the budget consultation process, with a distinct focus on capital infrastructure priorities related to public transport.

PTCBR believes that a rebalancing of the transport component of the ACT Budget is crucial to achieving long-term city changing benefits. This rebalancing should take the form of a 50/50 split between new road construction and new public transport infrastructure.

Please let me know if you or your staff would like to discuss any of the PTCBR recommendations with members of its Executive Committee.

Sincerely,

Ryan Hemsley
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Public Transport Association of Canberra
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Public Transport Association of Canberra 2020-21 Budget Submission

The ACT Treasury has asked for responses to four wide ranging questions about government budgeting and service provision. The four questions for 2020-21 are:

- What services do you believe are most important for the ACT?
- How can the ACT Government deliver current services more efficiently and productively or to better meet the needs of Canberrans?
- Are there particular services that you think the ACT Government can improve?
- What can the ACT Government do to make Canberra even more liveable?

PTCBR's submission provides the following answers to these questions in the context of the current and future public transport requirements for the ACT and surrounding region.

Budget priorities for public transport spending in 2020-21

The most important services for the Territory identified by the ACT Treasury include, but are not limited to:

- quality and timely healthcare;
- quality education;
- a safe and just community;
- management of the natural environment to ensure its sustainability;
- emergency management; and
- ensuring a holistic approach to investment in, promotion and enhancement of all Territory districts.

While transport infrastructure and services are not explicitly identified, transport infrastructure and services are a key enabler for each of the areas identified by the ACT Government. Good transport services will also continue to be demanded by all sectors of society. These services require ongoing investment to ensure they are able to provide the optimal community benefit.

To meet the public transport usage targets outlined in the ACT Government's *Climate Change Strategy 2019-25*, PTCBR recommends that funding in the 2020-21 budget be allocated to the following:

- fast, frequent, reliable and attractive public transport which caters for the current and future travel needs of the public;
- high quality, well maintained roads (including bus lanes, on-road cycle lanes, footpaths and shared paths) which reflect current and future needs;
- resilient transport and land use planning that is responsive to demographic, technological and social change;

- developing and delivering an interstate public transport strategy that results in higher rates of public transport use by those who work or conduct other business, medical or social activities in Canberra but live interstate. Such a strategy should also minimise unnecessary congestion; and
- new technologies to improve the passenger experience, such as the ability to use a variety of NFC-enabled devices to tap on/tap off on buses and light rail.

PTCBR has also identified the following specific priorities for the ACT Government to consider funding:

- reinstate the pre-September 2019 weekend bus frequencies;
- drive sustainable workplace cultural reform to ensure the reliable and cost-effective provision of bus services in the ACT;
- conduct a benchmarking exercise;
- extend the peak hour frequency for weekday local bus services to align with peak hour arrangements for light rail;
- standardise amenity at all bus stops, including the provision of seating;
- expand park and ride facilities;
- introduce new ticketing technology;
- incorporate wire-free technology into Canberra's existing light rail vehicles;
- update the Light Rail Network Plan;
- improve cross-border public transport;
- introduce a moratorium on new parkway-standard roads;
- replace registration fees with distance-based charges;
- continue to roll out light rail;
- establish a skills base for future light rail construction;
- plan for a new heavy rail station that is integrated into the ACT's public transport network;
- rebalance the ACT transport budget;
- meet the urban design requirements of the National Capital Authority;
- improve the customer experience at interchanges;
- improve Canberra's active travel infrastructure;
- improve public transport at the district level;
- reduce the minimum parking requirements for a demonstration housing precinct;
- locate local and rapid bus stops closer together;
- develop a Transport Canberra app;
- expand the on-demand and flexible bus services;
- improve Transport Canberra's use of data and analytics;
- investigate free fare zones;
- examine free weekend travel for young people;
- construct additional bus stops on arterial roads;
- improve public transport and active travel infrastructure in and around Canberra Hospital as part of the SPIRE project;
- investigate additional orbital bus routes;
- introduce a passenger counter barometer; and
- establish predictable funding arrangements for fleet procurement.

More information on these priorities is provided below.

Reinstate the pre-September 2019 weekend bus frequencies

It is profoundly disappointing that Network 19's notional improvement in weekend bus services has not been matched by good reliability and frequency. PTCBR strongly recommends that new bus drivers be recruited as quickly as possible to ensure that the recent gains in weekend public transport use are maintained and improved upon.

In the longer term, options should be investigated to ensure that the initial lower-than-average reliability of weekend services does not occur following future network restructures. This could include non-traditional recruitment practices involving the sub-contracting of some services to accredited transport providers.

Drive sustainable workplace cultural reform to ensure the reliable and cost-effective provision of bus services in the ACT

There are several seemingly intractable issues within the Transport Canberra bus workforce that provide a negative passenger experience and discourage the optimal use of Transport Canberra's bus fleet. These issues include the long-standing voluntary weekend rostering, poor driving practices (such as speeding, heavy braking and red light running), non-adherence to published timetables and the ongoing and obstinate refusal of a small but significant minority of drivers to facilitate rear door entry/exit.

PTCBR urges the ACT Government to drive significant workplace cultural reform within the Transport Canberra bus workforce. This should be a priority prior to and as part of the next Enterprise Bargaining process, with the experience of franchising services in other states providing some leverage during negotiations. In the short term, PTCBR requests that funding be made available to introduce best practice workplace training on customer relations.

PTCBR makes the broader observation that successive ACT Governments have made little observable progress on this issue since self-government. Now is the time to tackle the entrenched issues to ensure future initiatives are no longer compromised. PTCBR notes that while a more assertive approach towards workplace cultural reform may result in a degree of industrial disputation, this would be a small price to pay if the end goal is improved service delivery.

Conduct a benchmarking exercise

PTCBR is concerned that Transport Canberra does not have sufficiently accurate information on the cost and effectiveness of its operations relative to the performance of public and private sector operators in other Australian jurisdictions. A like-for-like comparison could be conducted in the ACT via a multi-year pilot project involving the use of private sector operators on a discreet rapid corridor, with the operator being chosen through a competitive tender process. Such a comparison could confirm we have the best model in place, or demonstrate where efficiencies could be garnered.

Extend the peak hour frequency for weekday local bus services to align with peak hour arrangements for light rail

While the improved frequency of many weekday local bus services included as part of Network 19 is welcome, the half-hourly frequency of many local bus services currently ends too early. PTCBR requests that funding be made available to extend the half-hourly frequency of local bus service to align with the light rail peak frequency period, which would be approximately 7.00 pm.

Standardise amenity at all bus stops, including the provision of seating

Many bus stops in Canberra have no seats and even fewer provide adequate shelter from the elements. PTCBR recommends that a minimum standard for all bus stops be established, so that each bus stop is set on a flat concrete pad that is accessible from the footpath and features a seat, tactile yellow tiling, good lighting and legible signage.

PTCBR also requests that a long-term program be funded to eventually see the majority of bus stops be covered, provided with bicycle storage facilities and feature e-paper real time information displays.¹ Further, all new or improved facilities should not be signed off without mandatory consultation having occurred with the Council for the Ageing and relevant disability organisations.

Expand Park and Ride facilities

PTCBR recommends that Park and Ride facilities should be relocated outside of Canberra's town centres to ensure that valuable land is not sterilised by surface car parks. All existing and future Park and Rides should be located along major transport corridors and include real-time information displays, smart parking technology, good pedestrian connections and secure bicycle storage.

Introduce new ticketing technology

PTCBR welcomes the ACT Government's commitment introduce new fare technology and recommends that it be implemented in the shortest possible time frame. Fares need not be tied to a plastic card and could instead replicate the universal contactless payment functionality recently incorporated into Sydney's public transport network.²

Transport Canberra should work to ensure that any new ticketing and fare model is compatible with bus companies that operate, or have the potential to operate services to and from Canberra. Addressing cross-border public transport demand can only be satisfied if both jurisdictions are able to use compatible or identical technology.

¹ <https://www.iothub.com.au/news/real-time-information-comes-to-sydney-bus-stops-487193>

² <https://transportnsw.info/tickets-opal/opal/contactless-payments>

Incorporate wire-free technology into Canberra's existing light rail vehicles

As evidenced by the recently-opened Newcastle light rail line,³ Canberra's model of light rail vehicle is capable of being fitted with the manufacturer's *freedrive* wire-free technology.⁴ PTCBR recommends that in preparation for future stages of light rail that require wire-free running, Canberra's existing fleet of LRVs be fitted out with this technology and a small section of the Gungahlin-City route, such as the 700 metres between the Gungahlin Place and Manning Clarke Crescent stations, be upgraded to wire-free standard. This will help to identify any adjustments that may be required for the widespread use of the technology in Canberra.

Update the *Light Rail Network Plan*

The 2015 *Light Rail Network Plan* was completed prior to the announced development of the CSIRO Ginninderra field site and the planned development of Canberra's western edge. These large-scale residential developments appear to have been announced prior to any transport analysis having been conducted.

PTCBR requests that funding be made available to update the *Light Rail Network Plan* to take into account these significant changes to Canberra's urban form. The updated plan should identify any new potential light rail corridors, prioritise their implementation based on social, environmental and economic needs, and identify any future physical and legislative barriers to the continued roll out of the network.

Improve cross-border public transport

PTCBR requests that funding for genuine cross border public transport research is made available and that the ACT Government participates in studies or consultation performed by regional governments, such as the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council. The ACT Government should also negotiate with NSW transport providers with a view to implement service improvements, including compatible ticketing technology, to encourage greater public transport use between NSW and the ACT. In addition, steps should be taken to allow appropriately accredited interstate operators to transport passengers between stops inside the ACT along routes they already traverse.

Introduce a moratorium on new parkway-standard roads

PTCBR strongly recommends that no further parkways be planned or constructed without a proper analysis of the potential effects of such projects on the public transport usage targets outlined in the ACT Government's *Climate Change Strategy 2019-25*. This includes any planned upgrading (e.g. grade separation) of existing roads to parkway standard.

³ <https://www.caf.net/en/productos-servicios/proyectos/proyecto-detalle.php?p=283>

⁴ <https://www.caf.net/en/productos-servicios/proyectos/proyecto-detalle.php?p=282>

Replace registration fees with distance-based charges

As electric cars become more commonplace and the fuel excise becomes an inadequate method of collecting distance-based fees, the ACT Government will likely transition to a form of distance-based registration scheme. PTCBR believes that this would be an equitable mechanism for electric car users to pay their contribution to transport infrastructure, while incentivising active and public transport usage. Concurrent with such a reform, congestion charging should also be introduced to ensure the appropriate price signals are given to those seeking to use high demand traffic and parking areas.

Continue to roll out light rail

Following the release of the business case for light rail stages 2A and 2B, PTCBR encourages the ACT Government to award a contract for construction as soon as possible, while ensuring value-for-money for ACT ratepayers and a high quality outcome for public transport users.

PTCBR also suggests that further work be undertaken on the business case for the future east-west light rail link from Belconnen to Airport via the City and Russell, as part of an ongoing program of works to expand Canberra's light rail network.

Establish a skills base for future light rail construction

To ensure continuity and skills maintenance in the ACT, it would have been ideal for work on light rail stage two to have commenced as soon as construction work on stage one had drawn to a close. If possible, PTCBR strongly recommends that the ACT Government plan the construction of future stages of light rail as soon as practicable so that a constant construction program can be forecast into the future.

Plan for a new heavy rail station that is integrated into the ACT's public transport network

PTCBR supports the ACT government's interest in improving the Canberra to Sydney rail service. As it is, the current railway station at Kingston is poorly located and wholly unsuited to addressing future faster rail links with NSW. The line's continued reliance on a 19th century gradient and track design via Queanbeyan to the main line at Goulburn ensures that any upgrades to locomotive technology will fail to yield significant comfort or travel time improvements.

A sensible short-term measure could be to fund a study to identify a new station location to ensure it is reserved solely for this future use. The eventual construction of a new station in a better location would allow visitors to access Canberra's primary business, government and tourist areas by modern public transport. The proposed station should also be located on ACT Government land to ensure that the issues related to lack of investment at Kingston are not repeated in the future.

Rebalance the ACT transport budget

For much of the history of the ACT, there has been a significant imbalance between funding for road projects and funding for other transport infrastructure in the ACT budget. PTCBR believes that a rebalancing of the ACT budget will be crucial if Canberra is to achieve the objectives outlined in the *Climate Change Strategy 2019-25*.

The funding of new road infrastructure in Canberra is out of proportion for a city that has long-term ambitions for a 40-45 per cent mode shift away from private car usage by 2045.⁵ While the political battle in recent years has been around investment in light rail, ACT ratepayers' funds continue to be squandered on gold-plated road projects of dubious merit.⁶ Fortunately, the results of the last two ACT elections have shown that when given the choice, Canberrans are happy to fund high-quality public transport infrastructure.

PTCBR requests that the ACT budget for 2020-21 allocate no more than 50 per cent of its transport funding towards road construction and maintenance. This rebalancing will enable the ACT Government to deliver fast, frequent and reliable bus services while rolling out the light rail routes identified in the *Light Rail Network Plan*. It will also allow for increased spending on cycle paths, bus priority measures, enhanced Park and Ride facilities and active travel programs in schools and workplaces.

One way this rebalancing can be achieved is to mandate that any new roads and road duplications include a bus lane, cycle lane and enhanced pedestrian access (e.g. an overpass or shared path) so that funding allocated to all types of road users. This will enhance road safety and increase active travel use by increasing pedestrian and cycling amenity.

This rebalancing of transport funding will help to ensure that families in Canberra are not forced to own two or more cars in order to participate in the everyday life of the nation's capital. As the city's population reaches half a million and beyond, the present rate of private vehicle ownership will be detrimental to the type of accessible urban environment that Canberrans have come to appreciate. By providing better public and active transport options, growth in private car usage can be arrested, and ideally decline, even as our population increases.

Meet the urban design requirements of the National Capital Authority

As with the first stage of light rail, light rail stages 2A and 2B will be required to meet the highest standards of urban and landscape design to meet the approval requirements of the National Capital Authority. PTCBR recommends that the ACT

⁵ *Climate Change Strategy 2019-25*, page 39.

⁶ See the combined \$200 million being spent to remove three sets of traffic lights from the Monaro Highway:

https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/chris-steel-mla-media-releases/2019/major-upgrades-to-the-monaro-highway-to-keep-canberra-moving

Government continue discussions with the Federal Government to seek out potential funding avenues to mitigate some of these additional costs for light rail stages two, three and beyond.

Improve the customer experience at interchanges

Better wayfinding

PTCBR was pleased to note that the ACT Government was considering improved wayfinding as part of its recently-release Infrastructure Plan. PTCBR encourages the funding of these facilities commence in the 2020-21 Budget, rather than sometime over the next five years as foreshadowed. A model similar to that in place in Wellington, New Zealand would appear to be a reasonable investment.

More customer service offices

PTCBR is concerned that there appears to be no long-term plan for a permanent customer service presence at Canberra's public transport interchanges. To rectify this, it is recommended that funding be allocated to identify and reserve several sites near existing and future interchanges for future customer service offices. Parts of this work should be done as part of the planning for the new and upgraded interchanges at Woden, Tuggeranong and Molonglo. Customer service assistants should also be hired on a permanent basis.

Planning for new interchanges

PTCBR strongly supports the work being done to renew the Woden bus interchange. The current interchange is well past its expiration date and is poorly integrated into the surrounding precinct. The ACT Government should start construction work on the new interchange and improved active travel links within and around the Woden Town Centre as soon as possible, so as to minimise future disruption associated with the construction of light rail stage 2B. In addition, PTCBR recommends that funding be allocated towards early design work for integrated bus and light rail interchanges at the Molonglo, Belconnen and Tuggeranong town centres.

City Interchange

While the intent behind the City Renewal Authority's proposed underground City bus interchange is commendable, PTCBR believes that an equally good outcome can be achieved by a combination of basic improvements to the existing city bus interchange and extensions to the light rail network.

In the short term, movement around the interchanged could be significantly improved by instituting a 40km/hr speed limit and modifying the traffic light sequencing on Northbourne Avenue between Barry Drive/Cooyong Street and London Circuit to prioritise east/west pedestrian movements.

Funding should also be allocated for improved shelters, additional passenger information displays and better cycling facilities. Longer term improvements should involve widening the verges on Northbourne Avenue between Barry Drive/Cooyong Street and London Circuit by replacing the outermost lanes with improved active travel infrastructure and landscaping.

Improve Canberra's active travel infrastructure

Serious work needs to be done to improve the active travel facilities in and around Canberra's town centres. PTCBR recommends that funding be allocated to make active travel a more attractive option for all Canberrans.

In our town centres

The Bunda Street and Hibberson Street shared zones are successful examples of streets that have been retrofitted to give adequate space and priority to pedestrians. They are worthy of emulation elsewhere in the city.

PTCBR suggests that in advance of any construction work, extensive cooperation with business and property owners be undertaken to ensure that good long term outcomes are achieved with minimal short term inconvenience.

For future areas where shared zones are likely, such as the Molonglo Commercial Centre, shared zones should be built as part of the urban fabric the first time around so as to avoid expensive and disruptive retrofitting a decade or more later.

In our suburbs

There exist a number of "missing links" in Canberra's network of shared paths. These missing links are indicative of a piecemeal approach to active travel infrastructure development and discourage active travel use over longer distances.

One notable example is evident along Flemington Road, with light rail passengers wishing to get to Mitchell currently being inconvenienced by the lack of a safe path network. This could easily be fixed by constructing a shared path between the EPIC and Racecourse and Wells Station Drive stations along the eastern side of the road.

Another example is the Sullivan's Creek shared path, which currently terminates at Mouat Street in the north and Barry Drive in the south. To cope with future demand expected from the increased residential density of Northbourne Avenue, this path should be extended south to link up with the path network around Lake Burley Griffin. As development of the Gungahlin suburb of Kenny gets underway, this path should also be extended north to link up with the new shared path constructed adjacent to Horse Park Drive.

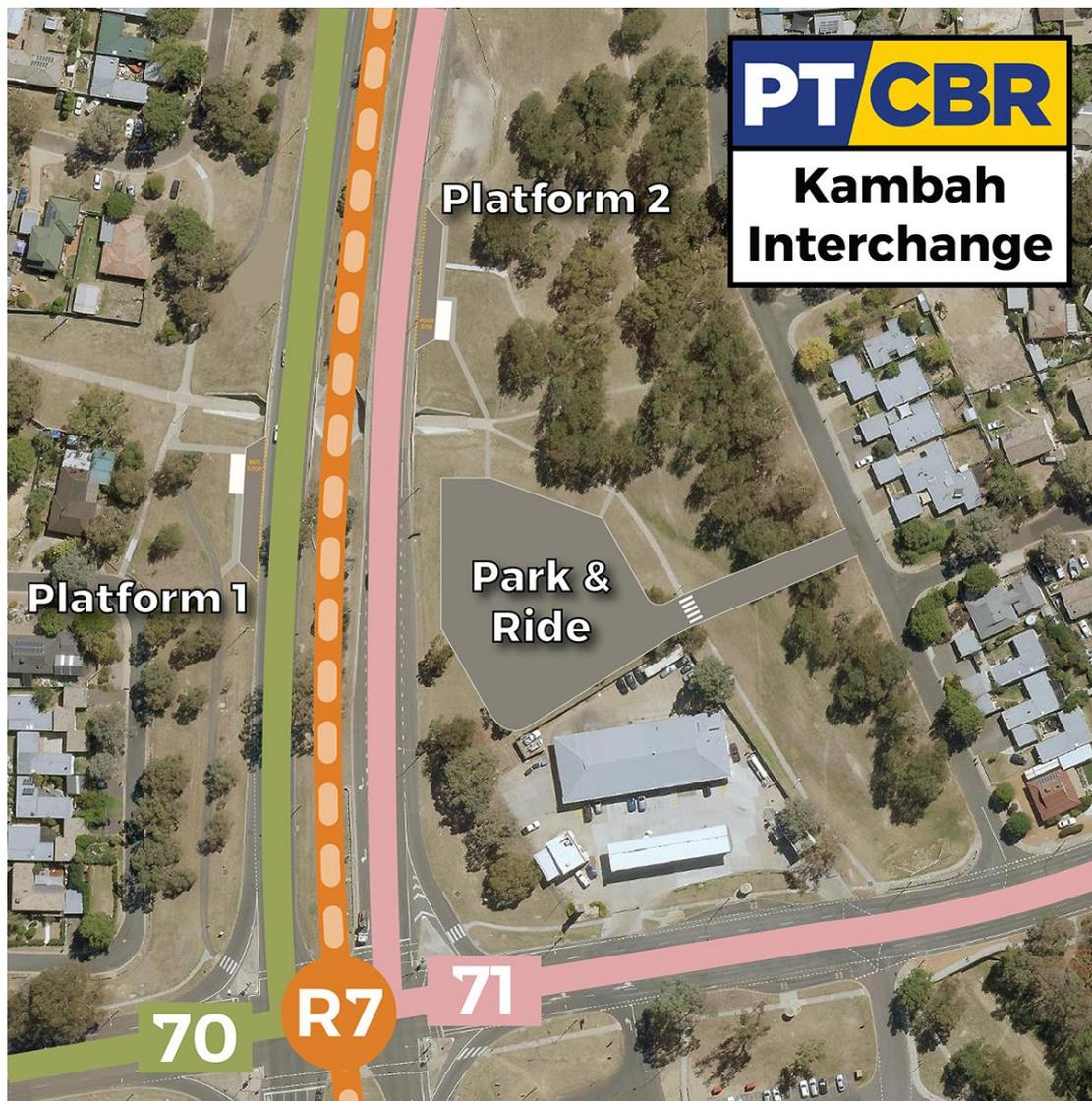
PTCBR recommends that these and any other “missing links” be identified as part of a wider active travel study and resolved as part of an ongoing program of works dedicated to active travel infrastructure.

Improve public transport at the district level

In Tuggeranong

Under the most recent bus network changes, Tuggeranong has seen a decrease in weekday public transport patronage. PTCBR has heard a number of complaints from residents and recommends that funding be allocated to improve route design and infrastructure to better meet the public transport needs of this district.

For instance, public transport accessibility in Kambah could be greatly improved by upgrading the stops on Drakeford Drive just north of Boddington/Marconi Crescent in the manner illustrated below:



Proposed Kambah Interchange

By diverting the routes 70/71 to terminate at Woden via the Tuggeranong Parkway/Hindmarsh Drive and extending the R7 from Cooleman Court⁷ to Tuggeranong via Streeton, Namatjira and Drakeford Drives, this pair of stops could become a key transfer point for Tuggeranong public transport users.

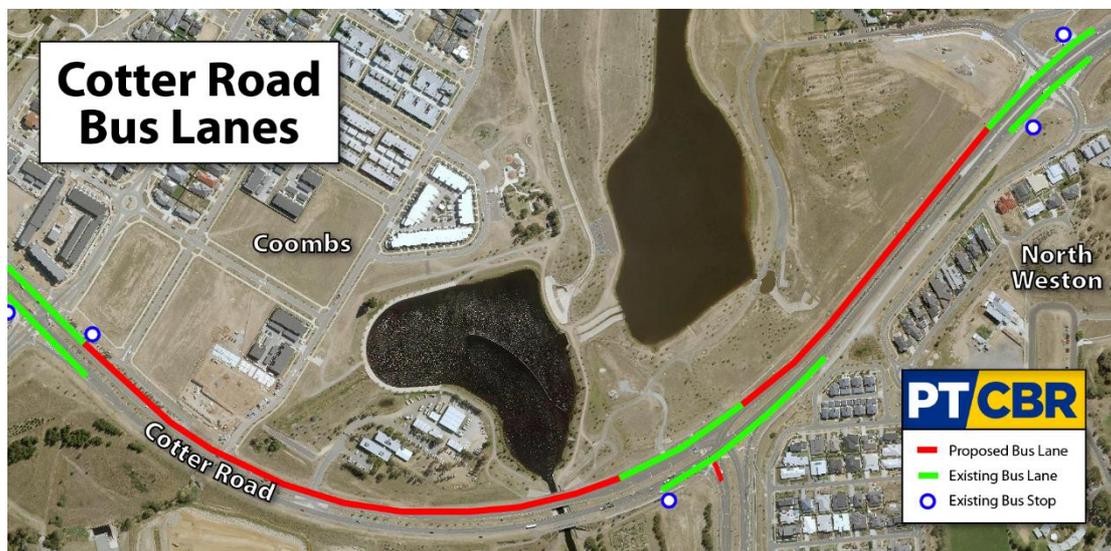
PTCBR also notes that the Lanyon Marketplace bus terminal has outgrown its current infrastructure and requires an upgrade. In order to facilitate bus movements from an extended R4, PTCBR recommends that the terminus be upgraded to include at-grade pedestrian crossings, improved landscaping, a public toilet and a new layover on Woodcock Drive.

Both interchanges should also include large bus pull in bays, 'interchange' style shelters, passenger information displays, bike rails, drinking fountains and good wayfinding signage.

In the Molonglo Valley

As noted in PTCBR's previous budget submission, there are three key improvements that would make public transport a significantly more feasible and attractive alternative for both existing and prospective residents of the Molonglo Valley.

The first, and most time-sensitive of these improvements would be to extend the northbound bus "jump" lanes along the length of the Cotter Road (including provision for buses entering from Streeton Drive) between John Gorton Drive and Kirkpatrick Street, in a manner illustrated below:



Proposed Cotter Road Bus Lanes

Currently, the Cotter Road is the only major road in and out of the Molonglo Valley. This upgrade would go some way to ameliorating the current (and growing) delays

⁷ This would have to be done in conjunction with extending the R6 to the Weston Creek terminus in place of the route 65.

during the AM peak period for city-bound public transport users in both Weston Creek and Molonglo.

The second improvement would be to fast-track the construction of the proposed \$150 million high-level bridge across the Molonglo River to enable fast and reliable public transport connections between Molonglo Stages 1, 2 and 3. PTCBR understands that the Suburban Land Agency will be putting in a budget bid for the construction of the high-level bridge for the 2020-21 budget, which will include capacity for the future installation of light rail between the City and the Molonglo Commercial Centre. PTCBR urges the ACT Government to accept this bid and progress with the construction of the bridge in the shortest possible time frame.

The third improvement would be to introduce a direct public transport link between Woden and Belconnen via John Gorton Drive. While Transport Canberra may claim that the current route is unsuitable for their buses due to the profile of the low level crossing, PTCBR members have regularly observed buses traversing this crossing when performing school charters to Stromlo Forest Park or “dead running” back to Belconnen depot at the completion of routes. Similarly, private coaches and buses are observed quite often on this route. If the judgement of Transport Canberra that their existing buses are unsuitable, PTCBR recommends that an order for more suitable buses be made as part of the next procurement round.

Reduce the minimum parking requirements for a demonstration housing precinct

The ACT Government’s *Climate Change Strategy 2019-25* calls for a mode shift away from private car usage that is at odds with the current parking requirements outlined in the Territory Plan’s *Parking and Vehicular Access General Code*, which require the provision of multiple parking spaces for dwellings with more than one bedroom. This has the double effect of artificially inflating the cost of housing and facilitating unsustainable levels of car dependency in new developments.

PTCBR recommends that funding be made available to investigate lowering these requirements as part of a demonstration housing precinct. As a significant planned mixed-use precinct within walking distance of light rail stage two and the facilities of Canberra’s central business district, the proposed Acton Waterfront development is an ideal opportunity to illustrate the benefits of reduced car dependency via the elimination of residential parking minimums.

Locate local and rapid bus stops closer together

A sensible way to improve the ability of passengers to take advantage of Network 19’s rapid bus services would be to locate local and rapid bus stops together where the routes intersect and to provide clear signage and on-board bus announcements for passengers willing to walk between closely located local and rapid bus stops. PTCBR recommends that funding be made available to make these relatively inexpensive but potentially significant improvements.

Develop a Transport Canberra app

While there are a number of third-party apps that provide information on Canberra's public transport network, the quality of these apps varies significantly and some require in-app purchases in order to be used effectively. PTCBR recommends that a user-friendly Transport Canberra app be developed, using the TC Journey Planner as a base. This app could be rolled out as part of the new ticketing system and should include real-time location data for buses and light rail.

Expand the on-demand and flexible bus services

PTCBR has significant concerns about the ability of the ACT Government to adequately resource and manage its on-demand and flexible bus service. The use of the same buses providing school bus travel for special needs passengers, limits the ability of flexible bus services to expand and be used flexibly.

During the consultation phase of the most recent bus network change, residents were promised that an on-demand and flexible bus service would be able to service areas such as Campbell Park, Hume, Longmore Crescent and the Alexander Maconochie Centre that would no longer be accessible by a fixed bus route. Six months following the launch of the new network, no contracts have been let to expand these services. With no anticipated additions to the Transport Canberra bus fleet of bus types suitable for these types of operations, it is unclear how this service can be expanded.

The community buses in use around Canberra (operated by aged care facilities, hospitals, clubs and community groups) are one possible option for use in an enhanced on-demand and flexible bus service. However, the operators of these buses have indicated to PTCBR that this is not their preferred outcome.

Regardless of what method is chosen, an appropriate way to make the service available to users would also need to be established. Many potential users would be of the fridge magnet, rather than the app generation. Phone bookings as well as bookings made online would most likely be a requirement. This may also present an opportunity to engage with suitably qualified recently retired but healthy and energetic residents seeking volunteering activities.

Improve Transport Canberra's use of data and analytics

PTCBR recommends that additional cutting-edge software be acquired by Transport Canberra to plan future services, such as StreetLight data.⁸ Current network planning software uses existing patronage information and inputs from internal network databases. PTCBR suggests that this be expanded to include data related to commercial and residential land use.

⁸ <https://www.streetlightdata.com/>

This could enhance the ability of the network planners to anticipate future, as well as actual travel patterns within the ACT. External data is now available that illustrates all journeys, including by private motor vehicle, ride share, taxi and bus. Incorporating such data sources into the planning process would enable a better understanding of travel patterns and unmet demand. Access to this information could provide early implementation recommendations for public transport infrastructure in new and developing suburbs. PTCBR observes that some of the issues arising from Network 19 may have been prevented had such data been available to the planners.

While we acknowledge that the use of MyWay data from current passengers is useful, it is not always suitable for planning future transport use. This data is useful in identifying the many chokepoints, high demand areas and locations where interchanges between local and rapid bus routes could be best located. Ideally this data could also be accessed by apps/passengers in real time and used for planning a journey.

PTCBR also suggests that all data used for transport planning be anonymised and made available for the public to analyse and offer solutions. App developers, software developers or transport planners could also use the data. It may be used in ways that are not at present foreseen. We are aware that some MyWay data has been made freely and publicly available, but suggest that this be expanded upon.

Investigate free fare zones

PTCBR notes that the current 'one zone' fare arrangement is likely discouraging shorter trips. Potential passengers are choosing to use taxis or private cars for many trips under 1-2kms, even in cases where there is a bus or light rail vehicle traversing the same route.

PTCBR suggests that as part of the new ticketing system, consideration be given to the development of strategic free fare zones to incentivise public transport use within Canberra's town and group centres.

Examine free weekend travel for young people

People under 18 years of age often travel on weekends to attend and participate in sporting events, go shopping, socialise, visit parents or siblings, undertake volunteering activities or undertake casual work. PTCBR has received reports that tight budgeting has meant young people are having to walk, accept lifts from other people, or miss out on these activities entirely due to the cost of transport.

PTCBR recommends that the ACT Government examine the feasibility of free weekend travel for young people in possession of a MyWay Card on social equity, inclusion and safety grounds.

Construct additional bus stops on arterial roads

An absence of bus stops on key arterial roads is limiting the catchment area of a number of bus routes. PTCBR recommends that ACT Government investigate the feasibility of constructing additional bus stops on Drakeford Drive (Bonython/Isabella Plains/Calwell), Erindale Drive (Oxley/Monash), Hindmarsh Drive (Lyons/Chifley), Yamba Drive (Farrer/Isaacs/Mawson/O'Malley), Cotter Road (Curtin), Kings Avenue (Kings Park), Gundaroo Drive (Abena Avenue) and Streeton Drive (Mulley Street).

Improve public transport and active travel infrastructure in and around Canberra Hospital as part of the SPIRE project

As part of the SPIRE project, PTCBR recommends that funding be allocated towards improved public transport and active travel infrastructure in the vicinity of the new facility and in the surrounding area. Ideally, these upgrades should occur concurrently with construction work on the SPIRE project.

Potential upgrades could include priority measures for public transport moving through the hospital precinct and surrounds, a dedicated shared path from the Woden Town Centre to the hospital precinct and an upgraded Hospital Road, inclusive of wider verges, street trees and larger bus shelters with clear signage.

Investigate additional orbital bus routes

PTCBR has received feedback that the current network's reliance on radial bus routes does not adequately cater for cross-town trips. In order to facilitate different journey types, the ACT Government should investigate the feasibility of additional orbital bus routes to create a 'spider's web' of public transport corridors. Potential future routes of this type could include an extension of the R7 to Tuggeranong, an extension of the R10 to Belconnen and additional rapid route from Tuggeranong to Woden via Erindale/Yamba Drive and then from Woden to Queanbeyan via the Canberra Hospital/Fyshwick.

Introduce a passenger counter barometer

Following the model of the bicycle counter display installed near Macarthur Avenue, MyWay data could be used to generate a near real-time rider barometer at the City Interchange. The display could divide into bus (blue) and light rail (red) boardings and possibly display other relevant information, such as inferred statistics (cars off the road, kilograms of carbon saved, etc.). These displays would encourage a sense of community amongst public transport users and could also be available online to provide a real-time measure of the success of public transport policies and investment.

Establish predictable funding arrangements for fleet procurement

PTCBR notes that a significant proportion of the existing bus fleet is likely to be redundant in the foreseeable future due to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and other roadworthiness pressures. PTCBR recommends that predictable funding arrangements be established to support the cost-effective acquisition of new vehicles over time. This will support both the continued development of public transport in the ACT and achievement of the emissions reduction targets outlined in the *Climate Change Strategy 2019-25*.