

Woden and Parliament next for light rail lines in Canberra tram master plan

The Canberra Times [Tom McIlroy 26 October 2015](#)

Parliament, Woden, Fyshwick and Canberra Airport are high priorities for future stages of Canberra's tram network, as the ACT government seeks to use light rail as "leading infrastructure" for broader development.

Canberrans will get their first look at a new 25-year master plan for tram services on Monday, showing a map of future routes that can connect with the \$783 million city to Gungahlin line, due to be operational by 2019 or 2020.

Further tram lines in the government's proposed seven sections would also include the Athllon corridor from Tuggeranong to Woden, Belconnen to the city, and Molonglo to the city. The plan identifies key urban areas of Canberra, employment zones, major roads and transport hubs with park and ride facilities.



The ACT government's light rail master plan map *Photo: Supplied*

No costs or proposed development timelines are outlined. With a heated political fight well under way on the first stage of light rail, the new master plan is likely to heighten debate about Canberra's public transport future ahead of next year's election.

The public will be asked to give their views on the plan, telling government where light rail should go next and if the city's tram network expansion should be based on the needs of commuters from broader parts of Canberra or increasing public transport take up close to major business, employment and tourism centres.

The second tram line built could service the entire parliamentary triangle, linking about 60 per cent of all territory jobs in an area that attracts more than 4 million visitors annually. Trams would run across the Kings and Commonwealth Avenue Bridges, servicing public service offices in Barton and national cultural institutions. [Chief Minister Andrew Barr has already pitched](#)

[trams in the triangle to the Turnbull government for federal funding.](#)

Challenges would include crossing the lake and wireless operations as required by the National Capital Authority.

Trams running from Woden town centre to the parliamentary triangle would run along Adelaide Avenue's large central median strip. Challenges here include pedestrian access across the busy road and narrow areas on Capital Circle at Parliament House.

A southern corridor tram line would take passengers to and from Woden, Mawson and Tuggeranong, designed to boost urban renewal and property development and add new transport options. Two options will be considered: Athllon Drive or the existing rapid bus alignment on Erindale Drive. Both routes would require negotiation or upgrades to roundabouts, while the Lake Tuggeranong dam wall has been identified as a manageable constraint.

The "eastern connections" would run to the airport from Russell, and to Fyshwick via Barton and Kingston. Both could transport business visitors and tourists, aiding traffic flows from the city to Russell, Eastlake and Majura. Trams could help fulfil the government's long-held ambitions of winning direct international flights to Canberra. Both lines would include end point park and ride facilities.

A Belconnen to the city line would run via Southern Cross Drive, connecting passengers via Kippax, the Belconnen town centre and Barry Drive. Steep grades on short sections of the road would see impacts on the choice of rolling stock.

Woden to the city trams would run via Weston Creek and the Molonglo corridor by Hindmarsh, Streeton and John Gorton Drives and Parkes Way. Here tram development will be constrained by the cost of new bridges.

Tram lines will be built as "leading infrastructure", with development corridors chosen in line with future need and to promote higher density. The plan highlights the findings of Infrastructure Australia's May 2015 audit report which showed the cost of road congestion would increase from \$208 million per year to \$703 million by 2031.

Planning Minister Mick Gentleman said Canberra's population would grow to more than 500,000 by 2041, leaving the city's nation leading car dependency unviable for a modern city. He references Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's high profile support for urban rail as part of making the case for the 25 year plan.

"Light rail is integral to ACT government's planning, transport, climate change and health strategies for the future," Mr Gentleman said.

"Light rail benefits include reducing congestion on our roads and greenhouse gas emissions."

Public consultation on the plan continues until December 11.