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The Secretary
The Joint Standing Committee on
the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Submission on The Inquiry into Commonwealth and Parliamentary approvals for the proposed Stage 2 of the Australian Capital Territory light rail project

The Weston Creek Community Council would like to offer the following comments on the Inquiry into the Proposed Stage Two of Light Rail in the ACT. Council has the following broad areas in which to comment, the possible loss of traffic lanes on Commonwealth Avenue and the impact of this, the likely route and therefore the time taken for the route Woden to Civic, possible development along the line and the cost benefit of such a proposal.

1. Possible Loss of Traffic Lanes on Commonwealth Avenue

The Weston Creek Community Council has a real concern with the possible loss of lanes on Commonwealth Avenue and the Bridge if Light Rail is to utilise this for the route to Woden.

This avenue is central to the Burley Griffin Plan. Canberra is a city with a dual role being both the National Capital but also home to almost 400,000 people. Consequently, any proposals to utilize this route for an additional purpose should support both roles as it performs an all important transport network role.

Commonwealth Avenue is one of the major north south road links across Lake Burley Griffin into the City area. From the southern perspective, the Inner South, Woden and Weston Creek access the City across this and Kings Avenue.

There are some estimates of traffic flow across Commonwealth Avenue of 60,000 movements per day making it the access way to and from the City for a considerable portion of Canberra's population.

In part, Council sees the maintenance of the 3-lane roadway as essential for Commonwealth Avenue. To do otherwise would see Commonwealth Avenue become more choked with traffic.

2. The Likely Route and Time for the Journey

Currently the Rapid Bus Service provides a direct service from Woden to the City between 13 to 16 minutes and this departs every 5 to 8 minutes from 7 am to 7 pm in the current timetable. Council would be concerned if the proposed light rail could not provide the same timetable and service for commuters. If the light rail cannot provide a similar service then what benefit can the light rail provide?

The proposed light rail track is set to pass through the Parliamentary Triangle following King Edward Terrace and via Windsor Walk through the Barton Parliamentary Zone. This is not a direct route.

Stops are proposed along Adelaide Avenue at Hopetoun Circuit and Kent Street yet there are no park and ride facilities here or as yet proposed. A further stop is proposed at Carruthers Street again with no park and ride facilities. If the alignment of the light rail is down the centre of Adelaide Avenue, Council would be concerned with access although it recalls a previous proposal for the development of bus stops in the centre of Adelaide Avenue at these two locations. Council questions just what population these stops would service given they are areas predominantly of low density development.

3. Development along the Route

Council would be concerned if the Green belt designed to separate the Inner South of Canberra from Woden, of the Curtin horse paddocks and the Mint playing fields, were to be developed for either medium or high density housing. This is a buffer zone between the Inner South and Woden and as such it helps to maintain the character of the city plus providing habitat for flora and fauna. The ACT Government has an Inquiry under way into Nature in our City suggesting that they place some importance on this issue.

The playing fields on the east side adjacent to the Mint are heavily used and are maintained in excellent condition. The ACT Government is pursuing the policy of a 'Healthy City' and there is already a distinct lack of facilities for

sporting bodies. We have seen several football codes and other sporting bodies commenting recently on the lack of facilities, especially for junior sport.

At present, Weston Creek and Molonglo have a very good transport service provided by the current rapid routes from the Woden area and North Weston including the park and ride facilities. The journeys are quick and well patronised plus the light rail, as proposed, would not cover areas away from its route. Again, the question would be, where are commuters to park?

4. Cost Benefit

Finally, where are the clientele along the route? There is the large employment area in the Parliamentary and Barton area and the City area which is where commuters would travel to but there is no high density population along the route or as yet, proposed. Is the route solely a route to join Woden to the City?

Council would welcome a public cost benefit of this proposed route to explain the benefits over the present Rapid Bus network.

Council would be happy to discuss these comments with the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Tom Anderson
Chair
Weston Creek Community Council

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