



# Submission on *Transport for Canberra*

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## Overview

Transport for Canberra is basically a sound policy document.

Nevertheless, as with any policy document, there are areas in which it can be improved, and areas in which proposed actions can be enhanced to more effectively achieve the desired outcomes.

The best way to reduce Canberra's transport emissions is to minimise the distance that Canberrans travel to everyday destinations such as work, schools, shops and recreation.



## Specific comments

### 1.2 The case for a change in how we travel

**Travel to work** (Figure 2 in the draft) is an important component of transport demand. However we understand that travel to and from work represents a declining minority of Australia's urban trips. A more complete understanding of travel requires additional information about travel during work time, and travel to school, shops, services and recreation.

The topic of “**declining physical activity**” should be expanded to address all of the health issues related to transport, including the direct and indirect costs of:

- deaths, injuries and property damage caused by transport crashes
- death and illness caused by transport emissions
- cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and psychological illnesses whose incidence and severity are increased by Canberrans' choices to use passive rather than active transport.

More information on the extent of these health issues is provided in the Canberra Pedestrian Forum submission on the National Road Safety Strategy:

<http://grapevine.net.au/~mcccluskeyarundell/NationalRoadSafetyStrategyComments.pdf>.

**An ageing population:** The critical travel needs of senior citizens who can no longer drive are to shops, to local services such as doctors, and from home to public transport. These needs can best be met by ensuring that they have access to shops and services within walking distance, and that walking infrastructure is adequate for their needs. Public transport can provide only a small proportion of these transport needs.

**Housing affordability:** Housing affordability is affected by travel costs, which can be addressed using tools such as Walkscore (<http://www.walkscore.com/>) in the same way that heating and cooling costs are currently addressed by the ACT House Energy Rating Scheme.

**Balancing Transport investments:** The draft policy notes that Canberrans would allocate 43% of local transport funds to walking and cycling, 37% to public transport and 20% to maintaining a safe road network.

These ratios should be compared with actual transport fund investments, and targets should be set for future funding of walking, cycling and public transport.

Barely two thirds of respondents to Canberra's Walk21 survey agreed that they had a local shop within comfortable walking distance where they could buy fresh vegetables.

Reducing travel distances will also increase the potential for switching to low-emission travel modes such as cycling and motorcycling.



The most effective way to reduce travel distances is through long-term urban and transport planning.

### **1.3 Transport for Canberra strategic goals**

We endorse the strategic goals.

There appears to be a typographical error in this section, where **Transit Oriented Developments** are described as “**Transport** Oriented Developments.”

## **2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

The average ACTION bus trip causes 1.7 kg of greenhouse emissions. This is equivalent to travelling 6 km by car, and is twice the greenhouse emissions of an average Sydney Bus trip.

A major cause of high per-passenger bus emissions is the amount of distance travelled with empty seats, in off-peak periods.

One way to reduce per-passenger bus emissions would be offer free off-peak travel. This would only increase the effective government subsidy from 80% to 100%, without any increase in operating costs.

### **2.7 Public transport infrastructure and systems and 2.9 Transport for mobility and social inclusion**

These sections needs to address the public transport infrastructure that connects between the bus stop and the home – which is both the origin and the end-point of every journey – noting that almost a quarter of Canberra's homes are currently not connected to bus stops by footpaths<sup>1</sup>, and that nature strips on these streets are often obstructed or have hazardously uneven surfaces.

#### **2.10 School and tertiary transport**

School transport comprises a significant proportion of morning peak traffic, and creates a mid-afternoon mini-peak.

What evidence is there to support the claim that “*Increasing numbers of primary, secondary and higher education students rely on, or choose to use, sustainable transport modes*”?

This section should explain what research has been done (or will be done) to identify the factors that affect decisions about how to travel to school, and what is being done to address factors such as lack of walking infrastructure, or lack of suitable schools within walking distance?

<sup>1</sup> According to the ACT Infrastructure five-yearly report to the Council Of Australian Governments, ([http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/113609/infrast-rpt-coag.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/113609/infrast-rpt-coag.pdf)), Canberra has 5,625 lane kilometres of Territory and Municipal sealed roads and 1,867 kilometres of footpaths. Many Canberra streets have four or more lanes. If we assume that Canberra streets have an average of 2.3 lanes, then 5,625 lane kilometres corresponds to 2,446 km of streets. On this basis 579 km of Canberra's streets – almost a quarter – have no footpaths.



## 2.12 Public transport actions

**Action 14** should be expanded to “Design the public transport network to be worth walking to **and safely accessible by walking ...**”

## 3. Active Travel

Table 5: Benefits of active travel states that there are “*Minimal greenhouse gases emitted*” from active travel. A recent analysis of has shown that active transport modes result in significant indirect greenhouse emissions, such as increased emissions from food production – see “Greenhouse emissions from ACT travel:

<http://grapevine.net.au/~mccluskeyarundell/transportemissionsACT.pdf>

### 3.1 Where are we now

This section should include **more information on walking**. According to the Walk21 “Making Walking Count” survey Canberrans walk on average almost twice per day, averaging 26 minutes per day. Assuming an average speed of 4.8 km/h, this equates to a daily distance of 2 kilometres.

The claim that “*Nearly 40% of all Canberra residents cycle at least once a fortnight*” is NOT supported by the following statistics:

- Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey 2010 (<http://www.ausport.gov.au/information/scors/ERASS>): 19% of ACT adults aged 15 or over (53,000) cycle at least ONCE PER YEAR.
- ABS 4901.0 - Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia, Apr 2009 (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4901.0>): 63.3% of children 14 or under (26,500) participated in bike riding in a two week period.
- Australian Cycling Participation ([http://www.cyclingresourcecentre.org.au/post/national\\_cycling\\_participation\\_survey](http://www.cyclingresourcecentre.org.au/post/national_cycling_participation_survey)): “Around 22% of the ACT population rode in the week prior to the survey, increasing to 32% who had ridden in the previous month.”

### 3.3 A compact city to connect people and places

The best way to reduce Canberra's transport emissions is to minimise the distance that Canberrans must travel to reach everyday destinations such as work, schools, shops, services and recreation.

Reducing travel distances will also increase the potential for switching to low-emission (but slower) active travel modes.

The most effective way to reduce travel distances is through long-term urban and transport planning.

### 3.5 Infrastructure

Noting that Canberra's walking and off-road cycling network connects to little more than three quarters of Canberra homes, what is the basis for the



claim in the draft policy that “*Canberra has one of the most extensive walking and cycling networks in Australia ?*”

### **3.7 Active travel to school**

What is the basis for the claim that “*Over 85 per cent of ACT school children under the age of 12 never walk to school unaccompanied by an adult ?*”

### **3.9 Active travel actions**

**Add an additional Action:** “*Identify streets with inadequate walking facilities – especially lack of footpaths combined with obstructed nature strips – implement a strategy to remove obstructions, develop a target by when all Canberra streets will have adequate walking facilities, and develop a strategy to meet that target.*”

### **4.1 Congestion and the ACT’s road network**

The following examples from the Texas Transportation Institute's 2011 [Urban Mobility Report](#) show that congestion relief strategies can support sustainable transport modes:

- timing traffic signals so that more vehicles [*and we would add pedestrians*] see green lights,
- improving road and intersection designs
- important corridors or growth regions can benefit from ... new or expanded public transportation facilities
- Diversify development patterns – denser developments with a mix of jobs, shops and homes, so that more people can walk, bike or take transit to more, and closer, destinations.

### **4.2 Parking**

The draft policy includes a good example of effective long-term planning – the change to MANAGING DEMAND for car parking spaces, rather than simply MEETING DEMAND for car parking spaces.

The same policy should be adopted for roads. It would be preferable to MANAGE DEMAND FOR UNCONGESTED ROADS, rather than to try to meet that demand by providing ever more and wider roads. This would be a big change from the current approach of using revenues raised from non-drivers to subsidise car drivers' free use of uncongested roads (e.g. the Gungahlin Drive Extension and the proposed Majura Parkway).

Another approach would use tolls to finance road construction. The four-lane GDE, for example, could have been completed more quickly and cheaply if it had been financed by tolls.



## 5.1 Land use/transport planning

A South Australian Government publication<sup>2</sup> lists the following principles for Transit Oriented Developments:

- *integrating Transit Oriented Developments into the surrounding community: Pedestrian, mobility scooter ('gopher') and cycling-friendly streetscapes and an integrated network design will link Transit Oriented Developments with surrounding community destinations such as services, employment and retail, thereby encouraging social cohesion and building community wellbeing.*
- *Mental health and wellbeing — creating places for people: Transit Oriented Developments will create safe, attractive and green streetscapes that promote physical activity and provide opportunity for social interaction. These attributes are known to contribute to good mental health and wellbeing.*
- *Access to healthy food — protecting the state's food bowl: Residents and workers in Transit Oriented Developments should have access, within walking distance, to supermarkets or other stores where healthy, affordable fresh food is available. The provision of housing within urban infill projects such as Transit Oriented Developments reduces the pressure to expand housing settlements into prime agricultural land, which is important for supporting local food production.*
- *Workplace access and amenity – local jobs for local people: The creation of employment opportunities are an essential component in creating places where people can live and work. Transit Oriented Developments should enable the establishment of a diversity of industries and jobs that can be accessed via public transport, walking or cycling.*

## 6. Transport monitoring and reporting framework

The mode share targets through to 2026, which were developed for the 2004 Sustainable Transport Plan, should be increased to take into account of developments since 2004, including:

<sup>2</sup> South Australian Government Land Management Corporation and Departments Health, Planning and Local Government, and Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, 2011, *Transit-Transit Oriented Developments...through a health lens*,

<http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/9b73728048965a969de8fd7675638bd8/transit-oriented-dev-healthlens-hiap-20111006.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=9b73728048965a969de8fd7675638bd8>, accessed 15 October 2011



1. The 8% emissions increase target, that was effective nationally in 2004 under the Kyoto Protocol, has been superseded by the ACT Government's 40% emissions reduction target for 2020; and
2. improved understanding of the greenhouse effects of travel mode switching. The indirect impacts of mode switching include increased food consumption and hence increased emissions from food production. The result is that the overall greenhouse reductions available from mode switching are about half of the reductions that would have been estimated from now-superseded publications such as "Global Warming Cool It." ([http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/files/217567/File/Globwarm\\_Cool\\_It.pdf](http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/files/217567/File/Globwarm_Cool_It.pdf)). Consequently, achieving the initial greenhouse reduction targets will require doubling the targets for rates of mode switching. For more information, see "Greenhouse emissions from ACT travel": <http://grapevine.net.au/~mccluskeyarundell/transportemissionsACT.pdf>).

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