

Letter from Jack Kershaw to politicians

To The Prime Minister, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP (by the required separate pro-forma),

To The ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA,

And to the other above-addressed ACT light rail decision makers, and interested parties,

ACT LIGHT RAIL STAGE 2. CIVIC TO CAPITAL HILL SECTION.

Summarised submission. Update, Feb. 17, 2020.

This issue deserves more public debate, and clearly needs more wide-ranging expert assessment.

The tram is literally on "the wrong track". The crossing of Lake Burley Griffin needs a more exciting and enlightened solution that respects the national capital ethos, while better expressing, visually, economically, and symbolically, a progressive new mode of public transport for Canberra, in the Central National Area.

Using Commonwealth Avenue for light rail stage 2 (Civic - Woden) has many serious problems.

Issues include:

. The dangerous, telling, and costly decision to divide the project into two parts, (stage 2a is Civic to Commonwealth Park); (That stage 2a reportedly does not require certain Commonwealth environmental approvals [*The Canberra Times*, Feb. 17, 2020], does not mean that it is acceptable [see below]. In any case, use of the remainder of Commonwealth Avenue still does require those approvals - see below for clearly valid objections.)

. Major traffic disruption during construction;

. Inappropriate "land value capture" for vista- and public realm-destroying private residential development, at West Basin, and Commonwealth Avenue North;

. The destruction of cultural landscapes, including famous trees, and open space character;

. The loss of vital national capital heritage (including engineering elements);

. Inevitable development along Commonwealth Avenue South, destroying the visual and symbolic developmental balance of the Parliamentary Zone;

. Ruining the existing symmetry with Kings Avenue, including its bridge;

. Filling in the attractive, bulk-reducing, and vista-affording bifurcated form of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, with tram tracks, (Recently, the NCA and the ACT Government jointly ran focus groups on the topic of the nature of this bridge, well after the Joint Standing Committee report on light rail 2. Light rail was not allowed to be included in the focus group discussions. The writer was invited to, and did participate in one of the focus groups.) and;

. Complying with the ban on overhead electric wires*.

Briefly, an alternative route that ameliorates those problems, takes in:

Edinburgh Avenue;

New Acton;

The ANU;

Liversidge Street and the existing land bridge over Parkes Way tunnel, or Lawson Crescent;

Acton Peninsula south;

Griffin's missing, elegantly curving, elevated third central lake crossing (for trams, pedestrians, and bikes only) - the subject of a properly constituted, international design competition;

A discrete, enlarged Lennox Gardens North combined with Flynn Place (appropriately detached from Nara Park and other precincts to the south), a far better new lakeside people's place than noisy, south-facing West Basin);

Flynn Drive; and,

State Circle. (With a stop at Kings Avenue, serving Parliament House North and the Parliamentary Zone.)

This alternative route is more inclusive, and offers some appropriate "land value capture" opportunities (see writer's more comprehensive earlier submissions).

In the alternative arrangement, peak hour services could run partially express between Capital Hill and Civic, to optimise the inter-town travel time.

*It is feasible and reasonable that normal overhead wires could be used throughout Stage 2 if the above-suggested alternative route is adopted, obviating the need for expensive dedicated rolling stock. This is because of the nature and relative detachment from the National Triangle of the suggested new lake crossing, Flynn Drive, and even State Circle (its cutting in particular); and provided the wires could be accepted in the short transition to, and on Adelaide Avenue. Apparently, the location of The Lodge there is a major factor. However, there is a long-standing proposal, despite recent renovations, to eventually relocate the

Prime Minister's residence, to a new building complex, more appropriately, on a site near the lake in the vicinity of north-facing Attunga Point.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Kershaw FRAIA

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