

# WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*- Your Local Voice -*

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## Minutes

### Monthly Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> July 2002

#### Welcome

Gary Caitcheon, Committee Member, welcomed the WCCC Committee, guest speakers and residents. He indicated that the Chairperson Jeff Carl was in Brisbane. The guest speakers are from the Gungahlin Community Council, Ian Ruecroft, President and Jonathon Reynolds, Committee member.

Mr. Caitcheon indicated that Ian Ruecroft would give a short overview of the Civic to Gungahlin Tram proposal and take questions, Bob Sutherland from the WCCC would take the right of reply. General business would, as normal, be after the guest speaker; one piece of general business would be Barbara Brinton speaking on the ACT Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education.

#### Apologies

Jeff Carl, Di Patterson, Tim Janes, Edward Wagg

#### Ian Ruecroft – Gungahlin Community Council (GCC).

Ian Ruecroft indicated that he was circulating a one-page flyer which was previously published by the GCC in its newsletter. (The handout was cleared by the Chair prior to the meeting –attachment A).

The GCC stance on light rail was to encourage light rail to be considered as an option for public transport for Gungahlin. The GCC does not have the resources itself to see if it is a viable option but is actively encouraging its consideration.

A light rail has been the topic of discussion for many years and the Gungahlin to Civic link was the last link in the previous proposal considered. The traffic corridor for a dual carriageway light rail was along Northbourne Ave to EPIC and then along Flemington Road to Gungahlin. There are as yet no options for plans for North Gungahlin past the Gungahlin Town Centre.

Mr. Ruecroft conceded it was indeed a lot of money, estimated at \$80M for the Gungahlin to Civic dual light rail. The majority of the funds could be recovered from the sale of land adjacent to the light rail route. A recent example was a block for 200 residences selling at auction for \$19M, it is estimated that with a firm light rail decision in place the land may have fetched an additional \$6M - \$8M. He believed the option for light rail has to be considered now so as to affect land prices.

Gungahlin current has 20,000 to 25,000 residents, the same as Weston Creek, but eventually it will reach 100,000 residents. How do we provide the best public transport facilities and benefit others through less congestion? Mr. Ruecroft referred to the statistics in the handout (see Attachment A) and the number of 'travelling workers per lane' was very high from Gungahlin and road transport will continue to increase and increase the congestion.

The Gungahlin Drive extension will deliver more traffic to Barry Drive and the Glenloch Interchange. The Majura Road could be another solution to the congestion however it was 37kms from Civic to Gungahlin via Majura Road and only 14kms via Northbourne Ave.

Mr. Ruecroft indicated that the debate on the Gungahlin Drive extension would be seen as insignificant compared to the debate which will come from the Monash Drive route on the Territory Plan via EPIC, Ainslie and Oxley Street into the city.

Light rail could be considered an option, but could it work for the rest of Canberra? How do we re-coup the cost for the route to Belconnen? Or to Woden? The only viable leg is the City to Gungahlin route.

Light rail is a modern form of transport and a 'park and ride' could be established at EPIC for high volume carparking. The chances of a light rail down Northbourne Ave are good; the chance of a dedicated bus lane is very poor. Northbourne Ave is already at capacity and when Gungahlin grows from current 20,000-25,000 to 100,000 an additional 80,000 residents will impact on the traffic congestion.

Mr. Ruecroft indicated that the WCCC has produced a good paper and raised a number of valid issues. The GCC is considering options, looking at possible solutions and investigating issues concerning those possible solutions.

Mr. Caitcheon advised that Mr. Ruecroft had agreed to take questions.

Mr. Vince Bagusauskas asked whether at a public meeting of the GCC a motion of the GCC was for light rail to be looked at as the feasible option? Mr. Ruecroft indicated that it has never been suggested that light rail was the ultimate solution but the GCC has raised it in the overall picture of public transport for Gungahlin. He also indicated that there was concern that some options may be closed off. The Gungahlin Drive extension, Monash Drive, a bus lane on Northbourne Ave and no rat-running through the suburbs of north Canberra were all issues to be addressed and everybody has problems with traffic movement and traffic congestion. There is indeed support for other forms of public transport if the benefits are the same. The GCC is being aggressive to have light rail considered as an option.

Rose Trevethan asked whether the current proposal was for Gungahlin to the City only? Mr. Ruecroft indicated that the original proposal of some years ago involved Tuggeranong to Woden to Barton to Civic to Belconnen then to Gungahlin in a figure

8. Light rail does need to be looked at seriously as an option to address the major issue of public transport access. He indicated that he believed that light rail would be here in 20 years but suggested 5 years as the short term for a Gungahlin to Civic light rail. He advised that comprehensive material is available on the GCC website at [www.gcc.asn.au](http://www.gcc.asn.au)

Mr. Vince Bagusauskas asked whether the GGC would be agreeable to have more information on the alternative public transport options on their website. Mr. Ruecroft indicated that they were more than happy to have additional material and useful web links.

Mr. Caitcheon thanked Mr. Ruecroft and called on Bob Sutherland to deliver a right of reply.

#### Bob Sutherland – Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC).

Mr. Sutherland indicated to the meeting that the WCCC had been invited to the GCC meeting on trams but had declined, as it would have been Daniel in the lion's den. Mr. Sutherland also said that he had once written an essay entitled 'clang clang clang goes the money'. The tram is an idea whose time has passed.

Mr. Sutherland advised that the WCCC paper referred to by Mr. Ruecroft was on the website ([www.wccc.com.au](http://www.wccc.com.au)) and there were copies of the paper at tonight's meeting. He addressed the issue of why Weston Creek residents had such an interest - if the cost was estimated at \$80M (at the conservative end of estimates) this, on a per household basis, would draw \$8M out of Weston Creek residents.

Mr. Sutherland indicated that the application of income from land sales to a specific expenditure had not happened previously and would be extremely unlikely in the future by any ACT Government. The income from land sales in the Territory needed to be used for the benefit of all eg hospitals rather than tied use of income.

If Gungahlin to Civic was the first stage of the tram, others would want it and it would become extremely costly for ratepayers.

The outcome of the GCC February meeting appeared to be no general agreement, except that the traffic problem needed to be fixed and effort had to be put into improving the infrastructure and stop the dithering. The tram is old-fashioned technology no matter how it's dressed up.

Poor public transport is not unique to Gungahlin as we have poor transport in Weston Creek. The Canberra Hospital is in our local district yet we need to change buses to get to it.

The *Graham Report into ACTION Services* found that each change of transport had a 30% drop in patronage, eg a ferry or a bus. It found if a passenger had to change twice there was a 60% drop in patronage; from Weston Creek to the University of Canberra it used to take 3 buses. However direct services are provided from Weston Creek to the City in morning and afternoon peak hours only. If the tram proposal succeeds there would be no chance of getting direct services from Weston Creek but with a bus transit way there would be some chance of getting direct services.

Busway transit is a valid, affordable alternate to a fixed line tram. Tram passengers actually have more changes more often because of their fixed routes. Some surveys have found that rail travel is preferred, however after 12 months survey results show that passengers are indifferent when comparing bus or rail travel.

The principal means of reducing greenhouse gases is to leave the car at home. In some US cities it was found that the tram took passengers from buses not cars. Also it has been found that the operating costs of trams are very high and interest payments on the infrastructure are high because of the greater amount of capital needed. At these levels a very generous busway transit can be provided. Gungahlin should have the best, affordable public transport, as should Weston Creek.

Mr. Sutherland quoted information from Guy Thurston CEO of ACTION that experiments were underway which would allow buses to be joined into 'bus-trams' without the need to change; and then separated at the end. This allows imaginative uses of joining and disjoining buses from this type of 'tram'.

The volume of people able to be moved by buses is often quoted. In San Paulo Brazil examples are routes that carry 11,000 to 25,000 people per hour on buses. What can be done with a tram can be done cheaper with buses. The new busway transit in Brisbane is showing good results since its introduction.

Mr. Caitcheon invited questions of Mr. Sutherland.

Rose Trevethan indicated that she would like to see a tram faster than current trams. Mr. Sutherland indicated that the speed and use of trams/trains had examples in Australia of what doesn't work. The Perth to Joondalup (northern Perth suburb) was suffering poor patronage compared to the buses, so the bus routes were changed so that they didn't compete with the tram. Other examples of poor patronage were the Brisbane Airport to Brisbane City rail link as well as the recently opened Sydney Airport rail link. A recent survey of passengers on the Sydney City light rail found that most of the patrons are casino employees. The Brisbane Busway transit system is showing evidence of attracting more people. There is early evidence that people are leaving cars at home. Another example of busway is that the recently announced public transport improvement from Liverpool to Parramatta will not to be a train or tram but an off-road bus transit lane.

Mary Sexton asked when are public comments being called? Mr. Sutherland indicated that the paper produced for debate in Weston Creek was a draft and as indicated in Jeff Carl's covering letter comments and suggestions were more than welcome to ensure the range of issues and opinions are canvassed. The formal Inquiry into public transport options has not opened but a government announcement that an inquiry will be held has been made. When public submissions are called for the current paper will be updated/refined and submitted to the Inquiry.

Ian Rucroft asked the question of whether money from Weston Creek residents for, say, Monash Drive is the same as for light rail? Mr. Sutherland indicated that Government decisions on infrastructure building is collective decision using consolidated revenue.

Mr. Ruecroft also clarified that the developer does not pay the increased value of the land; it is the house buyer who is paying the increased house price because of the proximity to the light rail route.

Mr. Ruecroft asked how it was intended to have buses cope with the current congestion on Northbourne Ave? Mr. Sutherland advised that he was on the ACT Transport Reform Advisory Group (TRAG) and the Group was pushing for a bus lane on Northbourne Ave. Evidence to date from bus operators from out of town and using Northbourne Ave in peak times have needed to adjust their timetables by 15mins and they are looking at a further 5-minute increase in their timetables. It is possible that a left lane busway could be created and the pressure is there now. An alternate may be a median strip busway transit system. An issue which needs to be considered is turning traffic off Northbourne Ave not queuing across the median strip. This is going to be a problem with the median strip turning traffic with either a tram or busway.

Mr. Bullen posed to Mr. Sutherland that the first speaker (Mr. Ruecroft) had come across as neutral in his approach to public transport solutions whilst he (Mr. Sutherland) has a strong argument against the light rail. Mr. Bullen asked Mr. Sutherland about his credentials to comment on the issue of public transport. Mr. Sutherland replied by indicating that the GCC had exerted significant pressure to have a tram as the preferred public transport option for Gungahlin although that may not have been conveyed at this meeting. In respect of the strong argument against the option there is the capital infrastructure cost that will be borne by all ratepayers and the ongoing continual subsidisation from the community. In respect of his credentials Mr. Sutherland advised that he was a retired transport economist.

Mr. Caitcheon thanked both Mr. Ruecroft and Mr. Sutherland for their contributions and residents for their questions.

### General Business

Mr. Caitcheon moved on to the general business of the meeting indicating that copies of the minutes of the last meeting were on the WCCC website and there were copies available at this meeting.

### ACT Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education

Mr. Caitcheon called on Barbara Brinton, Barbara advised that she was nominated for the ACT Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education by the WCCC and that nomination was successful. The Advisory Council had had its first meeting with all the new members on 4th July 2002. The meeting was essentially a meet and greet so that the members were able to meet and learn how the Council operates and who were the other members. Barbara advised that she would report back to the WCCC as appropriate. An upcoming event was Adult Learners Week and more information is available on their website ( [www.adultlearnersweek.org](http://www.adultlearnersweek.org) )

### Minutes of the June 2002 meeting

Mr. Caitcheon asked if there were any questions or comments relating to the minutes of the previous monthly meeting.

Mr. Millar of the Weston Creek Community Association indicated that he had a concern with the statement "Mr. Millar asked Mr. Carl if he could read a statement into the minutes, after some debate it was agreed. This is attachment D". Mr. Millar commented that this did not accurately reflect what was said. The Secretary indicated that the minutes were not verbatim but did reflect the event and Mr. Carl had the minutes.

Mr. Millar also indicated that he wished to clarify a statement regarding the status of the Weston Creek Community Association. The Association was in fact operating under the regulations of Incorporated Associations Act.

Mr. Millar also advised that he had checked with the Registrar of Associations since the last meeting and the Weston Creek Community Council is not registered. Mr. Millar asked what regulations does the Council operate under. The Secretary indicated that the registered name is the Weston Creek Citizen's Council Inc and this does appear on relevant correspondence and that the WCCC operates under the Incorporated Associations Act.

Mr. Caitcheon asked if there were any further questions

Mrs. Heather Millar believed that the minutes did not give an accurate account of the meeting because it had been stated that motions were not passed at meetings, but there are examples of motions being passed at previous meetings.

Mary Sexton advised that she did not believe that the minutes conveyed the tone of the meeting.

Mr. Caitcheon asked if there were any further questions. As there were no further questions the next matter of business would be dealt with.

### Annual General Meeting

The Secretary advised that the AGM will be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 at 7.45pm at Royals. (This meeting item is the article convening the AGM – Constitution Rule 12 sub rule 4).

## Auditor

The current Auditor is Gary Rake who will be preparing the material for last financial year. It is expected that Gary Rake will continue as auditor for this financial year.

Meeting closed 9.05pm

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002

*Attachment A - 2 pages Gungahlin Community Council handout*

*Provided by Mr. Ian Ruecroft to be included in the minutes*

## What is required to deliver equitable transport corridors for Gungahlin?

By Ian Ruxcroft - President, Gungahlin Community Council

In the Gungahlin Community Council's comments relating to the Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study, the Council drew attention to the need for Gungahlin to have equitable transport corridors with other areas of the ACT. Following is a table based on information supplied at the first work shop relating to the extension of Gungahlin Drive. The document is "Figure C - FUTURE POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT" (ADREF 1.17797.17797026 (2/12/96)).

The figures relating to the population and employment forecasts are as contained in the report, this has been extended out to include an estimate of the probable number of people who would be required to travel out of the area for work commitments. The figures have been calculated on the formula of:

- ◆ Working population = Forecast population minus 50% (for people not required to travel out of the area for work commitments eg. children, people working from home, retirees etc).
- ◆ Traveling workers = Working population minus forecast employment positions
- ◆ Traveling workers per lane = Number of traveling workers divided by the number of future lanes (actual or calculated)

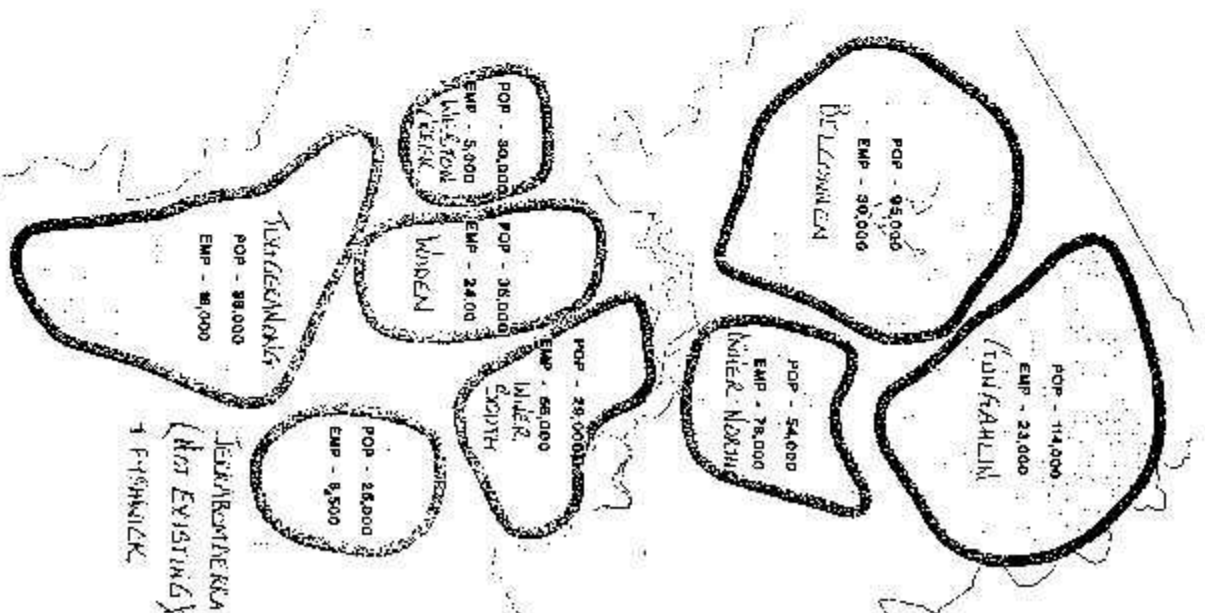
District	Forecast population	Working population	Forecast jobs in district	Travelling workers	Current lanes	Future lanes	Workers per lane
Inner South	29,000	14,500	56,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Inner North	54,000	27,000	78,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Woden	35,000	17,500	24,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Belconnen	95,000	47,500	30,000	15,000	7	6	2,500
Weston Creek	30,000	15,000	5,000	10,000	5	5	2,000
Tuggeranong	88,000	44,000	16,000	28,000	7	8	3,500
Gungahlin	114,000	57,000	23,000	34,000	3	10 (actual)	3,400
Jerrabomberra	25,000	12,500	6,500	6,000	Nil	2 (calculated)	3,000

The three lanes currently identified as being available for Gungahlin are: The Barton Highway (1), Flemington Road (1) and William Slim Drive to the Glenloch interchange (1). In addition to this the following is planned:

1. The Gungahlin Drive extension providing two extra lanes (one new and one taken from Belconnen) = 2 extra lanes.
2. Flemington Road becoming a dual roadway to the Federal Highway = 1 extra lane.
3. The Horsepark Drive/ Majura Parkway being dual roadway = 2 extra lanes.

Note: Only one lane of the Barton is available for Gungahlin residents (the other lane is for NSW and Belconnen users).

The above calculations indicate that there is a need for at least an additional two lanes out of Gungahlin and that these lanes must be in the direction of the inner city areas (where the employment is). The Carnell Government's suggestion of restricting the Gungahlin population of 100,000 people with an employment base of 15,000 still produced a travelling working population of 35,000 and requires 10 lanes to equitable to Tuggeranong, which is the most disadvantaged of all the other districts.







## Light rail, is it a pipe dream or a possibility?

By Ian Rucroft - President, Gungahlin Community Council

On the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2002 the Gungahlin Community Council (GCC) hosted an information session on light rail (trams), this was followed by a debate on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. Like all good debates, there were strong arguments for and against the proposed concept of a light rail system.

The meeting voted to support a light rail network for the ACT. It was also agreed that the Council should actively promote a light rail transport link from Civic to Gungahlin as the first stage of a larger network. The route endorsed by the meeting follows Northbourne Avenue before turning into Flemington Road and proceeding to the Gungahlin Town Centre. Information relating to light rail can be accessed on the GCC website: [www.gcc.asn.au](http://www.gcc.asn.au)

Although light rail has been a topic of debate in the ACT for many years, the current round of interest has been sparked by the ACT Government's decisions to proceed with a Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study. After consideration of the draft document, the GCC suggested that the following items should be considered for inclusion in the terms of reference for any Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study:

- 1) The growth of Gungahlin is the greatest of any area in the ACT and therefore should be a significant component of any study into public transport. *Traffic problems are already significant and will only increase with the growth of the Gungahlin population.*
- 2) Public transport needs and traffic corridors can be minimised by refocusing commitment to the principals of the Territory Plan, which identifies Town Centres as providing a hub for commerce and employment.
- 3) A long-term commitment to providing Gungahlin with equitable commercial and employment opportunities needs to be considered as part of this study.
- 4) The benefits for attracting employment and investment to Gungahlin should be explored with a focus on the probable impact on commercial and residential development made by commitment to a light rail link from Civic to Gungahlin.
- 5) The Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study should fully explore the development of a modern light rail network for the ACT, including the following considerations:
  - ◆ The first link of the light rail network should be the link Civic to Gungahlin along the route as shown on the Territory Plan (TTP) route)
  - ◆ The study should include an economic assessment of the above route based on patronage and increased land revenue of land adjacent to the corridor (as a result of the commitment to light rail).

- ◆ Any economic assessment of the light rail option for Civic to Gungahlin should include the consideration of cost savings which can be achieved by avoiding the construction of roads which would be required to deliver equitable transport conditions for Gungahlin residents *ie. the construction of Monash Drive.*
- ◆ A realistic time frame for the construction of a staged light rail network should be developed as part of the study, noting that the light rail link (Civic to Gungahlin) could be designed and constructed within a timeframe of three years.
- ◆ That consideration be given to developing the EPIC car parking areas as an extensive park and ride facility that forms a hub for car, bus and light rail interchange.
- ◆ That any light rail network should be designed to be compatible and complementary to the existing (and future) ACT bus service.

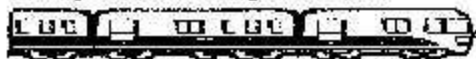
The topic of light rail is an emotional subject for many people in the community. With cost estimates for the Civic to Gungahlin link ranging from \$30m to \$60m, there is a definite need to consider the options and make the right decision. At this time the development of a light rail link (from Civic to Gungahlin) could make a significant difference to the way the area develops. It would undoubtedly influence opportunities for attracting employment and commerce into the area.

Attracting people to use public transport is a complicated exercise. It should be recognised that there is very little chance of attracting people who are supplied with a company car or work in an area that is difficult to get to by bus or tram. Others have considerations such as childcare pickup, schooling, sporting and social commitments that make public transport fairly unattractive.

Although there are many things that make people decide to use public transport, there are some basic factors that cause people to consider it in preference to purchasing a vehicle or running a second car.

Items that attract	Items that cause consideration
Favorable travel time	Difficult traffic conditions
Attractive fare structure	Shortage of available parking
Convenience of stations	Company and Gov. incentives
Frequency of service	Environmental concerns
Passenger comfort at stations and in travel	Increases in the cost of car ownership, petrol or parking

Gungahlin is at a stage where public transport could have a huge influence for purchasers of future homes. At this time there are two homes within easy walking distance of Flemington Road. In fifteen years there will be 15,000 to 30,000 people living within easy walking distance of Flemington Road. Would light rail be attractive to them?



Authorised by Ian Rucroft on behalf of the Gungahlin Community Council.