

MEDIA RELEASE

ABN 57 948 429 670

EMBARGO: 10.30am 17 November 2022

Eastwick Greenline Light Rail and Active Travel Corridor Concept Revealed

A transformational vision to replace the existing train line with light rail and active travel through East Canberra has been unveiled by the Fyshwick Business Association.

“This vision is the culmination of 18 months’ work with architects and planners and listening to important stakeholders about their aspirations for our precinct and its place in the National Capital,” Fyshwick Business Association President Rob Evans said.

“For too long Fyshwick has been forgotten by planners and decision makers, but we changed that when we formed three years ago and stood up for Fyshwick to say NO to the large-scale waste facilities which would have doomed the area.

“Fyshwick is evolving and will continue to grow and diversify. This vision is the next step in showing what is possible when you invest in thinking about how great the future could be. But this is not just for Fyshwick, this is a legacy vision that would benefit the whole of Canberra for decades to come.”

Mr Evans acknowledged and thanked the creative team behind the Eastwick Greenline concept - Marcus Graham and Felicity Stewart from Stewart Architecture - for their ingenuity, their deep personal commitment to this project and their never-ending enthusiasm to make Canberra a better place to live, work and play.

“The fundamental challenge of this century is to make our cities more sustainable and healthy places to live. This means creating car-free green streets that have outstanding public transport, encourage active travel and foreground wellbeing for all people. Canberra is uniquely placed to deliver this vision,” said Stewart Architecture Director Felicity Stewart.

Stewart Architecture Principal, Marcus Graham said: “This proposal looks to unlock a significant quantum of underutilised land in central Canberra. Smart infill will help to limit urban development at the fringes of our already sprawling capital city. This project alone could accommodate a significant portion of Canberra’s future growth whilst safeguarding and enhancing key natural assets like the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.”

Mr Evans said the proposed Eastwick light rail route would deliver access to a ‘string of pearls’ including destinations like Manuka Oval, the Kingston Arts Precinct, Kingston Foreshore, East Lake, Jerrabomberra Wetlands, Fyshwick Markets, CIT Fyshwick, Dairy Road, central and east Fyshwick and then on to both Canberra Airport and Queanbeyan along different routes.

“The east end of Fyshwick is the perfect place for a brand-new, multi-modal transit hub where heavy rail meets light rail and which would provide a fitting arrival to the National Capital for people travelling by train instead of the brown box with zero amenity or connectivity that is currently Canberra station. The hub would also include park-and-ride and end of journey facilities for active travellers.

“People could arrive in Canberra and jump on the light rail or bus to wherever they want to go across the city in a seamless public transport network.”

Alongside the light rail, the Greenline affords parallel separated access for active travel with pedestrians having additional pathways.

“Canberrans have always ridden bikes and now e-scooters are popular – we need to make it easier for people to get out of cars and we simply cannot squander the opportunity in any new light rail infrastructure to include adjacent safe and accessible active travel corridors.

“Reliable public transport and active travel options are good for business, especially when they take cars off the road in a place which is already clogged with traffic most of the day.

“Fyshwick is the hottest part of Canberra because of the heat island effect and this vision is a way to address that whilst still maintaining our industrial core.

“As well as cooling the area, the concept creates the ability for both vehicles and people to readily cross Fyshwick from north to south over the Greenline which will make Fyshwick a far more functional business community and take pressure off the bottlenecks at Newcastle and Ipswich Streets which are currently the only access across the rail line.”

Mr Evans commended the ACT Government on the inclusion of a ‘strategic investigation corridor’ along the proposed light rail route in its recently-released draft District Strategy, including the identification of several sites along the rail corridor for ‘potential’ development.

“At its narrowest point, the rail corridor is 80 metres wide. Allowing 30 metres for the light rail and Greenline there is still 25 metres either side for development.

“Then there is the current wasteland that lies around Canberra Station which will be developed as part of the new East Lake precinct, and which we have included in our concept in recognition of the importance of planning for the best possible interface between Fyshwick and our immediate neighbours.

“This concept makes perfect sense and the net land value uplift of the area we have considered to the ACT Government sits at a conservative \$570 million in today’s dollars, after land development and subdivision costs are taken out and excluding any future inflation or returns. That’s a sizeable deposit on an infrastructure project where half the route is already formed.

“Further, the scale and importance of this infrastructure and its potential links to the airport and across the border to the wider Capital Region mean it should attract both federal and NSW funding and it is logical that further engagement is undertaken with relevant federal and state parliamentarians and officials.”

Mr Evans said Fyshwick was the second largest economy in the ACT (about \$3 billion) after the Canberra CBD with more than 1500 businesses and around 15,500 workers. Research showed 97% of Canberrans visit Fyshwick annually, more than half several times a year and one in five at least weekly.

“What happens to Fyshwick is not just important in Canberra’s inner south, it is relevant to all Canberrans.

“We have already engaged with many individuals and organisations from Ministers, MLAs and planning and transport officials to industry and community groups and of course our members in Fyshwick and we have been overwhelmed by the willingness of people to embrace the concept, ask questions and make constructive contributions to start to add depth and detail to the vision.

“The Eastwick Greenline concept aims to build momentum to ensure our business community is more vibrant and has the ability to grow and attract employees and customers.

“We also want to stimulate conversation about the future of our National Capital and how this vision can help deliver an integrated transport network, boost the economy, cool the heat sink and give Canberrans an infrastructure vision of which they can be justifiably proud,” Mr Evans said.

“We welcome public feedback via our website www.fyshwickbusiness.com.au and we will summarise and pass on those comments to government as we encourage our decisionmakers to crank up the timetable on their ‘strategic investigation’ of this area.”

Media inquiries: Jane Seaborn 0414 829 282



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