

**ACT AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT: THE FREQUENT NETWORK**

**REPORT NO. 9 / 2015**

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2015

ISSN 2204-700X (Print)

ISSN 2204-7018 (Online)

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the Territory Records Office, Shared Services, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, ACT Government, GPO Box 158 Canberra City ACT 2601.

### **ACT Audit Office**

The roles and responsibilities of the Auditor-General are set out in the *Auditor-General Act 1996*.

The Auditor-General is an Officer of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

ACT Audit Office undertakes audits on financial statements of Government agencies, and the whole-of-Government consolidated financial statements.

The Office also conducts performance audits, to examine whether a Government agency is carrying out its activities effectively and efficiently, and in compliance with relevant legislation.

ACT Audit Office acts independently of the Government, and reports the results of the audits directly to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

### **Accessibility Statement**

ACT Audit Office is committed to making its information accessible to as many people as possible. If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the Office on (02) 6207 0833.

If English is not your first language and you require the assistance of a Translating and Interpreting Service, please telephone Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require assistance, please telephone the National Relay Service on 13 36 77.

### **AUDIT TEAM**

Brett Stanton

Henny Norder

Rod Nicholas

Russell Hearne

The support of Sophie Butler-Stratton and Dr Geoff Clifton of University of Sydney is appreciated.

Produced for the ACT Audit Office by Publishing Services, Shared Services, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, ACT Government

Publication No. 15/1354

ACT Government Homepage address is: <http://www.act.gov.au>

PA 14/11

The Speaker  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
Civic Square, London Circuit  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Madam Speaker

I am pleased to forward to you a Performance Audit Report titled 'Public Transport: The Frequent Network' for tabling in the Legislative Assembly pursuant to Subsection 17(5) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*.

Yours sincerely



Dr Maxine Cooper  
Auditor-General  
6 November 2015



# CONTENTS

---

<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Overall Conclusion.....	1
Chapter Conclusions.....	3
Key findings .....	5
Recommendations.....	14
<b>1   Introduction.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Background.....	17
Audit objective and scope .....	21
Audit criteria, approach and method .....	21
<b>2   Governance and administration .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Summary.....	23
ACT Government roles and responsibilities .....	26
Transport for Canberra.....	28
Whole-of-government oversight of public transport initiatives .....	32
Risk management .....	36
<b>3   Implementation of the Frequent Network.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Summary.....	43
Implementing the Frequent Network .....	48
Assessment against the principles, goals, targets and <i>Actions</i> in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> .....	50
Review and evaluation of the implementation of the Frequent Network.....	72
<b>4   Assumptions underpinning the effective delivery of the Frequent Network .....</b>	<b>81</b>
Summary.....	81
Public transport planning strategies and plans .....	85
Patronage assumptions and associated risks .....	87
Planning assumptions and risks.....	92
Operational assumptions and risks .....	94
Cost benefit analysis of the Frequent Network.....	102
Integrating Light Rail in the Frequent Network.....	105

---

## Contents

---

<b>Appendix A:</b>	<b>2012 Frequent Network.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Appendix B:</b>	<b>2016 Indicative Frequent Network.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Appendix C:</b>	<b>2031 Frequent Network.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Appendix D:</b>	<b>Transport planning strategies and plans .....</b>	<b>115</b>

## SUMMARY

---

In March 2012, the ACT Government released *Transport for Canberra: Transport for a Sustainable City 2012-2031 (Transport for Canberra)* thereby setting the policy for transport for the next twenty years.

In terms of public transport, *Transport for Canberra* notes that:

An effective public transport system needs to be fast, frequent, reliable, comfortable and safe for passengers. It must be integrated with and supported by urban planning and design.

One of the four public transport policy objectives set out in *Transport for Canberra* is ‘A frequent public transport network supported by services, planning, infrastructure, land supply and location of facilities.’<sup>1</sup> The Frequent Network, a key concept articulated in *Transport for Canberra*, is expected to be ‘the backbone of an integrated transport system’ for Canberra.

The long-term (2031) goal for the Frequent Network is the establishment of ‘permanent public transport corridors with 15 minute or better frequency for people travelling across and within the city, with the consolidation of some suburban routes to build efficiency into the system and shorten travel times’. The Frequent Network is comprised of Rapid services, which service public transport corridors for all day, high speed travel across the city along dense corridors and Frequent Local services, which are local services in areas of current or future denser development, including some group centres.

The Frequent Network is to be delivered through implementing a range of policies, including those in the *ACT Planning Strategy*, that seek to reshape Canberra as a more compact city, prioritising development along, and adjacent to, the Frequent Network.

The audit examined arrangements concerning the delivery of the public transport Frequent Network, including supporting governance and administration, planning, and review mechanisms.

## Overall Conclusion

The ACT Government’s policy on public transport is clearly expressed in its long-term overall transport policy; *Transport for Canberra: Transport for a Sustainable City 2012-2031 (Transport for Canberra)*. This provides transparency and sets the direction for planning and implementation, including the delivery of the Frequent Network as ‘the backbone of an integrated transport system’. However, the effective delivery of the Frequent Network is at risk. Actions for its

---

<sup>1</sup> The three other public transport objectives specified in for Canberra are: a public transport system that provides accessible mobility for everyone; a public transport system that maximises choice, with excellent options like Park and Ride and Bike and Ride; and a public transport system ready for the future, with smart systems (real time passenger information, journey planners and accessible information) and smart fleet, including clean buses and active consideration of light rail.

implementation are not being progressed in a timely manner and some are inadequate. Furthermore, public reporting on the implementation of the Frequent Network, through the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014), is inaccurate in relation to some actions. It has also varied from the reporting framework set out in *Transport for Canberra*.

It is important that the Frequent Network corridors be embedded in relevant planning documents; the Territory Plan and National Capital Plan to provide location certainty. This is particularly pertinent given that buses are likely to be the dominant mode serving the corridors now and in the foreseeable future, and bus routes can be easily varied. Providing certainty is important to foster and guide community and other stakeholders' investments, to progress the implementation of both the Frequent Network and *Transport for Canberra* overall.

Embedding the Frequent Network corridors in key planning documents has been delayed due to the finalisation of the Light Rail Master Plan, which was released for public comment in late October 2015. While the light rail service will become part of the Frequent Network it is only covering a limited part of this network (Gungahlin to Civic, at least in the immediate future). Accordingly, embedding other corridors in key planning documents should be progressed as a high priority.

Key operational risks for the Frequent Network include the availability of sufficient suitable buses and depots. Approved plans only provide for the acquisition of replacement vehicles for ageing buses already in service. A series of recent reviews has highlighted the need for a significant number of buses to be added to the ACTION fleet, and for additional depots, if the goals of the Frequent Network and the increased public transport journey to work mode share targets set out in *Transport for Canberra* are to be achieved. Correcting the shortfall in buses and depots needs to be addressed.

Another operational risk is the availability of bus drivers to allow the bus service to be managed in a flexible manner to respond to demand needs. *Transport for Canberra* recognised this and identified as a specific Action (*Public transport - Action 9*) the inclusion of a 'seven day network in ACTION enterprise agreement in 2013.' This was not achieved and the Fair Work Commission approved the current enterprise agreement in May 2014 with a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2017. Ways to address this operational staffing risk need to be identified so that the Frequent Network can be efficiently delivered.

Cross-agency communication, governance and risk management arrangements for the implementation of the Frequent Network are inadequate to support its implementation as planned. Furthermore, the integration of activities by the various agencies would benefit from *Transport for Canberra* being supported by a short-term (e.g. 5 year) whole-of-government implementation programming plan. This plan could guide the development of individual agencies' annual budget bids so that these were appropriately timed and integrated.

There has not been a comprehensive household travel to work survey undertaken for the ACT since 1997. This data is fundamental for planning and evaluating actions that are implemented, including those related to modal shift. Such a survey would provide more detailed information than that available from the five-yearly Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population

Housing. Data that is available indicates that modal shift targets are not being achieved and there is a significant risk that the *Transport for Canberra* initiatives, including the Frequent Network, may not be sufficient to facilitate their achievement over the planning period to 2031.

ACTION does not have data on the operating costs of the Frequent Network, even though data is available for the entire bus network. Once the light rail service (Capital Metro) is integrated into the Frequent Network, the collection and segmentation of data according to modes would facilitate long-term monitoring and evaluation to guide future transport initiatives. Furthermore, the light rail was not factored into the 2010 cost benefit analysis for the Frequent Network, which indicated that for every \$1 invested in the Frequent Network \$3.59 in benefits could be realised. Now that a light rail is to become part of the Frequent Network an updated analysis would provide more accurate information for decision-makers and the community.

## Chapter Conclusions

### GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Governance and administrative arrangements associated with the delivery of *Transport for Canberra*, specifically the Frequent Network, are not effective. The Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group, which was established in June 2012 to oversee the implementation of *Transport for Canberra*, has not been effective in coordinating, monitoring or reporting on *Transport for Canberra*, including the Frequent Network. There is no evidence that two other inter-agency working groups, the Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group, which have since been cited as having oversight responsibility for the implementation of *Transport for Canberra*, have considered *Transport for Canberra* generally, or the Frequent Network.

Information in *Transport for Canberra* about deliverables associated with the Frequent Network, their sequencing and timeframe for implementation is very broad and lacks specificity. This presents a risk that the integration of needed actions by different agencies may not be effectively undertaken. Furthermore, having more measurable specific targets could assist in guiding the delivery of the Frequent Network.

There is no cross-agency aggregated risk assessment and management associated with the delivery of the Frequent Network (or *Transport for Canberra*) as a whole. Such an approach is needed so that all risk is managed, including and importantly that related to the interdependency of agency actions for delivering the Frequent Network effectively and efficiently.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK

Due to the lack of detail and specificity in *Transport for Canberra* with respect to the implementation of the Frequent Network, including identified deliverables and associated timeframes, it is not possible to assess effectiveness of the overall delivery of the Frequent

Network. However, ACTION buses are being delivered at the desired frequency on Rapid services (between Belconnen and Tuggeranong town centres and Gungahlin and Fyshwick) but not on the Frequent Local services, which feed into the Rapid services. Targets associated with journey to work mode share change have not been achieved. Achieving 2016 and 2026 targets for public transport share of journey to work trips, 10.5 percent and 16 percent respectively, remain a major challenge and may not be achieved without significant effort and resources.

A series of recent reviews has highlighted the need for a significant number of buses to be added to the ACTION fleet to achieve the goals of the Frequent Network and journey to work mode share targets in *Transport for Canberra*.

Public reporting on the implementation of the Frequent Network, and *Transport for Canberra* as a whole, has been ambiguous and in some instances inaccurate. Furthermore, it is not possible to report on some performance measures and targets identified in *Transport for Canberra* due to a lack of data and information.

## **ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK**

There are key risks associated with the assumptions that underpin planning for the Frequent Network which will need to be recognised and managed to ensure the effective delivery of the Frequent Network.

A key patronage assumption for the Frequent Network relates to the connection between changes to land use and demand for public transport services, i.e. more intensive urban development is expected to lead to greater demand for public transport. An important means by which this would be achieved is by embedding the Frequent Network into relevant planning documents such as the Territory Plan and National Capital Plan, to give greater certainty to the community and other stakeholders. This has not occurred.

Key operational assumptions associated with the Frequent Network are that ACTION has sufficient infrastructure, capacity and resources to deliver the Frequent Network. These assumptions primarily relate to the availability of bus drivers for a seven-day working week (in order to deliver a seamless Frequent Network over the full week), the availability of buses and depots. Despite being identified in *Transport for Canberra* as a key Action, the required reform of the ACTION Enterprise Agreement has not occurred and the availability of drivers outside peak and weekday inter-peak times remains limited.

Recent reviews and evaluations of ACTION's future bus and depot needs highlight the need for considerable additional resources to both meet the requirements of the Frequent Network and delivery of the *Transport for Canberra* journey to work mode share targets (16 percent by 2026). Additional resources will need to be planned and delivered to ensure these commitments are met.

A cost benefit analysis of the Frequent Network undertaken in 2010 showed that for every \$1 invested there would be \$3.59 in benefits. This analysis was based on the use of buses. The Frequent Network is to also be serviced by light rail and an updated analysis is needed.

## Key findings

### GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

### Paragraph

*Transport for Canberra* identifies linkages with policies, legislation and programs in a range of ACT Government agencies other than the three main agencies (Environment Planning and Development Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (and ACTION) and the Capital Metro Agency) who have direct responsibilities for specific aspects of public transport. This reflects the interdependency of transport policies with other ACT Government policies, legislation and programs. Often to achieve implementation of a transport policy it is necessary to concurrently achieve a planning policy and vice versa.

2.11

*Transport for Canberra* sets out many activities and initiatives under its 34 Actions which are to be implemented over timeframes ranging from two to ten years. Broad timeframes of two, five and ten years are specified for the delivery of the Frequent Network as a whole. These timeframes are too broad to guide the integration of the interdependent activities and initiatives or monitor short-term progress with respect to delivery. A supporting short-term (e.g. 5 year) whole-of-government implementation programming plan for progressively delivering the Frequent Network is needed. It could guide the development of agencies' annual budget bids so that these were appropriately timed with activities and initiatives being integrated.

2.22

The Transport Monitoring and Reporting Framework in *Transport for Canberra* could be improved through having detailed measures and more specific targets which are directly relevant to the 34 Actions, including the Frequent Network Action (*Public transport - Action 2*).

2.26

The Terms of Reference for the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group stated that it would convene every two months. Nine meetings have been held in the three years since the Group was formed in June 2012 (of a possible 18 meetings), and only four have taken place since June 2013. The Working Group has not met since December 2014.

2.34

The tracking report initially used by the Working Group to monitor progress against *Transport for Canberra* commitments focused its reporting on the 34 Actions included in the policy, and not on targets specifically discussed in *Transport for Canberra* for progress reporting. The exception reporting adopted a loosely defined 'traffic lights' approach that highlighted responsible officers' assessments of the status of progress in implementing the Actions but obscured the detail of what specifically had or had not been achieved to date, and potentially, the Working

2.37

Group's awareness of emerging issues.

Notwithstanding that the release of an annual update report on Transport for Canberra is a required action specified in *Transport for Canberra* (Action 33), since the release of *Transport for Canberra* in March 2012 only one such report (the Transport for Canberra Report Card) has been released in September 2014. 2.39

Although the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group was an appropriate mechanism for overseeing and coordinating implementation of *Transport for Canberra* commitments it did not meet as frequently as planned and the reports prepared for its consideration provided inadequate detail on progress towards implementation of all elements of the 34 Actions specified in *Transport for Canberra*. The Audit Office was advised in September 2015 that the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group was disbanded and its responsibility for the oversight, reporting and coordination of implementation of the 34 Actions contained within *Transport for Canberra* has been assumed by the Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group. However, these groups have not considered *Transport for Canberra* generally, or the Frequent Network specifically, since their establishment. 2.43

Three new sub-committees of Cabinet that have a direct connection to transport issues were convened in February 2015: the Transport Reform; Economic Growth and Urban Renewal; and Capital Metro committees. While the overlap in membership (Ministerial and official) of these sub-committees provides an opportunity for whole-of-government oversight, monitoring and review of public transport initiatives, there is a need for these high level committees to be supported by a working group focused on the implementation of *Transport for Canberra*, including the Frequent Network. While this role could be undertaken by either or both of the Parking Coordination and Roads Coordination Groups these groups have not considered *Transport for Canberra* generally or the Frequent Network specifically in any of their meetings to date. 2.49

The risk register for the Environment and Planning Directorate's Strategic Planning Business Unit focuses on high-level organisational risks. It does not analyse and assess risks at a project or policy initiative level, such as the development and subsequent implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* policy, including the Frequent Network. 2.59

The risk management approach used by the Public Transport Division in the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate focuses on risks for all of its operations. The risk register does not include a specific reference to *Transport for Canberra*, including its public transport goals and targets, and lacks specificity with respect to the Frequent Network and its implementation. 2.73

The Capital Metro Agency's risk management is primarily focused on the delivery of light rail as a project. The risk register does not include a specific reference to *Transport for Canberra* or the significant public transport targets and goals in that policy, nor are the risks associated with the light rail integration into the Frequent Network stated. 2.76

There is no aggregated cross-agency risk assessment and management mechanism for public transport planning and management, or more specifically for implementation of *Transport for Canberra* policy and actions, and achievement of its overall goals, including the delivery of the Frequent Network. The lack of an aggregated risk assessment for the delivery of *Transport for Canberra* presents a risk that the interdependencies of actions delivered by the different ACT Government agencies will not be recognised thereby compromising effective and efficient delivery .

2.80

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK

Paragraph

*Transport for Canberra* does not identify or articulate specific targets for the progressive implementation of the Frequent Network, that is, specific expectations for the progressive coverage of the network or the frequency of services for the immediate forthcoming years. *Transport for Canberra* does, however, include maps showing the:

3.3

- 2012 Frequent Network;
- 2016 Indicative Frequent Network; and
- 2031 Frequent Network (with potential services mapped).

ACTION bus services that meet the Frequent Network definition of a 15 minute frequency or better (as at mid 2015) are:

3.11

- Rapid services (300 series - Blue) between Belconnen, City, Woden and Tuggeranong; and
- Rapid services (200 series - Red) between Gungahlin, City, Russell, Barton, Kingston and Fyshwick.

As at mid 2015, no ACTION bus services met the *Transport for Canberra* Frequent Local service definitions (15 minute frequency or better all day and evening), including the previously branded Gold Line (connecting City, Parliament House, and Deakin) and the previously branded Green Line (connecting City, Russell, Barton, Kingston, and Manuka).

3.12

The ACT Government committed to releasing an annual progress report on implementation of *Transport for Canberra* (Monitoring and reporting - Action 33). However, the first, and to date only, such report (the *Transport for Canberra Report Card*) was published in September 2014, covering the period from June 2012 to July 2014.

3.13

The *Transport for Canberra Report Card* (September 2014) does not refer to, or report directly against, the Monitoring and Reporting Framework (measures and targets) articulated in *Transport for Canberra*, although various elements of the framework are referred to in the report. To demonstrate transparency and accountability for implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* policy and its supporting Actions, it is important that future *Transport for Canberra Report Cards* align with, and directly report against, the specified monitoring and reporting

3.15

framework.

Audit Office analysis of data currently available to the ACT Government regarding progress against the performance measures and targets for reporting on implementation of *Transport for Canberra* initiatives set out in the policy document shows that the ACT Government is unable to report on:

- changes to mode share, e.g. changes from the use of car to public or sustainable transport, because data relied upon is five-year Australian Census of Population and Housing (Australian Census) data. The last Australian Census was conducted in 2011 and data from the 2016 Australian Census will not be available until 2017. Work on developing an alternative proxy measure for use of public transport has not yet been completed;
- progress in achieving sustainable travel for all trips in the ACT (not just journeys to and from work) because a base-line and a method for calculating this measure has not yet been completed; and
- transport network performance, including travel time by mode and wait time connections at stations, because a base-line and method for calculating the average number of trips per day per person has not yet been established nor has a method been designed to determine average wait time for connections.

An analysis of journey to work mode share information shows that:

3.23

- the 2011 target of 9.0 percent for Canberrans using public transport to travel to work was not achieved as only 7.8 percent used public transport. Although the target was not achieved there was an increase between 2001 and 2006 from 6.7 percent to 7.9 percent, but this declined marginally in 2011 to 7.8 percent; and
- the 2011 target for cycling and walking to work, 5.0 percent and 6.0 percent respectively were not achieved. Rather, there was a very small increase in these modes; between 2001 and 2006 cycling increased from 2.3 to 2.8 percent and walking increased from 4.1 to 4.9 percent.

Without up-to-date comprehensive household travel to work data it is not possible to assess whether *Transport for Canberra* is effective in encouraging a change in travel behaviour towards greater use of sustainable transport (including the use of public transport). A household travel survey can provide detailed data to complement that available from the five yearly Australian Census and other means.

3.30

Progress towards achievement of the mode share change targets identified in *Transport for Canberra* cannot currently be measured by the ACT Government. However, the Environment and Planning Directorate advised the ACT Government in November 2014 that the targets are challenging. It was evident in 2012, in the process used for developing *Transport for Canberra*, that achieving the 2016 and 2026 targets was likely to remain a major challenge, and may not be achievable without significant effort and resources. As the mode share change targets may not be realistic stretch targets but an aspiration, they need to be examined and changed, if needed.

3.37

In reporting progress against the guiding principles (strategic goals) identified in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> , the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) identified an objective for each principle and reported an assessment on implementation; achieved, is on track to be achieved or needs improvement. It is not clear why or how the particular objective for each principle was selected for reporting (they were not identified as such in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> ). The selected objectives included in the report card highlighted only a single aspect of the generally broad principle being assessed. The Environment and Planning Directorate has advised that the particular objectives were selected to simplify the presentation of broad and overlapping information and avoid unnecessarily lengthy status reporting.	3.48
The Audit Office's analysis of the <i>Transport for Canberra Report Card</i> (September 2014) indicates that reporting to the community on the implementation of Actions set out in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> has been difficult due to the nature of the Actions. Furthermore, some of the reporting is inaccurate as:	3.50
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some Actions that have not been completed have been reported as being 'Achieved', and</li> <li>• some Actions reported as being 'On track to be achieved' were actually not achieved; many Actions were reported in the report card as 'On track to be achieved', yet no evidence is presented to support this claim.</li> </ul>	
In addition, where an Action is assessed by agencies as not being progressed as required, it has been reported as 'Needs improvement'. This comment is not a statement of progress but one of direction. Furthermore, it is not clear what actually 'Needs improvement' to achieve the outcome expected from the particular Action.	3.51
Some of the key commitments in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> that are critical to the success of the Frequent Network are not being achieved. These include:	3.52
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'embedding the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan', and 'working with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan' - these components of the Frequent Network Action (<i>Public transport - Action 2</i>) have not been achieved yet are reported as 'Achieved';</li> <li>• 'include seven day network in ACTION enterprise bargaining agreement in 2013' (<i>Public transport - Action 9</i>) – this has not been achieved yet it is reported as 'Needs Improvement' and given current circumstances is unlikely to be achieved;</li> <li>• 'adopt an operating speed standard of 40km/hr for the Rapid Service to guide infrastructure investment development' (<i>Public transport - Action 17</i>) - this is reported as 'Needs improvement' and actual speeds are far lower than the standard at 32 km/h; and</li> <li>• 'grow the bus fleet to respond to patronage growth and deliver the Frequent Network, and ensure new bus fleet minimises greenhouse gas, maximises patronage potential, and obtains value for money for</li> </ul>	

the Territory' (*Public transport - Action 4*) – this is reported as 'On track to be achieved' yet there are issues with the current replacement program. The ACTION bus fleet replacement program will need to be accelerated to redress the slow progress achieved over recent years to replace the many vehicles in the fleet that do not meet standards required under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and to ensure 80 percent of the bus fleet meets disability standards by the end of 2017.

In October 2014 the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate completed the *Network Review*; a review of Network 14 with reference to the replaced Network 12. The Review noted the significance of the Frequent Network, observing that 40 percent of weekday journeys in 2014 were made on services in rapid corridors, although these services accounted for only 24 percent of vehicle kilometres and 22 percent of vehicle hours.

3.58

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate's comparative study of Network 12 and Network 14 (the *Network Review*) assessed the performance of the public transport system, and provided quantitative support for the Network 14 revisions to the networks. The study shows a benefit in shifting resources to services on the Frequent Network. The study identified risks to network performance (for example, the effect of forcing transfers on patrons who have grown used to through-routing) and made several recommendations aimed at encouraging patronage.

3.63

Through data available from MyWay, as well as other information management systems including NXTBUS, HASTUS and netBI, the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate can isolate routes and services that comprise the Frequent Network and monitor and review their performance. To date, however, network analysts have not specifically monitored or reviewed the performance of the Frequent Network. Doing so would provide a stronger basis on which to develop and implement the Frequent Network as a key deliverable from *Transport for Canberra*.

3.67

The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) considered ACTION's future bus fleet and depot requirements and identified a need for the ACTION bus fleet to grow at approximately nine buses per year to 2031 and for additional bus depot facilities.

3.78

The *Expenditure Review* (March 2015) undertaken by MR Cagney identified that the 16 percent mode share target for public transport journey to work trips in 2026 was 'plausible but ambitious' but that a significant increase in buses was needed to meet the target. The Review also identified that a total of 1,007 buses would be needed by ACTION in 2031 (915 of which would be needed to service the peak AM period) to meet future demand and the journey to work target. This significantly exceeds the estimate of 562 buses identified in the *Future Facilities Masterplan*, completed five months earlier in November 2014. The Review also identified the need for a total of five bus depots in the future (one more than was forecast in the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014)).

3.84

## ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK

The ACT Government's transport planning and land use strategies and plans emphasise the interdependence of land use and transport planning. Most recently, *Transport for Canberra* has provided a strong and transparent policy regarding the importance and function of the Frequent Network in providing an 'effective public transport system [that is] fast, frequent, reliable, comfortable and safe for passengers'. Its delivery requires the implementation of various interdependent transport and land use policies and the effective management of risks in an integrated and targeted manner.

Paragraph

4.4

The primary assumptions underlying *Transport for Canberra* relate to patronage. *Transport for Canberra* assumes that a network of frequent corridor services will create sufficient incentives to redirect development towards these corridors and away from lower density areas, if supported by other policies around the release of land. In this respect, the provision of a higher quality transport network represents a driver of transport supply and a driver of demand for land while policies around land use represent drivers of demand for transport and of supply for land.

4.7

Other assumptions and risks around the development of the Frequent Network revolve around planning assumptions and operational assumptions, namely whether:

4.8

- demand will follow the growth path assumed in planning documents such as *Transport for Canberra* (planning assumptions); and
- the network will be able to grow at the rate needed to support the successful delivery of the Frequent Network (operational assumptions).

Growth in suburban areas presents a challenge to a public transport system, which must seek to balance increased coverage and patronage with network efficiency. Providing services in areas where there is low current patronage but high potential (such as a greenfield development destined to be on the Frequent Network) may help to establish patterns of usage and increase the viability of the services, but it is expensive. Until patronage increases to a sustainable level it is an inefficient use of limited resources.

4.17

The presumption of a direct, and positive, correlation between transport developments and demand for higher density land usage is contestable. Dr Clifton, a transport expert engaged by the Audit Office, has advised that it is possible to create higher density urban development that does not lead to a significantly greater demand for sustainable transport.

4.21

The ACT Government has not yet implemented the commitment in *Transport for Canberra* to update the Territory Plan to embed the rapid corridors, nor have the rapid corridors been embedded within the National Capital Plan. Embedding the transit corridors in these high level plans is a means of reducing the risk that development of new residential and employment areas will be inappropriately located and therefore not serviced by high quality public transport, i.e. the

4.26

Frequent Network.

There is risk associated with the decision to delay implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* initiative to embed the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan, and to work with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan, pending completion of the Light Rail Master Plan. While this continues to be delayed opportunities may be lost for fostering needed land use changes. When constructed and commissioned, the light rail will become part of the Frequent Network. However, a very significant part of the Frequent Network may never be served by light rail. Accordingly, those parts of the Frequent Network that have certainty should be embedded as a matter of high priority.

4.28

*Transport for Canberra* commits the ACT Government to providing a high frequency network, seeking to maximise patronage and a reliable coverage network (which is still at relatively frequent 60 minute intervals or better) for at least 95 percent of Canberran households. Because coverage services must compete with the Frequent Network for government public transport investment, catering to both inevitably means compromises are necessary. There is a cost to maintaining the Coverage Network, which represents a challenge to the expansion of the Frequent Network.

4.42

There are key operational assumptions and risks related to ACTION and its capacity to deliver the Frequent Network. Three key assumptions relate to:

4.43

- the availability of drivers;
- the availability of buses; and
- the availability of depots.

Thirty three (33) of the 53 routes on the Frequent Network are now aligned. Further progress is constrained by the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, which was approved by the Fair Work Commission in May 2014 and has a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2017. Unless the parties agree to vary the current Agreement, there is a risk that this matter may not be finalised until 2017.

4.48

*Transport for Canberra* recognises that ACTION's fleet will need to grow to implement the Frequent Network, but there is no reference to the extent of growth required.

4.51

The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified that 'to meet the targets of the Transport for Canberra policy, the bus fleet will need to grow at approximately nine buses per annum until 2031' to a total of 562 buses (from a current total fleet of 411).

4.58

ACTION's Fleet Replacement Program was endorsed in 2008 with an agreement for the *replacement* of 364 buses between 2007 and 2022. Fleet replacement is focused on aligning the fleet to achieve accessibility requirements under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). There is no growth—net increase in vehicles or service capacity—built into this program.

4.59

Implementation of the Frequent Network under <i>Transport for Canberra</i> was expected to lead to an increase in the provision of services by ACTION and increased demand for services. It was expected that the bus fleet would need to grow to meet the additional demand. However, ACTION's fleet replacement strategy (endorsed in 2008 by the ACT Government) is focused on replacing vehicles to meet legislated disability requirements, and maintaining the fleet rather than growing it. A Fleet Replacement Program developed in October 2014 for consideration by the ACT Government has not been approved.	4.64
The March 2015 ACTION Expenditure Review estimates that by 2031 the peak requirement for buses by ACTION would be 915 buses (1,007 buses with 10 per cent spares). This is an increase of 445 buses to be purchased over the estimate of 562 buses identified in the <i>Future Facilities Masterplan</i> (November 2014).	4.68
The <i>Future Facilities Masterplan</i> (November 2014) considered ACTION's future bus fleet and depot requirements. The Masterplan identified a need for additional or expanded depot facilities to maintain the growth in the bus fleet over and above the expected future facilities at Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden.	4.71
In light of the increased number of buses forecast as necessary to meet the <i>Transport for Canberra</i> requirements by 2031, the <i>Expenditure Review</i> notes that a total of five depots will be required in the future. This represents an additional depot, over the four that were forecast five months earlier in the November 2014 <i>Future Facilities Masterplan</i> .	4.72
The <i>ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis</i> (February 2010) identified that there was a strong case for the implementation of the Frequent Network. This analysis was cited in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> . In referring to the strong benefit-to-cost ratio expected of the Frequent Network, however, <i>Transport for Canberra</i> does not acknowledge it was based on a bus-only service, or that it is very sensitive to achievements in mode shift from private car to public transport. The introduction of light rail into the Frequent Network will affect the potential costs and benefits of the Frequent Network. Furthermore, any failure to achieve the target mode shares will have an adverse effect. An updated cost benefit analysis is needed for the Frequent Network that reflects its operation by both buses and light rail, revised estimates regarding investments in new buses and an extra depot to meet future peak demands and risks associated with the achievement of mode share changes expected under <i>Transport for Canberra</i> .	4.83
The Environment and Planning Directorate advised that the Capital Metro Light Rail Project 'has its own comprehensive business case, which took into account both transport and urban development benefits' and that 'another update of cost-benefit analysis on the frequent network would have very little value.' However, the Business Case that was prepared in relation to the Capital Metro Light Rail Project (publicly released in October 2014) included cost-benefit analysis in relation to only the implementation of the light rail in the Civic to Gungahlin corridor. The <i>ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis</i> (February 2010) considered the Frequent Network across Canberra as a whole and	4.84

there would be merit in updating this analysis, which is broader than that for the Capital Metro Light Rail Project in the Civic to Gungahlin corridor.

Integration of light rail in the Frequent Network is considered in the Light Rail Master Plan, which was released for public comment in late October 2015. This plan was initially envisaged to be delivered in mid 2015. 4.86

## **Recommendations**

- 1.2 Of the seven recommendations, four are considered to be a high priority; these are Recommendations 1, 2, 5 and 6.

<b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>
<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should improve governance and administration of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> and therefore the Frequent Network by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) developing a short-term (e.g. 5 year) whole-of-government public transport implementation plan with specific targets and timelines;</li><li>b) identifying an appropriate whole-of-government group and charging it with responsibility for coordinating, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i>, including and especially the delivery of the Frequent Network;</li><li>c) establishing an accountability mechanism so the whole-of-government group undertakes its responsibilities; and</li><li>d) developing an aggregated cross-agency risk assessment and management mechanism for <i>Transport for Canberra</i>, including and especially for the delivery of the Frequent Network.</li></ul>		

<b>RECOMMENDATION 2</b>	<b>TRANSPORT FOR CANBERRA MONITORING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>
<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should improve reporting on the implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i>, in the annual Transport for Canberra Report Card by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) using the measures and targets identified in the <i>Transport for Canberra</i> Monitoring and Reporting Framework;</li> <li>b) developing the necessary baselines, measures and systems so that the required data can be collected, recorded and analysed; and</li> <li>c) all summary comments on progress being accurate, and including information that justifies claims of ‘On track to be achieved’; and specifying what ‘needs improvement’.</li> </ul>		
<b>RECOMMENDATION 3</b>		
<p><b>HOUSEHOLD TRAVEL SURVEY</b></p>		
<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should undertake a periodic household travel survey to provide detailed data on travel behaviours in the ACT and use the information to inform transport policies and their planning and performance measurement.</p>		
<b>RECOMMENDATION 4</b>		
<p><b>PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF FREQUENT NETWORK</b></p>		
<p>The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate should periodically review the performance of the Frequent Network using quantitative analysis of the data available from ACTION business systems including MyWay, HASTUS and NetBI to better inform overall management of the Frequent Network.</p>		
<b>RECOMMENDATION 5</b>		
<p><b>EMBEDDING TRANSPORT CORRIDORS IN URBAN PLANNING DOCUMENTS</b></p>		
<p><b>HIGH PRIORITY</b></p>		
<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should provide certainty with respect to the location of the Frequent Network by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) embedding its long-term corridors in the Territory Plan as a matter of priority; and</li> <li>b) working with the Australian Government to also embed these corridors in the National Capital Plan.</li> </ul>		

**RECOMMENDATION 6      ADDRESSING ACTION'S OPERATIONAL RISKS HIGH PRIORITY**

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (ACTION) should address key operational risks to the implementation of the Frequent Network by:

- a) identifying and providing options to the ACT Government for overcoming the adverse effects of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement on the ability of ACTION to manage in a more flexible manner to meet demand; and
- b) identifying and providing options to the ACT Government for funding an increase in bus numbers and expanding the number of depots. (This could be done as part of a short-term (e.g. 5 years) whole-of-government public transport implementation plan – refer to Recommendation 1).

**RECOMMENDATION 7      COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK**

The Environment and Planning Directorate should update its cost benefit analysis of the Frequent Network in light of revised assumptions associated with its delivery. In particular, the updated analysis should consider: the impact of the inclusion of the light rail into the Frequent Network; revised estimates regarding investments required in new buses and an extra depot to meet forecast future peak demands; and risks associated with the achievement of mode share changes expected under *Transport for Canberra*.

## Agencies' responses

The Environment and Planning Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, Capital Metro Agency and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate were provided with:

- a draft proposed report for comment. All comments were considered and required changes were reflected in the final proposed report, and
- a final proposed report for further comment. As part of this process the Environment and Planning Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, Capital Metro Agency and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate were also asked to provide comments for inclusion in the final report in the Summary chapter.

The Environment and Planning Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, Capital Metro Agency and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate did not provide comments for inclusion in the Summary chapter of this report. However, no matters regarding the factual accuracy of technical material in this report were brought to the attention of the Auditor-General.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

---

- 1.1 This chapter provides background information on the Frequent Network and presents the audit objective, scope, criteria, approach and method.

## Background

### Transport for Canberra

- 1.2 In March 2012 the ACT Government released *Transport for Canberra: Transport for a Sustainable City 2012-2031* (*Transport for Canberra*), a key policy document that ‘will be the foundation for transport planning for the next 20 years’. *Transport for Canberra* updated and replaced the ACT Government’s previous *Sustainable Transport Plan*, which was released in 2004.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.3 *Transport for Canberra* emphasises that there is an important link between the ACT’s transport planning and urban planning policies:

Transport for Canberra has been prepared in conjunction with the ACT Planning Strategy so important relationships between land use and transport can be used to support a shift to more sustainable transport and a more sustainable Canberra.
- 1.4 Both *Transport for Canberra* and the *ACT Planning Strategy* seek to achieve ‘more compact development around the centres, where residential, commercial, retail and recreational land uses mix together sensitively’. Importantly, these policy documents prioritise development along, and adjacent to, major transport corridors that connect the town centres (for example, Gungahlin to the City, Belconnen to the City and Tuggeranong to the City). The importance of these corridors is reflected in the commitment in *Transport for Canberra* to ‘embed the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan’ and to ‘work with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan’.
- 1.5 There are five broad components of *Transport for Canberra*:
  - public transport;
  - active travel;
  - roads, parking, vehicles and freight;
  - managing travel demand; and
  - monitoring and reporting.

---

<sup>2</sup> Dr Maxine Cooper was Director, Territory Planning, Urban Services in 2001. In this role, Dr Cooper was involved in transport planning. As an Executive Director, Enterprise Services, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate in 2006-2007, Dr Cooper had responsibility for ACTION.

The period covered by this audit is from 2012 to 2015 and the policy document of focus is Transport for Canberra which was released in March 2012.

1.6 *Transport for Canberra* also identifies six guiding principles that ‘guide the new transport policies and the 34 action items required to implement them’:

The following six principles guide the new transport policies and the 34 action items required to implement them, creating a transport system that:

1. is integrated with land use planning
2. makes active travel like walking and cycling the easy way to get around
3. provides sustainable travel options and reduces transport emissions
4. is safe for moving people however they get around
5. is accessible for everybody whatever their level of mobility at any time or place
6. is efficient and cost effective, providing value for money for the government, business and the community by managing travel demand across the whole transport system.

1.7 These guiding principles are also referred to in *Transport for Canberra* as strategic goals.

## Public Transport

1.8 *Transport for Canberra* identifies four objectives for public transport in the ACT:

- a frequent public transport network supported by services, planning, infrastructure, land supply and location of facilities;
- a public transport system that provides accessible mobility for everyone;
- a public transport network that maximises choice, with excellent options like Park and Ride and Bike and Ride; and
- a public transport system that is ready for the future, with smart systems (real time passenger information, journey planners and accessible information) and smart fleet, including clean buses and active consideration of light rail.

1.9 *Transport for Canberra* also includes specific mode share goals, including increasing the public transport share of all work trips to 10.5 percent by 2016 and 16 percent by 2026 (actual share in 2011 was 7.8 percent). The public transport network envisaged in *Transport for Canberra* has been ‘designed for the current bus-based fleet, but will be adaptable to, and supportive of, mass public transport technology like light rail, bus rapid transit or other technology’.

### *The Frequent Network*

1.10 The ACT's public transport network is made up of four types of services:

- rapid;
- frequent local;
- peak express; and
- coverage.

1.11 Table 1-1 describes these four different public transport service types.

**Table 1-1 Service types in the public transport network**

Service type	Frequency	Service span	Stopping pattern, catchment and speed standard	Purpose	Example in existing system
Rapid	15 minutes or better	All day and evening, 7 days a week	Widely spaced stations or major stops (500 – 2000m apart) Approx 40km/hr (including stops) Catchment: 750m – 1km from each stop/station	Public transport corridor, for all day, high speed travel across the city along dense corridors. Rapid services carry the majority of passengers, and can help achieve mode shift goals for work trips and associated emissions reductions.	Blue Rapid  Red Rapid
Frequent Local	15 minutes or better	All day and evening, 7 days a week	Local stops every 400 – 500m Approx 20km/hr (including stops) Catchment: up to 500m from each stop/station	Local services in areas of current or future denser development, including some group centres. A frequent local service can help create more active streets and further develop employment and residential density. This type of service will connect to rapid services at bus stations and town centre nodes for longer trips. Can drive patronage and help achieve mode shift goals.	Parliamentary Zone Frequent Network: the Gold line and Green line layer routes to create efficient frequency.
Peak express	Depends on demand in the peak between work/suburbs	Peak period only, peak direction only weekdays only	Long, non-stop segment to/from major employment destinations at peak. Speed is route specific, but routes will use regular arterial roads outside the normal bus network (e.g. Gungahlin Drive, Monaro Highway).	Direct service from residential or Park and Ride facility to major employment destinations to supplement rapid services.	Xpresso routes from suburbs to City and Parliamentary Zone.

Service type	Frequency	Service span	Stopping pattern, catchment and speed standard	Purpose	Example in existing system
Coverage	30 minutes or better by 2021 (see minimum coverage standard)	All day, with less frequent service at evenings and weekends	Local stops every 400 – 500m No speed standard Catchment: up to 500m from each stop/station	Local and feeder services in lower density areas away from the Frequent Network. These services provide local access and are generally provided for reasons of inclusion rather than patronage.	Local routes across suburban areas.

**Rapid + Frequent Local = Frequent Network**

<sup>(1)</sup> The Gold Line and Green Line branding of routes through the Parliamentary Triangle has been discontinued since publication of *Transport for Canberra* in 2012.

Source: *Transport for Canberra*, page 19

- 1.12 The Frequent Network comprises the rapid and frequent local service types and is a key feature of the public transport component of *Transport for Canberra* which states that the Frequent Network is intended to be:

... the backbone of an integrated transport system where the key message is ‘for access to fast, frequent and reliable public transport services, locate on the Frequent Network’.

- 1.13 The Frequent Network represents the public transport services operating on permanent public transport corridors at a frequency of 15 minutes or better. ‘Rapid’ services are on the corridors between town centres, and ‘frequent local’ services are in the areas of denser employment and residential development, including some group centres. The Frequent Network is thus a component of the public transport system that is described both geographically (by specific routes) and temporally (by the frequency of services).

- 1.14 *Transport for Canberra* includes maps of the Frequent Network, as it operated in 2012 (see Appendix A of this report), an Indicative Frequent Network map for 2016 (Appendix B) and a proposed Frequent Network for 2031 (Appendix C).

#### *Integration with Light Rail*

- 1.15 The ACT Government has committed to the construction of a light rail in the ACT. It has also created the Capital Metro Agency with a mandate to deliver the light rail project, known as Capital Metro, initially in the corridor from the City to Gungahlin along the Northbourne Avenue (part of the Frequent Network).

- 1.16 The initial Capital Metro light rail route represents a relatively small (geographically) part of the Frequent Network corridors, being only 12 kilometres (Northbourne Avenue, the Federal Highway, Flemington Road and Hibberson Street). When operational, the light rail route is expected to replace most bus services between Gungahlin and the City, and all bus services that travel along Northbourne Avenue.

## Audit objective and scope

- 1.17 The objective of the audit is to provide an independent opinion to the Legislative Assembly on the effectiveness of the delivery of the public transport Frequent Network.
- 1.18 The audit is focused on the activities of the Environment and Planning Directorate, the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and to a much lesser extent the Capital Metro Agency with respect to the governance and administration, planning and implementation of the Frequent Network.
- 1.19 In considering the delivery of the Frequent Network, the audit has also considered relevant aspects of *Transport for Canberra* that affect, or otherwise relate to, the delivery of the Frequent Network.

## Audit criteria, approach and method

- 1.20 The effectiveness of planning, governance and implementation arrangements for the public transport Frequent Network was considered using the following criteria:
  - Governance and administration — are there appropriate governance and administrative structures in place to deliver the Frequent Network?
  - Planning — are the planning assumptions that support the development of the Frequent Network justified?
  - Delivery — is the Frequent Network being delivered as planned - what progress has been made, and what work is yet to occur and in what time period? Have risks related to the delivery of the Frequent Network been identified and are they being managed?
  - Review and evaluation — are there appropriate review and evaluation mechanisms in place to measure the delivery and operation of the Frequent Network?
- 1.21 The audit adopted the Office's Performance Audit Methods and Practices (PAMPr) and related Policies, Practice Statements and Guidance Papers. These policies and practices have been designed to comply with the requirements of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* and relevant professional standards (including Auditing Standard ASAE 3500 – *Performance Engagements*).

**1.22 The audit approach and method involved:**

- a review of literature, and work undertaken by other audit offices to identify better practices;
- an identification and review of information and documentation including governance and accountability; and related policy, procedures, research, and reports;
- an identification and documentation of procedures and controls used to implement policies and guidelines and to ensure compliance with them; and
- interviews and discussions with key auditee staff and other stakeholders.

**Compliance with applicable Australian Auditing Standards and professional ethical pronouncements**

**1.23** Applicable requirements of Australian Auditing Standards and professional ethical pronouncements, including those relating to independence, were followed in the conduct of this audit.

**1.24** The following information draws attention to matters that were considered in assessing the independence of the Auditor-General, Dr Maxine Cooper, in relation to the matters considered during the audit.

**1.25** Dr Maxine Cooper was Director, Territory Planning, Urban Services in 2001. In this role, Dr Cooper was involved in transport planning. As an Executive Director, Enterprise Services, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate in 2006 - 2007, Dr Cooper had responsibility for ACTION.

**1.26** The period covered by this audit is from 2012 to 2015 and the policy document of focus is *Transport for Canberra* which was released in March 2012.

## 2 GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

---

- 2.1 This chapter considers the governance and administrative arrangements that support the delivery of the Frequent Network. It discusses:
- the roles and responsibilities of ACT Government agencies;
  - the *Transport for Canberra* policy document, including the identification and articulation of actions and deliverables;
  - cross-agency working groups associated with the delivery of transport planning activities and initiatives; and
  - ACT Government agencies' risk management.

### Summary

#### Conclusion

Governance and administrative arrangements associated with the delivery of *Transport for Canberra*, specifically the Frequent Network, are not effective. The Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group, which was established in June 2012 to oversee the implementation of *Transport for Canberra*, has not been effective in coordinating, monitoring or reporting on *Transport for Canberra*, including the Frequent Network. There is no evidence that two other inter-agency working groups, the Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group, which have since been cited as having oversight responsibility for the implementation of *Transport for Canberra*, have considered *Transport for Canberra* generally, or the Frequent Network.

Information in *Transport for Canberra* about deliverables associated with the Frequent Network, their sequencing and timeframe for implementation is very broad and lacks specificity. This presents a risk that the integration of needed actions by different agencies may not be effectively undertaken. Furthermore, having more measurable specific targets could assist in guiding the delivery of the Frequent Network.

There is no cross-agency aggregated risk assessment and management associated with the delivery of the Frequent Network (*or Transport for Canberra*) as a whole. Such an approach is needed so that all risk is managed, including and importantly that related to the interdependency of agency actions for delivering the Frequent Network effectively and efficiently.

## Key findings

	Paragraph
<i>Transport for Canberra</i> identifies linkages with policies, legislation and programs in a range of ACT Government agencies other than the three main agencies (Environment Planning and Development Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (and ACTION) and the Capital Metro Agency) who have direct responsibilities for specific aspects of public transport. This reflects the interdependency of transport policies with other ACT Government policies, legislation and programs. Often to achieve implementation of a transport policy it is necessary to concurrently achieve a planning policy and vice versa.	2.11
<i>Transport for Canberra</i> sets out many activities and initiatives under its 34 Actions which are to be implemented over timeframes ranging from two to ten years. Broad timeframes of two, five and ten years are specified for the delivery of the Frequent Network as a whole. These timeframes are too broad to guide the integration of the interdependent activities and initiatives or monitor short-term progress with respect to delivery. A supporting short-term (e.g. 5 year) whole-of-government implementation programming plan for progressively delivering the Frequent Network is needed. It could guide the development of agencies' annual budget bids so that these were appropriately timed with activities and initiatives being integrated.	2.22
The Transport Monitoring and Reporting Framework in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> could be improved through having detailed measures and more specific targets which are directly relevant to the 34 Actions, including the Frequent Network Action ( <i>Public transport - Action 2</i> ).	2.26
The Terms of Reference for the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group stated that it would convene every two months. Nine meetings have been held in the three years since the Group was formed in June 2012 (of a possible 18 meetings), and only four have taken place since June 2013. The Working Group has not met since December 2014.	2.34
The tracking report initially used by the Working Group to monitor progress against <i>Transport for Canberra</i> commitments focused its reporting on the 34 Actions included in the policy, and not on targets specifically discussed in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> for progress reporting. The exception reporting adopted a loosely defined 'traffic lights' approach that highlighted responsible officers' assessments of the status of progress in implementing the Actions but obscured the detail of what specifically had or had not been achieved to date, and potentially, the Working Group's awareness of emerging issues.	2.37

Notwithstanding that the release of an annual update report on Transport for Canberra is a required action specified in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> (Action 33), since the release of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> in March 2012 only one such report (the Transport for Canberra Report Card) has been released in September 2014.	2.39
Although the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group was an appropriate mechanism for overseeing and coordinating implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> commitments it did not meet as frequently as planned and the reports prepared for its consideration provided inadequate detail on progress towards implementation of all elements of the 34 Actions specified in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> . The Audit Office was advised in September 2015 that the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group was disbanded and its responsibility for the oversight, reporting and coordination of implementation of the 34 Actions contained within <i>Transport for Canberra</i> has been assumed by the Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group. However, these groups have not considered <i>Transport for Canberra</i> generally, or the Frequent Network specifically, since their establishment.	2.43
Three new sub-committees of Cabinet that have a direct connection to transport issues were convened in February 2015: the Transport Reform; Economic Growth and Urban Renewal; and Capital Metro committees. While the overlap in membership (Ministerial and official) of these sub-committees provides an opportunity for whole-of-government oversight, monitoring and review of public transport initiatives, there is a need for these high level committees to be supported by a working group focused on the implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> , including the Frequent Network. While this role could be undertaken by either or both of the Parking Coordination and Roads Coordination Groups these groups have not considered <i>Transport for Canberra</i> generally or the Frequent Network specifically in any of their meetings to date.	2.49
The risk register for the Environment and Planning Directorate's Strategic Planning Business Unit focuses on high-level organisational risks. It does not analyse and assess risks at a project or policy initiative level, such as the development and subsequent implementation of the <i>Transport for Canberra</i> policy, including the Frequent Network.	2.59
The risk management approach used by the Public Transport Division in the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate focuses on risks for all of its operations. The risk register does not include a specific reference to <i>Transport for Canberra</i> , including its public transport goals and targets, and lacks specificity with respect to the Frequent Network and its implementation.	2.73

The Capital Metro Agency's risk management is primarily focused on the delivery of light rail as a project. The risk register does not include a specific reference to <i>Transport for Canberra</i> or the significant public transport targets and goals in that policy, nor are the risks associated with the light rail integration into the Frequent Network stated.	2.76
There is no aggregated cross-agency risk assessment and management mechanism for public transport planning and management, or more specifically for implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> policy and actions, and achievement of its overall goals, including the delivery of the Frequent Network. The lack of an aggregated risk assessment for the delivery of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> presents a risk that the interdependencies of actions delivered by the different ACT Government agencies will not be recognised thereby compromising effective and efficient delivery .	2.80

## ACT Government roles and responsibilities

2.2 A range of ACT Government directorates have roles and responsibilities associated with the development and implementation of transport policies and initiatives. *Transport for Canberra* explicitly recognises this stating:

Transport for Canberra offers a whole-of-government response to the transport issues raised in ACT Government strategies on climate change and environment, planning, infrastructure and safety, health and physical activity, accessibility and social inclusion, and land release and master planning programs.

Responsibility for implementing Transport for Canberra's actions is shared across the directorates that form the ACT Public Service.

2.3 *Transport for Canberra* identifies that there are linkages with policies, legislation and programs in the following areas:

- ACT planning framework;
- climate change and environment;
- land release and master planning program;
- infrastructure and safety;
- accessibility and social inclusion; and
- health and physical activity.

- 2.4 ACT Government agencies with key responsibilities for transport initiatives are:
- the Environment and Planning Directorate;
  - the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate; and
  - the Capital Metro Agency.
- 2.5 The roles and responsibilities of various ACT Government agencies in relation to the development and implementation of transport policies and responsibilities are discussed in the following sections.

### **Environment and Planning Directorate**

- 2.6 The Environment and Planning Directorate is responsible for strategic land use and transport planning, and planning and the management of the Territory's development assessment processes. It has the lead role for developing the overall policy direction for transport in the ACT, including determining the location of the Frequent Network corridors. The Environment and Planning Directorate undertook the lead role in developing *Transport for Canberra* and a representative of the Directorate chaired the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group (refer to paragraphs 2.29 to 2.39).

### **Territory and Municipal Services Directorate**

- 2.7 The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate is responsible for municipal services and ACTION. It contributed to the development of the public transport aspects of *Transport for Canberra*, and has an ongoing role with respect to the planning and delivery of public transport. The Directorate engages with the Environment and Planning Directorate and the Land Development Agency (part of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate) with respect to land development activities and their integration with public transport services.
- 2.8 The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate's Public Transport Section is responsible for the administration of many aspects of transport for the ACT including:
- infrastructure management (Roads ACT has responsibility for the management, use and maintenance of the ACT roads, bridges, footpaths, traffic lights, street lighting and the stormwater infrastructure asset base);
  - public transport services (ACTION buses, including school bus services);
  - capital works design and delivery; and
  - transport reform options.

### **Capital Metro Agency**

- 2.9 The Capital Metro Agency is responsible for planning for the implementation of the light rail between Gungahlin and the City (and any further extensions approved over time) which, when completed, will form part of the Frequent Network.

## Other ACT Government agencies

2.10 Other ACT Government agencies with responsibilities for transport initiatives include:

- the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, which provides strategic advice and support on transport policy, financial and economic matters and whole of government issues. The Land Development Agency, within the directorate, develops and sells greenfield and urban renewal land projects on behalf of the ACT Government;
- the Education and Training Directorate, which coordinates with the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate to provide public transport school services and related infrastructure and through various programs supports active travel initiatives;
- the Community Service Directorate, which works with other directorates to develop and deliver socially inclusive public transport policies; and
- the Health Directorate, which is responsible for supporting and promoting various active transport initiatives.

2.11 *Transport for Canberra* identifies linkages with policies, legislation and programs in a range of ACT Government agencies other than the three main agencies (Environment Planning and Development Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (and ACTION) and the Capital Metro Agency) who have direct responsibilities for specific aspects of public transport. This reflects the interdependency of transport policies with other ACT Government policies, legislation and programs. Often to achieve implementation of a transport policy it is necessary to concurrently achieve a planning policy and vice versa.

2.12 Given the number of ACT Government agencies whose functions affect transport planning and delivery, effective cross-agency governance and administrative arrangements are essential for the delivery of *Transport for Canberra*.

## Transport for Canberra

2.13 *Transport for Canberra* was released by the ACT Government in March 2012 as ‘the foundation for transport planning for the next 20 years.’ *Transport for Canberra* identifies a range of commitments and actions broadly summarised in Chapter 7 of the document as 34 Actions. *Transport for Canberra* states that the ACT Government will ‘progressively deliver transport improvements each year in the context of demand for services and infrastructure across all sectors’. Some broad activity and timeline targets (two, five and ten-year timeframes from 2012) have been established for the 34 Actions.

2.14 Nowhere in *Transport for Canberra*, including in its 34 Actions, is there a specific mention of budgetary matters, although the observation is made that the ACT Government:

... will examine the most cost effective ways to meet the targets and deliver the [34 Actions] within Transport for Canberra. This will mean some changes in the way our transport services operate (particularly in public transport), and a change in the balance of funding for transport to focus on more sustainable ways to manage travel demand. We will also consider the financial and economic costs and benefits of infrastructure and recurrent initiatives to deliver the Transport for Canberra actions ...

### ***Relevant Transport for Canberra Actions***

2.15 Many of the 34 Actions specified in *Transport for Canberra* are multi-faceted, meaning there is more than one activity, output or outcome involved. For example, *Public transport - Action 8* is:

Adopt interim minimum coverage standards for public transport services and finalise the standards by 2013 following an analysis of MyWay data and an audit of walking and cycling connections to the public transport network.

2.16 To fully complete this requires completion of the following activities:

- adoption of interim minimum coverage standards;
- analysis of MyWay data (MyWay is the ticketing system for ACTION buses, which is capable of producing some data on the use of ACTION buses by patrons);
- an audit of walking and cycling connections to the public transport network;
- development of ‘final’ coverage standards by 2013; and
- adoption of the final coverage standards.

2.17 The way that Action 8 is presented appears to require all activities to be completed by 2013, to enable finalisation of minimum coverage standards for public transport services, yet Action 8 is shown with timeline targets for two, five and ten years, suggesting that it is an ongoing program of activity. It is unclear, then, which activity required under the Action should be completed by when.

2.18 *Transport for Canberra* identifies the development and implementation of the Frequent Network as *Public transport - Action 2*<sup>3</sup>, described as follows:

Adopt the Frequent Network of public transport services to guide planning and design of public transport services, public transport and active travel infrastructure, land supply programs, urban development and location of facilities. This includes:

- a) embedding the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan
- b) working with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan

---

<sup>3</sup> In this report, *Public transport – Action 2* will also be referred to as the Frequent Network Action.

- c) progressively developing the public transport network to implement the Frequent Network corridors and routes in annual reviews
  - d) through the implementation of the ACT Planning Strategy, identifying and delivering transit oriented developments on the Frequent Network, and expanding the frequent local network if supported by appropriate land use change
  - e) planning the road network of new areas to facilitate the operation of the Frequent Network, including straight and direct collector roads, and roads connecting adjacent suburbs
  - f) including queue jumps, coordinated traffic signals, and public transport priority measures in all upgrades, redesigns or new works on rapid corridors
  - g) constructing new bus stations and major stops and auditing existing interchanges.
- 2.19 As discussed in paragraph 3.3, there are two maps in *Transport for Canberra* showing an indicative Frequent Network for 2016 and a potential Frequent Network for 2031. These maps show the expected geographic growth of the Frequent Network over the periods to 2016, and 2031 (refer to Appendix B and Appendix C). These maps represent the development of the public transport system envisaged by the ACT Government in *Transport for Canberra*, which was based on existing services as at June 2012, noting that:
- The maps ... show the current bus network, a possible 2016 bus network, and a possible 2031 bus network. The red and orange lines—the Frequent Network—remain fixed over the whole time, but the coverage services will inevitably grow and change as our city changes.
- 2.20 *Transport for Canberra* indicates that the Frequent Network will be progressively introduced over years. A *Summary of Actions* table in Chapter 7 of *Transport for Canberra* identifies only overall timeframes (of two, five and ten years) for the implementation of the Frequent Network Action. There is no detail, however, on when the seven different parts of the Frequent Network Action are to be delivered including, for example, the sequencing of those that are interdependent.
- 2.21 In this circumstance, both part (a) ‘embedding the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan’ and part (g) ‘constructing new bus stations and major stops and auditing existing interchanges’ appear to have two, five and ten year timeframes for implementation. However, it would seem prudent to first embed the corridors in the Territory Plan to provide certainty on their locations before investing in new bus stations.
- 2.22 *Transport for Canberra* sets out many activities and initiatives under its 34 Actions which are to be implemented over timeframes ranging from two to ten years. Broad timeframes of two, five and ten years are specified for the delivery of the Frequent Network as a whole. These timeframes are too broad to guide the integration of the interdependent activities and initiatives or monitor short-term progress with respect to delivery. A supporting short-term (e.g. 5 year) whole-of-government implementation programming plan for progressively delivering the Frequent Network is needed. It could guide the

development of agencies' annual budget bids so that these were appropriately timed with activities and initiatives being integrated.

### **Monitoring and reporting progress on implementation**

2.23 Chapter 6 of *Transport for Canberra* describes the ACT Government's intended approach to monitoring and reporting progress on the implementation of *Transport for Canberra*. It includes a table of nine performance measures, targets associated with each performance measure, and detail on how each will be measured. Some measures and targets are vague. For example, the measure 'Integrated transport and land use planning' has the target 'See ACT Planning Strategy' and the policy states that it will be measured 'Through ACT Planning Strategy'. Similarly, the measure 'Safe transport system' directs the reader to the ACT Road Safety Strategy for a target.

2.24 There are two targets specified in the 'Transport network performance' measure relevant to the Frequent Network:

Average wait time for connections to the Frequent Network at stations:

- By 2013, average wait time for connections from coverage [service] to frequent service - 7.5 minutes; from frequent service to coverage service - 15 minutes.
- By 2016, average wait time for connections from coverage [service] to frequent service - 5 minutes; from frequent service to coverage service - 10 minutes.

2.25 While these are relevant measures, given the importance of the Frequent Network, it would be instructive to have additional targets and measures that reflect progress over time in delivering and operating the network. The two current targets could be complemented with additional specific targets and measures related to other important factors such as travel time between key destinations, reliability of service and servicing of households within specific distances from the corridors.

2.26 The Transport Monitoring and Reporting Framework in *Transport for Canberra* could be improved through having detailed measures and more specific targets which are directly relevant to the 34 Actions, including the Frequent Network Action (*Public transport - Action 2*).

RECOMMENDATION 1	GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	HIGH PRIORITY
<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should improve governance and administration of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> and therefore the Frequent Network by:</p> <p>a) developing a short-term (e.g. 5 year) whole-of-government public transport implementation plan with specific targets and timelines;</p>		

## Whole-of-government oversight of public transport initiatives

- 2.27 Given the number of ACT Government agencies associated with the planning and implementation of public transport initiatives, each of which has differing core roles and responsibilities, it is important that these initiatives are integrated through there being a means to provide whole-of-government oversight, monitoring and review of public transport initiatives.
- 2.28 Whole-of-government oversight, monitoring and review of *Transport for Canberra* was initially planned to be undertaken through the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group. The Audit Office was advised that oversight on implementation of *Transport for Canberra* is now to be undertaken through meetings of the Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group; inter-agency groups that have been established to support the roles of the Parking Coordinator General and Roads Coordinator General.

### Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group

- 2.29 The Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group was convened in June 2012 at the request of the then Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development. It was chaired by the Deputy Director General, Environment and Planning Directorate and had representatives from all ACT Government directorates.
- 2.30 The Terms of Reference for the Working Group stated:
- The group will be responsible for the oversight, reporting and coordination of implementation of the thirty-four [Actions] contained within *Transport for Canberra*, which relate to:
- public transport;
  - active travel;
  - road transport and fleet;
  - travel demand management; and
  - monitoring and reporting.
- 2.31 The Working Group reported to the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development via the Chair. The Chair of the Working Group was also responsible for briefing the Strategic Board, by exception, on matters arising from the Working Group.
- 2.32 The Terms of Reference for the Group also state that the group was to meet every second month to report and collaborate on strategies to deliver actions in *Transport for Canberra*.
- 2.33 The Working Group first met on 25 June 2012. At this meeting the Group decided to discuss issues on an ‘exception reporting’ basis.

### Frequency of meetings

2.34 The Terms of Reference for the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group stated that it would convene every two months. Nine meetings have been held in the three years since the Group was formed in June 2012 (of a possible 18 meetings), and only four have taken place since June 2013. The Working Group has not met since December 2014.

### Monitoring and review of Transport for Canberra transport initiatives

- 2.35 The Audit Office reviewed the minutes of the Working Group meetings to understand its activities in monitoring and reviewing *Transport for Canberra* actions. The Working Group sought to achieve this through two different processes:
- use of a tracking report; and
  - preparation of an annual Transport for Canberra Report Card.
- 2.36 The Working Group initially used a 'tracking report' to monitor and review progress against *Transport for Canberra* Actions. Meetings were scheduled for an hour, and the tracking report was circulated prior to the meetings for completion by the responsible officers. Most actions were classified as 'on track' from the outset and remained so up to November 2013, which was the last time that the tracking report was prepared.
- 2.37 The tracking report initially used by the Working Group to monitor progress against *Transport for Canberra* commitments focused its reporting on the 34 Actions included in the policy, and not on targets specifically discussed in *Transport for Canberra* for progress reporting. The exception reporting adopted a loosely defined 'traffic lights' approach that highlighted responsible officers' assessments of the status of progress in implementing the Actions but obscured the detail of what specifically had or had not been achieved to date, and potentially, the Working Group's awareness of emerging issues.
- 2.38 *Transport for Canberra* included the requirement for the release of an 'annual *Transport for Canberra* update report from 2012-13, and [the requirement to] review and update *Transport for Canberra* in five years' (*Monitoring and reporting action - Action 33*). In early 2014, the Working Group discontinued preparation of the tracking report on the grounds that it 'was not a useful way to track progress', and instead focused oversight on preparing and updating the Transport for Canberra Report Card to address the requirement in Action 33 for an update report.
- 2.39 Notwithstanding that the release of an annual update report on Transport for Canberra is a required action specified in *Transport for Canberra* (Action 33), since the release of *Transport for Canberra* in March 2012 only one such report (the Transport for Canberra Report Card) has been released in September 2014.

## Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group

- 2.40 The Audit Office was advised in September 2015 that whole-of-government oversight of the implementation of *Transport for Canberra* has been assumed by the Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group. The Parking Coordination Group was established in November 2013 and the Roads Coordination Group in March 2015, to support the roles of the Parking Coordinator General and Roads Coordinator General respectively.
- 2.41 Furthermore, the Audit Office was also advised that many of the issues that were within the scope of the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group were also of interest and relevance to the Parking Coordination Group and there was potential duplication of activity. The Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group has not met since December 2014, with responsibility for oversight of *Transport for Canberra* being assumed by these groups. Given the common membership of these groups, they meet consecutively on the same day on a monthly basis.
- 2.42 Between December 2014 and August 2015, according to documented minutes, the Parking Coordination Group has met eight times and the Roads Coordination Group has met six times. A review of the minutes for each of these groups shows:
- the Parking Coordination Group has been almost completely focused on parking matters since its inception;
  - the Roads Coordination Group has been primarily focused on road construction and implementation issues, as well as other municipal services and assets, since its inception; and
  - there is no evidence that *Transport for Canberra* generally, or the Frequent Network component of *Transport for Canberra* specifically, has been considered by either of the groups.
- 2.43 Although the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group was an appropriate mechanism for overseeing and coordinating implementation of *Transport for Canberra* commitments it did not meet as frequently as planned and the reports prepared for its consideration provided inadequate detail on progress towards implementation of all elements of the 34 Actions specified in *Transport for Canberra*. The Audit Office was advised in September 2015 that the Transport for Canberra Implementation Working Group was disbanded and its responsibility for the oversight, reporting and coordination of implementation of the 34 Actions contained within *Transport for Canberra* has been assumed by the Parking Coordination Group and Roads Coordination Group. However, these groups have not considered *Transport for Canberra* generally, or the Frequent Network specifically, since their establishment.

## Sub-Committees of Cabinet

- 2.44 In February 2015, three new sub-committees of Cabinet were established to progress significant transport-related initiatives, policies and projects:
- Transport Reform Cabinet Sub-committee;
  - Economic Growth and Urban Renewal Cabinet Sub-committee; and
  - Social Inclusion and Equality Cabinet Sub-committee.
- 2.45 In addition, the Capital Metro Sub-committee has also been meeting since December 2012.
- 2.46 Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate guidance states that sub-committees of Cabinet may be formed to:
- ... provide a forum for ideas and exchange between Ministers and officials on key government priorities. The aim is to allow early Ministerial input into policy development and to ensure that items which are brought to Cabinet are informed by prior consideration by Ministers. ... The Sub-committees are also a forum for additional accountability regarding implementation of the Government's key priorities.
- 2.47 The sub-committees offer a high-level governance mechanism to oversee the development and implementation of strategies aimed at achieving key government priorities. A common theme in the terms of reference for the sub-committees is the statement that 'the key focus ... will be to serve as an accountability mechanism to oversight project delivery risk'.
- 2.48 Furthermore the terms of reference for the sub-committees state:
- The Sub-committee[s] will provide an opportunity to consider issues which have cross portfolio implications in a single forum and to test new approaches and innovations in a coordinated manner.
- 2.49 Three new sub-committees of Cabinet that have a direct connection to transport issues were convened in February 2015: the Transport Reform; Economic Growth and Urban Renewal; and Capital Metro committees. While the overlap in membership (Ministerial and official) of these sub-committees provides an opportunity for whole-of-government oversight, monitoring and review of public transport initiatives, there is a need for these high level committees to be supported by a working group focused on the implementation of *Transport for Canberra*, including the Frequent Network. While this role could be undertaken by either or both of the Parking Coordination and Roads Coordination Groups these groups have not considered *Transport for Canberra* generally or the Frequent Network specifically in any of their meetings to date.

RECOMMENDATION 1	GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	HIGH PRIORITY
	<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should improve governance and administration of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> and therefore the Frequent Network by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) identifying an appropriate whole-of-government group and charging it with responsibility for coordinating, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i>, including and especially the delivery of the Frequent Network;</li> <li>c) establishing an accountability mechanism so the whole-of-government group undertakes its responsibilities;</li> </ul>	

## Risk management

- 2.50 Risk management is a core business practice, often aligned with strategic planning, that can contribute progressively to organisational performance and improvement by providing management with a greater insight into risks and their impact. Risk management can be applied to all levels of an organisation, in the strategic and operational contexts, to specific projects, decisions and recognised risk areas.
- 2.51 The Audit Office examined risk management activities for public transport planning undertaken by the following directorates:
- Environment and Planning Directorate, through the Strategic Planning Division;
  - Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, predominantly through the Public Transport Division (which includes ACTION); and
  - Capital Metro Authority.

### The Environment and Planning Directorate

- 2.52 The Environment and Planning Directorate's Risk Management Policy includes an analysis of the Directorate's operating environment and an assessment of strategic risks.
- 2.53 Strategic risks are assessed at a high level across the Directorate, as are proposed risk treatments. All strategic risks are rated as either 'high' or 'medium'. For example, the strategic risk of 'inability to achieve key initiatives or objectives because of ineffective engagement with stakeholders' is seen as a high risk. The proposed treatment is 'because of the level of the risk, it will be managed through normal business processes' and 'promote consultations and engagement with the community and key stakeholders, including monitoring, reporting and early mediation.'

- 2.54 The Environment and Planning Directorate's strategic risk assessment is supported by assessments for each business unit. The Risk Management Policy outlines responsibilities for risk management and a process for applying the policy. Business units are required to identify, assess and manage risks in their specific area of operations. Risks are broadly categorised as strategic, policy and program, resource management or project risks.
- 2.55 In accordance with the Directorate's Risk Management Policy, a formal risk assessment should be undertaken in:
- ... the development and implementation of new, or changes to, policies, programs and services, including new policies and procedures, new strategies and activities, changes to levels of activity, potentially sensitive issues which are likely to have a significant impact on [the Directorate].
- 2.56 The Risk and Risk Treatment Plan for the Strategic Planning Business Unit identifies eight risks including 'Failure of timely delivery of major high profile projects and interdependency projects' and 'Failure to clearly communicate to the Government resulting in advice not being implemented'. Both of these risks are identified as High and as at December 2014 their status is identified as 'On track'.
- 2.57 The Strategic Planning Business Unit's risk management process does not extend to analysis at a more operational level, such as for major projects or policy initiatives. For example, the significant work undertaken in developing the policy that became *Transport for Canberra* and in overseeing its implementation and subsequent reporting and review is not separately recognised as a risk and monitored and reported on as such. Accordingly, no risk assessment has been conducted by the Environment and Planning Directorate with respect to the implementation of *Transport for Canberra* policy initiatives, including the Frequent Network.
- 2.58 In October 2014, the Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Auditor General released a jointly prepared Better Practice Guide on the *Successful Implementation of Policy Initiatives*. The guide states:
- Successful implementation [of policy initiatives] relies on the identification and management of risk. A robust risk management framework will promote accurate, well informed judgements and mitigation strategies. The analysis of risks should commence as the policy is being developed and should continue through the implementation.
- 2.59 The risk register for the Environment and Planning Directorate's Strategic Planning Business Unit focuses on high-level organisational risks. It does not analyse and assess risks at a project or policy initiative level, such as the development and subsequent implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* policy, including the Frequent Network.
- 2.60 There would be benefit in Environment and Planning Directorate adapting its risk management approach to specifically recognise the importance of robust risk management at the major project/policy initiative level to facilitate successful development, implementation of policy.

## Territory and Municipal Services Directorate Public Transport Business Risk Register

- 2.61 The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate's Risk Management Framework states that 'business units and divisions will be responsible for implementing their own risk management plans based on their specific needs'. Consistent with this approach:
- ... Business units need to identify and communicate risks where they may affect the operations of the unit or other business units, sometimes external to the same division or Directorate. This is increasingly important within government where the focus is on outcomes that may require coordination of services by more than one business unit or agency.
- 2.62 Similarly, divisions within the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate are required to identify and manage risks specific to the operations of the division or that are of 'strategic importance to the division and its alignment to Directorate and Territory strategies'.
- 2.63 The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate's Public Transport Division includes the ACTION business unit. The Division's risk register focuses mainly on ACTION.
- 2.64 Although *Transport for Canberra* has defined the Frequent Network and Coverage Networks separately, and directs focus to the Frequent Network, ACTION's focus is largely operational and on managing an existing (and generally stable) public transport system as a whole. ACTION makes no distinction between the Frequent Network and the Coverage Networks, and its analysis of risks follows a similar pattern. Accordingly, the risks reported in the risk register are applicable to the system as a whole, including the Frequent Network.
- 2.65 The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate Public Transport Division risk register has identified ten risks. These are shown in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1 TAMS Public Transport Business Risk Register**

	Classification	Risk	Original risk rating	Residual risk
1	Financial	ACTION will exceed its budget	Medium	Medium
2	Products and Services	ACTION is unable to achieve network growth objectives in future years	High	Medium
3	People	Injury or death to staff, passengers or contractors	High	Medium
4	Products and Services	Protracted failure of essential systems or infrastructure required to run ACTION's business	Medium	Low
5	Operational	ACTION will fail to meet accountability indicators, or Federal DDA targets (12/2017 and 12/2022)	High	Medium
6	Compliance Regulation	ACTION does not meet its compliance, regulatory or audit findings requirements	Medium	Medium
7	Products and Services	ACTION is unable to deliver its advertised bus services to the community	High	High

	Classification	Risk	Original risk rating	Residual risk
8	Reputation and Image	Industrial action causes business disruptions	High	Medium
9	Financial	ACTION fails to deliver its capital works program	Low	None given
10	Operational	NXTBUS project remains in project phase	Medium	None given

Source: Territory and Municipal Services Directorate Public Transport Division Risk Register

- 2.66 These risks focus on ACTION's ability to deliver its services in the near future. Although most of the ten risks identified can be related to commitments and specific Actions in *Transport for Canberra*, the risk register makes no direct reference to that policy or the Frequent Network.
- 2.67 More detailed analysis of each risk is included in the Public Transport Division's risk register, covering aspects such as the source of the risk, current controls, mitigation strategies and the residual risk following application of the controls. For example, the risk that 'ACTION is unable to achieve network growth objectives in future years', which is initially assessed as a high risk, could arise because (among other things):
- 'fleet size [is] inadequate'; or
  - 'garaging and maintenance capacity of depots [are] inadequate'.
- 2.68 Existing controls to manage this risk shown in the Public Transport Division's risk register are:
- 'future requirements are now understood - Future Facilities Study is complete';
  - 'understanding of constraints understood and acknowledged by minister and executive staff'; and
  - 'budget bid for new depots'.
- 2.69 The risk assessment concludes that the application of the current controls can reduce the residual risk to *medium* as the controls were considered to be 'adequate'. The proposed action to deal with these risks is to 'await outcomes of budget 2015-16'.
- 2.70 The risk assessment does not offer practical management guidance in dealing with the risk or consequential effects should the risk be realised. Commissioning a study is not a 'control'; it is a means to acquire information to support further activities, such as a budget bid or to inform interim measures in the face of either a failure to attract the budget funding or a delay in same. Similarly, providing a better understanding of factors inhibiting network growth is not a control (a procedure or practice) that can help the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate to reduce the risk of failing to meet growth objectives.

- 2.71 Given the risk of not achieving network growth objectives was assessed as ‘high’, a more direct articulation of responses to this risk is warranted particularly given that regardless of the outcome of the budget bid, it would be necessary to manage the consequential risks from the lack of capacity at the depots; even if additional facilities were funded it would take some time before they were available, so other options (that is, controls) would be necessary.
- 2.72 The Public Transport Division’s risk register acknowledges there is a high risk that ACTION may be ‘unable to deliver its advertised bus services to the community’. Sources of the risk include problems with implementation of the latest iteration of the public transport network—Network 14—and a compensating control is that adjustments (Network 14.1) had already been developed and planned. The redesign and implementation of the public transport network is, in itself, a significant project that could benefit from its own risk assessment and mitigation strategies.
- 2.73 The risk management approach used by the Public Transport Division in the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate focuses on risks for all of its operations. The risk register does not include a specific reference to *Transport for Canberra*, including its public transport goals and targets, and lacks specificity with respect to the Frequent Network and its implementation.

### **Capital Metro Authority**

- 2.74 The Capital Metro Authority has developed procedures and a risk register to identify and manage the risks associated with its activities for progressing the implementing the light rail project. The Capital Metro Agency’s risk register is extensive, but primarily focuses on risks associated with the delivery of the light rail as a project.
- 2.75 The risk register and relevant risk management procedures recognise that many aspects of the Capital Metro Agency’s activities interface with other government agencies, and this is, in itself, a source of some risk to the successful completion of the light rail project. Nevertheless, there is no explicit risk identified in the register associated with the light rail network’s contribution to the goals sought from the Frequent Network.
- 2.76 The Capital Metro Agency’s risk management is primarily focused on the delivery of light rail as a project. The risk register does not include a specific reference to *Transport for Canberra* or the significant public transport targets and goals in that policy, nor are the risks associated with the light rail integration into the Frequent Network stated.

### **Whole-of-government risk management**

- 2.77 The Environment and Planning Directorate, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and Capital Metro Agency each have key roles and responsibilities associated with the development and implementation of transport initiatives. Each agency has its own risk management processes in place, dealing with their specific responsibilities. None of these agencies have identified in their risk management framework a specific and explicit risk

with respect to the delivery of the Frequent Network, nor is there a recognition of the interdependency of activities (and risks) across the agencies with respect to the delivery of the Frequent Network.

- 2.78 Implementation activities that involve multiple ACT Government entities face increased risk management complexities. In these circumstances, it is particularly important that there is a shared understanding of the risks for which the implementation partners are jointly or separately responsible and that responsibility for risk is formally acknowledged. This context makes it particularly important that an aggregated risk register be developed for the Frequent Network component of *Transport for Canberra*, as it is intended to be the backbone of the public transport system and is highly dependent on:
- urban development policies and initiatives, which are the responsibility of the Environment and Planning Directorate;
  - operational planning and responses by the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate as the operator of ACTION; and
  - Capital Metro Authority's delivery of the light rail as planned.
- 2.79 Similarly, recognition of the risks associated with the management of *Transport for Canberra* at an aggregated level, including the interdependencies of risks, could allow a more focused approach and improve coordination and integration of activities across agencies.
- 2.80 There is no aggregated cross-agency risk assessment and management mechanism for public transport planning and management, or more specifically for implementation of *Transport for Canberra* policy and actions, and achievement of its overall goals, including the delivery of the Frequent Network. The lack of an aggregated risk assessment for the delivery of *Transport for Canberra* presents a risk that the interdependencies of actions delivered by the different ACT Government agencies will not be recognised thereby compromising effective and efficient delivery .

<b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>
<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should improve governance and administration of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> and therefore the Frequent Network by:</p> <p>d) developing an aggregated cross-agency risk assessment and management mechanism for <i>Transport for Canberra</i>, including and especially for the delivery of the Frequent Network.</p>		

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK

- 3.1 Half of the 34 Actions identified in *Transport for Canberra* are directly related to public transport, and most of these have some bearing on the Frequent Network. This chapter examines the implementation to date of the relevant transport initiatives, particularly those related to the Frequent Network, outlined in *Transport for Canberra*.

### Summary

#### Conclusion

Due to the lack of detail and specificity in *Transport for Canberra* with respect to the implementation of the Frequent Network, including identified deliverables and associated timeframes, it is not possible to assess effectiveness of the overall delivery of the Frequent Network. However, ACTION buses are being delivered at the desired frequency on Rapid services (between Belconnen and Tuggeranong town centres and Gungahlin and Fyshwick) but not on the Frequent Local services, which feed into the Rapid services. Targets associated with journey to work mode share change have not been achieved. Achieving 2016 and 2026 targets for public transport share of journey to work trips, 10.5 percent and 16 percent respectively, remain a major challenge and may not be achieved without significant effort and resources.

A series of recent reviews has highlighted the need for a significant number of buses to be added to the ACTION fleet to achieve the goals of the Frequent Network and journey to work mode share targets in *Transport for Canberra*.

Public reporting on the implementation of the Frequent Network, and *Transport for Canberra* as a whole, has been ambiguous and in some instances inaccurate. Furthermore, it is not possible to report on some performance measures and targets identified in *Transport for Canberra* due to a lack of data and information.

### Key findings

	Paragraph
<i>Transport for Canberra</i> does not identify or articulate specific targets for the progressive implementation of the Frequent Network, that is, specific expectations for the progressive coverage of the network or the frequency of services for the immediate forthcoming years. <i>Transport for Canberra</i> does, however, include maps showing the:	3.3

- 2012 Frequent Network;
- 2016 Indicative Frequent Network; and

- 2031 Frequent Network (with potential services mapped).

ACTION bus services that meet the Frequent Network definition of a 15 minute frequency or better (as at mid 2015) are:

3.11

- Rapid services (300 series - Blue) between Belconnen, City, Woden and Tuggeranong; and
- Rapid services (200 series - Red) between Gungahlin, City, Russell, Barton, Kingston and Fyshwick.

As at mid 2015, no ACTION bus services met the *Transport for Canberra* Frequent Local service definitions (15 minute frequency or better all day and evening), including the previously branded Gold Line (connecting City, Parliament House, and Deakin) and the previously branded Green Line (connecting City, Russell, Barton, Kingston, and Manuka).

3.12

The ACT Government committed to releasing an annual progress report on implementation of *Transport for Canberra* (Monitoring and reporting - Action 33). However, the first, and to date only, such report (the *Transport for Canberra Report Card*) was published in September 2014, covering the period from June 2012 to July 2014.

3.13

The *Transport for Canberra Report Card* (September 2014) does not refer to, or report directly against, the Monitoring and Reporting Framework (measures and targets) articulated in *Transport for Canberra*, although various elements of the framework are referred to in the report. To demonstrate transparency and accountability for implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* policy and its supporting Actions, it is important that future *Transport for Canberra Report Cards* align with, and directly report against, the specified monitoring and reporting framework.

3.15

Audit Office analysis of data currently available to the ACT Government regarding progress against the performance measures and targets for reporting on implementation of *Transport for Canberra* initiatives set out in the policy document shows that the ACT Government is unable to report on:

3.17

- changes to mode share, e.g. changes from the use of car to public or sustainable transport, because data relied upon is five-year Australian Census of Population and Housing (Australian Census) data. The last Australian Census was conducted in 2011 and data from the 2016 Australian Census will not be available until 2017. Work on developing an alternative proxy measure for use of public transport has not yet been completed;
- progress in achieving sustainable travel for all trips in the ACT (not just journeys to and from work) because a base-line and a method for calculating this measure has not yet been completed; and

- transport network performance, including travel time by mode and wait time connections at stations, because a base-line and method for calculating the average number of trips per day per person has not yet been established nor has a method been designed to determine average wait time for connections.

An analysis of journey to work mode share information shows that:

3.23

- the 2011 target of 9.0 percent for Canberrans using public transport to travel to work was not achieved as only 7.8 percent used public transport. Although the target was not achieved there was an increase between 2001 and 2006 from 6.7 percent to 7.9 percent, but this declined marginally in 2011 to 7.8 percent; and
- the 2011 target for cycling and walking to work, 5.0 percent and 6.0 percent respectively were not achieved. Rather, there was a very small increase in these modes; between 2001 and 2006 cycling increased from 2.3 to 2.8 percent and walking increased from 4.1 to 4.9 percent.

Without up-to-date comprehensive household travel to work data it is not possible to assess whether *Transport for Canberra* is effective in encouraging a change in travel behaviour towards greater use of sustainable transport (including the use of public transport). A household travel survey can provide detailed data to complement that available from the five yearly Australian Census and other means.

3.30

Progress towards achievement of the mode share change targets identified in *Transport for Canberra* cannot currently be measured by the ACT Government. However, the Environment and Planning Directorate advised the ACT Government in November 2014 that the targets are challenging. It was evident in 2012, in the process used for developing *Transport for Canberra*, that achieving the 2016 and 2026 targets was likely to remain a major challenge, and may not be achievable without significant effort and resources. As the mode share change targets may not be realistic stretch targets but an aspiration, they need to be examined and changed, if needed.

3.37

In reporting progress against the guiding principles (strategic goals) identified in *Transport for Canberra*, the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) identified an objective for each principle and reported an assessment on implementation; achieved, is on track to be achieved or needs improvement. It is not clear why or how the particular objective for each principle was selected for reporting (they were not identified as such in *Transport for Canberra*). The selected objectives included in the report card highlighted only a single aspect of the generally broad principle being assessed. The Environment and Planning Directorate has advised that the particular objectives were selected to simplify the presentation of broad and overlapping information and avoid unnecessarily lengthy status reporting.

3.48

The Audit Office's analysis of the *Transport for Canberra Report Card* (September 2014) indicates that reporting to the community on the implementation of Actions set out in *Transport for Canberra* has been difficult due to the nature of the Actions. Furthermore, some of the reporting is inaccurate as:

3.50

- some Actions that have not been completed have been reported as being 'Achieved', and
- some Actions reported as being 'On track to be achieved' were actually not achieved; many Actions were reported in the report card as 'On track to be achieved', yet no evidence is presented to support this claim.

In addition, where an Action is assessed by agencies as not being progressed as required, it has been reported as 'Needs improvement'. This comment is not a statement of progress but one of direction. Furthermore, it is not clear what actually 'Needs improvement' to achieve the outcome expected from the particular Action.

3.51

Some of the key commitments in *Transport for Canberra* that are critical to the success of the Frequent Network are not being achieved. These include:

3.52

- 'embedding the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan', and 'working with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan' - these components of the Frequent Network Action (*Public transport - Action 2*) have not been achieved yet are reported as 'Achieved';
- 'include seven day network in ACTION enterprise bargaining agreement in 2013' (*Public transport - Action 9*) – this has not been achieved yet it is reported as 'Needs Improvement' and given current circumstances is unlikely to be achieved;
- 'adopt an operating speed standard of 40km/hr for the Rapid Service to guide infrastructure investment development' (*Public transport - Action 17*) - this is reported as 'Needs improvement' and actual speeds are far lower than the standard at 32 km/h; and
- 'grow the bus fleet to respond to patronage growth and deliver the Frequent Network, and ensure new bus fleet minimises greenhouse gas, maximises patronage potential, and obtains value for money for the Territory' (*Public transport - Action 4*) – this is reported as 'On track to be achieved' yet there are issues with the current replacement program. The ACTION bus fleet replacement program will need to be accelerated to redress the slow progress achieved over recent years to replace the many vehicles in the fleet that do not meet standards required under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and to ensure 80 percent of the bus fleet meets disability standards by the end of 2017.

In October 2014 the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate completed the

3.58

*Network Review*; a review of Network 14 with reference to the replaced Network 12. The Review noted the significance of the Frequent Network, observing that 40 percent of weekday journeys in 2014 were made on services in rapid corridors, although these services accounted for only 24 percent of vehicle kilometres and 22 percent of vehicle hours.

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate's comparative study of Network 12 and Network 14 (the *Network Review*) assessed the performance of the public transport system, and provided quantitative support for the Network 14 revisions to the networks. The study shows a benefit in shifting resources to services on the Frequent Network. The study identified risks to network performance (for example, the effect of forcing transfers on patrons who have grown used to through-routing) and made several recommendations aimed at encouraging patronage.

3.63

Through data available from MyWay, as well as other information management systems including NXTBUS, HASTUS and netBI, the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate can isolate routes and services that comprise the Frequent Network and monitor and review their performance. To date, however, network analysts have not specifically monitored or reviewed the performance of the Frequent Network. Doing so would provide a stronger basis on which to develop and implement the Frequent Network as a key deliverable from *Transport for Canberra*.

3.67

The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) considered ACTION's future bus fleet and depot requirements and identified a need for the ACTION bus fleet to grow at approximately nine buses per year to 2031 and for additional bus depot facilities.

3.78

The *Expenditure Review* (March 2015) undertaken by MR Cagney identified that the 16 percent mode share target for public transport journey to work trips in 2026 was 'plausible but ambitious' but that a significant increase in buses was needed to meet the target. The Review also identified that a total of 1,007 buses would be needed by ACTION in 2031 (915 of which would be needed to service the peak AM period) to meet future demand and the journey to work target. This significantly exceeds the estimate of 562 buses identified in the *Future Facilities Masterplan*, completed five months earlier in November 2014. The Review also identified the need for a total of five bus depots in the future (one more than was forecast in the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014)).

3.84

- 3.2 In examining the implementation of Actions in *Transport for Canberra* related to the Frequent Network, the Audit Office reviewed:
- specific progress in implementing the Frequent Network. The existing geographical extent of corridors (by specific routes) and temporal services (by frequency) were examined. A comparison was made with the 2012 Frequent Network (refer to Appendix A) and the 2016 Indicative Frequent Network (refer to Appendix B);
  - progress in achieving specific goals and targets identified in *Transport for Canberra*;
  - progress against the six guiding principles identified in *Transport for Canberra*, also referred to as strategic goals elsewhere in *Transport for Canberra* document. The implementation of the Frequent Network directly contributes to some of these principles; and
  - progress in implementing the relevant Actions from *Transport for Canberra*. There are 16 public transport-related Actions in *Transport for Canberra*, 12 of which are directly relevant to the implementation of the Frequent Network.

## Implementing the Frequent Network

- 3.3 *Transport for Canberra* does not identify or articulate specific targets for the progressive implementation of the Frequent Network, that is, specific expectations for the progressive coverage of the network or the frequency of services for the immediate forthcoming years. *Transport for Canberra* does, however, include maps showing the:
- 2012 Frequent Network;
  - 2016 Indicative Frequent Network; and
  - 2031 Frequent Network (with potential services mapped).
- 3.4 *Transport for Canberra* identifies the 2016 and 2031 networks as ‘possible’ networks, noting that ‘the red [Rapid] and orange lines [Frequent]—the Frequent Network—remain fixed over the whole time, but the coverage services will inevitably grow and change as our city changes.’

### 2012 Frequent Network

- 3.5 Appendix A shows the Frequent Network, as it was in 2012 when *Transport for Canberra* was published. As designed, the Frequent Network largely adopted the corridors served by previously existing main bus routes, as explained in the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Final Report* (June 2009), a major study that subsequently formed the basis for the Frequent Network:

The ... Frequent Network should be based on the existing network plus near-term priorities for improvement, based on patronage and on the patterns of development actually occurring. A starting point for this network exists today. Since June 2008

there has been service every 15 minutes or better all day on weekdays service on the following segments:

- the Intertown or Rapid linking Belconnen, City, Woden, and Tuggeranong
- Northbourne Avenue between Mitchell and the City
- a routing linking the City, Russell, Barton, Kingston, and Manuka.
- a routing linking the City, Parkes, Parliament House, and Deakin.

A five-year plan should build on this starting point, adding corridors and service quality in the direction defined by the long-term network.

- 3.6 The 2012 Frequent Network mapped at Appendix A shows these routes as follows:
- a Rapid service every 2-10 minutes (Belconnen to City and City to Tuggeranong);
  - a Rapid service every 15 minutes or better (Kippax to Belconnen, Gungahlin to Belconnen and City to Fyshwick); and
  - Frequent local services every 15 minutes or better (City to Manuka via Russell, City to Deakin via Parliament House and Woden to Narrabundah).
- 3.7 In practice, at the time, only the Rapid services from Belconnen to City, and City to Tuggeranong were operating at the Frequent Network frequency and service span definition, i.e. timeframe for operation.
- 3.8 Appendix B shows the Indicative Frequent Network for 2016 as identified in *Transport for Canberra*, as well as an Audit Office assessment of its implementation to date. In doing so, the Audit Office notes that an assessment has been made on public transport services as of mid 2015 and that the Frequent Network for 2016 was identified as *indicative* only.

## 2016 Indicative Frequent Network

- 3.9 An analysis of the 2016 Indicative Frequent Network shows that:
- Rapid services, every 15 minutes or better (but mostly every 2-10 minutes), were expected to connect:
    - Kippax, Belconnen, City, Woden, Erindale, Tuggeranong and Lanyon
    - Gungahlin, City, Russell, Barton, Kingston, Manuka and Fyshwick
  - Frequent local services, every 15 minutes or better, were expected to connect:
    - City, Russell, Barton, Kingston, and Manuka
    - City, Parkes, Parliament House, and Deakin
    - Woden and Narrabundah
    - City and the airport
    - City, Ainslie, Hackett and Dickson
    - Watson and Dickson
    - Kippax and Belconnen
    - Melba and Belconnen

- Belconnen and Dickson
- City, Turner, O'Connor, Lyneham and Dickson
- Potential frequent local services, every 15 minutes or better, were expected to connect:
  - Gungahlin and Belconnen
  - Tuggeranong and Weston
  - Woden, Kambah, Fisher Waramanga and Woden
  - Woden, Weston and Molonglo.

### **Status of the Frequent Network (2015)**

- 3.10 Since the Frequent Network was formally identified in *Transport for Canberra* in 2012, in the Gungahlin to the City, and Gungahlin to Belconnen corridors, some bus services have been increased in response to demand. Services in the City to Fyshwick corridor (via Russell, Manuka and Kingston) have also been added to achieve 15 minute intervals or better (notwithstanding that the Manuka to Fyshwick segment is not strongly patronised). The frequency of connections to the parliamentary triangle has improved since the introduction of pay parking in that zone (in October 2014), but these do not yet meet the targeted 15 minute service.
- 3.11 ACTION bus services that meet the Frequent Network definition of a 15 minute frequency or better (as at mid 2015) are:
- Rapid services (300 series - Blue) between Belconnen, City, Woden and Tuggeranong; and
  - Rapid services (200 series - Red) between Gungahlin, City, Russell, Barton, Kingston and Fyshwick.
- 3.12 As at mid 2015, no ACTION bus services met the *Transport for Canberra* Frequent Local service definitions (15 minute frequency or better all day and evening), including the previously branded Gold Line (connecting City, Parliament House, and Deakin) and the previously branded Green Line (connecting City, Russell, Barton, Kingston, and Manuka).

### **Assessment against the principles, goals, targets and Actions in *Transport for Canberra***

#### **Transport for Canberra Report Card**

- 3.13 The ACT Government committed to releasing an annual progress report on implementation of *Transport for Canberra* (Monitoring and reporting - Action 33). However, the first, and to date only, such report (the *Transport for Canberra Report Card*) was published in September 2014, covering the period from June 2012 to July 2014.

3.14 The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) is essentially in two parts:

- the first section presents a ‘summary of Transport for Canberra progress’, reporting under the six guiding principles identified in *Transport for Canberra* (refer to paragraph 3.38); and
- the second section reports on progress in implementing the 34 Actions included in *Transport for Canberra*, many of which are of particular relevance to the Frequent Network (refer to paragraphs 3.49– 3.53).

3.15 The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) does not refer to, or report directly against, the Monitoring and Reporting Framework (measures and targets) articulated in *Transport for Canberra*, although various elements of the framework are referred to in the report. To demonstrate transparency and accountability for implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* policy and its supporting Actions, it is important that future Transport for Canberra Report Cards align with, and directly report against, the specified monitoring and reporting framework.

### **Assessment against specific goals and targets**

3.16 Table 3-1 shows the performance measures and targets for reporting progress on the implementation of *Transport for Canberra* articulated in the monitoring and reporting framework included in the policy document. It also includes a brief discussion of the Audit Office’s assessment against these targets.

**Table 3-1      *Transport for Canberra* performance measures and targets (directly relevant to the Frequent Network) and Audit Office assessment**

Transport performance measure	Target	Audit assessment—July 2015
1. Journey to work mode share for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• walking</li> <li>• cycling</li> <li>• public transport</li> </ul>	By 2016, increase work trips for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking to 6.5%</li> <li>• Cycling to 6%</li> <li>• Public transport to 10.5%</li> </ul> By 2016, 60% of ACT adults and 20% of ACT children meet National Physical Activity Guidelines	<b>Data unavailable to assess.</b> No update on mode share is available as the Environment and Planning Directorate relies on journey to work data from the Australian Population and Housing Census (Australian Census). The next Australian Census is due in 2016, but data will not be available until 2017. Data could be provided from a household travel survey. The last comprehensive survey was conducted in 1997. Recent budget bids by the Environment and Planning Directorate to facilitate the conduct of a household travel survey have been unsuccessful. Work has commenced to develop a proxy measure for public transport mode share using data from the ticketing system, but has not been completed. See paragraph 3.27 to 3.30

Transport performance measure	Target	Audit assessment—July 2015
2. Sustainable travel for all trips in the ACT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average number of trips per person per weekday / weekend</li> <li>• purpose of different trips</li> <li>• distance of different trips</li> <li>• percentage of trips by public transport</li> <li>• percentage of trips by cycling</li> <li>• percentage of trips by walking</li> </ul>	Establish a baseline and methodology for average number of trips per person per day in the ACT. Increase percentage of all trips by sustainable transport each year. Establish a baseline (2012) and increase percentage of children travelling to school by active travel (walking, cycling, scooting) by 2016.	<b>Data unavailable to assess.</b> A base-line and methodology for average number of trips per person per day in the ACT has not yet established. Data for these measures would rely on conduct of a household travel survey. The last comprehensive survey was conducted in 1997. Recent budget bids by the Environment and Planning Directorate to facilitate the conduct of a household travel survey have been unsuccessful.
3. Accessibility of the transport system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• percentage of population within 500m of a regular bus stop</li> <li>• percentage of population within 750m of a Rapid service bus stop</li> <li>• percentage of population within 5 km of a Park and Ride facility</li> </ul>	Minimum coverage standards are set in 2013, and targets are met for 2016 and 2021. New suburbs are more supportive of active travel. Implement the ACT Accessible Public Transport Action Plan.	Draft coverage standards included in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> remain current—no updated standards have been progressed for government consideration. An audit of walking and cycling connections to the public transport network has been completed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of the population within 500m of a regular bus stop has increased from 96.1 percent in 2011 to 97.6 percent.</li> <li>• The proportion of the population within 750m of a Rapid service bus stop has increased from 14.5 percent in 2011 to 23.7 percent.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• The proportion of the population within 5 km of a Park and Ride facility is 88.2 percent.</li> </ul> See Table 3-9.
4. Note there was an error in the original numbering in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> and there was no number 4.	N/A	N/A

<sup>4</sup> The apparent growth in the number of people living within 750m of a Rapid service bus stop (a 10 minute walk) is not a result of any changes to land use planning but rather resulted from the addition of the ‘Red Rapid’ service to the Frequent Network. The Red Rapid runs from Gungahlin to Fyshwick via the City, Russell and Barton, and adds a sizable land area to the newly designated ‘Rapid’ transit corridor.

Transport performance measure	Target	Audit assessment—July 2015
5. Transport network performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• travel time by mode (public transport, cars, cycling and walking)</li> <li>• wait time for connections at stations</li> <li>• number of tonne-kilometres by mode</li> </ul>	<p>Improve freight, public transport, cycling and maintain passenger vehicle travel times.</p> <p>Average wait time for connections to the Frequent Network at stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2013, average wait time for connections from coverage to frequent service – 7.5 minutes; from frequent service to coverage service – 15 minutes.</li> <li>• By 2016, average wait time for connections from coverage to frequent service – 5 minutes; from frequent service to coverage service – 10 minutes.</li> </ul>	<b>Data unavailable to assess.</b> A base-line and methodology for average number of trips per person per day in the ACT has not yet established. A methodology to determine average wait time for connections to the Frequent Network at stations has not yet been established.
6. Safe transport system	See ACT Road Safety Strategy	Not considered as part of audit.
7. Integrated transport and land use planning	See ACT Planning Strategy.	Neither the Territory Plan or the National Capital Plan has been updated to embed the rapid public transport corridors.  See paragraphs 4.22 to 4.26.
8. Transport emissions	Reduce vehicle kilometres travelled by private passenger car through mode shift. Increase the efficiency of travel by decreasing the emissions intensity of the ACT passenger vehicle fleet, and increasing efficiency of the ACT public transport fleet.	Not considered as part of audit.
9. Progress of Transport for Canberra Actions	Release an annual progress report on implementation of Transport for Canberra.	One Transport for Canberra Report Card issued in September 2014.  See Table 3-17.

Source: *Transport for Canberra*, ACT Audit Office analysis

3.17 Audit Office analysis of data currently available to the ACT Government regarding progress against the performance measures and targets for reporting on implementation of *Transport for Canberra* initiatives set out in the policy document shows that the ACT Government is unable to report on:

- changes to mode share, e.g. changes from the use of car to public or sustainable transport, because data relied upon is five-year Australian Census of Population and Housing (Australian Census) data. The last Australian Census was conducted in 2011 and data from the 2016 Australian Census will not be available until 2017. Work on developing an alternative proxy measure for use of public transport has not yet been completed;
- progress in achieving sustainable travel for all trips in the ACT (not just journeys to and from work) because a base-line and a method for calculating this measure has not yet been completed; and
- transport network performance, including travel time by mode and wait time connections at stations, because a base-line and method for calculating the average

number of trips per day per person has not yet been established nor has a method been designed to determine average wait time for connections.

RECOMMENDATION 2	<b><i>TRANSPORT FOR CANBERRA MONITORING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK</i></b>	<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>
<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should improve reporting on the implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i>, in the annual Transport for Canberra Report Card by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) using the measures and targets identified in the <i>Transport for Canberra Monitoring and Reporting Framework</i>;</li> <li>b) developing the necessary baselines, measures and systems so that the required data can be collected, recorded and analysed;</li> </ul>		

### Overall mode share change goal

- 3.18 A key goal of *Transport for Canberra* is to achieve a change in journey to work mode from car to alternative options such as public transport, cycling and walking. This was identified as the first key performance measure for *Transport for Canberra* (refer to Table 3-1) and has previously been recognised in a number of other relevant documents including *The Canberra Spatial Plan* (March 2004), *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004)<sup>5</sup> and the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009) (refer to paragraphs 4.2 to 4.3).
- 3.19 *Transport for Canberra* comments that ‘nationally, Canberra has the second lowest usage of public transport (after Hobart)’ and that in 2006, 81 percent of Canberrans travelled to work by car (either as drivers or passengers) compared to the Australian average of 69.7 percent.
- 3.20 The Audit Office engaged Dr Geoffrey Clifton, University of Sydney, as a transport specialist. He provided advice in relation to the planning assumptions associated with the Frequent Network. Dr Clifton noted *Transport for Canberra*’s acknowledgement that congestion in the ACT is low by Australian standards and therefore private car trips are relatively fast. Furthermore, the supply of parking space within the ACT remains relatively high and parking costs relatively low. As a result, driving is relatively more attractive in the ACT than elsewhere in Australia. Dr Clifton further noted that ‘it is assumed within [*Transport for Canberra*] that these incentives will be reversed in order to support the modal shift to public transport and the use of the Frequent Network’.

<sup>5</sup> Dr Maxine Cooper was Director, Territory Planning, Urban Services in 2001. In this role, Dr Cooper was involved in transport planning. As an Executive Director, Enterprise Services, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate in 2006-2007, Dr Cooper had responsibility for ACTION.

3.21 In this context, *Transport for Canberra* states:

Between now and 2026 balanced investments in policies, urban planning, programs and infrastructure will encourage an additional 48,000 Canberrans at least to opt for a sustainable mode of transport for their daily commute, find new ways to work like telecommuting, or find work closer to home to make active travel an easier choice. The goals ... will act as a guide to help government, the private sector and community measure our progress towards the long-term 2026 mode share targets.

3.22 Table 3-2 presents the mode share targets associated with *Transport for Canberra*, as well as progress in achieving the targets to 2011.

**Table 3-2 Journey to work mode share targets and results to 2011**

Mode	2001 actual	2006 actual	2011 actual	2011 target	2016 target	2026 target
Public Transport	6.7%	7.9%	7.8%	9.0%	10.5%	16%
Cycling	2.3%	5.0%	2.8%	5.0%	6.0%	7%
Walking	4.1%	2.5%	4.9%	6.0%	6.5%	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>30%</b>

Source: *Transport for Canberra, Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014)*

3.23 An analysis of journey to work mode share information shows that:

- the 2011 target of 9.0 percent for Canberrans using public transport to travel to work was not achieved as only 7.8 percent used public transport. Although the target was not achieved there was an increase between 2001 and 2006 from 6.7 percent to 7.9 percent, but this declined marginally in 2011 to 7.8 percent; and
- the 2011 target for cycling and walking to work, 5.0 percent and 6.0 percent respectively were not achieved. Rather, there was a very small increase in these modes; between 2001 and 2006 cycling increased from 2.3 to 2.8 percent and walking increased from 4.1 to 4.9 percent.

3.24 The targets (and data) specified in *Transport for Canberra*, and its predecessor the *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004), refer to 'journey to work' trips rather than all personal journeys. In part, this is because data for 'journey to work' trips are more readily available (for example, the Australian Census includes relevant questions), and journeys to work are a significant proportion of all trips, accounting for much of the congestion on roads.

3.25 The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessed performance against the mode share measure as 'needs improvement'. It stated:

There has been a net increase in total sustainable trips between 2006 and 2011, with increases tracking at a faster rate than population growth. The ongoing implementation of Transport for Canberra and continued investment in public transport and cycling and walking infrastructure, through projects such as Capital Metro light rail, and public transport network improvements such as Network 14 and

NXTBUS, will encourage more people to use public transport and partake in active travel over time.

- 3.26 To date, the mechanism used for measuring mode share has relied on Australian Census journey to work data which is only updated every five years. Accordingly, there has been no update on mode share since the 2011 Australian Census data was released. The next Australian Census is in 2016 and data is unlikely to be available until sometime in 2017.
- 3.27 *Transport for Canberra* indicated that the ACT Government expected to measure achievement against the mode share target using ‘a combination of ABS Census data, public transport ticketing data (the MyWay ticketing system was introduced in March 2011), cycle counts and data from Walk21’. In the absence of updated census data, the Environment and Planning Directorate aimed to develop a for public transport mode share using data from the ticketing system, but work has not been completed.
- 3.28 Useful though such information could be, it is not a substitute for detailed travel data. Some jurisdictions use household travel surveys to supplement the Australian Census data. The surveys provide information additional to that obtained in the census, such as the day-to-day travel behaviour of households, including how and why they travel, at what time of day trips are made and the average trip distance and duration. Results are typically used to inform planning for roads, public transport and other facilities. The Environment and Planning Directorate has been unsuccessful in bids for budget funding to undertake such a survey.
- 3.29 In 2014, consultants engaged to recalibrate the Canberra Strategic Transport Model (the modelling tool used by the Environment and Planning Directorate for strategic transport planning, including development of *Transport for Canberra*) recommended the conduct of a household travel survey. The consultants stated:
- The main issue with the current calibration is the amount of data available. These data were not complete and were collected at different times, which reduced their usefulness in comparison. Although the [journey to work] data from [the Australian Bureau of Statistics] is very useful for calibrating [home based work] trips, there have been no real-world data available for the other trip purposes. ...
- A comprehensive [household travel survey] in the ACT is long overdue as the last (complete and unbiased) survey was undertaken in 1997. The [household travel survey] should be undertaken around the time of the 2016 Census (or even in conjunction with the census if an agreement can be reached with the ABS) ...
- 3.30 Without up-to-date comprehensive household travel to work data it is not possible to assess whether *Transport for Canberra* is effective in encouraging a change in travel behaviour towards greater use of sustainable transport (including the use of public transport). A household travel survey can provide detailed data to complement that available from the five yearly Australian Census and other means.

- 3.31 Although a household survey will have costs (approximately \$300,000), these are comparatively small compared with the expenditure on transport overall, yet such information is fundamental to guiding policy and planning changes to encourage the greater use of sustainable transport.

### RECOMMENDATION 3      HOUSEHOLD TRAVEL SURVEY

The Environment and Planning Directorate should undertake a periodic household travel survey to provide detailed data on travel behaviours in the ACT and use the information to inform transport policies and their planning and performance measurement.

#### *Specific mode share targets*

- 3.32 Transport modelling, using data such as population demographics, census data, surveys and physical counts, has been used by the ACT government to test the projected outcomes for various policy scenarios, and to derive modal targets considered to be achievable yet motivational. The modal priorities are based on a document prepared by the Department of Urban Services in 1999 (*Integrated land use and transport planning in the ACT*) which establishes a ‘guiding principle for transport mode priority’ in the following order of precedence:
- walking;
  - cycling;
  - public transport;
  - commercial vehicles; and
  - private cars.
- 3.33 The targets recognised that some trips were not suitable for certain modes as they involved physical or objective limitations. For example, a trip over two kilometres, or a trip involving carrying luggage, goods or shopping, was considered unsuitable for walking. Nevertheless, the *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004) concluded that the total potential for additional public transport, walking and cycling trips was 21, 23 and 13 percent respectively. Together, the report concludes ‘there is a potential for 40 percent of [journey to work] trips to be taken by one of these modes, indicating that the Plan targets are achievable’.<sup>6</sup>
- 3.34 Targets for transport mode shares for 2011 and 2026 were carried forward from the *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004); the 2016 targets set out in *Transport for Canberra* are new. The *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004) acknowledged the difficulty of more than doubling the then-current proportion of trips to work undertaken by environmentally

---

<sup>6</sup> Dr Maxine Cooper was Director, Territory Planning, Urban Services in 2001. In this role, Dr Cooper was involved in transport planning. As an Executive Director, Enterprise Services, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate in 2006 - 2007, Dr Cooper had responsibility for ACTION.

friendly transport modes. The 2004 Plan warned that ‘these targets are ambitious and challenging and will require significant commitment and resources to achieve them’. Achieving the modal targets would involve a 16 percent reduction in car use by 2026. The difficulty in achieving the targets was also recognised in the process for developing *Transport for Canberra* policy.

- 3.35 More recently, an *Expenditure Review* report prepared by MRCagney in March 2015 stated:

The target is plausible but ambitious ... As a stretch target, it is appropriate, but does require the adoption of a series of policy directions regarding land use, urban intensification around transit corridors, parking pricing, road pricing and increased supply of public transport service.

- 3.36 In commenting on a proposed *Active Transport Plan* in November 2014, the Environment and Planning Directorate advised government that the mode share targets ‘are challenging’ and estimated that to achieve its 2016 targets ‘Canberra will need around 7,000 more public transport users, 7,000 more bicycle riders, and 4,000 more people walking than in 2011’.
- 3.37 Progress towards achievement of the mode share change targets identified in *Transport for Canberra* cannot currently be measured by the ACT Government. However, the Environment and Planning Directorate advised the ACT Government in November 2014 that the targets are challenging. It was evident in 2012, in the process used for developing *Transport for Canberra*, that achieving the 2016 and 2026 targets was likely to remain a major challenge, and may not be achievable without significant effort and resources. As the mode share change targets may not be realistic stretch targets but an aspiration, they need to be examined and changed, if needed.

## **Progress against relevant guiding principles (strategic goals)**

- 3.38 As discussed in paragraph 1.6, *Transport for Canberra* identifies six guiding principles associated with its transport initiatives. The six guiding principles are also referred to as strategic goals in *Transport for Canberra*. The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) has reported progress against these principles.
- 3.39 The Audit Office considered the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) report on progress against two key principles identified in *Transport for Canberra*:
- integration with land use planning; and
  - efficiency and cost effectiveness, providing value for money for the government, business and the community by managing travel demand across the whole transport system.

## Integration with land use planning

3.40 In reporting against the principle that transport planning should be ‘integrated with land use planning’, the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) reported against the objective: ‘increase the population living within a 10 minute walk of a rapid public transport corridor’. The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessed this objective as ‘achieved’, adding that the proportion of the ACT population living within 750 metres (10 minutes walk) of a rapid public transport corridor had increased from 14.5 percent in 2011 to 23.7 percent following the introduction of *Transport for Canberra*.

3.41 There are a number of issues associated with this assessment, including:

- the narrow focus of the objective, when considered against the broader activities identified in *Transport for Canberra*, relevant to integrating public transport with land use planning; and
- the means by which the increase in the population living within a 10 minute walk of a rapid public transport corridor was achieved.

3.42 In relation to the narrowness of the objective, it is noted that guidance on the original guiding principle (strategic goal) was articulated in *Transport for Canberra* as follows:

Transport for Canberra establishes:

- a Frequent Network of rapid corridors and frequent local lines with fast, frequent public transport that guides land use planning and investments
- the rapid corridors will be adopted into the Territory Plan as part of the new ACT Planning Strategy
- active communities where walking and cycling are the easy choice for local trips, with public transport options supported by Park and Ride and Bike and Ride facilities for quick cross-city travel
- ring road options for car and freight traffic that integrate with central corridors designed for public transport.

3.43 The selection of the objective ‘increase the population living within a 10 minute walk of a rapid public transport corridor’ is selective, given the breadth of initiatives initially provided for by *Transport for Canberra*, including the adoption of rapid corridors within the Territory Plan, active community initiatives and ring road options for car and freight traffic.

3.44 Furthermore, the apparent growth in the number of people living within a 10 minute walk of a rapid public transport corridor is not a result of any changes to land use planning but rather the addition of the ‘Red Rapid’ service to the Frequent Network. The Red Rapid runs from Gungahlin to Fyshwick via the City, Russell and Barton, and adds a sizable land area to the newly designated ‘Rapid’ transit corridor.

### **Efficiency and cost effectiveness**

- 3.45 In reporting against the principle that transport planning should be ‘efficient and cost effective, providing value for money for the government, business and the community by managing travel demand across the whole transport system’, the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) reported against the objective: ‘efficient and reliable movement of people and goods’. The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessed this objective as ‘achieved’.
- 3.46 In assessing this objective as achieved, the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) described a number of ACT Government ‘investments in infrastructure and technology to make the movement of people and goods more efficient and cost effective’. The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) noted that over \$350 million had been invested in new public transport and road infrastructure like busways, bus stations and stops, park and ride facilities, real time passenger information (NXTBUS), and intersection upgrades, as well as major road works such as the Majura Parkway and widening of Parkes Way.
- 3.47 While the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) lists a number of infrastructure and technology investments the ACT Government has made, the basis on which these investments are used to support an assessment of ‘achieved’ against the objective of ‘efficient and reliable movement of people and goods is not clear.
- 3.48 In reporting progress against the guiding principles (strategic goals) identified in *Transport for Canberra*, the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) identified an objective for each principle and reported an assessment on implementation; achieved, is on track to be achieved or needs improvement. It is not clear why or how the particular objective for each principle was selected for reporting (they were not identified as such in *Transport for Canberra*). The selected objectives included in the report card highlighted only a single aspect of the generally broad principle being assessed. The Environment and Planning Directorate has advised that the particular objectives were selected to simplify the presentation of broad and overlapping information and avoid unnecessarily lengthy status reporting.

### **Progress in implementing *Transport for Canberra* Actions that are directly relevant to the Frequent Network**

- 3.49 Tables 3-3 to 3-18 present the ACT Government’s reported progress against those actions related to delivering the Frequent Network in *Transport for Canberra Annual Report Card* (September 2014). The tables also present the Audit Office’s assessment and comments.

**Table 3-3      *Public transport - Action 2: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment***

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
<p>Adopt the Frequent Network of public transport services to guide planning and design of public transport services, public transport and active travel infrastructure land supply programs, urban development and location of facilities. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) embedding the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan</li> <li>b) working with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan</li> <li>c) progressively developing the public transport network to implement the Frequent Network corridors and routes in annual reviews</li> <li>d) through the implementation of the ACT Planning Strategy, identifying and delivering transit oriented developments on the Frequent Network, and expanding the frequent local network if supported by appropriate land use change</li> <li>e) planning the road network of new areas to facilitate the operation of the Frequent Network, including straight and direct collector roads, and roads connecting adjacent suburbs</li> <li>f) including queue jumps, coordinated traffic signals, and public transport priority measures in all upgrades, redesigns or new works on rapid corridors</li> <li>g) constructing new bus stations and major stops and auditing existing interchanges</li> </ul>	Achieved
<p><b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b></p> <p><b>Not achieved. Furthermore it is unclear as to when this action should be considered to have been completed and therefore achieved.</b></p> <p>Action 2, as described in <i>Transport for Canberra</i>, has seven parts that need to be collectively delivered to demonstrate achievement of this key commitment.</p> <p>Work on several of the parts has been undertaken and the Frequent Network is being progressively implemented, but progress is limited. At present only the 'Rapid' routes are at the desired frequency. A series of reviews and evaluations highlight the risks of not achieving the expected services (refer to 3.66 to 3.83).</p> <p>The key commitment to 'embed the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan and work with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan' has not been achieved (refer to paragraphs 4.22 to 4.26).</p> <p>The Frequent Network is described in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> as the 'backbone' of an integrated transport system. Given its significance in the policy, it could be expected to receive a high priority, and focused attention, in inter-agency collaborative forums, strategic plans and risk assessments. The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and ACTION do not give priority to the Frequent Network in their network planning and operations. Rather, their goal is focused on the transport system broadly; aiming to use buses to deliver an efficient public transport system to the community. As a result, the public transport system is slowly evolving to meet present and projected demand, with few fundamental changes to its structure, although no particular priority is given to the Frequent Network.</p>	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-4 Public transport – Action 3: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 3: Actively plan for mass public transport like light rail or bus rapid transit in all new public transport infrastructure planning and design.	On track to be achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b> <i>Being progressed but associated publicly released timeframes have not been met. Furthermore, it is unclear as to when this action should be considered to have been completed and therefore achieved.</i>  Light Rail, as a component of the Frequent Network, is being implemented on the Gungahlin to City corridor. Considerable activity is underway to implement the light rail project, including through seeking of expressions of interest to implement the Light Rail Network.  A <i>Capital Metro Light Rail Integration Study</i> was undertaken in November 2013. The study was ‘designed to identify and assess options for integrating the City to Gungahlin light rail service into Canberra’s overall transport network. The <i>Capital Metro Light Rail Integration Study</i> was produced on the basis of feedback from an eight-week public consultation process, which was ‘designed to gather feedback from the community to help ensure the City to Gungahlin transit corridor is effectively designed to encourage people to use light rail and that light rail successfully integrates with other means of transport.’ In relation to the light rail’s integration with other modes the study noted ‘respondents felt it was most important for light rail to integrate with the bus network, with a connection to local pedestrian and bicycle paths and availability of car parking all running a close second.’  While the <i>Capital Metro Light Rail Integration Study</i> presents findings derived from a community consultation process, there is no further information or detail with respect to the integration of the light rail network with the Frequent Network, or the bus network as a whole.  The <i>Light Rail Master Plan</i> , which considers further extensions to the light rail system, was released for public comment in late October 2015. It was to be released in mid 2015.	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-5 Public transport - Action 4: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 4: Grow the bus fleet to respond to patronage growth and deliver the Frequent Network, and ensure new bus fleet minimises greenhouse gas, maximises patronage potential, and obtains value for money for the Territory.	On track to be achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b> <i>Unable to be determined as the ACT Government has not defined what is intended by ‘grow the bus fleet’, for example, whether it refers to the number of buses in the fleet or the total fleet capacity. No targets or timeframes have been identified. Furthermore, it is unclear as to when this action should be considered to have been completed and therefore achieved.</i>  The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) states that a replacement fleet strategy is in place including new low emission buses, and more efficient network design and higher capacity new buses have helped increase bus capacity since 2012. These activities do not refer directly to any growth in fleet numbers.  Action 4 from <i>Transport for Canberra</i> is in four parts:  Grow the bus fleet: – to respond to patronage growth and deliver the Frequent Network	

- to ensure the new bus fleet minimises greenhouse gas emissions
- to maximise patronage potential and
- to obtain value for money for the Territory.

**Respond to patronage growth**—there has been some growth in patronage, particularly on the Gungahlin to City corridor and services to the Parliamentary Triangle, the latter since the introduction of paid parking in that zone. However, it is unclear whether the growth is due to population movement within the ACT (Gungahlin is the fastest growing region in Canberra) or increased demand for public transport services. ACTION has responded to increased demand in peak periods by reallocating the current fleet to deliver more frequent services on rapid corridors (especially Gungahlin to the City). The introduction of Network 14 saw services on the rapid corridors increase by nine percent over Network 12 (from 1 472 to 1 605), but services on the ‘frequent locals’ feeding into the rapid corridors dropped by 67 percent (from 676 to 225). Overall services on routes along the defined Frequent Network decreased by fifteen percent.

**Minimising greenhouse emissions**—the ACTION fleet replacement strategy involves replacing buses that have reached or passed their optimal retirement age (and do not generally meet legislated disability standards) with more modern vehicles, selected (at least) in part because they meet new standards on greenhouse gas emissions. Under this strategy, ACTION has acquired 115 replacement buses in the period 2007-12, and subject to budget considerations will acquire 249 new buses in the period 2012-22 to replace vehicles in the current fleet.

However, the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate advised that the fleet replacement program ‘stalled’ during the period 1998-2003, with the result that 42 percent of the current ACTION fleet has reached or passed optimal retirement age, and of this 42 percent, a third is over 20 years old. Many of these vehicles do not meet current emission standards and are not compatible with new technologies relating to fuel type, vehicle safety, and environmental or economy concerns. Delays in replacing these vehicles is compromising the fleet and its capabilities in delivering efficient and effective services, as well as meeting greenhouse emissions policies.

**Maximise patronage potential**—new vehicles being purchased have a reduced carrying capacity compared to the buses they are replacing. The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate estimates that:

... for every six buses replaced, an additional bus would need to be purchased to maintain the carrying capacity of the fleet. In the past 10 years ACTION has replaced 238 buses. This equates to a loss in capacity across the fleet of 40 rigid buses (or 2,600 passengers) and is one of the contributing factors as to why ACTION experiences full passenger loads during peak services, often resulting in passengers having to wait for the next service.

**Obtain value for money**—fleet replacement delays that mean ACTION is retaining buses past their optimal retirement age have a negative effect on resale value. The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate has advised:

In the current scenario, buses are being replaced well past their useful life and consequently have no resale value with many sold for scrap value only. This contributes to significant waste as many buses may have had up to three major driveline component replacements, the last of which is likely to have occurred just prior to retiring the vehicle. Up to \$100,000 in parts may have been recently fitted to a bus being sold for scrap at a value of \$3 000.

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-6      Public transport - Action 5: Transport for Canberra Report Card  
(September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 5: Continue to expand Park and Ride and Bike and Ride facilities.	Achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b>	
<p><i>The claim of achieved suggests no more facilities are to be built. This however, is unlikely to be the case.</i></p> <p>Several new facilities have been constructed including at Mitchell, Gungahlin, Belconnen, Bruce and Fyshwick.</p> <p>While the Environment and Planning Directorate has advised that around 88 percent of the ACT's population is within 5 kilometres of a Park and Ride station, suggesting that this is the basis for making a claim of achieved, the action stated is different from the measure used by the Directorate.</p>	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-7      Public transport - Action 6: 2014 Transport for Canberra Report Card  
(September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 6: Continue to provide and promote bike racks on buses, with 80% of the bus fleet to be fitted with racks by December 2012	Achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b>	
<p><i>Achieved by 2015 but the target date was 2012.</i></p> <p>As at 2 April 2015, 84 percent of the ACTION fleet is fitted with bike racks. Under current regulations, however, bike racks cannot be fitted to the 'steer-tag' Scania buses in the fleet. ACTION has 26 such buses (6 percent of the fleet). ACTION has advised that it is currently trialling bike racks on some steer tag and articulated buses.</p>	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-8      Public transport – Action 7: Transport for Canberra Report Card  
(September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 7: Continue to work with Queanbeyan City Council and the NSW Government with the aim of creating a seamless public transport corridor between the ACT and Queanbeyan via Canberra Avenue, and work with the NSW Government and regional councils to progress better transport connections to existing and planned	On track to be achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b>	
<p><i>Transport for Canberra includes an implied commitment to establish a rapid public transport service between Queanbeyan and the ACT by 2016. The Environment and Planning Directorate advised the Audit Office that the intention actually is to have the service established by 2031.</i></p> <p>Although some progress has been made since 2010, there remain many practical inhibitions to implementing a seamless public transport corridor between the ACT and Queanbeyan via Canberra Avenue.</p>	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-9      Public transport – Action 8: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
<b>Action 8: Adopt interim minimum coverage standards for public transport services and finalise the standards by 2013 following an analysis of MyWay data and an audit of walking and cycling connections to the public transport network.</b>	<b>On track to be achieved</b>
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b>	
<b><i>Not achieved by 2013. Draft standards exist that are being applied and scheduled for finalisation by 2016.</i></b>	
<p><i>Transport for Canberra</i> includes draft minimum coverage standards that deal with the frequency of services and the distance to a bus stop. The coverage standards represent an indicator of the community's accessibility to the public transport system as well as a guide to the integration of land use and public transport. Under <i>Transport for Canberra</i> the accessibility of the public transport system will be measured against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the percentage of the population within 500 metres (5-7 minutes' walk) of a regular bus stop</li> <li>– the percentage of the population within 750 metres (10 minutes' walk) of a rapid service bus stop and</li> <li>– the percentage of the population within 5 km of a park and ride facility.</li> </ul> <p>The Environment and Planning Directorate has confirmed that no further minimum coverage standards have been established, and that the draft standards in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> remain current. <i>Transport for Canberra</i> includes a draft minimum coverage standard for 95 percent of households to be within 500 metres of a regular bus stop by 2016. No standard has been set in relation to 'rapid service bus stops' or 'park and ride facilities'. The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) states that final coverage standards will be determined by 2016.</p> <p>Against the performance indicators above, the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) reports on the population within 'a walkable catchment'. The Report Card shows that the proportion of the ACT population living within 750 metres (10 minutes walk) of a rapid public transport corridor has increased from 14.5 percent in 2011 to 23.7 percent. This increase results from the addition of the 'Red Rapid' service from Gungahlin to Fyshwick via the City, Russell and Barton, which adds a sizable land area to the newly designated 'rapid' transit corridor. It is not a result of any change to land use planning.</p> <p>Although not included in the Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014), the community's accessibility to the public transport system as a whole has improved. The Environment and Planning Directorate has advised that in 2011, prior to the introduction of the Frequent Network, 96.1 percent of the population lived within 500 metres of a bus stop. Under Network 14, this has increased to 97.6 percent of the population.</p> <p>Further, with the provision of several new Park and Ride facilities, 88.2 percent of the population is within five kilometres of a Park and Ride facility.</p>	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-10    *Public transport - Action 9: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment***

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 9: Include seven day network in ACTION enterprise bargaining agreement in 2013.	Needs improvement
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b>	
<i>Not achieved.</i>	
<p>The 2013 timeframe has not been met. Alignment of the weekend and weekday routes is progressing where possible. Excluding Xpresso and peak-only routes, 33 out of 53 routes on the Frequent Network are now aligned.</p> <p>However, further progress is constrained by the current workplace agreement, which was approved by the Fair Work Commission in May 2014 with a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2017. Unless the parties agree to vary the current Agreement, this matter cannot be finalised until 2017.</p>	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-11    *Public transport - Action 10: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment***

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 10: Implement the bus network design guidelines based on international best practice for service design, including meeting the wait time targets identified in Transport for Canberra.	Needs improvement
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b>	
<i>Not achieved.</i>	
<p><i>Transport for Canberra</i> includes targets for ‘average wait time for connections to the Frequent Network at stations’, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2013, average wait time for connections from coverage to frequent service – 7.5 minutes; from frequent service to coverage service – 15 minutes.</li> <li>• By 2016, average wait time for connections from coverage to frequent service – 5 minutes; from frequent service to coverage service – 10 minutes.</li> </ul> <p>The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate advised the Audit Office it is unable to generate data needed to measure the average wait time for connections to the Frequent Network at stations. The Directorate is working with ACTION and the Environment and Planning Directorate to determine how to measure performance against this target using the ‘real-time’ information now available through the NXTBUS system (which commenced operation in September 2014).</p>	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-12 Public transport - Action 15: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
<p>Action 15: Design the public transport network to be genuinely competitive with car travel, and continue to invest in infrastructure to support the delivery of the Frequent Network, including smart technology such as real time passenger information and the MyWay ticketing system, stations, stops, transitways and other infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b></p> <p><i>Not achieved. Some work has been completed in terms of system design and infrastructure but there is currently insufficient data available to the ACT Government to demonstrate whether there has been any discernible modal shift towards public transport.</i></p> <p>Major infrastructure works have included the construction of transitways and bus lanes (such as Belconnen to City), bus stations (Barton, Gungahlin and City West), and major stops (such as Albert Hall, College Street, Russell).</p> <p>The NXTBUS real time passenger information has been implemented and with the MyWay ticketing system provides a large amount of data on services and patronage. <i>Transport for Canberra</i> cites evidence that implementing real time passenger information can increase patronage by 10-20 percent. A change of such magnitude is unlikely—particularly for the Frequent Network—given that the premise of frequent services is that patrons will have confidence that public transport (whether bus or rail) is available to them when they require it, irrespective of the time of day, because the services are provided frequently.</p> <p>The frequency of services has improved between Network 12 and Network 14, with a shift in vehicle kilometres and vehicle hours towards higher frequency services, across both weekdays and weekends. A decrease in weekday route kilometres indicates the network is now more direct. On weekends, route kilometres have increased due to better emulate to the weekday network. In both instances, the proportion of rapid services has increased, reflecting improvements in service frequency.</p> <p>These improvements in system design and infrastructure will help to make the public transport system, and the Frequent Network in particular, more competitive with private travel, but there is insufficient information to demonstrate change at present. In the absence of detailed survey data, such as may be obtained through a household travel survey or the Australian Census, the ACT Government is unable to determine whether there has been any discernible modal shift towards public transport.</p>	Needs improvement

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-13 Public transport - Action 16: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
<p>Action 16: Continue to monitor the implementation of recommendations of the ACT Accessible Public Transport Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b></p> <p><i>Bus replacement program needs accelerating if targets are to be achieved</i></p>	On track to be achieved

This action is important in achieving a public transport system that is ‘accessible for everybody whatever their level of mobility at any time or place’. The *ACT Accessible Public Transport Plan 2013-18* highlights several areas in public transport that should be addressed to improve accessibility including access to vehicles, buildings and infrastructure, communication and information formats and attitudes of transport providers and the community. The Plan includes relevant performance indicators.

An important aspect of accessibility concerns access to the vehicles themselves, and the *Disability*

*Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) require Government to ensure 80 percent of the bus fleet meets disability standards by the end of 2017, and 100 percent of the fleet by 2022. As at April 2015, 65 percent was DDA compliant (217 buses of the operating fleet of 416).

42 percent of the bus fleet is past the optimal retirement age for the vehicles, and many of the older vehicles do not meet DDA standards. Replacement vehicles are compliant, but implementation of the replacement program has been slow.

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate estimates that to achieve the 2017 and 2022 DDA targets the fleet replacement program will need to be accelerated to replace an additional 105 buses (over the current contracted acquisitions) to redress the slow progress to date.

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-14 Public transport - Action 17: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 17: Adopt an operating speed standard of 40km/hr for the Rapid Service to guide the infrastructure investment program.	Needs improvement

**Audit Office assessment and comment**

**Not achieved. Notwithstanding work to date, further infrastructure improvements will be required if it is to be achieved.**

Although *Transport for Canberra* advocates operating speed standards (40 kph for rapid services and 20 kph for frequent locals) it is not clear whether these standards have been formally adopted. Such speeds are important in terms of the efficiency of the public transport system and to promote public transport as a viable alternative to private travel.

In any regard, the Rapid services are currently falling considerably short of the target—they are currently achieving around 32 kph under Network 14, up marginally from 31 kph under Network 12. Under Network 14, service speeds increased for all service types (that is, Rapid, Frequent Local and Coverage services) except Peak Express services (possibly due to introduction of a new route on more congested arterial roads). A comparative review of Network 12 (implemented in May 2012) and Network 14 (implemented September 2014) undertaken by ACTION showed that Network 14 speeds up routes. The review stated, however, that ‘evidence suggests many run times are now too tight, with drivers unable to maintain the schedule, drawing into question the merits of setting speeds governed by resource constraints rather than traffic patterns’.

Operating speeds are influenced by many factors such as general traffic congestion, bus priority measures, the number of stops, vehicle reliability and passenger boarding procedures. The *Transport for Canberra* Report Card (September 2014) indicates that information from the real-time passenger information system (NXTBUS) will assist in implementing the operating speed standard. Detailed analysis of the real time data will help to identify bottlenecks and specific factors impeding operating speed and areas where infrastructure investment (such as transit lanes or priority at intersections) can be implemented.

The implication from the ACTION Future Facilities Masterplan (November 2014) however, is that adjustment to route run times to improve the operating speed may be difficult without compromising network performance, and that significant improvement in operating speeds is more likely to require infrastructure improvements. See paragraphs 3.66 to 3.76.

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-15 Active travel - Action 19: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 19: Investigate new types of transport infrastructure and services including shared spaces, segregated lanes, priority at intersections, electric bikes and public cycle parking facilities in the city.	On track to be achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b> <i>Unable to be determined as it is unclear as to when this action should be considered to have been completed and therefore achieved. It is recognised that work is underway but it requires on-going attention across several directorates to be delivered in an integrated manner.</i> The Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) outlines a number of completed activities related to the city's pedestrian and cycle networks. The activities are part of the integrated transport network promoted under the <i>Active Travel Framework</i> , which was released in May 2015 and acknowledges the strong link between active travel, public transport and land use planning. Ensuring the efficient and effective implementation of an integrated transport network will require coordination of planning, implementation and governance activities across several directorates.	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-16 Managing travel demand - Action 29: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 29: Deliver travel behaviours change programs to promote and encourage greater take-up of sustainable transport for work trips in line with sustainable travel goals.	On track to be achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b> <i>Unable to be determined as it is unclear as to when this action should be considered to have been completed and therefore achieved. It is recognised that work is underway but the 2016 and 2026 mode change targets remain a major challenge for government, and will not be achievable without significant effort and resources.</i> ACT Government activities to encourage travel behaviours changes are ongoing, including promotion for public transport, and active transport activities, as well as introduction of related policies (for example on parking). However, data is presently unavailable to conclude whether there has been any behavioural change that will lead to a sustainable modal shift (see paragraphs 3.18 to 0). The Audit Office notes the observation of consultants that completed a benefit cost analysis of the Frequent Network that travel time benefits were a relatively small contributor to the overall expected benefits of the Network. 'Despite bus priority improvements, car travel would not be much slower than bus during the peak' and as a result, changes for many new passengers would be motivated mainly by out-of-pocket travel cost savings rather than time savings. This is supported by the observation that patronage of bus services to the Parliamentary Triangle increased following the introduction of paid parking in that zone. The close link between parking costs and use of public transport is recognised in the ACT Government parking action plan ( <i>Building and Integrated Transport Network: Parking</i> ) released in June 2015. Transport for Canberra identifies 2016 and 2026 mode share targets that require an additional 48,000 people to use sustainable transport options to travel to work by 2026. Transport for Canberra includes performance measures and targets for sustainable travel, with measures being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average number of trips per person per weekday/weekend</li> </ul>	

- purpose of different trips
- distance of different trips
- percentage of trips by public transport
- percentage of trips by cycling
- percentage of trips by walking

The targets are stated as:

- establish a baseline and methodology for average number of trips per person per day in the ACT.
- increase percentage of all trips by sustainable transport each year.
- establish a baseline (2012) and increase percentage of children travelling to school by active travel (walking, cycling, scooting) by 2016.

*Transport for Canberra* further states that a travel survey will be used to establish a ‘baseline average number of trips per person per day’, and that reporting on sustainable trips as a proportion of this baseline would occur from 2012-13.

The Environment and Planning Directorate has not yet established a base-line or methodology to measure the average number of trips per person per day in the ACT. All the measures cited above require this base information. Further, census data does not provide sufficient detail to capture the information required to meet this commitment. The Environment and Planning Directorate has advised that ‘without a household travel survey we have been unable to complete this task’.

Australian Census data has previously been used to show that mode share by sustainable travel options achieved in 2011 was marginally improved over 2006, although the share achieved by public transport and cycling had declined slightly (walking was the big improver). Actual achievements (15.5 percent of journeys to work used sustainable transport options), however, fell considerably short of Government targets (20.0 percent).

Achieving the 2016 and 2026 targets will remain a major challenge for government, and will not be achievable without significant effort and resources.

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-17 Monitoring and reporting - Action 33: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 33: Release an annual Transport for Canberra update report from 2012-13, and review and updated Transport for Canberra in five years.	On track to be achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b> <i>Not achieved. Annual update report not delivered for 2013-14, only one update so far issued (September 2014). Focus will be required to deliver the next update and to ensure planning is commenced in a timely way to deliver the five year review and update on target.</i>	

The ACT Government has published one update report on since adopting *Transport for Canberra* policies in March 2012; the *Transport for Canberra Report Card* was released in September 2014.

A review, and update, of *Transport for Canberra* is due by 2017.

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

**Table 3-18 Monitoring and reporting - Action 34: Transport for Canberra Report Card (September 2014) assessment of progress and Audit Office assessment and comment**

Action	Progress recorded in Report Card
Action 34: Progressively improve transport policies, program, infrastructure and services each year, taking into account the benefits and costs of initiative to deliver Transport for Canberra actions and targets.	On track to be achieved
<b>Audit Office assessment and comment</b> <i>Unable to be determined as it is unclear as to when this action should be considered to have been completed and therefore achieved. It is recognised that work has been undertaken but it is difficult to specifically report on such a broad action item. However, the Frequent Network is yet to be delivered in full.</i> This is a progressive 'Action'. Several related policies such as the <i>Active Travel Strategy</i> (May 2015) and <i>Parking Action Plan</i> (June 2015) have been released. Implementation of the actions agreed under these policies are expected to assist in achieving the long term goals associated with <i>Transport for Canberra</i> , including transport mode shifts. Nevertheless, although there have been improvements in many areas, the Frequent Network envisaged in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> is far from delivered.	

Source: Transport for Canberra Report Card and ACT Audit Office

## Summary comments

- 3.50 The Audit Office's analysis of the *Transport for Canberra Report Card* (September 2014) indicates that reporting to the community on the implementation of Actions set out in *Transport for Canberra* has been difficult due to the nature of the Actions. Furthermore, some of the reporting is inaccurate as:
- some Actions that have not been completed have been reported as being 'Achieved', and
  - some Actions reported as being 'On track to be achieved' were actually not achieved; many Actions were reported in the report card as 'On track to be achieved', yet no evidence is presented to support this claim.
- 3.51 In addition, where an Action is assessed by agencies as not being progressed as required, it has been reported as 'Needs improvement'. This comment is not a statement of progress but one of direction. Furthermore, it is not clear what actually 'Needs improvement' to achieve the outcome expected from the particular Action.
- 3.52 Some of the key commitments in *Transport for Canberra* that are critical to the success of the Frequent Network are not being achieved. These include:
- 'embedding the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan', and 'working with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan' - these components of the Frequent Network Action (*Public transport - Action 2*) have not been achieved yet are reported as 'Achieved';

- ‘include seven day network in ACTION enterprise bargaining agreement in 2013’ (*Public transport - Action 9*) – this has not been achieved yet it is reported as ‘Needs Improvement’ and given current circumstances is unlikely to be achieved;
  - ‘adopt an operating speed standard of 40km/hr for the Rapid Service to guide infrastructure investment development’ (*Public transport - Action 17*) - this is reported as ‘Needs improvement’ and actual speeds are far lower than the standard at 32 km/h; and
  - ‘grow the bus fleet to respond to patronage growth and deliver the Frequent Network, and ensure new bus fleet minimises greenhouse gas, maximises patronage potential, and obtains value for money for the Territory’ (*Public transport - Action 4*) – this is reported as ‘On track to be achieved’ yet there are issues with the current replacement program. The ACTION bus fleet replacement program will need to be accelerated to redress the slow progress achieved over recent years to replace the many vehicles in the fleet that do not meet standards required under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and to ensure 80 percent of the bus fleet meets disability standards by the end of 2017.
- 3.53 There is also no assessment or statement included in the report card on whether the highest priority Actions are being progressed as planned and/or whether implementation is being sequenced so that those *Actions* which are interdependent are integrated in their delivery.

RECOMMENDATION 2	TRANSPORT FOR CANBERRA MONITORING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK	HIGH PRIORITY
The Environment and Planning Directorate should improve reporting on the implementation of <i>Transport for Canberra</i> , in the annual Transport for Canberra Report Card by:  c) all summary comments on progress being accurate, and including information that justifies claims of ‘On track to be achieved’; and specifying what ‘needs improvement’.		

## Review and evaluation of the implementation of the Frequent Network

- 3.54 The Audit Office considered the adequacy of review and evaluation mechanisms to measure the implementation and operation of the Frequent Network.
- 3.55 There has not yet been a specific review or evaluation of the implementation and/or operation of the Frequent Network initiative. The Frequent Network was only formally identified as ACT Government public transport policy with the release of *Transport for Canberra* in March 2012. *Transport for Canberra* includes an Action (Monitoring and

reporting - *Action 33*) that includes as a component to 'review and update Transport for Canberra in five years' (that is, by 2017).

3.56 Notwithstanding that there has not yet been a formal review or evaluation of the implementation and/or operation of the Frequent Network, there have been several other relevant reviews, which are likely to affect *Transport for Canberra* and the Frequent Network. Three key reviews are:

- *Network Review* (October 2014);
- *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014); and
- *Expenditure Review* (March 2015).

## ACTION Network Review

3.57 Network 14, introduced in September 2014, was the first major revision of the public transport system since the release of *Transport for Canberra*. It was the first network redesign to benefit from analysis of patronage data generated from the MyWay ticketing system, and the first to be guided by the strategic direction set out in *Transport for Canberra*.

3.58 In October 2014 the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate completed the *Network Review*; a review of Network 14 with reference to the replaced Network 12. The Review noted the significance of the Frequent Network, observing that 40 percent of weekday journeys in 2014 were made on services in rapid corridors, although these services accounted for only 24 percent of vehicle kilometres and 22 percent of vehicle hours.

3.59 The *Network Review* drew heavily on analysis of ACTION's business information systems, chiefly HASTUS (which assists in network planning and scheduling by defining routes, stops, vehicle requirements and timetables) and NetBI (which uses information from HASTUS and the extensive data from the ticketing/information system MyWay to produce a wealth of analytical data such as passenger journeys, stop utilisation, journey origin/destination and passenger origin/destination). This was supplemented with community consultation, and information from ACTION's customer interface. Further analysis of MyWay data in early 2015 extended the analysis to cover a period of 13 weeks, enough time for the new network to 'settle in' and largely confirming the initial analysis.

3.60 Patronage data was a particular focus and several case studies were prepared. Some 'network scenarios' were modelled to test the effect of adding or withdrawing routes and introducing or cutting back on through-routing.

3.61 The *Network Review* concluded that:

- an increased focus on a 'peak-first' network, at the expense of an 'all-day' network, 'has not hurt patronage to the extent expected'. Curtailing some evening services had a less than proportional effect on patronage, suggesting there was scope for efficiencies. However, the report cautioned against continuing this trend, as interpeak

and evening services help support patronage in the peak periods (that is, a person may travel on a bus in a peak period knowing that an evening service is available for the trip home);<sup>7</sup>

- additional weekend services led to a 10 percent increase in weekend patronage;
- through-routing ('one seat to destination') was demonstrably favoured by patrons; its introduction on one route led to a 43 percent increase in patronage, whereas discontinuing through-routing elsewhere saw a 55 percent patronage drop; and
- good information for patrons, including clear 'branding' of frequent services, is critical. Effective publicity for a new 'direct' service from Gungahlin to Belconnen led to an increase in total weekday passenger trips of 30-40 percent, notwithstanding that an existing (and more circuitous) route was actually quicker.

3.62 Several high level recommendations were made in the report as follows:

- simplify the network -
  - run fewer routes at a higher frequency
  - layer routes onto corridors to improve frequency
  - reduce the number of trip variants
  - through-route all-day along the Blue and Red Rapid corridors, supplementing the trunks with additional services ... during the peaks
  - operate this weekday network at a reduced frequency on weekends
- improve information design -
  - redesign timetables and destination signs on buses
  - introduce frequent network branding incorporating frequency mapping
  - rationalise bus routes and route numbers
  - use NXTBUS to its full potential, for instance by displaying connecting information in real time
- implement the bold reforms -
  - argue the case that mass transit exists to serve the masses
  - change community expectations by incorporating roads into any discussion of 'equity' in the provision of public transport
  - redesign future networks without fear of community pressure
  - challenge established work practices and refrain from predicting union reaction
- consider the benefits of franchising -

---

<sup>7</sup> Many of the public transport reforms in Transport for Canberra are aimed at improving patronage of the public transport system for journeys to work, and the Frequent Network itself has a focus on services during peak periods. In the face of limited resources, increasing peak services will have a detrimental effect on Coverage Services.

- a new Transport for Canberra agency can set Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for operators, with penalties and incentives in place for meeting Key performance Indicators (KPIs)
  - franchising has cut costs around Australia whilst modernising work practices
  - savings can be reinvested back into the network.
- 3.63 The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate's comparative study of Network 12 and Network 14 (the *Network Review*) assessed the performance of the public transport system, and provided quantitative support for the Network 14 revisions to the networks. The study shows a benefit in shifting resources to services on the Frequent Network. The study identified risks to network performance (for example, the effect of forcing transfers on patrons who have grown used to through-routing) and made several recommendations aimed at encouraging patronage.

#### **Ongoing review of the ACTION bus network**

- 3.64 The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate routinely monitors network performance using the extensive high quality data on patronage available from MyWay, and other operational aspects from NXTBUS, HASTUS and netBI, as well as through public feedback. The Territory and Municipal Services has, for example, given particular attention to the Rapid routes, given their prominence in the overall bus transport network (43 percent of average weekly patronage occurs on the 21 percent of rapid route services).
- 3.65 The operational monitoring seeks to incrementally improve passenger experience (location of facilities such as bus stops, frequency and speed of services, connections and transfers) and generally improve efficiency by minimising dead running (typically 'not in service' buses moving from or to a depot or one-way peak services returning to the start of the route). Dead running is an expensive part of public transport operations, creating costs (mainly wages) but no revenue. Dead running accounts for about 15 percent of the operating cost of the fleet and 18 percent of all vehicle kilometres.
- 3.66 Schedules and routes may be revised as a result of this monitoring, and monitoring may also provide information to inform other aspects of ACTION's operations including work practices and maintenance. The same process has been used to monitor the implementation of network changes.
- 3.67 Through data available from MyWay, as well as other information management systems including NXTBUS, HASTUS and netBI, the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate can isolate routes and services that comprise the Frequent Network and monitor and review their performance. To date, however, network analysts have not specifically monitored or reviewed the performance of the Frequent Network. Doing so would provide a stronger basis on which to develop and implement the Frequent Network as a key deliverable from *Transport for Canberra*.

**RECOMMENDATION 4 PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF FREQUENT NETWORK**

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate should periodically review the performance of the Frequent Network using quantitative analysis of the data available from ACTION business systems including MyWay, HASTUS and NetBI to better inform overall management of the Frequent Network.

### **ACTION Future Facilities Masterplan**

- 3.68 In 2014, SMEC and MRCagney were commissioned to ‘undertake an assessment of ACTION’s business model, in order to maximise the financial viability of ACTION for the next 20 years, and identify the bus depot facilities that will improve the operational efficiencies of Canberra’s bus fleet’. The *Future Facilities Masterplan* was completed in November 2014.
- 3.69 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) noted that, as of January 2014, ACTION had 410 buses in service as its standard fleet, which were maintained at depots in Belconnen and Tuggeranong. ACTION also had an additional 18 ‘special needs transport vehicles’, which were maintained at its re-commissioned depot at Woden. The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified the ACT Government’s future bus fleet and depot requirements.

#### **Bus fleet requirements**

- 3.70 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) considered the future bus fleet requirements of ACTION with respect to its peak fleet requirements, i.e. the bus requirements during the peak morning operating hours.
- 3.71 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified that, of the 410 standard buses in ACTION’s current fleet, 365 were used in the peak AM period (5:00 am to 9:00 am). The Masterplan noted that the Environment and Planning Directorate had a ‘detailed dataset for the design of the 2031 bus network’ but that ‘it was mostly developed in 2009 as part of preparing the *Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (SPTNP), and is considered somewhat out-of-date.’ The Masterplan further identified:

Additionally, a number of potential issues have since been identified with the 2031 network. When subjected to a rigorous comparison with the existing (2014) network, it was noted that the forecast volume of bus services operating in the AM peak hour (measured in vehicle hours) in 2031 was little higher than in 2014. On several major corridors leading to the Canberra CBD, the number of inbound peak hour buses was shown to be forecast to drop between 2014 and 2031, effectively reducing the inbound carrying capacity of the bus network. This is not a realistic outcome for the development of Canberra’s public transport system.

...

What appears to have occurred, however, is that the number of existing bus services operating in some corridors appear to have been underestimated. Even with the

increase in the number of Rapid routes, and the setting of peak frequency on Rapid routes at 7.5 minutes (10 buses per hour), the future network does not provide as many bus services per hour as the existing network.

- 3.72 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) sought to identify the peak fleet requirement for the 2031 network. The Masterplan noted that in doing so, ‘the determination of the peak fleet requirement for a hypothetical future network, including the locations for depot pull-outs, is a complex process.’ Nevertheless, the Masterplan identified that ‘the combined urban and school AM peak fleet requirement estimated for 2031 is 511 vehicles.’ Taking into account the standard spare vehicle ration of ten percent the Masterplan noted ‘this results in an estimated fleet size in 2031 of 562 buses required for the urban and school bus networks.’ This is an increase of 152 buses over the January 2014 total of 410 buses.
- 3.73 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) noted that the predicted fleet size of 562 buses represented a 37 percent increase over the existing fleet, and that:
- The increased rate of growth of fleet compared to population is not unexpected due to:
- New bus routes to service growth areas on the periphery of Canberra will be longer than the existing average bus routes. More bus resource is required to service a population further from the CBD, compared to one located close to the CBD.
  - Policies defined in Transport for Canberra target an increased mode share for public transport in the future. Most existing AM peak hour services are carrying good loads, with limited spare capacity to carry additional passengers. Consequently, the additional capacity required to achieve increased mode share needs to be delivered by increased frequencies on selected parts of the existing network.
- 3.74 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified that ‘to meet the targets of the Transport for Canberra policy, the bus fleet will need to grow at approximately nine buses per annum until 2031.’

## Depot requirements

- 3.75 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified:

The existing depots at Belconnen and Tuggeranong are operating over their effective design capabilities, to the order of 25% and 20% respectively. They have now reached the point at which they physically cannot accommodate any additional buses.

- 3.76 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) noted *Transport for Canberra*, including its transport mode goals (16 percent of journey to work trips in 2026 to be undertaken by public transport) and stated:

In accordance with the expected demand on the bus fleet required to meet Canberra’s mode shift goals, and the current capacity issues at the Belconnen and Tuggeranong Depots, it is expected that additional depot facilities will be required.

- 3.77 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) noted that the Woden depot was re-commissioned for the purpose of housing ACTION's special transport fleet and that re-establishing a full depot at Woden 'is viewed as a logical option as it is already under appropriate ownership, is strategically well located to efficiently meet the operational needs of the ACTION bus network, and is appropriately zoned for development as a bus depot.' However, notwithstanding the full establishment of a depot 'given the anticipated growth in the ACTION bus fleet, all three depots would reach capacity in 2020, necessitating the need for additional or expanded facilities.'
- 3.78 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) considered ACTION's future bus fleet and depot requirements and identified a need for the ACTION bus fleet to grow at approximately nine buses per year to 2031 and for additional bus depot facilities.

## ACTION Expenditure Review

- 3.79 The ACT Government requested an in-depth review of ACTION to inform decisions regarding the provision of public transport services. The main purpose of the review was 'to develop options for the ACT Government that place provision of public bus transport services in a sustainable financial position.' A detailed report (the *Expenditure Review*) was provided to the ACT Government by consultant MRCagney in March 2015. The report is currently being considered by the ACT Government.

### Bus fleet requirements

- 3.80 Similar to the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014), the *Expenditure Review* also considered the peak fleet requirements of ACTION. The ACTION Expenditure Review considered the peak fleet requirements, in recognition of the *Transport for Canberra* policy of 16 percent journey to work trips by public transport by 2026. The *Expenditure Review* stated:

The Transport for Canberra policy defines a 16% bus modal target by 2026... we have calculated the peak requirement would be 858 buses (944 buses with 10% spares), allowing for increased bus capacity as old smaller buses are replaced. By 2031 the peak requirement would be 915 buses (1,007 buses with 10% spares). This represents an increase of 445 buses to be purchased (approximately 30 buses per annum) over the 562 buses outlined in the ACTION Future Facilities Masterplan.

- 3.81 In relation to the mode share targets (specifically the target of 16 percent of all journey to work trips by public transport by 2026), the report noted:

Of concern in Transport for Canberra is the disparity between the 16% mode share target, and the volume of service provided in the AM peak period within its proposed 2031 bus network. Recent adjustments to that planned network provided additional AM peak period services, and resulted in an estimated fleet growth of 40% between 2014 and 2031 (to 511 buses). However, the 16% mode share target combined with expected population growth, would require peak fleet and service levels to increase to 858 buses by 2026, which is 2.35 times the current fleet.

## Depot requirements

- 3.82 In light of the greater number of buses forecast as necessary to meet the *Transport for Canberra* requirements by 2031, the *Expenditure Review* notes that a total of five depots will be required in the future. This represents an additional depot, over the four that were forecast in the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014).

## Review outcomes

- 3.83 A public transport reform statement is being prepared by the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, having regard to the conclusions and recommendations of the *Expenditure Review*. Public announcement of a number of reforms, which may affect the Frequent Network, is expected late in 2015.
- 3.84 The *Expenditure Review* (March 2015) undertaken by MR Cagney identified that the 16 percent mode share target for public transport journey to work trips in 2026 was 'plausible but ambitious' but that a significant increase in buses was needed to meet the target. The Review also identified that a total of 1,007 buses would be needed by ACTION in 2031 (915 of which would be needed to service the peak AM period) to meet future demand and the journey to work target. This significantly exceeds the estimate of 562 buses identified in the *Future Facilities Masterplan*, completed five months earlier in November 2014. The Review also identified the need for a total of five bus depots in the future (one more than was forecast in the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014)).



## 4 ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK

---

- 4.1 This chapter considers the planning assumptions associated with the Frequent Network and the risks associated with the planning assumptions for the implementation of the Frequent Network.

### Summary

#### Conclusions

There are key risks associated with the assumptions that underpin planning for the Frequent Network which will need to be recognised and managed to ensure the effective delivery of the Frequent Network.

A key patronage assumption for the Frequent Network relates to the connection between changes to land use and demand for public transport services, i.e. more intensive urban development is expected to lead to greater demand for public transport. An important means by which this would be achieved is by embedding the Frequent Network into relevant planning documents such as the Territory Plan and National Capital Plan, to give greater certainty to the community and other stakeholders. This has not occurred.

Key operational assumptions associated with the Frequent Network are that ACTION has sufficient infrastructure, capacity and resources to deliver the Frequent Network. These assumptions primarily relate to the availability of bus drivers for a seven-day working week (in order to deliver a seamless Frequent Network over the full week), the availability of buses and depots. Despite being identified in *Transport for Canberra* as a key Action, the required reform of the ACTION Enterprise Agreement has not occurred and the availability of drivers outside peak and weekday inter-peak times remains limited.

Recent reviews and evaluations of ACTION's future bus and depot needs highlight the need for considerable additional resources to both meet the requirements of the Frequent Network and delivery of the *Transport for Canberra* journey to work mode share targets (16 percent by 2026). Additional resources will need to be planned and delivered to ensure these commitments are met.

A cost benefit analysis of the Frequent Network undertaken in 2010 showed that for every \$1 invested there would be \$3.59 in benefits. This analysis was based on the use of buses. The Frequent Network is to also be serviced by light rail and an updated analysis is needed.

## Key findings

	Paragraph
The ACT Government's transport planning and land use strategies and plans emphasise the interdependence of land use and transport planning. Most recently, <i>Transport for Canberra</i> has provided a strong and transparent policy regarding the importance and function of the Frequent Network in providing an 'effective public transport system [that is] fast, frequent, reliable, comfortable and safe for passengers'. Its delivery requires the implementation of various interdependent transport and land use policies and the effective management of risks in an integrated and targeted manner.	4.4
The primary assumptions underlying <i>Transport for Canberra</i> relate to patronage. <i>Transport for Canberra</i> assumes that a network of frequent corridor services will create sufficient incentives to redirect development towards these corridors and away from lower density areas, if supported by other policies around the release of land. In this respect, the provision of a higher quality transport network represents a driver of transport supply and a driver of demand for land while policies around land use represent drivers of demand for transport and of supply for land.	4.7
Other assumptions and risks around the development of the Frequent Network revolve around planning assumptions and operational assumptions, namely whether:	4.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demand will follow the growth path assumed in planning documents such as <i>Transport for Canberra</i> (planning assumptions); and</li> <li>• the network will be able to grow at the rate needed to support the successful delivery of the Frequent Network (operational assumptions).</li> </ul>	
Growth in suburban areas presents a challenge to a public transport system, which must seek to balance increased coverage and patronage with network efficiency. Providing services in areas where there is low current patronage but high potential (such as a greenfield development destined to be on the Frequent Network) may help to establish patterns of usage and increase the viability of the services, but it is expensive. Until patronage increases to a sustainable level it is an inefficient use of limited resources.	4.17
The presumption of a direct, and positive, correlation between transport developments and demand for higher density land usage is contestable. Dr Clifton, a transport expert engaged by the Audit Office, has advised that it is possible to create higher density urban development that does not lead to a significantly greater demand for sustainable transport.	4.21
The ACT Government has not yet implemented the commitment in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> to update the Territory Plan to embed the rapid corridors, nor have the	4.26

rapid corridors been embedded within the National Capital Plan. Embedding the transit corridors in these high level plans is a means of reducing the risk that development of new residential and employment areas will be inappropriately located and therefore not serviced by high quality public transport, i.e. the Frequent Network.

There is risk associated with the decision to delay implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* initiative to embed the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan, and to work with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan, pending completion of the Light Rail Master Plan. While this continues to be delayed opportunities may be lost for fostering needed land use changes. When constructed and commissioned, the light rail will become part of the Frequent Network. However, a very significant part of the Frequent Network may never be served by light rail. Accordingly, those parts of the Frequent Network that have certainty should be embedded as a matter of high priority.

*Transport for Canberra* commits the ACT Government to providing a high frequency network, seeking to maximise patronage and a reliable coverage network (which is still at relatively frequent 60 minute intervals or better) for at least 95 percent of Canberran households. Because coverage services must compete with the Frequent Network for government public transport investment, catering to both inevitably means compromises are necessary. There is a cost to maintaining the Coverage Network, which represents a challenge to the expansion of the Frequent Network.

There are key operational assumptions and risks related to ACTION and its capacity to deliver the Frequent Network. Three key assumptions relate to:

- the availability of drivers;
- the availability of buses; and
- the availability of depots.

Thirty three (33) of the 53 routes on the Frequent Network are now aligned. Further progress is constrained by the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, which was approved by the Fair Work Commission in May 2014 and has a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2017. Unless the parties agree to vary the current Agreement, there is a risk that this matter may not be finalised until 2017.

*Transport for Canberra* recognises that ACTION's fleet will need to grow to implement the Frequent Network, but there is no reference to the extent of growth required.

The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified that 'to meet the targets of the Transport for Canberra policy, the bus fleet will need to grow at

4.28

4.42

4.43

4.48

4.51

4.58

approximately nine buses per annum until 2031' to a total of 562 buses (from a current total fleet of 411).

ACTION's Fleet Replacement Program was endorsed in 2008 with an agreement for the *replacement* of 364 buses between 2007 and 2022. Fleet replacement is focused on aligning the fleet to achieve accessibility requirements under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). There is no growth—net increase in vehicles or service capacity—built into this program.

4.59

Implementation of the Frequent Network under *Transport for Canberra* was expected to lead to an increase in the provision of services by ACTION and increased demand for services. It was expected that the bus fleet would need to grow to meet the additional demand. However, ACTION's fleet replacement strategy (endorsed in 2008 by the ACT Government) is focused on replacing vehicles to meet legislated disability requirements, and maintaining the fleet rather than growing it. A Fleet Replacement Program developed in October 2014 for consideration by the ACT Government has not been approved.

4.64

The March 2015 ACTION Expenditure Review estimates that by 2031 the peak requirement for buses by ACTION would be 915 buses (1,007 buses with 10 per cent spares). This is an increase of 445 buses to be purchased over the estimate of 562 buses identified in the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014).

4.68

The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) considered ACTION's future bus fleet and depot requirements. The Masterplan identified a need for additional or expanded depot facilities to maintain the growth in the bus fleet over and above the expected future facilities at Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden.

4.71

In light of the increased number of buses forecast as necessary to meet the *Transport for Canberra* requirements by 2031, the *Expenditure Review* notes that a total of five depots will be required in the future. This represents an additional depot, over the four that were forecast five months earlier in the November 2014 *Future Facilities Masterplan*.

4.72

The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010) identified that there was a strong case for the implementation of the Frequent Network. This analysis was cited in *Transport for Canberra*. In referring to the strong benefit-to-cost ratio expected of the Frequent Network, however, *Transport for Canberra* does not acknowledge it was based on a bus-only service, or that it is very sensitive to achievements in mode shift from private car to public transport. The introduction of light rail into the Frequent Network will affect the potential costs and benefits of the Frequent Network. Furthermore, any failure to achieve the target mode shares will have an adverse effect. An updated cost

4.83

benefit analysis is needed for the Frequent Network that reflects its operation by both buses and light rail, revised estimates regarding investments in new buses and an extra depot to meet future peak demands and risks associated with the achievement of mode share changes expected under *Transport for Canberra*.

The Environment and Planning Directorate advised that the Capital Metro Light Rail Project ‘has its own comprehensive business case, which took into account both transport and urban development benefits’ and that ‘another update of cost-benefit analysis on the frequent network would have very little value.’ However, the Business Case that was prepared in relation to the Capital Metro Light Rail Project (publicly released in October 2014) included cost-benefit analysis in relation to only the implementation of the light rail in the Civic to Gungahlin corridor. The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010) considered the Frequent Network across Canberra as a whole and there would be merit in updating this analysis, which is broader than that for the Capital Metro Light Rail Project in the Civic to Gungahlin corridor.

4.84

Integration of light rail in the Frequent Network is considered in the Light Rail Master Plan, which was released for public comment in late October 2015. This plan was initially envisaged to be delivered in mid 2015.

4.86

## Public transport planning strategies and plans

- 4.2 Since 2004 there have been a number of studies undertaken and plans developed relevant to ACT public transport. These include:
- *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study* (January 2004);
  - *Canberra Spatial Plan* (March 2004);
  - *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004);
  - *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009); and
  - *Transport for Canberra* (March 2012).
- 4.3 The purpose, findings and outcomes of these strategies and plans are discussed in detail in Appendix D.
- 4.4 The ACT Government’s transport planning and land use strategies and plans emphasise the interdependence of land use and transport planning. Most recently, *Transport for Canberra* has provided a strong and transparent policy regarding the importance and function of the Frequent Network in providing an ‘effective public transport system [that is] fast, frequent, reliable, comfortable and safe for passengers’. Its delivery requires the implementation of various interdependent transport and land use policies and the effective management of risks in an integrated and targeted manner.

- 4.5 Paragraph 2.3 identified the range of government policies and programs that intersect with transport planning; transport planning is influenced by almost 30 significant government policies and programs, including the *ACT Planning Strategy*, the *Canberra Plan*, and the *ACT Infrastructure Strategy*. Assumptions underpinning these policies, such as population demographics and projections, road congestion changes and so forth affect planning for the Frequent Network. Accordingly, planning assumptions associated with the Frequent Network are, in many respects, the assumptions underpinning transport planning as a whole.

### **Frequent Network planning assumptions and risks**

- 4.6 As discussed in paragraph 3.20, the Audit Office sought advice from Dr Geoffrey Clifton at the University of Sydney in relation to the planning assumptions associated with the Frequent Network. In identifying the assumptions underpinning planning for the Frequent Network Dr Clifton advised:

The primary assumption ... underlying the Transport for Canberra plan is the assumption that a network of frequent corridor services will create sufficient incentive to redirect development towards transport corridors and away from lower density areas, if supported by other policies around the release of land. Here, provision of a higher quality transport network represents a driver of transport supply and a driver of demand for land whilst policies around land use represent drivers of demand for transport and of supply for land.

...

The remaining assumptions and risks around the development of the Frequent Network revolve around two areas. Firstly, is the question of whether demand will follow the growth path assumed in planning documents such as *Transport for Canberra*. Secondly, is the question of whether the network will be able to be grown at the rate needed to support the successful development of the Frequent Network. This second set of risks can be broken down into assumptions and risks at the planning level and assumptions and risks at the operational level.

- 4.7 The primary assumptions underlying *Transport for Canberra* relate to patronage. *Transport for Canberra* assumes that a network of frequent corridor services will create sufficient incentives to redirect development towards these corridors and away from lower density areas, if supported by other policies around the release of land. In this respect, the provision of a higher quality transport network represents a driver of transport supply and a driver of demand for land while policies around land use represent drivers of demand for transport and of supply for land.

- 4.8 Other assumptions and risks around the development of the Frequent Network revolve around planning assumptions and operational assumptions, namely whether:

- demand will follow the growth path assumed in planning documents such as *Transport for Canberra* (planning assumptions); and
- the network will be able to grow at the rate needed to support the successful delivery of the Frequent Network (operational assumptions).

4.9 The following section of this report discusses the three key categories of implicit assumptions associated with the ACT Government's public transport planning:

- patronage assumptions (and risks);
- planning assumptions (and risks); and
- operational assumptions (and risks).

## Patronage assumptions and associated risks

4.10 In relation to patronage assumptions (and risks) Dr Clifton identified three key areas:

- demography;
- employment; and
- land use.

### Demography

4.11 In relation to demographic changes, Dr Clifton advised:

Continued population growth is [a] key assumption of Transport for Canberra and the extensive Frequent Network proposed for the period after 2016 will only be required if this growth occurs. Population growth in the three years from June 2011 to June 2014 was 4.9 percent; this is less than the 5.2 percent growth of Australia as a whole and less than the 7.4 percent growth in the ACT in the four years to June 2007. The lower growth in the ACT does not preclude the further development of the Frequent Network but may require changes to the rate at which the Frequent Network grows, particularly if this lower growth rate is sustained over the medium term.

Furthermore, the Transport for Canberra document assumes that demographic change will favour public transport over private vehicles.

### Employment

4.12 In relation to employment changes, Dr Clifton advised:

Employment growth is also an important assumption. The Frequent Network will require growth in employment to occur in the public sector, education and or the service industries rather than industrial or light industrial areas located outside of the areas well-serviced by public transport.

4.13 The employment sectors referred to by Dr Clifton are typically located in the town centres that serve as terminals for the Frequent Network; industrial or light industrial areas are not. The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009) (upon which the Frequent Network was based) states that 'Hume's smaller size and greater remoteness will make it very hard to serve with high-quality public transport, so the Strategic Network considers this a very low priority'.

- 4.14 The recent relocation of ACT public service activities to Gungahlin has been influenced, at least in part, by the public transport policy. However, the ACT Government has less influence over the location of Commonwealth public service offices and personnel, and the relocation of these facilities away from town centres (for example, to the business park developments at the Canberra airport) could affect planning for the Frequent Network.

## Land Use

- 4.15 Since 2004, ACT transport policies have emphasised the relationship between transport planning and land use, and given prominence to the Frequent Network. *Transport for Canberra* includes the key message that

... future developments—whether by the government, private or community sector—will need to be on or near the Frequent Network service to benefit from the frequent and reliable public transport service it will provide.

- 4.16 Two key issues are relevant to land use assumptions (and risks) associated with planning the Frequent Network:

- timing of the implementation of frequent services with greenfield development; and
- designation of rapid transit corridors in urban planning documents.

### Timing of the implementation of frequent services with greenfield development

- 4.17 Growth in suburban areas presents a challenge to a public transport system, which must seek to balance increased coverage and patronage with network efficiency. Providing services in areas where there is low current patronage but high potential (such as a greenfield development destined to be on the Frequent Network) may help to establish patterns of usage and increase the viability of the services, but it is expensive. Until patronage increases to a sustainable level it is an inefficient use of limited resources.

- 4.18 In relation to the implementation of the Frequent Network in greenfield developments, Dr Clifton advises:

Transport for Canberra assumes that greenfield residential developments will be built to allow for easy walking distance of all residents to the Frequent Network with little, if any, new provision of coverage or feeder services. Route planning is underway for the new developments in Molonglo and East Lakes with trunk bus services being planned rather than feeder or coverage services. Whether these trunk bus services will be provided with the frequency necessary to form part of the Frequent Network will depend on the speed of development in the area and the availability of buses and funding.

A further difficulty arises in the sequencing of new developments and the growth of the Frequent Network. Unless Frequent Network services are put in place early, it is difficult to create dense low-driving neighbourhoods, as new residents will be more likely to develop the habit of using the car as their primary means of transport. However, investing in frequent public transport services in areas that are not yet

developed or in areas of relatively low density means redirecting service from elsewhere in the absence of additional budget.

4.19 In relation to this issue, the Environment and Planning Directorate advised ‘in developing the Molonglo suburbs, provision has been made for park and ride and bike and ride facilities, and bus priority measures, as well as limited peak express services, notwithstanding that population density could only support infrequent bus services.’

4.20 Dr Clifton further advised that:

These timing issues have been addressed successfully in the growth areas of NW Sydney, where bus only roadways, higher quality interchanges and park and ride facilities were provided early whilst densities could only support infrequent bus services. However, in that area of Sydney a clear commitment was made to increase frequency as demand increased and frequencies have steadily increased in the 20 years since this infrastructure was first built.

4.21 The presumption of a direct, and positive, correlation between transport developments and demand for higher density land usage is contestable. Dr Clifton, a transport expert engaged by the Audit Office, has advised that it is possible to create higher density urban development that does not lead to a significantly greater demand for sustainable transport.

4.22 Dr Clifton notes that:

Evidence for this can be seen in the newer higher density residential areas in North West Sydney and in newer urban areas of the Western part of the United States (that is, Los Angeles and Las Vegas), which have relatively high densities by Australian standards but low public transport market shares. This implies that densification of land use needs to be handled carefully.

Evidence from reports ... note that access to frequent public transport services with longer hours of operation than has been traditionally the case in Australian cities are one of the conditions necessary to support the simultaneous intensification of land use and a lowering of demand for private car travel. However, the evidence on new transport developments as a direct driver of demand for higher density land use is mixed.

### **Embedding the Future Network in planning documents**

4.23 *Transport for Canberra* states that:

Since it was first released in 2009 [as a consultation draft], the Frequent Network map has been modified and adapted in response to community, private and public sector feedback and land use change opportunities identified through ongoing master planning. It is very important that the network (particularly the rapid corridors) be settled and adopted in policy and planning to give certainty to planners, developers and every Canberran about the location of the most frequent and highest quality public transport.

- 4.24 In relation to the Frequent Network and its interaction with land use policy, *Public transport - Action 2* in *Transport for Canberra* provides:
- Adopt the Frequent Network of public transport services to guide planning and design of public transport services, public transport and active travel infrastructure land supply programs, urban development and location of facilities. This includes:
- embedding the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan
  - working with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan
- 4.25 The Audit Office was advised by the Environment and Planning Directorate that this action has been deferred until finalisation of the Light Rail Master Plan, which may affect some corridors. The ACT Government expected to release a Light Rail Master Plan for public consultation in early 2015, but this was delayed until late October 2015.
- 4.26 The ACT Government has not yet implemented the commitment in *Transport for Canberra* to update the Territory Plan to embed the rapid corridors, nor have the rapid corridors been embedded within the National Capital Plan. Embedding the transit corridors in these high level plans is a means of reducing the risk that development of new residential and employment areas will be inappropriately located and therefore not serviced by high quality public transport, i.e. the Frequent Network.
- 4.27 At present, the National Capital Plan shows ‘an indicative inter-town public transport route’, which is shown connecting Gungahlin, Canberra Central (Inner North and Inner South Canberra), Belconnen, Woden, and Tuggeranong (as well as an inter-town route through Molonglo). The Environment and Planning Directorate advised that the National Capital Authority has commenced the statutory process to implement changes to the National Capital Plan, through Draft Amendment 86.
- 4.28 There is risk associated with the decision to delay implementation of the *Transport for Canberra* initiative to embed the rapid corridors in the Territory Plan, and to work with the Commonwealth to include the rapid corridors in the National Capital Plan, pending completion of the Light Rail Master Plan. While this continues to be delayed opportunities may be lost for fostering needed land use changes. When constructed and commissioned, the light rail will become part of the Frequent Network. However, a very significant part of the Frequent Network may never be served by light rail. Accordingly, those parts of the Frequent Network that have certainty should be embedded as a matter of high priority.

### **Route changes in the Frequent Network**

- 4.29 *Transport for Canberra* states:

New frequent local lines may also be added where denser, transit-oriented developments are planned. These discussions will occur through implementation of the ACT Planning Strategy, with new transport/land use corridor studies and master planning across the city.

- 4.30 Since the release of *Transport for Canberra*, route changes have occurred in response to routine operational management of the public transport system by the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and ACTION. The indicative network plans for 2016 and beyond included in *Transport for Canberra* are broadly used by ACTION to inform the development of service levels and the network structure, but route alignments, frequency and span of hours are adjusted in line with actual demand on the network and to account for operational issues such as fleet availability.
- 4.31 ACTION has implemented some parts of the Frequent Network to follow a different alignment to that in the *Transport for Canberra* ‘indicative’ plan. For example, the initial network design showed a planned rapid connection between Woden and Erindale following a route that encompassed Sulwood Drive, a high speed trunk road. ACTION realigned the route to follow Longmore Crescent, which is a suburban feeder road running largely parallel to the initially planned route. The initial alignment offered a fast, high frequency express service. The implemented alignment has essentially instead provided a high frequency feeder route that maximises patronage potential.
- 4.32 Elsewhere, ACTION varied the initially planned Gungahlin to Belconnen frequent local route to service a high school and university, rather than adopt the planned alignment, which although more direct and potentially faster, failed to cater for the high patronage potential of these employment and educational sites. A further example is the Kippax to Belconnen route, which is designated to become part of the Frequent Local network by 2016. ACTION does not see this route as providing sufficient patronage to support upgrading the frequency in the short term, preferring to divert any resources thus made available to other components of the network.
- 4.33 In relation to route changes to the Frequent Network, Dr Clifton commented:
- A Frequent Network that reacts to [operational] changes is desirable but runs the risk of losing the sense of permanence of transport options that can drive employment and residential location decisions. ACTION appears to be mindful of this risk and is seeking to present incremental changes to services in future years in preference to the more large scale annual changes of recent years that [marked redesign of the public transport network previously].
- 4.34 One means by which the risk described by Dr Clifton, ie that public transport operational route changes lose ‘the sense of permanence of transport options that can drive employment and residential location decisions’, may be managed is to ensure that urban planning documents reflect the long term planning intentions of government. In the case of the Frequent Network this would include embedding the rapid transit corridors set out in *Transport for Canberra* into high levels plans such as the Territory Plan and the National Capital Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 5	EMBEDDING TRANSPORT CORRIDORS IN URBAN PLANNING DOCUMENTS	HIGH PRIORITY
	<p>The Environment and Planning Directorate should provide certainty with respect to the location of the Frequent Network by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) embedding its long-term corridors in the Territory Plan as a matter of priority; and</li> <li>b) working with the Australian Government to also embed these corridors in the National Capital Plan.</li> </ul>	

## Planning assumptions and risks

### Coverage services versus frequent services

4.35 The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009) discussed both the concept of a ‘coverage cap’ and ‘coverage standards’, noting that key policy decisions would need to be made by the ACT Government in relation to the nature and type of public transport service that was to be offered in the future and its cost. In relation to a ‘coverage cap’, i.e. a cap on the proportion of the public transport budget provided for Coverage Services, the Plan stated:

A key decision to be made in response to this study is the level of low-patronage Coverage service that should be run in the long term. Coverage service is designed to circulate in low-density suburbs where patronage potential - both current and long-term - is predictably low.

...

Coverage service meets important goals dealing with quality of life and the needs of mobility-disadvantaged persons. These goals will continue to exist, but they are - and will continue to be - in conflict with the goal of high mode share. To manage this conflict, the ACT Government should consider adopting a “Coverage cap”, a policy limit on the percentage of total resources that should be devoted to these permanently low-patronage services. A separate decision could be made to operate somewhat more service in low-patronage areas of known socio-economic disadvantage.

4.36 The concept of a ‘coverage cap’ was not adopted in *Transport for Canberra. Transport for Canberra* stated:

The Strategic Public Transport Network Plan talks about two ways to address ... transport disadvantage and ensure public transport provides mobility and access for everyone while still creating fast, frequent connections to maximise use of buses: a coverage cap, where a maximum percentage of public transport monies will be dedicated to lower patronage services; or a minimum coverage standard. The former approach, tested with the community in 2009 during consultation around the Frequent network, attracted very low levels of support. The government will

therefore respond to this socially-driven transport demand by adopting minimum coverage standards for the public transport network.

- 4.37 Responding to community concerns, *Transport for Canberra* applies minimum coverage standards to meet social and accessibility-driven public transport demand. Under this policy decision, the target is for 95 percent of Canberra households to be within 500 metres of a bus stop. Further, *Transport for Canberra* indicated that, by 2016 (according to the 2016 Indicative Frequent Network) households accessing coverage services could expect an all-day service at a frequency of 60 minutes or better, and by 2031 all services would be at a frequency of 30 minutes or better (according to the 2031 Frequent Network).
- 4.38 As discussed previously, in paragraphs 3.58 to 3.63, in October 2014 the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate completed a review of Network 14, with reference to the replaced Network 12. The report noted the significance of the Frequent Network, observing that 40 percent of weekday journeys in 2014 were made on services in rapid corridors, although these services accounted for only 24 percent of vehicle kilometres and 22 percent of vehicle hours. One of the findings from the review was that an increased focus on a ‘peak-first’ network, at the expense of an ‘all-day’ network, ‘has not hurt patronage to the extent expected’. Furthermore, curtailing some evening services had a less than proportional effect on patronage, suggesting there was scope for efficiencies. The report also cautioned against continuing this trend, as interpeak and evening services help support patronage in the peak periods (that is, a person may travel on a bus in a peak period knowing that an evening service is available for the trip home).<sup>8</sup>
- 4.39 In relation to the tension between coverage services and frequent services, Dr Clifton advised:

There appears to have been an effort made [by ACTION] to reduce some coverage services in favour of growth in the Frequent Network (i.e. the Red Rapid) and growth in the higher frequency local services that do not meet the threshold of four buses per hour to be a true part of the Frequent Network (i.e. the Belconnen to Gungahlin corridor where frequencies are now three per hour). Rather than a response to a coverage cap, these developments appear to be part of a policy by ACTION to support patronage growth in the face of externally imposed limits to its budgets and limits to its available resources.

- 4.40 Cuts to Coverage Services, however, are often met with public challenge and have on occasion been reversed notwithstanding the poor patronage of the service. Yet cuts are inevitable; from a network management perspective, where there is little to be gained by providing a service that is infrequently used and the resources thus freed can be better used to deliver the promised Frequent Network. This does not mean that those people patronising such a service and needing public transport should not be served; but they may need to be served in another way rather than via a traditional bus service on a

---

<sup>8</sup> Many of the public transport reforms in *Transport for Canberra* are aimed at improving patronage of the public transport system for journeys to work, and the Frequent Network itself has a focus on services during peak periods. In the face of limited resources, increasing peak services will have a detrimental effect on coverage services.

schedule. One example of such a service is the Flexible Bus Service that has been implemented by ACTION.

#### *The Flexible Bus Service*

4.41 ACTION advised that ‘the Flexible Bus Service is available to Canberra residents who have limited access to public transport options’. The Flexible Bus Service is a free service that is specifically available to the aged or people with a disability, operating ‘off a basic timetable, picking up residents from their home and taking them to local community service providers such as local shopping centres and hospitals’. It is typically available to persons who meet the following criteria:

- seniors card holders with mobility issues;
- seniors card holders aged 70 or over;
- living in a nursing home and/or retirement village;
- impacted by a permanent or temporary disability that prevents you from accessing regular route services; and
- holders of a Vision Impaired (VIP), or Total and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) travel pass.

4.42 *Transport for Canberra* commits the ACT Government to providing a high frequency network, seeking to maximise patronage and a reliable coverage network (which is still at relatively frequent 60 minute intervals or better) for at least 95 percent of Canberran households. Because coverage services must compete with the Frequent Network for government public transport investment, catering to both inevitably means compromises are necessary. There is a cost to maintaining the Coverage Network, which represents a challenge to the expansion of the Frequent Network.

## **Operational assumptions and risks**

4.43 There are key operational assumptions and risks related to ACTION and its capacity to deliver the Frequent Network. Three key assumptions relate to:

- the availability of drivers;
- the availability of buses; and
- the availability of depots.

- 4.44 In relation to operational assumptions (and risks) Dr Clifton advised:

ACTION is undergoing a review process ... that might lead to changes in the operation of services, or the amount of funding that ACTION receives. In the interim, funding is allowing existing service levels to be maintained and any increase in frequencies tends to be gained by redirecting services from elsewhere. Future funding levels for additional vehicles and drivers are a key risk to the ability of ACTION to deliver the 2016 Frequent Network and longer term planning for the network will need to reflect these.

## **Availability of drivers**

- 4.45 *Public transport - Action 9 in Transport for Canberra* provides:

Include seven day network in ACTION enterprise bargaining agreement in 2013.

- 4.46 The importance of operating public transport on a seven-day basis was highlighted by Dr Clifton, who stated 'having a consistent network design, with good frequencies and span of hours throughout the week is necessary to drive patronage growth.'

- 4.47 In relation to the availability of drivers, Dr Clifton advised:

The Enterprise Bargaining Agreement under which ACTION operates was identified as a risk in *[Transport for Canberra]*. The [Enterprise Bargaining Agreement] sets out the conditions and pay levels for bus drivers and the services that are operated or proposed must comply with the requirements of the [Enterprise Bargaining Agreement]. Action 9 of *[Transport for Canberra]* required that provision for a seven day network be included in the ACTION Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for 2013. Discussions with ACTION suggest that this did not occur and the availability of drivers outside peak and weekday interpeak times remain limited.

- 4.48 Thirty three (33) of the 53 routes on the Frequent Network are now aligned. Further progress is constrained by the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, which was approved by the Fair Work Commission in May 2014 and has a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2017. Unless the parties agree to vary the current Agreement, there is a risk that this matter may not be finalised until 2017.

<b>RECOMMENDATION 6</b>	<b>ADDRESSING ACTION'S OPERATIONAL RISKS HIGH PRIORITY</b>
-------------------------	--

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (ACTION) should address key operational risks to the implementation of the Frequent Network by:

- a) identifying and providing options to the ACT Government for overcoming the adverse effects of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement on the ability of ACTION to manage in a more flexible manner to meet demand;

## Availability of buses

- 4.49 In relation to the availability of buses, Dr Clifton advised:

A bus based system has capacity that can be increased relatively organically (new buses, new drivers); depot capacity is the ‘lumpy’ investment that will eventually be required after the basic network infrastructure is established. In off peak hours, additional driver hours are the key investment required as bus numbers and depot space are determined by the peak (typically the AM peak when school and commuter trips coincide).

[*Transport for Canberra*] discusses the availability of vehicles and the requirement to grow the fleet as the Frequent Network grows. There is also a need to increase depot space and maintenance facilities as the fleet grows. Fleet requirements will also change as the Gungahlin corridor is converted to light rail and other bus routes in the inner North of Canberra are redirected to become feeder services. The net effect of these changes will depend on the timing of the growth of the Frequent Network but ACTION is well aware of these issues and, despite the budgetary limitations, neither fleet nor depot space appear to be a limiting factor either at present or over the medium term. The purchase of new vehicles and the construction of new depot space does not have a long lead time so any risks that exist here can be managed over the longer term.

## Fleet requirements

- 4.50 Implementing the Frequent Network as proposed in the *Transport for Canberra* policy document released in 2012 involved increasing the frequency of bus services to achieve 15-minute intervals (or better) across the Rapid and Frequent Local routes—all day and on weekends. Increasing frequency on the Frequent Network as envisaged, while at the same time providing a substantial Coverage Network<sup>9</sup>, would require additional buses to service the routes, and additional support costs (drivers etc), as well as supporting infrastructure.
- 4.51 *Transport for Canberra* recognises that ACTION’s fleet will need to grow to implement the Frequent Network, but there is no reference to the extent of growth required.
- 4.52 Initial budget submissions for the precursor for *Transport for Canberra* in March 2010 included around \$94 million for the acquisition of buses to meet the demand expected to be created by the new policy, but resources were not provided for these additional buses. The March 2010 submission with the draft *Transport for Canberra* policy included a bid for 140 additional buses. By the time the final submission was made to the ACT Government in February 2012, the bid for additional resourcing had been reduced to \$28 million over two years, or approximately 56 buses at \$0.5m per vehicle. In any case, notwithstanding this proposal, Government approved a significantly reduced total capital program for *Transport for Canberra* that did not include any funds to acquire additional buses. The then current Fleet Replacement Strategy, approved in 2008, did not provide for growth in the fleet.

---

<sup>9</sup> Around half of ACTION’s services provided local coverage to about 16 percent of patrons.

- 4.53 The Environment and Planning Directorate advised the Audit Office that modelling in 2009 undertaken as part of developing the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (which subsequently became the public transport component of *Transport for Canberra*) determined that ‘the fleet requirements over a 20 year period for regular trips is 413 (not including school services)’. At the time (30 June 2009), ACTION had a fleet of 393 buses in service in total.

### ACTION Future Facilities Masterplan

- 4.54 As discussed in paragraphs 3.68 to 3.78 in 2014, SMEC and MRCagney were commissioned to ‘undertake an assessment of ACTION’s business model, in order to maximise the financial viability of ACTION for the next 20 years, and identify the bus depot facilities that will improve the operational efficiencies of Canberra’s bus fleet’. The *Future Facilities Masterplan* was completed in November 2014.
- 4.55 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) considered the future bus fleet requirements of ACTION with respect to its peak fleet requirements, i.e. the bus requirements during the peak morning operating hours. The Masterplan noted that the Environment and Planning Directorate had a ‘detailed dataset for the design of the 2031 bus network’ but that ‘it was mostly developed in 2009 as part of preparing the Strategic Public Transport Network Plan (SPTNP), and is considered somewhat out-of-date.’ The Masterplan further identified:

Additionally, a number of potential issues have since been identified with the 2031 network. When subjected to a rigorous comparison with the existing (2014) network, it was noted that the forecast volume of bus services operating in the AM peak hour (measured in vehicle hours) in 2031 was little higher than in 2014. On several major corridors leading to the Canberra CBD, the number of inbound peak hour buses was shown to be forecast to drop between 2014 and 2031, effectively reducing the inbound carrying capacity of the bus network. This is not a realistic outcome for the development of Canberra’s public transport system.

...

What appears to have occurred, however, is that the number of existing bus services operating in some corridors appear to have been underestimated. Even with the increase in the number of Rapid routes, and the setting of peak frequency on Rapid routes at 7.5 minutes (10 buses per hour), the future network does not provide as many bus services per hour as the existing network.

- 4.56 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) sought to identify the peak fleet requirement for the 2031 network. The Masterplan identified that ‘the combined urban and school AM peak fleet requirement estimated for 2031 is 511 vehicles.’ Taking into account the standard spare vehicle ration of ten percent the Masterplan noted ‘this results in an estimated fleet size in 2031 of 562 buses required for the urban and school bus networks.’ This is an increase of 152 buses over the January 2014 total of 410 buses.

4.57 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) noted that the predicted fleet size of 562 buses represented a 37 percent increase over the existing fleet, and that:

The increased rate of growth of fleet compared to population is not unexpected due to:

- New bus routes to service growth areas on the periphery of Canberra will be longer than the existing average bus routes. More bus resource is required to service a population further from the CBD, compared to one located close to the CBD.
- Policies defined in Transport for Canberra target an increased mode share for public transport in the future. Most existing AM peak hour services are carrying good loads, with limited spare capacity to carry additional passengers. Consequently, the additional capacity required to achieve increased mode share needs to be delivered by increased frequencies on selected parts of the existing network.

4.58 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified that ‘to meet the targets of the Transport for Canberra policy, the bus fleet will need to grow at approximately nine buses per annum until 2031’ to a total of 562 buses (from a current total fleet of 411).

### **ACTION Fleet Replacement strategy**

4.59 ACTION’s Fleet Replacement Program was endorsed in 2008 with an agreement for the replacement of 364 buses between 2007 and 2022. Fleet replacement is focused on aligning the fleet to achieve accessibility requirements under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). There is no growth—net increase in vehicles or service capacity—built into this program.

4.60 Following the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014), the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate prepared a proposed Fleet Replacement Program in October 2014 for consideration by the ACT Government. The strategy acknowledged the aging fleet and its increasing costs, and stated:

*Transport for Canberra* is the ACT Government’s template for transport modelling into the future. Based on the expected population growth mode share targets defined within *Transport for Canberra*, it is expected that ACTION will require a fleet of at least 562 buses by 2031.

4.61 To address these matters, and ensure the fleet meets legislated disability standards, the strategy proposed:

- replacement of vehicles to meet disability standards (this is no change from the current program);
- retirement of vehicles at 15 years, and
- accelerated replacement during a five year correction period (accelerated over the current strategy to meet disability requirements by 2020, two years ahead of the legislated deadline).

4.62 The proposed strategy formalised a ‘retirement regime’ for the fleet, addressed the risks related to the current replacement program stalling, and sought to ensure government would meet legislated disability requirements. In addition, the proposal for government consideration recommended:

- acquisition of additional buses to address growth, commencing in 2017-18. (Growth is assumed at 5 percent every two years from that point. This would provide a fleet of 562 buses by 2031.) This would need to be accompanied by funding for new depots to service the expanded fleet and address overcapacity at current depots;
  - acquisition of 40 additional buses to cover a capacity shortfall following replacement as above because new buses have a lower carrying capacity than those being replaced,
- or
- acquisition of additional steer-tag buses rather than rigid buses to cover the capacity shortfall, subject to a relaxation of the restrictions on their use in the ACT.

4.63 The proposed strategy has not received ACT Government approval, and the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate was not successful in gaining funding through the budget for the accelerated replacement (over the five-year correction period), or for additional buses.

4.64 Implementation of the Frequent Network under *Transport for Canberra* was expected to lead to an increase in the provision of services by ACTION and increased demand for services. It was expected that the bus fleet would need to grow to meet the additional demand. However, ACTION’s fleet replacement strategy (endorsed in 2008 by the ACT Government) is focused on replacing vehicles to meet legislated disability requirements, and maintaining the fleet rather than growing it. A Fleet Replacement Program developed in October 2014 for consideration by the ACT Government has not been approved.

### **ACTION Expenditure Review**

4.65 As discussed in paragraphs 3.79 to 3.84 the ACT Government requested an in-depth review of ACTION to inform decisions regarding the provision of public transport services. The main purpose of the review was ‘to develop options for the ACT Government that place provision of public bus transport services in a sustainable financial position.’ A detailed report (the *Expenditure Review*) was provided to the ACT Government by consultant MRCagney in March 2015. The report is currently being considered by the ACT Government.

- 4.66 Similar to the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014), the *Expenditure Review* also considered the peak fleet requirements of ACTION. The ACTION Expenditure Review considered the peak fleet requirements, in recognition of the *Transport for Canberra* policy target of 16 percent journey to work trips by public transport by 2026. The *Expenditure Review* stated:

The Transport for Canberra policy defines a 16% bus modal target by 2026... we have calculated the peak requirement would be 858 buses (944 buses with 10% spares), allowing for increased bus capacity as old smaller buses are replaced. By 2031 the peak requirement would be 915 buses (1,007 buses with 10% spares). This represents an increase of 445 buses to be purchased (approximately 30 buses per annum) over the 562 buses outlined in the ACTION Future Facilities Masterplan.

- 4.67 In relation to future bus fleet requirements and the interaction with the light rail network, the *Expenditure Review* stated:

The reduction in fleet required due to the replacement of Red Rapid services with the [light rail] system will be offset by a required increase in local bus services feeding it, predominantly into a new Gungahlin interchange. Insufficient information has been received from [Capital Metro Agency] to quantify the resulting impact on the ACTION bus operation, but it is possible that the new feeder services will absorb the fleet made available.

- 4.68 The March 2015 ACTION Expenditure Review estimates that by 2031 the peak requirement for buses by ACTION would be 915 buses (1,007 buses with 10 per cent spares). This is an increase of 445 buses to be purchased over the estimate of 562 buses identified in the *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014).

## **Availability of depots**

### **ACTION Future Facilities Masterplan**

- 4.69 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) identified:

The existing depots at Belconnen and Tuggeranong are operating over their effective design capabilities, to the order of 25% and 20% respectively. They have now reached the point at which they physically cannot accommodate any additional buses.

- 4.70 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) noted that the Woden depot was re-commissioned for the purpose of housing ACTION's special transport fleet and that re-establishing a full depot at Woden 'is viewed as a logical option as it is already under appropriate ownership, is strategically well located to efficiently meet the operational needs of the ACTION bus network, and is appropriately zoned for development as a bus depot.' However, notwithstanding the full establishment of a depot 'given the anticipated growth in the ACTION bus fleet, all three depots would reach capacity in 2020, necessitating the need for additional or expanded facilities.'

4.71 The *Future Facilities Masterplan* (November 2014) considered ACTION's future bus fleet and depot requirements. The Masterplan identified a need for additional or expanded depot facilities to maintain the growth in the bus fleet over and above the expected future facilities at Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden.

### ACTION Expenditure Review

4.72 In light of the increased number of buses forecast as necessary to meet the *Transport for Canberra* requirements by 2031, the *Expenditure Review* notes that a total of five depots will be required in the future. This represents an additional depot, over the four that were forecast five months earlier in the November 2014 *Future Facilities Masterplan*.

### Summary of planning assumptions

4.73 In relation to the planning assumptions associated with the Frequent Network. Dr Clifton advised:

The plans for the development of the Frequent Network are predicated around assumptions regarding:

1. a shift in the development patterns of housing and employment and assumptions towards higher density corridors and town centres;
2. either changes to people's preferences for car ownership and usage or significant changes to the costs of driving and parking;
3. the ability, in the shorter term, to redirect bus services toward the Frequent Network and away from coverage services, and
4. the ability, in the longer term, to grow coverage services to provide higher frequency feeder services for the rapid corridor services.

4.74 Dr Clifton also advised:

For all four of these to occur requires a sustained political commitment from the ACT Government and its agencies. Based on the evidence, this commitment appears to have been sustained since the release of the *Transport for Canberra* Plan but many of the politically more sensitive decisions have not yet been made and this commitment will need to be sustained throughout the life of the plan.

All four points also require the public to alter their preferences for housing, employment and transport. Whilst there have always been people who favour higher density living and public transport, these have been in a minority in the ACT. There is evidence that people are prepared to accept higher density housing, both globally, elsewhere within Australia and as demonstrated by the demand for higher density housing in town centres and around the Gungahlin corridor.

There is also evidence that the current Frequent Network is popular and the moderate rebalancing of resources towards that network and away from coverage services has been successful. However, this has not led to significant growth in the market share for transport as shown in the 2011 census figures, nor in the recent patronage levels for ACTION bus services.

In the medium term, there will be need for changes to the Frequent Network and the remainder of the bus network to support the introduction of the Light Rail Network. There will also be a need for supporting infrastructure (such as interchanges and lay over space) and for some shorter term changes to the network during construction. ... there is an understanding from ACTION and from the planners of the Light Rail within the ACT Government as to the general nature of these changes and that detailed planning will occur in a timely fashion.

In the shorter term, there is also a need for actions to support the longer term development of the Frequent Network and to keep the longer term plans for the network up to date as circumstances change. ACTION is well placed to manage these changes given that ACTION has more control over network planning than most other bus operators in Australia (where planning tends to be done at the state or territory government level). That said, ACTION is constrained by a limited budget and a degree of uncertainty around the future structure of the organisation.

<b>RECOMMENDATION 6</b>	<b>ADDRESSING ACTION'S OPERATIONAL RISKS</b>	<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>
The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (ACTION) should address key operational risks to the implementation of the Frequent Network by:		
b) identifying and providing options to the ACT Government for funding an increase in bus numbers and expanding the number of depots. (This could be done as part of a short-term (e.g. 5 years) whole-of-government public transport implementation plan – refer to Recommendation 1).		

## Cost benefit analysis of the Frequent Network

- 4.75 As part of the development of the *Transport for Canberra* policy, the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate commissioned a cost-benefit analysis of the Frequent Network as defined in the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009). The consultant Parsons Brinkerhoff Australia Pty Ltd reported the result of their analysis in February 2010 in the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010).
- 4.76 The analysis sought to quantify the economic, environmental and social costs and opportunities of the Frequent Network and assess the potential for land value capture at key interchanges and along the corridor. Several scenarios were modelled, including a 'do minimum' option, a comprehensively revised public transport network incorporating the proposed changes, a 'free public transport' option and scenarios where fuel or parking costs increased dramatically. Estimates for patronage were based on projections using the government's modelling tools, which forecast that patronage would grow at an average of 3.2 percent each year between 2009 and 2031.

4.77 The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010) identified:

- project implementation costs of \$147.2 million, covering ‘infrastructure works at nine major centres involving major interchanges, bus stops and park-and-ride facilities’; and
- ‘additional operating and maintenance cost of bus services and passenger facilities’ of \$4.2 million per annum.

4.78 Benefits were classified according to:

- transport user benefits - ‘benefits which are experienced directly by the users of the transport system, including time savings, travel cost savings and safety benefits. These benefits were calculated separately for the commuter peak, off-peak and weekend’;
- externalities - ‘benefits which stem from transport activities, but are experienced by the wider community. These include environmental and social impacts’; and
- wider economic benefits - which ‘contribute directly to the [gross domestic product], but are not necessarily reflected in travel cost and travel time savings during work hours’.

4.79 The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010) identified that the base reference case delivered a Benefit:Cost Ratio of 3.59, i.e. \$3.59 of benefits for every \$1 spent, noting:

Even taking only travel cost, travel time, safety, and social and environment benefits into account, the results show that the capital investment and proposed network changes are economically viable, bearing in mind that:

- Most of the benefits accrue to passengers who would switch from car to public transport. The results are therefore particularly sensitive to the achievement of the desired mode shift targets. Mode shift was largely achieved by assuming higher than current fuel price and parking charges. The most optimistic scenario assumed free public transport.
- Some of the existing users, particularly those that would have to use bus feeder services, would be disbenefitted in the future. Apart from the negative public feedback, losing these passengers without attracting a sufficient number of new passengers in the short term would be detrimental to the viability of the service. It could also have serious repercussions for the farebox income collected by the bus operations.
- The calculations have been based on a bus service. Although other mass rapid transit options, such as LRT and BRT, could also provide services on the frequent network, both the capital and operating cost structure of such services would be different. In addition, benefits will also be altered, as patronage and generalised travel cost would differ from that of bus.

- 4.80 A key issue for consideration in the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010) is that the benefit to cost ratio is very sensitive to achievements in mode share targets. The analysis notes:

Although the proposed network plan has the potential to deliver substantial benefits over the next 30 years, it should be considered that most of these benefits stem from a mode shift from car to bus. Significantly, economic viability of the project is dependent on such a mode shift occurring and could not be justified on benefits to existing public transport users alone.

- 4.81 The results of the analysis were particularly sensitive to the achievement of the desired mode shift targets. Mode shift ‘would occur chiefly as a result of out-of-pocket travel cost savings, rather than time savings’. Further, the report noted, mode shift is largely achieved through greater use of park and ride facilities (which were assumed to have an ‘unlimited’ capacity) or movement of potential patrons into areas closer to the Frequent Network (so they could access public transport by either walking or cycling). Providing large park and ride facilities has a cost and getting people to relocate to areas closer to the transit corridors requires land use changes. The consultants stated that it is ‘unlikely that new users would opt for this ... unless frequency and coverage of feeder buses are substantially improved’.

- 4.82 *Transport for Canberra* referred to the strong economic case for the Frequent Network, citing the outcomes of the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010):

Economic analysis of the 2031 Frequent Network resulted in a benefit-to-cost ratio of 3.59—a return of \$3.59 for every \$1 invested in the Frequent Network. Analysis also found the required capital investment (a 48% increase in investment per capita by 2031, or around 2% increase per annum) is economically justified, based on the community benefits resulting from the projected patronage and mode share increases.

- 4.83 The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010) identified that there was a strong case for the implementation of the Frequent Network. This analysis was cited in *Transport for Canberra*. In referring to the strong benefit-to-cost ratio expected of the Frequent Network, however, *Transport for Canberra* does not acknowledge it was based on a bus-only service, or that it is very sensitive to achievements in mode shift from private car to public transport. The introduction of light rail into the Frequent Network will affect the potential costs and benefits of the Frequent Network. Furthermore, any failure to achieve the target mode shares will have an adverse effect. An updated cost benefit analysis is needed for the Frequent Network that reflects its operation by both buses and light rail, revised estimates regarding investments in new buses and an extra depot to meet future peak demands and risks associated with the achievement of mode share changes expected under *Transport for Canberra*.

- 4.84 The Environment and Planning Directorate advised that the Capital Metro Light Rail Project ‘has its own comprehensive business case, which took into account both transport and urban development benefits’ and that ‘another update of cost-benefit analysis on the

frequent network would have very little value.' However, the Business Case that was prepared in relation to the Capital Metro Light Rail Project (publically released in October 2014) included cost-benefit analysis in relation to only the implementation of the light rail in the Civic to Gungahlin corridor. The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan Cost Benefit Analysis* (February 2010) considered the Frequent Network across Canberra as a whole and there would be merit in updating this analysis, which is broader than that for the Capital Metro Light Rail Project in the Civic to Gungahlin corridor.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7 COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK**

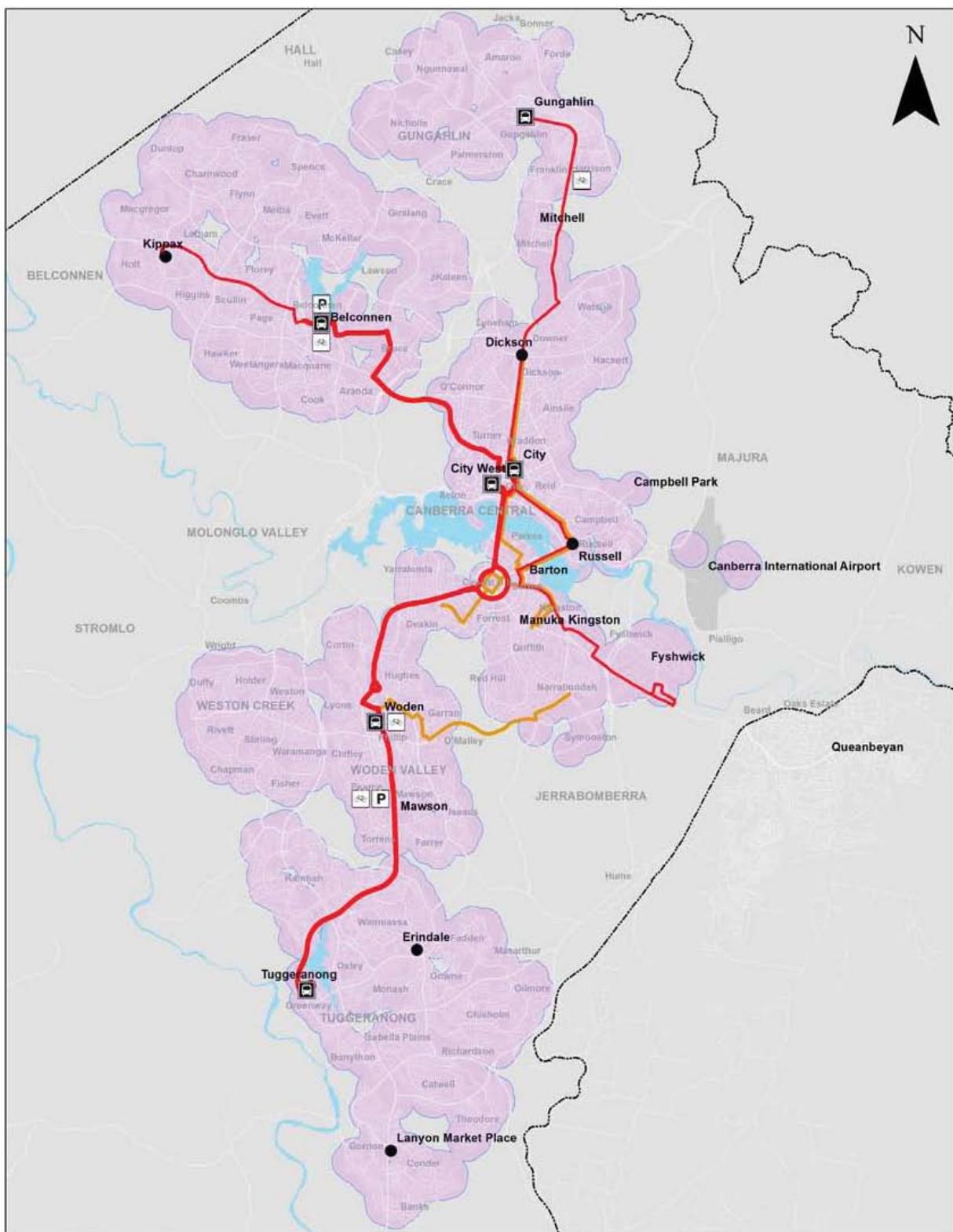
The Environment and Planning Directorate should update its cost benefit analysis of the Frequent Network in light of revised assumptions associated with its delivery. In particular the updated analysis should consider: the impact of the inclusion of the light rail into the Frequent Network; revised estimates regarding investments required in new buses and an extra depot to meet forecast future peak demands; and risks associated with the achievement of mode share changes expected under *Transport for Canberra*.

## **Integrating Light Rail in the Frequent Network**

- 4.85 Although *Transport for Canberra* is 'mode neutral' (in that it makes no stated preference for the delivery of the public transport system by bus or light rail), it acknowledges that the system is bus-dependent at present. Shortly after the release of *Transport for Canberra*, the ACT Government announced that it would implement light rail along the Gungahlin to City corridor, one of the primary corridors on the Frequent Network.
- 4.86 Integration of light rail in the Frequent Network is considered in the Light Rail Master Plan, which was released for public comment in late October 2015. This plan was initially envisaged to be delivered in mid 2015.
- 4.87 The Gungahlin to City corridor is identified in *Transport for Canberra* as 'the government's priority corridor for new infrastructure investments in the short to medium term, with mass rapid transit to be considered ...' Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics released in March 2015 show there has been strong growth in suburbs in Canberra with more apartments around business and shopping centres, with Gungahlin responsible for 71 percent of the total growth in Canberra over 2013-14. This has been reflected in an increase in demand for services along the Gungahlin to City corridor, although it is not known at this stage whether that is also indicative of a modal shift to public transport.

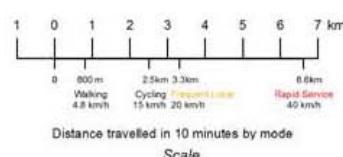
- 4.88 Public transport is currently provided through this corridor by bus. The ACT Government has made a policy commitment for a light rail system to operate in this corridor, and construction is expected to commence in 2016, with the system operational from 2019-20 onwards. Once operational, light rail will provide services in this corridor, and buses are expected to feed into three light rail interchanges; the City, Gungahlin Town Centre and Dickson. The bus network is expected to be changed to avoid duplication of services.
- 4.89 The integration of the light rail service with bus services is critical to commuter acceptance and the effective delivery of the Frequent Network.

## APPENDIX A: 2012 FREQUENT NETWORK



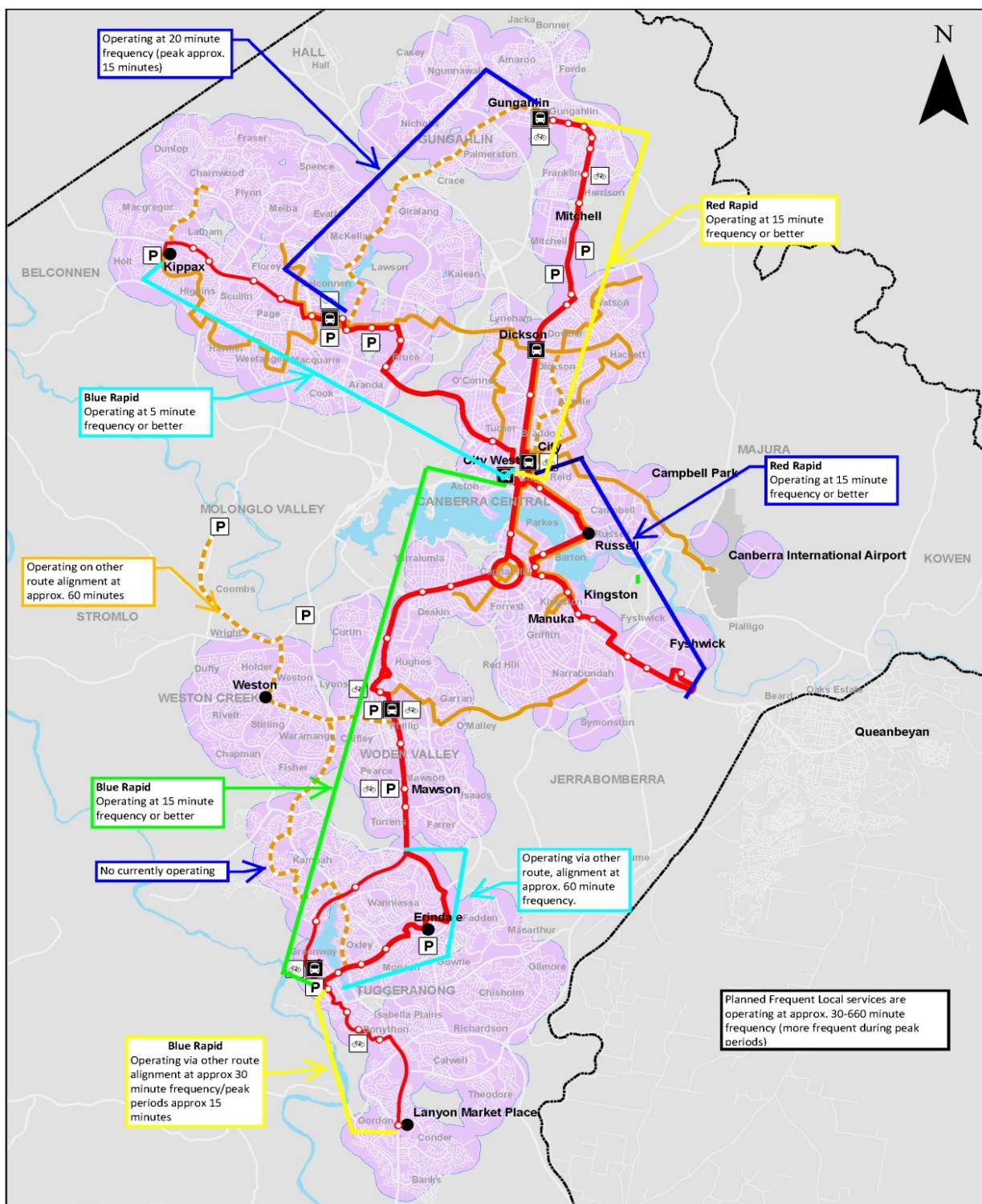
Map 6: 2012 Frequent Network

- |     |               |   |  |
|-----|---------------|---|--|
| [P] | Park and Ride | — | Rapid Service: every 15 min or better all day          |
| [B] | Bike and Ride | — | Rapid Service: every 2-10 min or better all day        |
| [S] | Station       | — | Frequent Local Service: every 15 min or better all day |
| ●   | Major Stop    | ■ | Area Covered by all day service every 60 min or better |



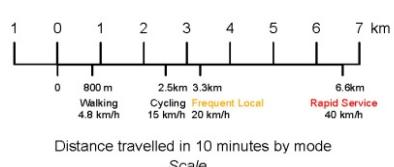


## APPENDIX B: 2016 INDICATIVE FREQUENT NETWORK



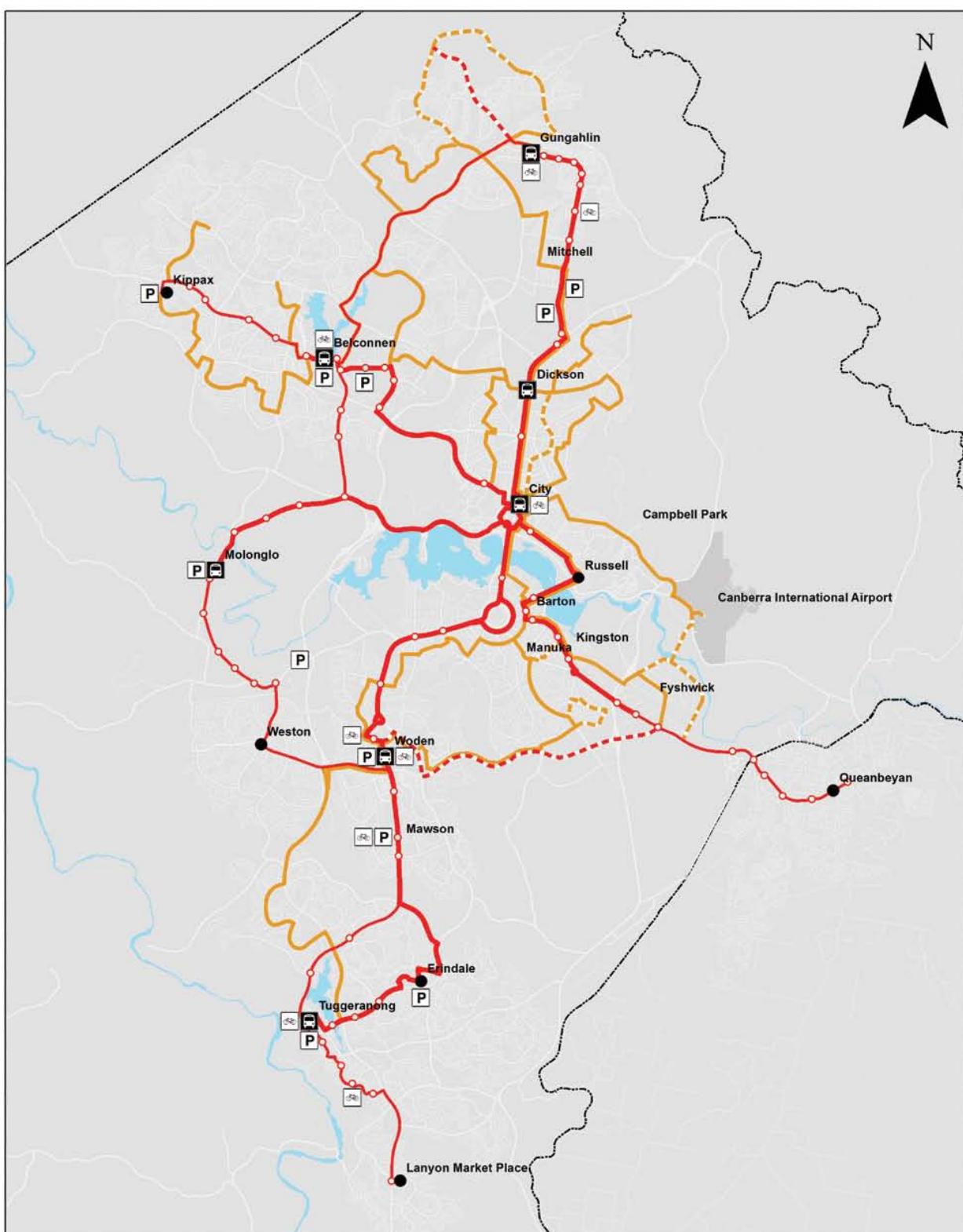
Map 7: 2016 Indicative Frequent Network

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| ○ Rapid Stops   | — Rapid Service: every 15 min or better all day          |
| ■ Station       | — Rapid Service: every 2-10 min or better all day        |
| ● Major Stop    | — Frequent Local Service: every 15 min or better all day |
| ■ Bike and Ride | — Potential Frequent Local                               |
| ■ Park and Ride | ■ Area Covered by all day service every 60 min or better |

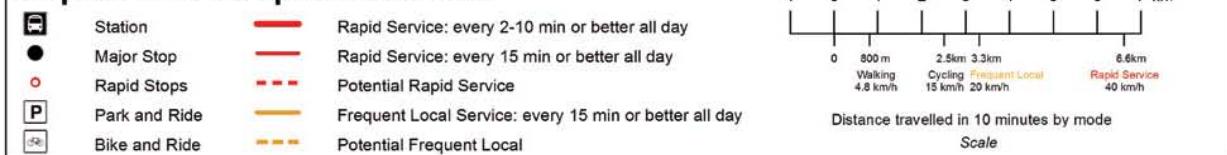




## APPENDIX C: 2031 FREQUENT NETWORK



**Map 2: 2031 Frequent Network**





## APPENDIX D: TRANSPORT PLANNING STRATEGIES AND PLANS

---

There have been a number of studies undertaken and plans developed that have been relevant to ACT public transport since 2004. These include:

- *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study* (January 2004);
- *Canberra Spatial Plan* (March 2004);
- *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004);
- *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009); and
- *Transport for Canberra* (2012).

### **Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study (January 2004)**

The *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study* was released in January 2004. The study was commissioned by ACT Planning and Land Authority and undertaken by KBR. The overall objective of the study was ‘to make recommendations for the planning and implementation of improvements to public transport services for Canberra which will increase the public transport share of journeys.’

The *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study* made a series of medium to long term recommendations that:

... seek to provide a new or improved public transport system in Canberra that, whilst based on the existing system, is developed progressively over time and will offer a more radical alternative to journeys by car, significantly improving public transport’s mode share.

According to the study, one of its aims was ‘to investigate the various public transport corridors which currently serve travel demand.’ The study recommended that ‘the first stage of route development should be based upon the following four transport corridors’:

- Belconnen to City
- Gungahlin to City
- City to Woden/Tuggeranong, and
- City to Manuka loop.

The *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study* (January 2004) identified that urban sprawl, which Canberra’s design tended towards, was commonly associated with low public transport provision and increased reliance on private cars for all trips. The principle of urban consolidation, on the other hand, had been identified with more compact cities leading to greater use of public transport, and better economic, health and sustainability outcomes.

## **Canberra Spatial Plan (March 2004)**

In March 2004 the ACT Government released *The Canberra Spatial Plan*, a strategic planning document for the purpose of directing and managing urban growth and change. According to the plan:

The purpose of the Canberra Spatial Plan is to provide clear strategic directions for the development of Canberra over the next 30 years and beyond, but with the flexibility required to respond to change. It is the Territory's key strategic planning document for directing and managing urban growth and change.

*The Canberra Spatial Plan* identified a number of dedicated public transport actions, including:

Dedicated trunk public transport routes will be constructed initially between Gungahlin and City and Belconnen and City. They will, in the first instance be used by buses, with the potential to convert to light rail in the longer term.

Public transport priority systems and dedicated public transport routes will be provided at the initial stages of development of new Greenfield and major urban renewal sites.

...

High quality transit stations/interchanges will be developed along the Trunk Public Transport Routes, and integrated into the town centres and Civic (priority actions are the development of new transit facilities in Woden and Belconnen).

Improvement of public transport services including construction of:

- bus priority measures;
- real-time information systems; and
- demand-responsive feeder services.

*The Canberra Spatial Plan* identified a series of outcomes that were sought from the sustainable transport initiatives, including:

- ‘an integrated transport and land use approach to new development and redevelopment areas - transit oriented development’;
- ‘transport support for urban regeneration and intensification’; and
- ‘a greater use of walking, cycling and public transport, with targets of: 20 percent of work trips by 2011 by walking, cycling and public transport; and 30 percent of work trips by 2026 by walking, cycling and public transport’.

## Sustainable Transport Plan (April 2004)

*The Canberra Spatial Plan* was closely aligned with the *Sustainable Transport Plan*. The *Sustainable Transport Plan* was released in April 2004 following 18 months of development, including public consultation.<sup>10</sup>

*The Sustainable Transport Plan* represented the first documented transport policy offering strategic direction and government priorities, and presented goals, targets and actions intended to deliver:

a transport system that has lower overall costs, particularly lower greenhouse gas emissions, lower air pollution, reduced accidents and lower health costs, and provides more transport options for the community [while also achieving] the economic and social goals for Canberra outlined in the *Canberra Plan*.

*The Sustainable Transport Plan* identified a range of measures including:

- busways and bus priority measures;
- real time information;
- improved public transport interchanges; and
- ‘integrated land use and, in particular, the achievement of the contained urban form in *The Canberra Spatial Plan*.’

A key to achieving *The Sustainable Transport Plan* was ‘the progressive shift towards an urban form that supports shorter trips and encourages people to walk or cycle’:

The Sustainable Transport Plan encourages improvement of public transport services at activity nodes along key transport corridors. This will support intensification of development along these corridors in line with the urban containment principle of the Spatial Plan.

Consistent with the *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study*, the *Sustainable Transport Plan* (April 2004) also called for the progressive development of a corridor transit system, ‘building onto the existing bus system’. Trunk routes would be made ‘more reliable’ by building busways with public transport priority. Such projects would ‘support land use development along the routes’.

## ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan (June 2009)

In 2008 the ACT Government commissioned a transport planning study. The resulting report, the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* by consulting firm MRCagney, was presented to government in June 2009. The report:

---

<sup>10</sup> Dr Maxine Cooper was Director, Territory Planning, Urban Services in 2001. In this role, Dr Cooper was involved in transport planning. As an Executive Director, Enterprise Services, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate in 2006 - 2007, Dr Cooper had responsibility for ACTION.

... defines steps that will need to be taken over the next two decades to achieve the ACT Government's sustainable transport goals, and to ensure competitive sustainable mobility for Canberrans into the future.

The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009) emphasised the importance of *The Canberra Spatial Plan* and *The Sustainable Transport Plan* and stated that the latter plan 'provides the necessary detail on the public transport impacts of these plans.' Importantly, it introduced the concept of the Frequent Network.

The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* stated:

The Frequent Network represents the ACT Government's *highest investment in public transport services*, and the locations where future development will enjoy the best public transport access. For this reason, the Frequent Network should be specifically defined in long-term planning so that other planning activities can respond to it.

In support of the Frequent Network, the *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* noted:

Increased density of development is generally appropriate on the Frequent Network. The proposed Frequent Network has been designed to focus on areas where high density exists or is planned, but once adopted as policy, the Frequent Network can also be a guide to identifying other areas where dense development could be introduced efficiently without further increasing the need for public transport.

Policies related to transit-oriented development would be focused on the Frequent Network. For example, building orientation and pedestrian access should be focused towards Frequent Network's stops. Parking requirements for new development can be lower on the Frequent Network, and maximum parking limits could even be considered.

Road planning should consider the Government's interest in maintaining the speed and reliability of the Frequent Network. In particular, policy targets for the average speed of the frequent Network should be adopted and monitored. In the future, these targets may imply the need for speed protection facilities, such as bus lanes or transit signals. Road planning activities that could reduce public transport speeds - such as additional stop signs, signals or traffic calming features - would need to take these targets into account.

The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009) stated '... the ACT Government should consider the Frequent Network when making its own location decisions, and should encourage Commonwealth Government and private entities to do likewise. The message is simple: **If you want good public transport in the long term, locate on the Frequent Network.**'<sup>11</sup>

Using the same planning and modelling tool used by the ACT Government's transport planners, the study modelled:

---

<sup>11</sup> Jarret Walker, the principle consultant for McCormickRankinCagney, adds on his website Human Transit '... If good transit isn't important to you, locate somewhere else'.  
(<http://www.humantransit.org/2009/07/long-term-transit-plans-ask-the-real-questions.html>)

... a conceptual Strategic Network of public transport services, designed to fit the development patterns outlined in the Canberra Spatial Plan and to be appropriate in scale to the Sustainable Transport Plan mode share target.

The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* also noted that providing a coverage service (for equity and access purposes) would involve a necessary trade-off with efficiency. The study identified that one consideration was to apply a cap to the total quantity or percentage of resources to be devoted to the goal of maintaining coverage despite low patronage (a 'coverage cap'), as this would implicitly release the remainder of resources to be devoted to the frequent services that maximum patronage.

The *ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* (June 2009) proposed by MRCagney was generally accepted by the ACT Government and has been incorporated into *Transport for Canberra*. The concept of a 'coverage cap', however, was not incorporated within *Transport for Canberra*.

### Transport for Canberra (2012)

The model for Canberra's public transport system introduced in *Transport for Canberra*, while presented as a single public transport system, essentially consists of two networks:

- the **Frequent Network** which is to provide services aligned to a series of permanent public transport corridors connecting the town centres and major employment centres and areas of high or potentially higher density. Services are expected to travel these routes every 15 minutes or better all day. The Frequent Network is to be designed to maximise patronage by serving the high-patronage markets throughout Canberra and therefore accommodate the majority of patronage.
- the **Coverage Network** services which are to provide local access through low-density suburbs where patronage potential is generally low. These services are to be designed to meet basic mobility needs citywide and be generally provided for reasons of inclusion rather than patronage. Services on the coverage network run at low frequencies, usually every 30 minutes during commute peaks and every 60 minutes at other times.

The Frequent Network is the main public transport deliverable of *Transport for Canberra* and a critical step towards providing an ‘effective public transport system [that is] fast, frequent, reliable, comfortable and safe for passengers’. The strong link between transport and land use is evident in the common theme of the transport and planning policies concerning development along rapid transit corridors (for example, Gungahlin to the City, Belconnen to the City and Tuggeranong to the City). The link between transport and land use is evident in Public transport - Action 2 of *Transport for Canberra*:

Adopt the Frequent Network of public transport services to guide planning and design of public transport services, public transport and active travel infrastructure, land supply programs, urban development and location of facilities.

In this respect, *Transport for Canberra* notes that the Frequent Network is intended to be:

... the backbone of an integrated transport system where the key message is ‘for access to fast, frequent and reliable public transport services, locate on the Frequent Network’.

## Audit reports

<b>Reports Published in 2015-16</b>	
Report No. 08 – 2015	Annual Report 2014-15
<b>Reports Published in 2014-15</b>	
Report No. 07 – 2015	Sale of ACTTAB
Report No. 06 – 2015	Bulk Water Alliance
Report No. 05 – 2015	Integrity of Data in the Health Directorate
Report No. 04 – 2015	ACT Government support to the University of Canberra for affordable student accommodation
Report No. 03 – 2015	Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment
Report No. 02 – 2015	The rehabilitation of male detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre
Report No. 01 – 2015	Debt Management
Report No. 07 – 2014	2013-14 Financial Audits
Report No. 06 – 2014	Annual Report 2013-14
<b>Reports Published in 2013-14</b>	
Report No. 05 – 2014	Capital Works Reporting
Report No. 04 – 2014	Gastroenterology & Hepatology Unit, Canberra Hospital
Report No. 03 – 2014	Single Dwelling Development Assessments
Report No. 02 – 2014	The Water and Sewerage Pricing Process
Report No. 01 – 2014	Speed Cameras in the ACT
Report No. 08 – 2013	Management of Funding for Community Services
Report No. 07 – 2013	2012-13 Financial Audits
Report No. 06 – 2013	ACT Auditor-General's Office Annual Report 2012-13
Report No. 05 – 2013	Bushfire Preparedness
<b>Reports Published in 2012-13</b>	
Report No. 04 – 2013	National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
Report No. 03 – 2013	ACT Government Parking Operations
Report No. 02 – 2013	Executive Remuneration Disclosed in ACTEW Corporation Limited's (ACTEW) 2010-11 Financial Statements and Annual Report 2011
Report No. 01 – 2013	Care and Protection System
Report No. 10 – 2012	2011-12 Financial Audits
Report No. 09 – 2012	Grants of Legal Assistance
Report No. 08 – 2012	Australian Capital Territory Public Service Recruitment Practices
Report No. 07 – 2012	Annual Report 2011-12
Report No. 06 – 2012	Emergency Department Performance Information
<b>Reports Published in 2011-12</b>	
Report No. 05 – 2012	Management of Recycling Estates and E-Waste
Report No. 04 – 2012	Development Application and Approval System for High Density Residential and Commercial Developments
Report No. 03 – 2012	Early Childhood Schooling
Report No. 02 – 2012	Whole-of-Government Information and ICT Security Management and Services
Report No. 01 – 2012	Monitoring and Minimising Harm Caused by Problem Gambling in the ACT
Report No. 06 – 2011	Management of Food Safety in the Australian Capital Territory
Report No. 05 – 2011	2010-11 Financial Audits
Report No. 04 – 2011	Annual Report 2010-11