



Trains and tunnels, light rail and rapid buses form key planks of the WA Government's long-term transport plan for the state.

WA News

## WA Government reveals future plans for rail, road transport in Perth

JOE SPAGNOLO, PerthNow

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A TUNNEL under the Swan River linking Riverside Drive to Narrows Bridge and Mounts Bay Road, an inner city subway and a tunnel from the Perth CBD to Morley are just some of the projects identified in the State Government’s much anticipated Perth Transport Plan released on Friday.

But as revealed by *PerthNow* on Thursday, Ellenbrook residents may have to wait another 30 years before they get their promised rail line to the city.



### WA Government's Public Transport blueprint: Integrated Mass Transit network map

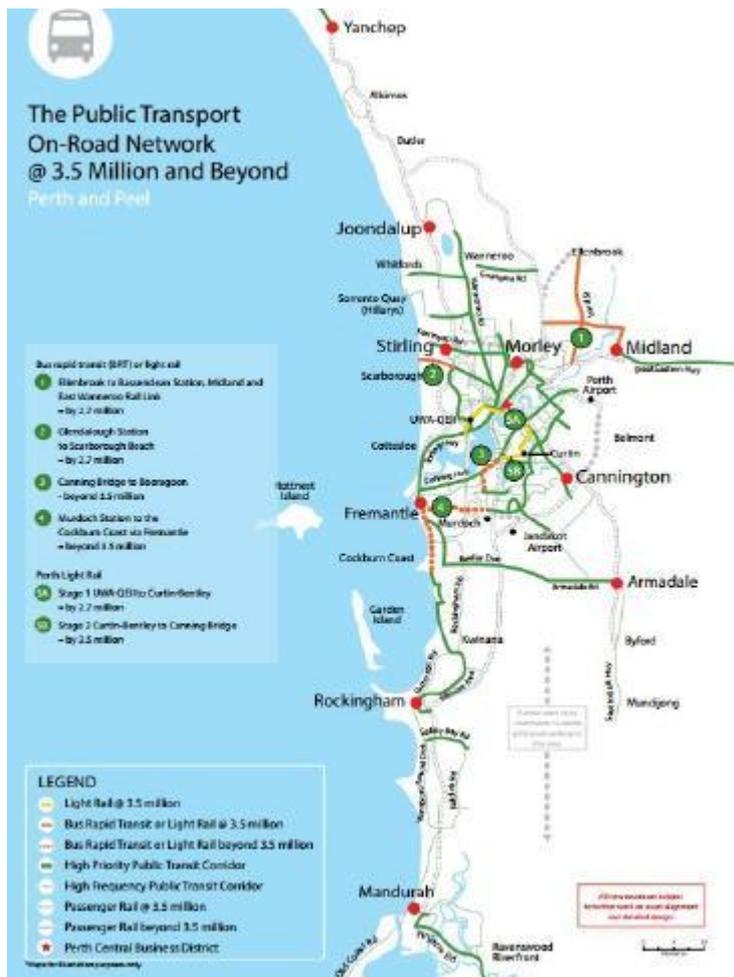
Releasing the plan — which cost \$1.3 million and took two years to produce — Transport Minister Dean Nalder said it was up to successive governments to pick which projects should be done first and how they would pay for them.

None of the projects were costed.

Gone is the promised \$2 billion light rail plan for the CBD, although the plan does say that by the time Perth reaches a population of 3.5 million — in about 30 years’ time — it should have a light rail route from the Perth CBD and branching off to the University of Western Australia and Curtin University.

“Beyond (a population of 3.5

million), a separate inner city subway will provide high capacity, high frequency, short distance connections between central Perth, East Perth, West Perth, Northbridge, Leederville and other city centres,” the report says.



## WA Government's Public Transport blueprint: On-road network

“It is possible that other elements of the subway could be undertaken in the development of radical lines through the Perth CBD.”

It added: “Perth Light Rail will create an inner orbital route, providing high frequency services between UWA, Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre and Canning Bridge via the Perth CBD and Curtin University.” Other routes that would be services by light rail or a rapid bus service would be Ellenbrook to Bassendean Station and Midland, Glendalough Station to Scarborough Beach, via Scarborough Beach Road and the Canning Bridge to Booragoon.

Also proposed in the plan is a Stock Road Tunnel which would extend Stock Road northwards

from Leach Highway as a freeway linking to Stephenson Avenue at Jon Sanders Drive.

The link would include two tunnels — one under the river from Leach Highway, surfacing north of the Fremantle rail line.

An East-West City Link to ease congestion on the existing Swan River crossings east of the CBD is also proposed.

It would consist of two connections — one which would involve a riverside bridge or tunnel connecting Canning Highway to Riverside Drive.

An east-west tunnel would connect Riverside Drive with the Narrows Bridge and Mounts Bay Road.

### Key heavy rail projects proposed include:

- expanding train network from 180km to 300km
- new rail to service Morley and East Wanneroo
- rail extensions to Yanchep, Bellevue and Byford
- Thornlie rail line extension to Cockburn Central

Key bus/light rail projects proposed include:

- Bus Rapid Transit connecting Ellenbrook to Bassendean, Midland and East Wanneroo

- BRT or light rail connecting Glendalough Station to Scarborough Beach

Key road plans include:

- Stock Road to link with Stephenson Avenue
- Fremantle-Rockingham Highway
- East-West City Link connecting Canning Highway to Riverside Drive
- Tunnel connecting Riverside Drive with the Narrows interchange.

Key cycle plans include:

- Increasing Perth's cycleway network from 172km to 850km

Transport Minister Dean Nalder said: "We know that Graham Farmer Freeway has been extremely successful.

"For our city to grow the way it is, it has been considered that we need to have an east-west corridor that provides a better linkage on the south side of the city.

"In consideration of that it has been advised, through this report, that this would be a very important project.

"Whether it's a tunnel, whether it's a cut and cover — there are different technologies that are emerging.

"Overseas there are technologies where they build the tunnel on the surface, dig a trench, float it out and drop it into the trench and cover it over.

"One of the good things about that technology is that you don't have to go so deep. With boring tunnels you have to go a certain depth underneath the water.

"I think it is still some time off. I don't see it in this term of government or next term of government."



The new plan will also benefit cyclists, making travelling times shorter. File image

Dr Fred Affleck, the chairman of the Planning and Research Centre, today identified connecting the CBD with Morley via a rail tunnel as a priority.

“I think probably the immediate connectivity to Morley is a useful (project) to start with.”

Mr Nalder offered little hope to Ellenbrook residents that a Liberal-National Government would build a rail line to Ellenbrook.

“There isn’t the population out there to sustain a capital investment at this point of time to put rail there.

“If you commit the capital spend where it is not necessarily needed at this point you are talking it away from somewhere else that might need it as this point.

“We don’t have an unlimited amount of capital.

“We have to prioritise projects.”

However, Opposition leader Mark McGowan said the Liberals had failed to deliver on every major transport promise they had made in their eight years in power.

“Now, with an election approaching they claim to have a plan – give me a break,” he said.

“After all their broken promises, the Liberals are now giving us a bunch of lines on a map. It’s a fairy tale document.

“There are no costings, no firm commitments, just aspirations.

Mr McGowan reverted back to Labor’s METRONET plan as the best transport option for WA.

“It’s a real plan, it’s costed, affordable and achievable,” he said.

“Only Labor actually builds what we say we’ll build – the Joondalup Line, the Mandurah Line, the Perth Underground, and the Forrest Highway.”

What transport projects should be prioritised?

Rail extensions to Yanchep, Bellevue and Byford  Rail servicing Morley and East Wanneroo  Freeway, tunnel linking Stock Rd and Stephenson Av  Bus Rapid Transit connecting Ellenbrook  Light rail between UWA, QEII Medical Centre, Perth CBD and Curtin University  BRT/Light rail connecting Glendalough to Scarborough Beach

Increasing Perth’s cycle network from 172km to 850km  East-West City Link road tunnel connecting Canning Hwy to Riverside Dr

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## REACTION

WestCycle chief executive officer Matt Fulton said the plan showed how far cycling has come in WA: “This is an incredibly exciting time for people who already ride and this plan will encourage even more people to get on their bikes.”

Jeremy Murray, chief executive officer of Bicycling Western Australia, also strongly supported the plan: “Elements of the plan such as the proposed new river crossings have the potential to significantly change behaviour and movement patterns.

“These crossings would radically improve connectivity and substantially shorten journey times, making travelling by bike an option for even more people. For example, the Three Points Bridge will cut the journey time between Elizabeth Quay and Fremantle to less than 40 minutes.”

CCI WA chief executive officer Deidre Willmott said the plan was a positive first step to ensuring Perth could continue to grow free of crippling traffic congestion.

“Improving transport efficiencies and creating an effective transport network are critical for Western Australia to be a world-leading place to live and do business,” Ms Willmott said.

“Without change, the avoidable cost of traffic congestion will double to reach more than \$4 billion by 2030 — 87 per cent of WA businesses said congestion already contributed directly

to lost productivity, in the RAC BusinessWise and CCI Business Congestion Survey for 2015.

“CCI has long called for a long-term infrastructure strategy for Western Australia and the business community would like to see an independent body — like Infrastructure WA — empowered with oversight over future infrastructure planning.”



### WA Government's Public Transport blueprint: Cycling network

Greens spokeswoman for transport Lynn MacLaren said: “Building more roads is not the answer to easing congestion. This has been proven in Paris, San Francisco, Seoul — large cities which have invested in their public transport systems, removed major highways, focused on rail and beat congestion.”

“The Government needs to show that kind of vision. Instead, it has dropped MAX light rail from the plan — the latest in a line of broken promises for the future of our public transport network.”

RAC general manager of corporate affairs Will Golsby said RAC welcomed the draft Perth Transport Plan having consistently called for its release to drive

investment in critical transport projects.

“The plan includes a number of projects RAC has been calling on the Government to implement — Thornlie rail line, extended and improved cycling networks, managed freeways, network management technologies and greater public transport options,” he said.

“However, the challenge now is what, when and how. What are the priority projects, when will they be delivered and how will they be implemented. The plan will get people talking, but will it get them moving?”

Mr Golsby said the plan changed the dynamic of the transport debate and RAC would review the projects in detail.

“However we note the Minister has called the plan ‘aspirational’ and has made no commitment to the delivery of the projects,” he said.