

Constitution Ave Redevelopment

As a result of the recent concerns of some Pedal Power members, Pedal Power advocacy group and the Executive Officer met with the National Capital Authority (NCA) to more clearly identify the issues associated with the redevelopment of Constitution Ave and ascertain the plans for that section.

Constitution Ave (running from the Russell Drive and the area of the Russel Offices through Anzac Pde, Coranderk St and up to London Cct) has been recognised as a primary feeder road, particularly for cycling commuters coming from Campbell and from Barton (across Kings Ave bridge) into the city. It currently caters to the cycling community through on-road cycle lanes from Anzac Pde to Coranderk St (in front of the Reid TAFE). There are a series of proposals to redevelop Constitution Ave – including the redevelopment of the intersection of Anzac Pde and Constitution Ave. The NCA is responsible for planning in this area.

Pedal Power representatives emphasised the following points to the NCA;

- Constitution Ave is a primary trunk route for people cycling to work, especially at Russell;
- Commuter cycling options require a constant and even high-speed flow, where the necessity for stopping or slowing is limited. Such interruptions to any proposed route would result in people choosing to cycle on the primary road and not any proposed alternative route – as is their legal right. Whilst a range of viable commuting routes already exist, the lack of a suitable alternative is likely to adversely affect all road users.
- We did not state any preferences around an on-road or off-road cycling option – simply that the principles that we were seeking were sufficiently catered for;
- Previous discussions that Pedal Power had with the NCA were reiterated – noting that any proposal need to cater for the commuter cycling community that were currently utilising the on-road cycling option.

Discussions with the NCA revealed the following;

- The NCA is undertaking the development of a public realm handbook for Constitution Ave to increase its useability through both residential and retail development along a large part of the avenue (in line with the Burley Griffin original plan);
- There are a number of limitations attached to the development of infrastructure in this area – including the consideration of the (currently) 4 rows of trees; heritage listing sites and the preservation of Anzac Pde features in any redevelopment;

- It would appear that on street kerbside parking is a feature that will be included in the Constitution Ave redevelopment;
- The revision of road conditions at the Anzac Pde / Constitution Ave intersection was considered one of the first things to redevelop because of the traffic management issues associated with this intersection at peak times (and the implications of their effect upon Parkes Way);
- Public consultation documents had been in the public domain for some months;
- NCA understood from preliminary consultation in March 2010 that Pedal Power was supportive of an off-road cycling facility (Pedal Power's view was that IF off- road was chosen, it must provide high speed flow and continuity)
- On-road cycling options were not considered by the NCA to be the best option for riders commuting, given the proposed increased bus use on this route and the on street, kerbside parking options that are proposed;
- NCA considers that a range of viable commuting routes already exist and are being well-utilised.
- Pedal Power considers that Constitution Ave is the current primary trunk commuting route between Civic and Russell, with practically no feasible alternatives east of Anzac Pde.
- It is proposed that future commuter cycling from Kings Ave bridge will be better catered for through the Kings Ave park area as riders move to the city centre;
- The recognition that commuting cyclists needs were to be well catered for was evident. There are plans to cater for the cycling community to use this route through an off-road cycling option on both sides of the road, though subject to detailed design and feasibility
- Whilst the budget had not been allocated for the completion of this as an option, it is proposed that planning approvals will be sought throughout the early part of 2011.
- Constitution Avenue's role in the ACT Government's existing cycling and walking masterplan for Canberra Central differs to that of the NCA - given the requirements of the National Capital Plan, changes to Constitution Avenue's design and extensive changes throughout the Russell road network.

As a result of these discussions, it would appear that the current works at the intersection of Constitution Ave and Anzac Pde are the start of a series of initiatives to modify the use of Constitution Ave.

Pedal Power Position

- Pedal Power recognises the need for interim measures and accepts that interruptions to normal flow will occur whilst essential works are undertaken;
- Pedal Power deplores the commencement of these works before the design and approval of works that adequately cater for the flow and continuity for people who cycle to work along Constitution Ave;
- Pedal Power urges the NCA to provide smooth flowing cycling facilities along this corridor, especially for people cycling to and from Russell and the new ASIO building;
- Pedal Power welcomes the proposal to build an off-road cycle path that caters for the (relatively) high speed traffic of commuters and looks forward to ongoing consultation as plans are developed;
- Pedal Power looks forward (and have gained assurance from NCA) to continued input to the cycling solutions proposed for the Constitution Ave area during redevelopment
- Pedal Power will advocate for increased funding for the NCA to provide cycling facilities that help fulfil the NCA's role of providing national public places for all Australians to enjoy and of enhancing the unique character of Canberra.
- NCA have obligated to further investigate potential routes and initiate discussions with TAMS to ensure a range of cycle facilities can be identified within the overall network. Pedal Power will be happy to facilitate these discussions.

For further enquiries please contact John Armstrong, Executive Officer, Pedal Power on 0412 257 990.

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8 December 2010