



Cycling and Pedestrian Capital Works Review

Introductory Comments

Pedal Power welcomes this revision of the ACT cycling priority report. The 2005 and 2007 reports contained four significant items:

- a Main Routes Network,
- a robust methodology for ranking capital projects,
- the resultant ranking based on that methodology,
- and in 2007 preliminary work was undertaken on the inclusion / definition of the Main Routes Network through Town and employment centres.

We commend all four. The continuing work on the Main Routes Network is providing an integrated network of present and future routes that did not exist before. The methodology and resultant ranking has provided a transparent method of prioritising limited funding amongst a large list of competing projects.

The 2005 and 2007 reports were necessary because the earlier 2004 *Ten Year Master Plan for Trunk Cycling & Walking Path Infrastructure 2004-14* report did not provide a sufficiently practical guide to prioritising projects. In contrast the 2005 and 2007 reports strongly benefited from an author with a good understanding of what will increase cycling and a willingness to go out and evaluate routes. This resulted in the recommended projects being ones that will indeed get the most people cycling for the least money. We are pleased that a similar understanding and willingness appears to be behind this report.

Although the 2005 and 2007 reports are of high quality it is disappointing that too many professionals working in government agencies, and consultant engineers, have been unaware of their existence. Particularly concerning has been the lack of knowledge of the Main Routes Network even though it is incorporated in the *ACT Design Standard 13* as Drawing DS13-11. This has meant low cost opportunities have been missed to improve cycle facilities when other work including resealing and work by developers has been undertaken on or adjacent a Main Route. In some cases the work has made cycling less attractive, eg the recently introduced turning lanes on Girraween St, Braddon; and development frontages on Marcus Clarke St in Civic which have destroyed the continuity and degraded the safety of Main Community Routes. For this reason we strongly recommend that thought be given to promoting greater awareness of the Main Routes Network. We also recommend that ACTPLA has some 'ownership' of this 2009 report because of ACTPLA's critical role in approving projects.

The 2007 report suggested further definition of Main Routes through town centres and employment areas, however this is yet to be included into *Design Standard 13*. It is essential that the improvements to the Main Routes Network that flow from this report be quickly included in *Design Standard 13*. As described above, it has proven difficult to ensure compliance of works with *Design Standard 13*, let alone ensure compliance with any other cycling document.

Methodology to rank projects

For two reasons we recommend that a separate ranking report be produced for cycling works and for pedestrian works. Firstly, it is quite hard to weigh up the merits of a pedestrian project versus a cycling project. Secondly, the 2009/10 ACT Budget specifically sets aside \$2 million a year for the next four years for *cycling* projects – it then makes sense to take that as given and continue to rank cycling projects against each other.

As set out in the tender document for this report, links to Town centres in Canberra are very important. Often cycle routes in Canberra frustratingly stop on the outskirts of town centres deterring less confident riders from cycling. We think it is important that the methodology to rank projects gives town centre projects a high weighting.

It is important that the methodology picks up on small missing links, often just 10-20 metres of dangerous/ difficult riding between two safe routes. These small missing links fall into two categories; firstly those that are cheap and easy to fix but which are overlooked, either because of their small size, or because the previous ranking scale's coarse financial criteria did not differentiate sufficiently between \$5,000 and \$100,000 projects; and secondly, missing links that previously have not generally been recognised as such. In Canberra this applies particularly to large multi-lane roundabouts, which effectively are missing links in the network just as much as gaps between paths or cycle lanes are. This is because there is no safe way through them; even where perimeter paths are provided there are often no gaps in the traffic to cross in.

Resealing – a low cost, highly efficient way to improve infrastructure and encourage cycling

Canberra has relatively wider roads so bicycle lanes or marked shoulder lanes can often be installed with some reallocation of road space. The best opportunity to do this is after resealing when lines have to be repainted anyway. It is excellent that this has been done in Canberra over the past 5-8 years. As a result many kilometres of bicycle lanes and marked shoulders have been installed for low cost as part of the annual summer resealing program.

We continue to strongly endorse the resealing program as a very cost effective way of encouraging cycling. A major factor in the decision to install bicycle lanes is whether the road is part of the recognised Main Routes Network. This is a good reason why it is important the Main Routes Network be comprehensive and covers all of the areas of need. Below we list roads that we believe should be added to the network plan to fill in obvious missing links in the grid to make a connected and cohesive network.

While the resealing program is very beneficial, the gains from it are not being fully maximised because often minor capital works to eliminate pinch points are required to allow a continuous bicycle lane to be included, and if these works are not done, the bicycle lane or even a marked shoulder may not be marked. Examples are removal or narrowing of traffic islands and median strips and short lengths of road widening. It appears that capital works are not co-ordinated with the resealing program to maximise the opportunity and benefits the reseal program offers. This opportunity is recognised in the ACT Government's *On-road Cycling Policy*, however this does not appear to be delivering to its full potential.

We suggest the following improvements to maximise the efficiency of the resealing program.

- Making capital works associated with the reseal program that will deliver a new section of the Main Routes Network a perennial No.1 on the priorities list - this would reflect the opportunity and value in expanding the network through this program;

- Preparing a base reseal program a year in advance to enable identification of minor capital works and for these to be implemented prior to resealing. Currently the program is not prepared until July / August. This means sites are not examined and design issues are not raised until very close to the start of resealing. This creates a high risk environment for poor outcomes. The extra time would ensure opportunities could be maximised;
- The amount of capital works funding associated with the reseal would depend on the roads in the program and may vary significantly from year to year. The funding could be endorsed through the BAG; and
- Ensuring better communication and coordination of works within Roads ACT

Copenhagen-style cycle lanes

The additional comfort that physically-separated cycle lanes provide encourages more people to cycle. For this reason we support Copenhagen style lanes and our Civic Cycling Loop proposal (below) incorporates them. The 2009 “Walking and Cycling Literature Review”, prepared for the Victorian Department of Transport, contains a good discussion of Copenhagen-style cycle lanes. It can be found at www.transport.vic.gov.au.

Copenhagen Lanes cost more and take more space (making them more difficult to retrofit), and thus a methodology will be required to determine where they should be fitted in preference to standard bicycle lanes. Greenfield sites, major upgrades involving demolition of existing infrastructure, and locations with current or expected high cycling numbers would be the prime locations for their installation; for example, the (as yet unnamed) main street in Molonglo Town Centre.

Victoria is trialling separation using vibra strips/rumble strips (on Rathdowne St, Carlton) and the rubber separators usually used to mark tram tracks. This is a cheaper method of providing separation than a median strip. Denmark also provides physical separation by raising the cycle lane above the level of the road (ie does not require a median).

Shared space and town centres

We endorse the thoughtful application of shared space. We suggest it be installed on Canberra’s shopping streets as appropriate over time. We particularly recommend shared space for Bunda Street as part of the Civic Cycling Loop.

The article ‘The Traffic Guru’ by Tom Vanderbilt in The Wilson Quarterly, Summer 2008. (See www.wilsoncenter.org) is a very thoughtful evaluation of the concept. The shared space concept is less well-known in English-speaking countries than in Europe. However it has been successfully applied in UK and US streets including High St in Kensington, London (which experienced a decrease in accidents after the application) and is now being applied in Bendigo.

We note that often shared streets lead to a measurable increase in safety despite people feeling *less* safe (see article quoted above).

Unfortunately Childers Street, the main example of shared space in Canberra, has not been implemented to achieve the main objective of creating a slow speed environment. A centreline painted down the middle of this space makes it look like a road and people treat it that way. The resultant dynamics of the space have become more like a road than a place where pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles have equal rights.

There are other issues with the shared space created on Childers Street, and an evaluation of this area should be undertaken to learn lessons that can be used elsewhere.

New Routes and Projects

In the two sections below we highlight routes and projects that we think are of significance and have not been included in the 2007 report. We note that cycling is a local activity and people who cycle regularly have a detailed knowledge of what is needed in their local area. Public consultations will be essential to use this knowledge. Pedal Power will be happy to publicise consultations to our almost 3000 members.

Suggested additions to the Main On Road Routes Network Plan

Below we suggest additions to the Main On-road Routes network. This includes some roads that for various reasons already include, or are planned to include, cycle lanes, but which should none-the less be formally recognised as main routes. Additions to the Main Community Routes Network are suggested further below under the heading *New Priority Projects*.

Strategic links to Queanbeyan

- Pialligo Avenue to NSW border
- Lanyon Drive to NSW border
- Canberra Ave to NSW border

Tuggeranong

- Sulwood Dr (cross link)
- Erindale Dr (cross link)
- Tharwa Dr south to Banks (to service all of south Tuggeranong)
- Woodcock Dr via Johnson Dr to Monaro Hwy (cross link to service south Tuggeranong)
- Full length of Athllon Dr

Weston Creek

- Missing link through south of Weston including Streeton Dr to Namatjira Dr to Sulwood Dr (to service all of Weston)
- Cotter Rd - Uriarra Rd out to Stromlo Forest Park (New major venue)

Belconnen

- Florey Dr (cross link)
- Kerrigan St (to service Dunlop)
- College Street

North Canberra

- Antill St and Phillip Avenue
- Fairbairn Ave to the Airport

Gungahlin

- Wells Station Rd (cross link)
- Sandford St

- Horse Park Dr from Federal Hwy to Clarrie Hermes Dr to Barton Hwy (to service all of Nth Gungahlin)
- Mirrabai Dr (to link Town Centre to Nth Gungahlin)

New Priority Projects

Below we suggest higher priority projects which were generally not in the 2005 and 2007 reports. We have also included some attachments which provide more detail for some of the projects.

Although we strongly support the principle that projects should be ranked using a formal cost-benefit methodology, we believe the Civic Cycling Loop and works that complete the Lake Burley Griffin cycle ride are special cases and should be the highest priorities regardless of their ranking. In addition to their functional aspect, they have special merits that are difficult to incorporate into a ranking table, being intended as high visibility projects that will significantly lift the profile of, and support for, cycling in Canberra. They are also expected to have a much greater economic impact (ie bringing money into Civic and lakeside businesses) thereby providing economic justification for their earlier construction.

- Civic Cycling Loop. A loop linking all Civic bound cycle routes and providing bicycle riders from any direction with a safe route to within a block of their destination (see attachment). We believe this project should be highly ranked because
 - It will make Civic more lively and economically vibrant
 - it will attract more people into Civic especially those people currently repelled from making short trips into Civic by the difficulty finding a car park
 - it will become increasingly important to reduce car parking demand and traffic congestion as the buildings and population of Civic and the Inner North increase.
 - it will be an icon project being the first Copenhagen-style lanes in Canberra and 'naked streets', setting an important precedent for other similar work
 - it will incorporate Copenhagen-style lanes and thereby will be open up cycling to people who would otherwise be intimidated by riding on the road.
- Completion of the Lake Burley Griffin cycle path - the best half day cycle ride in Australia. There are two major missing links in this route
 - Firstly and of highest priority due to current development, the connection from Bowen Park to Jerrabomberra Wetlands via Kingston Foreshores (including a direct connection to the Telopea Park Path) A consultant engineer has been employed by Roads ACT to ensure works are coordinated. It would be beneficial if a meeting with the engineer were held.
 - Secondly, the dangerous Bowen Drive crossing near the National Gallery.
 - The short section on Wendouree Drive that is also on-road could also be considered though it is a lower priority
- Red Hill cycle path from Brereton Street Garran to Francis Street Red Hill by sealing existing dirt track (See attachment.)
- Ipswich St cycle path from Canberra Ave to Newcastle Street (See attachment).
- Cycle path from the end of the Airport cycle path to Brindabella Business Park.
- Cycle path from the end of the Airport cycle path to Majura Park offices and retail precinct.

We request that the Main Routes Network plan (Drawing DS13-11) be amended to include the routes above as part of this project, as all of the suggested new routes connect town centres or major places of employment.