



## PEDAL POWER ACT Inc

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*More Canberrans cycling, more often, for a better community*

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Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services  
Office of the ACT Legislative Assembly  
[committees@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:committees@parliament.act.gov.au)

22 March 2013



**Re: DV308 Cooyong Street Urban Renewal**  
**Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and TAMS Committee - Call for Submissions**

Thank you for giving Pedal Power ACT the opportunity to comment on this project. Pedal Power ACT supports the broad principles of the redevelopment, specifically:

The project will offer about 2500 people the opportunity to live within an easy walking or cycling distance of all the services of the city centre, including employment, shopping, recreation and bus transport. This is a step towards a more sustainable transport future, and a more people-friendly urban environment. It offers an alternative to the almost obligatory car-dependent lifestyle available throughout most of Canberra. It is important to offer those who choose not to drive, or cannot drive, such an alternative.

Dividing development facing Cooyong Street with laneways will improve connectivity at the walking and cycling scale, especially between Civic and the residential areas of Braddon and Reid.

The proposal to incorporate commercial development in mixed-use buildings along the Cooyong Street frontage will encourage human-scale street activity and amenity on a road that has a prominent impact on the urban character of Civic because of its location and visibility. The present character of Cooyong Street is unpleasant at the human scale, being devoted entirely to maximising the efficient flow of motor transport with little regard for streetscape or other users.

We strongly support the inclusion of a trunk cycle path and building setback devoted to pedestrian and cycle circulation along the whole Cooyong Street frontage. We also commend the prohibition of driveways off Cooyong Street, as these would clash with the proposed trunk cycle path and reduce pedestrian amenity.

## **Main Issue – Cooyong Street**

Pedal Power ACT's main interest in this project is the opportunity it presents to improve Cooyong Street for cycling. Cooyong Street is the main east-west road link across Civic from Barry Drive to Constitution Avenue and Parkes Way. It has been constructed to maximise space for motor vehicles and is nevertheless choked with traffic beyond its capacity at peak times. There is no viable alternative route onto which traffic could be redirected, and so it would seem highly improbable that on-road cycle lanes could be constructed in the foreseeable future as this would involve closing motor vehicle lanes – a proposition likely to be intensely unpopular and therefore politically unachievable.

Yet the Cooyong Street route is also a continuation of the on-road cycle lanes on Barry Drive and is a missing link for people riding bikes via Barry Drive from Turner, O'Connor, Belconnen, or ANU to Braddon, Reid CIT, Constitution Avenue and employment centres further east like Russell. It will also be the main link for residents of the development itself to access those same destinations. At the moment Cooyong Street is a highly unpleasant on-road riding environment during peak times, enough to discourage all but the most committed road riders, and the footpaths are virtually impassable for bicycles, being very narrow and heavily obstructed. There is no capacity whatsoever to widen the road within the existing road reserve in order to improve the cycling experience.

Redevelopment of the ABC flats site appears to offer the only opportunity to improve Cooyong Street as a cycling route, fill in a missing link in the cycling network, and also to improve the experience for pedestrians, so it is important to get it right now with the long-term needs of the city in mind – particularly the Transport for Canberra active transport objectives.

The master plan indicates mixed-use buildings with commercial spaces at ground floor level fronting Cooyong Street, with residential apartments above. This approach allows the creation of an active, people-friendly street frontage that would also provide an attractive and safe thoroughfare for people to cycle or walk along. The large population of the development itself is likely to support some cafes, convenience stores etc. and locating these and other businesses along a wide paved 'boulevard' for cycling and walking beside Cooyong Street will help soften its traffic-ridden character.

## **Braddon Precinct Code**

### **R40 / C40**

Specifies a minimum setback from Cooyong Street of 6 metres. In our 2010 submission to ACT Housing on the initial planning study, we estimated the pavement width required is 10 to 15 metres, allowing for shop awnings and display stands, café outdoor seating, adequate space for pedestrian and bicycle movement, and safe separation between walkers and bike riders – preferably achieved through delineation of a dedicated trunk cycle path within this space. For the reasons described above, there is no possibility of providing the trunk cycle path within the existing road reserve, therefore it will have to be accommodated within the proposed 6 metre setback, which we believe is inadequate. TAMS design standard DS 13 specifies a 3.0 metre width for a trunk cycle path shared with pedestrians in high-use areas, and with the specified shoulder clearances of 500 mm on each side, the total width required is 4.0 metres, leaving very little space in the 6.0 metre setback zone for shopfront related and cafe seating uses. At the very least, rule R40 should be a mandatory requirement and additional space for pedestrians and other functions could be provided in an additional setback required at ground floor level only.

**Reid Precinct Code**

R14 / C14

As for R40 / C40 of the Braddon Precinct Code above

**Figure 2**

The 6 metre setback to Cooyong Street is not dimensioned.

The dark tone denoting 'Landscape Corridor' does not appear on the map.

**Master Plan Documents**

Some of the master planning documents provided as background material (ie. 'Perspective with Yield' 11/04/2012) show courtyard walls obstructing the 6 metre setback from Cooyong Street in the block between Ainslie Avenue and Akuna Street. This is not compatible with the trunk cycle path or pedestrian access requirements along this frontage.

**Parking**

The construction cost and ongoing running costs of providing underground basement car parking in residential developments in Canberra accounts for a very significant proportion of the retail price of apartments, which has negative implications for housing affordability. Given the convenient location, residents seeking a non car-based lifestyle will undoubtedly be attracted to this development, and so a good case could be made to reduce the mandatory amount of car parking that planning rules would normally require. The cost savings would further encourage adoption of non car-based lifestyles and alternative modes of transport such as cycling and walking, thereby helping achieve the government's active transport objectives. We made this point in our 2010 submission, but there appears to be nothing in DV308 that would allow any reduction in parking from that required by the Parking Code.

A safe and inviting east-west thoroughfare for bike riding and walking, with an attractive urban design outcome for Cooyong Street, can be achieved as part of the proposed redevelopment if these objectives are given sufficient attention in the detailed design phases. We look forward to seeing how the project evolves from here on and would value the opportunity to comment on subsequent stages of the design process.

Thank you again for consulting with Pedal Power ACT on this important project.

Regards

Bryn Challis  
Advocacy Volunteer,  
Pedal Power ACT Inc.

