

Civic Cycle Loop: Bunda Street Design Competition

TO: Shane Rattenbury, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services
CC: ACT Transport Planning

Main points

- Bunda Street is an important cycling destination, but not a significant cycling route.
- Encouraging additional bicycle traffic into Bunda Street will increase congestion, and increase conflict with the main traffic flows which are across Bunda Street.
- The GHD/Tract 30 km/h slow speed zone proposal effectively formalises existing traffic conditions, and represents only a small improvement on the status quo.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Bunda Street project be deferred, to free up funding for eight trunk walking and cycling infrastructure projects that are more cost-effective.

We further recommend that when the Bunda Street project is implemented:

- the project prioritise the 88% of on-road traffic movements that are people walking across Bunda Street;
- the design be based on the GTA 10 km/h Shared Zone proposal, with additional measures to ensure that bicycles comply with the speed limit;
- the Spackman Mossop Michaels cycleway proposal be rejected, because it will increase traffic danger by encouraging high speed cycling alongside and across busy pedestrian routes.

The above points and recommendations are explained in Attachment 1.

With my best regards

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Chair, Living Streets Canberra
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ATTACHMENT 1: Main points and Recommendations explained

Main points explained

Bunda Street is an important cycling destination, but not a significant cycling route.

The often-full bicycle parking racks in the approach streets (Genge St, Scott's Crossing, Petrie St) demonstrate Bunda Street's popularity as a destination.

Traffic congestion along Bunda Street means that it is usually faster for cyclists to use other routes such as City Walk or London Circuit.

Our Saturday morning traffic count on Bunda St showed an average bicycle traffic rate of only one bicycle every four minutes.

Encouraging additional bicycle traffic into Bunda Street will increase congestion, and increase conflict with the main traffic flows which are across Bunda Street.

Bunda Street is arguably Canberra's most congested street. Our Saturday morning traffic count showed that 88% of Bunda Street's on-road traffic movements are people crossing from one side of Bunda Street to the other.

Any increase in traffic along Bunda Street will increase conflict with traffic movements across the street.

The GHD/Tract 30 km/h slow speed zone proposal effectively formalises existing traffic conditions, and represents only a small improvement on the status quo.

The 550 metre section of Bunda Street, from Mort to Akuna Streets, has three zebra crossings, one signalised pedestrian crossing and one pedestrian crossing at a signalised intersection.

Significant numbers of pedestrians use these crossings for most of the day. Traffic speeds along Bunda Street at these times are typically less than 20 km/h, even though the speed limit is 50 km/h.

Reducing the speed limit from 50 km/h to 30 km/h will have little impact on actual traffic speeds, at times when significant numbers of pedestrians are using Bunda Street. At other times drivers are still expected to obey traffic signals and to give way to pedestrians on zebra crossings.

Recommendations explained

the Bunda Street project be deferred, to free up funding for eight trunk walking and cycling infrastructure projects that are more cost-effective.

Living Streets' revised cost-effectiveness analysis, which is being prepared for publication, identifies forty projects that are each more cost-effective than the Bunda Street Shared Space or the City Cycle Loop.

For a total cost less than that of the Bunda Street Shared Space, we could build all of the following projects:

- Thesiger Court Link - off road path
- University avenue off road path
- Giralang Link - off road path
- Fisher off-road path
- Menindee Drive off-road path
- The Valley Avenue to Gundaroo Drive link on road lanes
- Mawson Shops off road bypass
- Lake to War Memorial off road path

The Bunda Street and City Cycle Loop projects were chosen with virtually no consideration of cost.

They were chosen on the basis of Multi Criteria Analysis, a method described as “junk evaluation,” “fundamentally flawed in principle,” and “open to abuse by special-interest groups” by Professors Leo Dobes and Jeff Bennett of the ANU's Crawford School of Economics and Government.

Conventional cost benefit analysis weighs costs and benefits equally.

In Canberra's 2005 and 2007 Multi Criteria Analysis rankings of walking and cycling projects, cost was weighted only 20%. If the benefit score of a zero-cost project was 20% lower than that of a \$10 million project (e.g. if the zero-cost project scored 45% for benefits, and the \$10 million project scored 65% for benefits), it could never rank above the \$10 million project,

The 2011 Multi Criteria Analysis used a new method under which 201 of the 202 projects would have scored zero for “cost effectiveness.” Although a calculation error resulted in these 201 projects gaining non-zero “cost effectiveness” scores, all of their weighted scores were below 1%.

After the Government refused to rank projects by cost-effectiveness, a Canberra Pedestrian Forum analysis ranked Bunda Street fifth. Subsequent investigation showed that the data used for the fifth-ranking project applied to the Giralang Link, and not to Bunda Street.

We further recommend that when the Bunda Street project is implemented:

the project prioritise the 88% of on-road traffic movements that are people walking across Bunda Street

Most Binda Street pedestrians arrive in Civic by car, bus or bicycle. So if a measure prioritises Bunda Street's pedestrians, it prioritises people who are motorists, public transport users and cyclists.

Our Saturday morning traffic count showed that 88% of Bunda Street's on-road traffic movements (3,000 per hour) are people crossing from one side of Bunda Street to the other, 12% are motor vehicles driving along Bunda Street, and less than 1% are bicycles.

If the Bunda Street section of the Civic Cycle Loop is as successful as the Northbourne Avenue on-road cycle lanes, then after a few years bicycle traffic will increase to about eighty bicycles per hour.

the design be based on the GTA 10 km/h Shared Zone proposal, with additional measures to ensure that bicycles comply with the speed limit

Of the three designs, the GTA proposal is the only one that provides a Shared Space as described in Simon Corbell's October 2010 media release and in many subsequent consultations, and the “*shared space ... to increase safety for pedestrians*” that was evaluated in the 2011 Cardno report.

The Shared Space experience in Childers Street indicates that a Shared Space will not work properly if vehicles significantly exceed the speed limit. Measures to constrain bicycle speeds within the shared zone could include:

- ensuring that pavement markings do NOT suggest the presence of a clear and direct path that is suitable for high speed cycling;
- rumble strips;
- occasional speed limit enforcement using radar guns or speed cameras.

the Spackman Mossop Michaels cycleway proposal be rejected, because it will increase traffic danger by encouraging high speed cycling alongside and across busy pedestrian routes

The proposed cycleway will increase pedestrian and cyclist danger, because it will facilitate cycling speeds of 25 km/h or more, adjacent to and across busy pedestrian routes.

Bicycle speeds will no longer be constrained by the low speed of motor vehicles which currently must stop for pedestrians at several zebra crossings, one set of pedestrian signals and one set of intersection traffic signals.

Additionally, unlike motor vehicles, bicycles are almost silent as they approach pedestrians.

Furthermore, conversion to a one-way street for motor vehicles will mean that pedestrians are less likely to expect fast-moving vehicles to approach from the other direction.