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DISCUSSION PAPER

Her Way

(Southside Women's Active Travel Plan)



9 August 2021

Foreword

The ACT Government has started work to deliver light rail to Woden. This project will provide more convenient and reliable transport options for people on the southside, help prevent future traffic gridlock and cut transport emissions for a cleaner environment.

But over the next few years these construction works will mean significant disruption for Canberrans travelling from the southside to the city centre.

This will be particularly felt during weekday peak hours when more of us are moving around the region.

I want to work with the women in my electorate, and from Canberra's southside, to find ways to minimise the inconvenience and disruption during the construction of light rail. It will be important to support individuals and households to find positive solutions that will work for people in different family situations and with different travel needs during – and beyond – this period of disruption.



Research suggests that women have different travel patterns and needs than men.

A 2018 report by the International Transport Forum notes that “women tend to have specific travel characteristics in terms of mode choice, time of travel, trip purpose, route, trip chain and travel distance, and they have very different preferences and constraints than men”.

I want to help you meet your travel needs and explore new options to provide you with effective, efficient means of transport that can strengthen your quality of life. I particularly want to help those who have an interest in transitioning away from private car use, but might be concerned about it, or don't quite know where to start.

There may be challenges to overcome, but we're resilient. As women, we are positive, proactive, innovative and creative. We can do this!

I have prepared this Discussion Paper to get the conversation started, to hear what matters to you, and to start exploring what the opportunities and solutions might be.

#HerWay

Rethink your route. Rethink your routine.

M. Peterson

9 August 2021

Introduction – What’s happening?

The ACT Government has started early works on Stage 2 of light rail from the city to Woden.

The first part of delivering Stage 2 involves extending the light rail network by 1.7 kilometres from the city to Commonwealth Park and adding three new stops at Edinburgh Avenue, City South and Commonwealth Park.

As part of these works, London Circuit will be raised to provide an at-grade intersection with Commonwealth Avenue. This means key parts of one popular route from the southside to the city will face traffic disruptions and lane closures for the next few years.

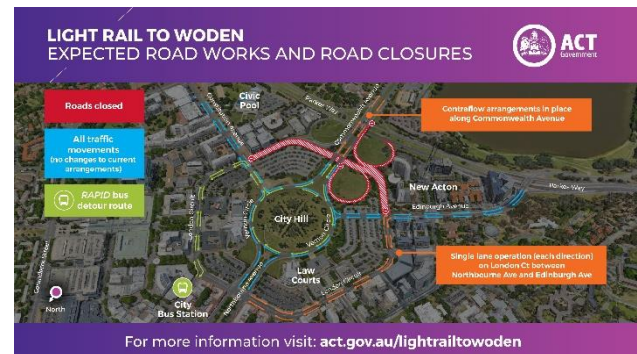
While these works will be very disruptive in the short term, they will ultimately deliver a fantastic new transport link for Canberra’s southside once Stage 2 of light rail is up and running.



Image is looking north-west

Source: ACT Government, online June 2021

If you currently travel to the city from the south of Canberra in a private vehicle – particularly during weekday peak times – I encourage you to start thinking now about how you might be able to adjust your commute once the construction starts. This will help make it as easy and stress-free as possible.



Source: ACT Government July 2021

The ACT Government will also be doing what it can to minimise disruption impacts on the community. This will include providing clear information to businesses and the community about what’s happening, when, and what travel alternatives are available.

Throughout the construction of Light Rail Stage 2, you can stay updated at

<https://www.act.gov.au/lightrailtowoden>

Why light rail?

The ACT Government is investing in light rail to strengthen our public transport system by connecting major population areas, employment centres, and social and cultural hubs across Canberra. Light rail will help reduce congestion, cut greenhouse gas emissions, make it easy and convenient for Canberrans to move across our city, and enhance our liveability, quality of life and health and wellbeing outcomes.

Integrating light rail with walking, riding, scooting, our bus network and private vehicle use is at the heart of our plans to make Canberra a more connected, sustainable and vibrant city.

Why women?

Evidence shows that women often have different transport needs and patterns than men, including:

- a need for trip-chaining (incorporating multiple purposes as part of the travel journey which might include school drop-off and pick-up, grocery shopping and other tasks); and
- different levels of comfort and safety using different modes of travel, different route choices, and different times of night and day.

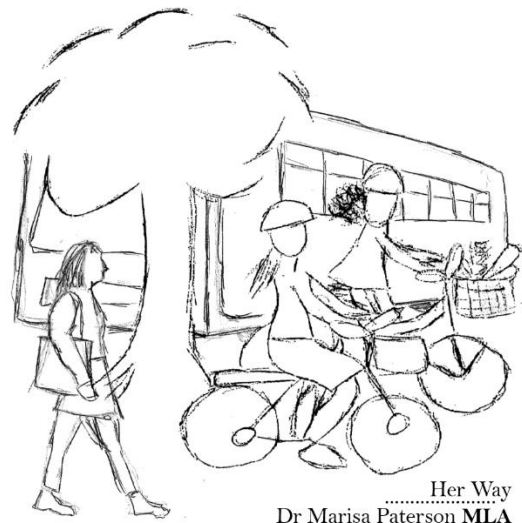
Global research shows that women, generally, “make fewer journeys to work by car and more journeys for maintenance activities such as shopping and childcare... also travel less often and for shorter distances than men... and are more willing to reduce vehicle use than men” (Ng and Acker, 2018, p.8).

This same research also finds that women often experience a greater complexity of activities in their travel patterns than men and undertake more non-work-related trips than men.

Other research, confirming these findings, concludes that, on average:

- women walk more than men;
- women use public transport more than men;
- women cycle less than men;
- men drive more often than women, and women are more likely to be passengers; and
- men are more likely to use new mobility services than women (Ramboll, 2021).

Importantly, women’s perceptions of safety and risk can also impact their travel choices, and research shows that women “adjust their behaviour and their travel patterns to accommodate this fear” (Criado Perez, 2019). This might involve taking a longer, more indirect route, travelling at different times, and ensuring not to travel alone.



What does this mean for you?

Across Canberra, the main mode of travel is by private car, either as driver or passenger – particularly in outer districts when we often have to cover larger distances. In inner districts where distances to destinations are shorter, we’re more likely to walk, ride, scoot and/or use public transport (ACT Government, 2020).

While women’s journeys might typically be shorter and more complex than those of men, many of us travel regularly to the city centre and other town centres for work and other purposes.

Women are well positioned to make changes to some of the journeys we undertake, to embrace a range of options that will benefit us – both during this immediate period of disruption and also for the longer-term lifestyle changes.

Making changes starts with considering our travel habits and patterns. As part of the forthcoming disruption period, the ACT Government will be asking people to *Rethink your route, Rethink your routine*. This means considering how we get around as well as when and for what purposes we do so.

For some of us, there are no alternatives to the private car. And some women need to travel to the city centre, at peak times. There’s no getting around this.

However, many of us may have alternative options. Why not embrace them? These might include:

- altering the time we travel to and from work;
- catching the bus;
- riding, walking, or scooting – even part way;
- working from home – even 1 or 2 days per week; and/or
- working in an alternative location closer to our home.

For those of us who can review and reconsider our travel patterns, we will help to relieve pressure and congestion for those who need to travel on our road network during peak hours; those who genuinely have no other option. We can work together to achieve positive outcomes for ourselves, and for the community, supporting each other during this period of upheaval.



As well as providing improved options for your transport needs, I'm hoping that the outcomes we'll achieve through this work will include:

- improved community outcomes through more livable neighbourhoods where people feel safe to walk, ride, scoot, catch public transport and interact and connect with others;
- improved place-making outcomes with renewed demand resulting in amenities such as shade trees and other landscaping;
- reduced road trauma and traffic incidents;
- more efficient use of your time, which potentially incorporates more physical activity; improved health and wellbeing; and
- environmental benefits through reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Riding a bike

I'm particularly keen to explore the opportunities for women in my electorate to start riding a bike as a mode of transport; whether this be to the local shops, to work, to take children to school, or for other purposes.

Combining bike riding with other forms of transport, including buses or private vehicle, is a great option. You don't have to ride all the way to the city from the southside.



As some examples, you could instead:

- ride with your kids to school and then catch a bus to work from there;
- ride to a rapid bus stop and either take your bike on the bus to store it securely in your workplace during the day; or park it in a secure Bike and Ride facility; or
- drive part way or get a lift (with your bike), park your car (or get dropped off) in an appropriate location and ride your bike from there to the city or other workplace.

Between 1976 and 2011, the rate of riding a bike to work in the ACT more than tripled from 0.9% to 2.8%. This has increased further since 2011, and Canberra has the highest percentage of any of Australia's capital cities for commuting by bike. Our city is a great place to ride!

And if you think you don't have the fitness, consider an e-bike! E-bikes are soaring in popularity as a convenient, effective and efficient way to get around.

Benefits of a Bicycle



Bike riding offers a range of personal benefits including:

- much needed and valuable ‘me’ time;
- an efficient way to incorporate regular, physical activity into your daily or weekly routine;
- mental health and wellbeing outcomes;
- community connection and social cohesion; and
- a quicker travel time for short journeys.

In the ACT men are twice as likely to ride a bike as women (ACT Government, 2015). There are many reasons for this, including the primary two stated above – concerns about safety, and the need for trip-chaining.

Bike riding must be the easy, convenient and safe option for it to be viable, and for you to consider it as a preferred option. It should not be a chore.

I know there are challenges, and I’m keen to work through them with you; addressing them one by one. On your behalf, I’m keen to also work with the ACT Government to make bike riding a reality and something to be enjoyed by everyone.

It’s not uncommon to hear people say, on commencing riding, “this is the best thing I’ve ever done – I don’t know why I didn’t do it sooner!”

Across the world, and in many different contexts and scenarios, bike riding brings freedom, power and joy to women. The bike played a key role in the emancipation of women in the early nineteenth century. In many ways, it continues to do so. Globally, charity and not for profit organisations provide bikes to women and girls in developing countries to help them access education, employment and health services.

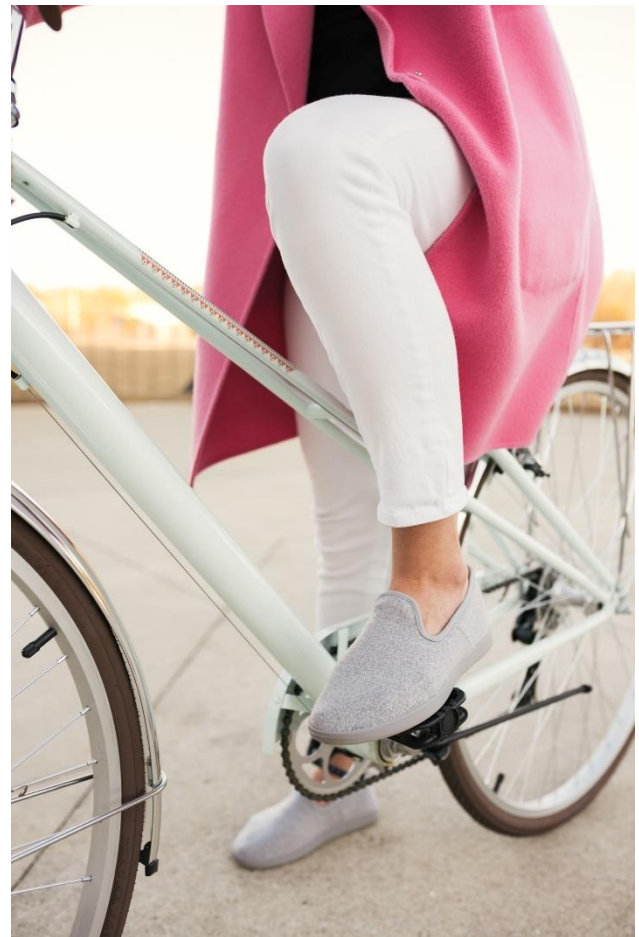
Bikes bring solidarity.

Let’s continue the journey for women historically and globally, and for ourselves in our contemporary, everyday lives. Let’s ride to join and connect with a global, powerful movement of women who ride.

How do we work together?

I want to hear from you: What are your options, challenges, barriers and constraints in rethinking your route and routine? What are the opportunities, and what support do you need to help implement a plan that’s going to work for you?

What would your ideal week look like if time, transport, work and other commitments were factored into the equation, but in a way that optimised your quality of life?



I'm going to collect and collate as much information as I can, from as many southside women as I can, over the next four weeks.

I welcome you to please provide input through any of the following:

- online contact form:
<https://marisapaterson.com.au/contact/>
- online survey:
<https://marisapaterson.com.au/news/campaigns/her-way/>
- email Paterson@parliament.act.gov.au
- phone (02) 6205 1448
- Coffee catch-up Saturday 21 Aug 2:00-3:00pm at A Bite to Eat, Chifley
- Upcoming mobile offices - visit my [Facebook page](#) and [website](#) for details on when and where I'll be
- Community Council meetings where I'll provide a short overview on this topic:
 - Molonglo Valley Community Forum
Thurs 19 August 7:30-8:30pm TBC, 80 Woodbury Avenue Coombs
 - Weston Creek Community Council
Wed 25 August 7:30-8:30pm,
Weston Creek Community Centre,
Parkinson Street, Weston
 - Woden Valley Community Council
Wed 1 September 7:00-9:00pm,
Canberra Southern Cross Club, Corinna Street, Phillip

To get the conversation started, I've included some discussion points on the next page, on which you might like to comment.

I welcome all your comments and input by Friday 3 September.

While the focus of this work is to assist women, I welcome comments from anyone living in the southside who would like to make changes to the way they travel around our city for work and other purposes.

My story

I'm just like you. I recognise that the upcoming construction works for light rail will be very disruptive but I'm also positive about the long-term benefits this huge project will bring for our community. I want to ride a bike but I'm nervous about it, and not quite sure how to make it happen.



What are the next steps?

After I've heard from as many people as possible and better understand your views on constraints, opportunities and solutions, I'll collate a report, with recommendations which I'll present to the Minister for Transport and City Services, as well as any other Ministers as relevant and appropriate.

I'll be doing whatever I can to help ease the disruption for you, and to help you transition to whatever solutions might work best for you.

I'll also embark on my own journey, and share it with you, as I seek to rethink my route and routine.

Please follow this conversation on social media and join in! Tag @MarisaPatersonMLA on Facebook and marisapaterson_mla on Instagram, and use the hashtag: **#HerWay**

Discussion points on which you might want to comment:

Current habits and potential changes

What is your current main mode of transport?

- Do you also use other modes? If so, when and in what ways/for what purposes?

Would you like to switch to make better use of public transport, riding a bike, scooting and/or walking?

- What types of trips would you consider switching from your car?
 - To or from work
 - To or from the local shops
 - Taking children to and from school
 - To or from other errands, social engagements or sports activities

How would you describe your current working arrangements?

(not working, part-time work, full-time work, studying...)

Are flexible working arrangements available for you?

- Do you currently work flexibly? – in what ways?
- Would you like to make greater use of flexible working arrangements?

What support do you need to make the switch out of your private car, and from who?

(even for just one or two trips a week)?

Barriers and constraints

To get the ball rolling (or the wheels spinning), some barriers that you might experience – common to women globally – and might wish to comment on, include:

- Safety
 - lighting
 - separated cycling infrastructure
 - secure bike parking – at your workplace, public transport stops, and other destinations
- Other infrastructure shortcomings
 - Bus timetable and/or ticket pricing
 - Bus services/facilities
- Logistical constraints
 - Too much to carry
 - Too many other errands/tasks to do
 - Need to look neat/professional
- Workplace arrangements
 - Lack of end of trip facilities (bike parking, change rooms, showers etc)
 - Unable to work from home
 - Rigid workplace times
 - Difficult to request other arrangements
- Lack of confidence riding
 - Traffic concerns
 - Skills or fitness
- Lack of access to a bike, scooter etc
 - Financial cost
- Distance
 - Unsure about the route
- Weather
- Image and identity (ie – you don't see yourself as a bike rider)
- Other...



This discussion paper has been prepared with the support of:

- Pedal Power ACT
- Amy Gillett Foundation

References and Resources

ACT Government, 2020, *ACT Transport Strategy*

ACT Government, 2015, *Building an Integrated Transport Network (the Active Travel Framework)*.

Amy Gillett Foundation - <https://www.amygillett.org.au/>

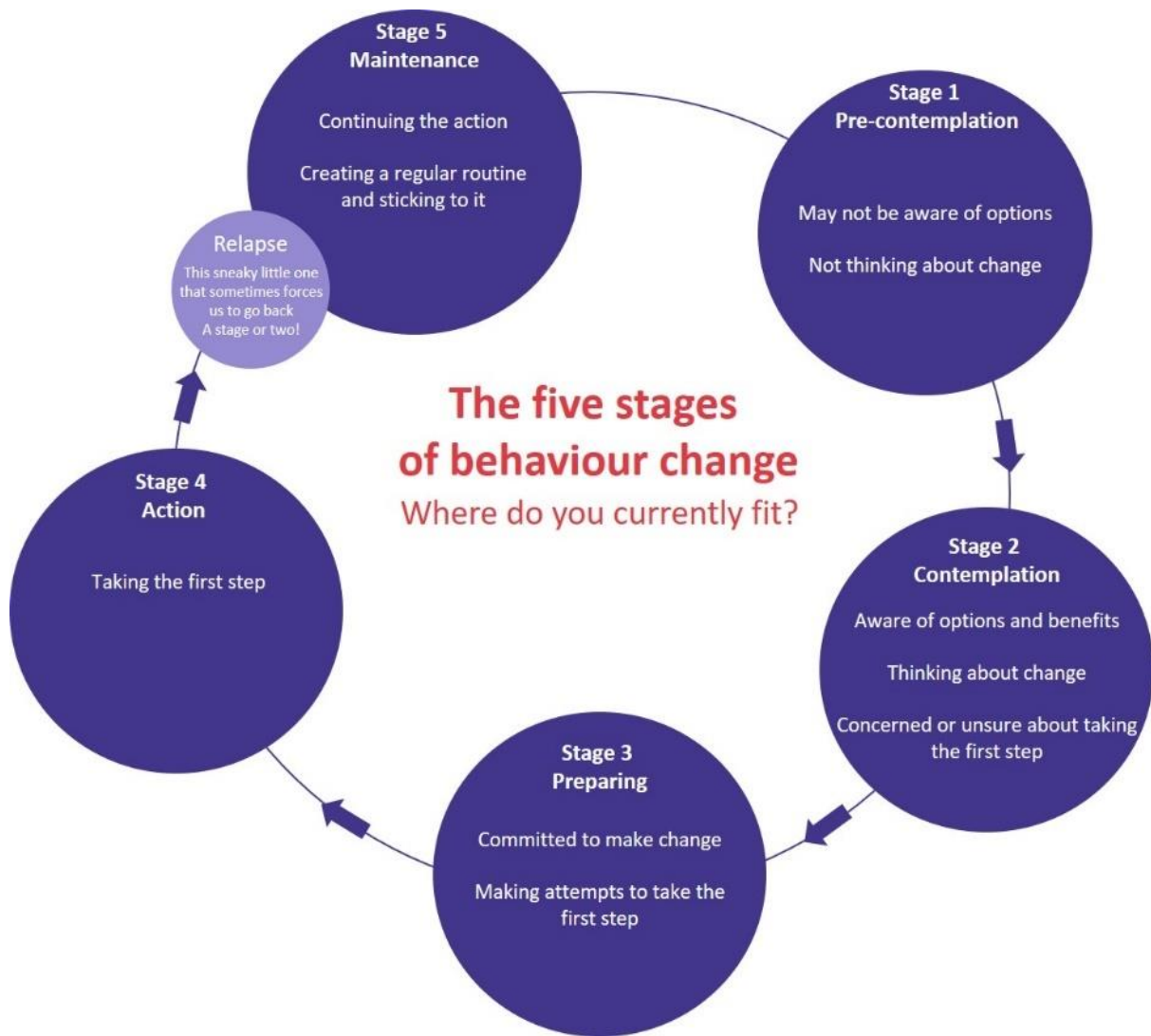
Criado Perez, Caroline, 2019, *Invisible Women – Exposing data bias in a world designed for men’*, Penguin Random House, UK

Ng and Acker, 2018, *Understanding Urban Travel Behaviour by Gender for Efficient and Equitable Transport Policies* International Transport Forum

Pedal Power ACT - <https://www.pedalpower.org.au/>

Ramboll, 2021, *Gender and (Smart) Mobility Green Paper*







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