

Mr John Baker
Chief Executive Officer
Sunshine Coast Council
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16/5/2025

Dear John,

Subject: Pedestrian safety and access on Western side of Coolum Terrace, Coolum Beach

Following on from a letter on 4th Nov 2024 from Gary Lee, Secretary of the Coolum Residents Association to your office, a site visit was arranged by and with the Deputy Mayor Maria Suarez and Megan Cawkwell, Transport Capital Works Manager on 12th February with myself and Bernie Caffery, Chairman of the CRA Pedestrian Sub-Committee.

Possible options were discussed, but we have not received word of a solution. As the usual solution of a concrete footpath would be too costly, it is very apparent that some different thinking and direction from the highest level of Council is needed to provide a simpler solution, like just reshaping the problem sections of the verge. A grassed pathway is all that is required and the easiest and least cost solution.

I understand that Maria Suarez has shown you the pedestrian issue on Coolum Terrace and I feel that it is timely to reiterate the CRA's case for the improved pedestrian infrastructure.

In response to the CRA letter on 4/11/24 an email from Promise Arraiza on 19/12/24 reference number TIM2404293R, helpfully sets out the factors the Sunshine Coast Council considers when deciding on funding for new pedestrian infrastructure. In my view Coolum Terrace is consistent with almost all these factors as detailed below.

Existing infrastructure - The critical point is that Coolum Terrace is a split-level terrace (two metre high wall between each side of the terrace) so the existing footpath on the eastern side is inaccessible from the western side for 400m. Some parts of this western section have a concrete footpath, but given all the issues and costs constraints, we are merely asking for a 1.2 – 1.5M wide strip of grassed verge in the remaining sections (approx. 200 metre in total) to be made walkable. Sections in front of some private residences are of Third World standard, and simply too dangerous for pedestrians. Residents and that includes parents pushing prams, should not be forced to walk on the road.

1st Attachment The photos clearly show the main problem areas.

Direct access from residential areas – The Council is encouraging waking, but every walk from home, begins and ends, with pedestrians being able to walk along their street verge to the nearby pathways.

If made walkable, all of Coolum Terrace can provide direct access to the main tourism, recreation and cultural node of Coolum Beach, including surf club, patrolled beach, community centre, library, bus stops, shops and restaurants, Tickle Park with

its skate bowl and other recreational facilities, access to the northern end of the boardwalk, as well as the signalised intersection at Beach Road/DLW that provides safe pedestrian access across David Low Way.

Environmental impacts - nil environmental impacts.

Potential demand - Coolum Terrace is in the high-density residential zone and thus already has high demand for improved pedestrian infrastructure, but the western side is un-walkable. How can this be justified?

Coolum Terrace being a central location is within very close proximity to the services listed above, making some of the land suitable for more future higher density residential development.

Safety of pedestrians and cyclists - This is the critical issue, and the reason why the Coolum Resident's Association sees this as Coolum's most pressing pedestrian safety issue. Pedestrians currently have no option but to walk on the roadway around parked vehicles and beside passing cars.

Site specific constraints - The verge has a significant side slope in places, but this can be addressed by a combination of minor reprofiling, and variations in the horizontal alignment of the walkway. These slopes are the main reason the verge is unsuitable for use by pedestrians, so it is a circular argument to use the slopes as a reason for not improving pedestrian accessibility. Streets where pedestrians are forced to walk on the roadway should be given a higher priority than streets with wide level verges that can be used by pedestrians without the need for a constructed footpath.

Also, another reason Council has given for not fixing the problem is the need and cost of retaining walls. These will either not be needed or there are now far cheaper options to stabilize any of the small cut side slopes, as it is only a narrow strip of the verge that will be reformed.

A New Approach Needed to Pedestrian Issues at the Residential Street Level –

After two years of discussions, numerous letters and lots of effort by the Deputy Mayor Maria Suarez, plus the time of Council Officers, no real headway has been made about this pressing safety issue on Coolum Terrace. I think it is time for new thinking on this pedestrian matter and acknowledgement that it is not just a problem unique to Coolum Tce.

With concrete footpaths in Coolum on average only a bit over 1metre wide, and now they are expected to handle more pedestrians plus all the various PMD's in increasing numbers, it is little wonder there is a compatibility issue.

Encouraging more people to walk will only be successful, given the increasing traffic, parked cars, more electric quiet vehicles and bikes, if pedestrians can be taken off the roadways and given safe walkable street verges. There is a great opportunity for a new low-cost approach to making our streets verges pedestrian friendly.

Many grassed verges that are difficult to walk, could easily be reformed with very minor earthworks to provide a 1.2 to 1.5metre wide Side-Walk (grassed "footpath").

While the SCC has concentrated on major pathways in Coolum, many streets particularly older ones, have no concrete footpath and verges that are unwalkable because of severe side slope, undulations and driveway crossovers that are on angles not conducive to pedestrian traffic. The other problem with street verges is that some have been overplanted by residents.

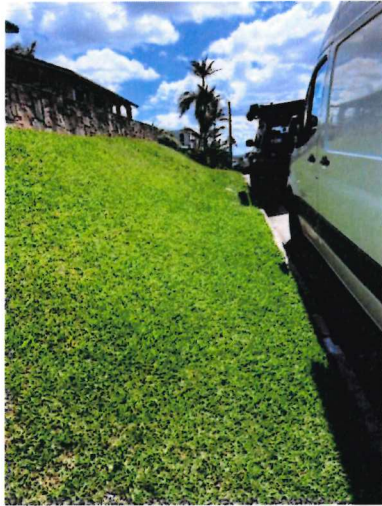
The 2nd attachment - Walkable Verge a Low Cost Pedestrian Solution explains why there is a problem on Coolum Tce and other streets, and why the same old problems are still being created, and our recommended solutions.

We hope that the Council acknowledges that Coolum Terrace meets the Pedestrian Infrastructure Criteria and can work with the CRA to make some real progress in making it safer for residents and holiday makers. This we are sure could be a model for other streets unsafe for pedestrians.

Yours sincerely

Ray Barber
President, Coolum Residents Association





Sections of Coolum Terrace verge nearly Un-Walkable

Walkable Verge - a low cost pedestrian solution – West Side of Coolum Terrace

1. Minimal earthwork treatments to selected sections of Coolum Terrace's verge on the west side can make Coolum Terrace safe for walking.

The 18 houses and 32 apartments on the west side are prime medium density Coolum locations and deserve to have a walkable verge to the beach, shops and community centre.

The split-level road makes the east side footpath inaccessible for most of the block Beach Rd to Scrub Rd.

Pedestrians and sadly Mothers with strollers are having to use the road, which is clearly unsafe.

Side slope, undulations, driveway designs with little consideration for the pedestrians who have to cross over them, and overgrown vegetation presently oppose the safe foot negotiation of the western verge.

Coolum Residents Inc (Bernie and Ray) can show Council a low cost and safe approach to the above challenge (the Coolum Way). Walkable verges become Side-Walks.

2. The Coolum Way can be a model for the region

If Council proves through the above model that verges can easily be made more walkable, then this can provide a model for other Coolum streets and the region.

Senior citizens especially, are finding verges to be a suitable refuge from PMD's, so let's help the walkers to access the verges. E-bikes etc are unlikely to go there.

Homeowners have cribbed some verges with planting, plus some crossovers and driveways don't appear to meet any standards. A review of verge management and better control of the design of driveways could make them more pedestrian friendly and eliminate them from being pedestrian hazards.

A Verges Commissar in Council – a newly created position – could manage the introduction of the new improved standards, with the support of community organisations like Residents Associations. This will return the verge to the walkers and safety to the people.

Reforming the cribbage and poor consideration of pedestrians for 70 + years can make the Sunshine Coast a modern pedestrian friendly tourist area.

Ray Barber

Bernie Caffery

Coolum Residents Association

12 February, 2025