



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

GPO Box 2104, Brisbane 4001

convenors@cbdbug.org.au

www.cbdbug.org.au

The Right Honourable Graham Quirk
Lord Mayor of Brisbane
GPO Box 2287
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Lord Mayor

This letter requests your action to address the inadequate pathway provision for pedestrian and cyclist access through the construction site at the Howard Smith Wharves. The following issues are identified, with further details later in this correspondence.

1. The current path width is inadequate for the volume and mix of pedestrians and cyclists.
2. Adequate clearance has not been provided between the path and the temporary fencing.
3. The path contains at least one dangerously sharp turn at present (where the path has not been widened as required by the development approval) and construction plans show further sharp bends are likely.
4. Shade mesh has not been removed on bends, as required by the development approval.
5. Construction approval was provided in relation to a separate development application (DA) to the main development, which was not advertised, and is materially different to the draft construction management plan in the original DA.
6. Advanced notice was not provided for the path changes.

This route is the major connection for people cycling and walking between the city and north side suburbs such as Fortitude Valley, New Farm, Teneriffe, Newstead, and beyond. The 3,000 pedestrians and cyclists who travel along this corridor daily necessitate at least the minimum specified path width so that this traffic is not compromised. Not surprisingly, since the commencement of these works we have already recorded a 30% drop in peak hour usage.

Many of these issues are in direct contradiction to the accepted national design guidance, specifically the Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Pedestrian and Cyclist Paths, with which both project and council engineers should already be familiar. This guide will hereafter be referred to as 'the Austroads Guide'. The 2009 edition was available when the approval was granted, so all references will refer to that version, rather than the recently released 2017 version.

The CBD BUG requests that the construction management plan be amended to provide an adequate path, that provisions around the treatment of corners be correctly enforced, and that Council explain why the second DA was considered necessary, and the public was not notified.

Details

1. The shared path is only 3.5 metres wide, which is slightly wider than the minimum shared path width allowed by the Austroads Guide (section 7.4.3). However, during the evening the path also functions as a recreational path with joggers. It should be noted that, as a major

recreational path, a width of 3.5 metres, or provision of (visually) separated pedestrian and cyclists paths be more appropriate. At 3.5 metres wide, it is difficult for a cyclist to pass two pedestrians walking abreast, either for over-taking, or in opposite directions, and the length of the construction zone compounds this problem. It should also be noted that these minimum widths are clearly meant to apply to paths with open space on either side, and is elaborated in section 7.7.1.

It is reasonable that this path only cater for lower speeds. However, the width should still be adequate for pedestrians and cyclists to pass each other safely. An absolute minimum path width of 3.5 metres, with adequate clearance to the fence, as described below, should be provided. Any lengths of narrower paths should be limited.

Reference should also have been given to TMR TN133 regarding path widths in regard to volumes. At volumes of over 200 cycle movements in one hour during peak and equivalent pedestrian movements. According to TMR a minimum path width of 4.0 metres should have been provided.

2. The Austroads Guide has a specific section on the treatment of paths at work sites (Appendix B.3). This section specifies that a gap of at least 0.3 metres should be provided between the edge of the path, and any obstacles which may catch a cyclist's pedals. It should be noted that this aligns with the advice in section 7.7.1 above. Even with a bare minimum 3.5 metres shared path, this would require a 4.1 metres clearance between the fence supports. Providing a narrower path increases the risk of crash and injury. The temporary fencing in place does not possess a smooth face due to the feet and rails.

3. It is noted that the development approval requires the path to be widened where sharp bends occur. This requirement has already not been complied with, and only after a complaint to BCC was this corrected. This particular corner poses a safety risk to cyclists, and while the developers have (correctly) highlighted the fence pole with reflective tape, this should not be considered an adequate substitute for a widened path section, with an adequate turn radius. It should be noted that the path plans for future construction stages contain many sharp turns.

4. The development approval also requires shade mesh to be taken down on the inside of bends to improve visibility. Already this requirement has not been followed. Although shade mesh is generally good along the fence, as it helps to prevent handlebars from catching, on the inside of corners of such a narrow path it is very important to maintain visibility. Near misses have already been reported to the CBD BUG.

5. When the initial DA (A004402377) for the Howard Smith Wharves precinct was published by BCC, it was advertised as is appropriate (and required by Council guidelines) for a project of this significance. The draft construction management plan in this application clearly indicated that a shared pedestrian and cycle path was to remain open for the duration of the construction period, with a width of 6.0 metres. In the CBD BUG's submission to Council on this application we requested (among other things) that the path should be provided with separate pedestrian and cycling spaces.

However, when the path was suddenly changed, without any notice for user, a much lower standard of path was provided. It wasn't until a CBD BUG member contacted Council that we were even made aware of a second, separate application (A004603409) covering the construction of the development. This second application allows for a 2.5 metres wide path, which is not only inadequate for the volumes of pedestrians and cyclists as described above, but is also materially different from the 6.0 metre width stipulated in the draft construction management plan. The second application also allows for full closures of the path of up to two weeks, which is also materially different to the draft construction management plan; that stated that any closures should be as short as possible, preferably occurring overnight, or for only a couple of days.

It is not clear why the second application was not advertised in the same way as the first, which some CBD BUG members view as being a method to subvert the DA process and limit community scrutiny. It is also not clear why the final construction management plan was allowed to be substantially different to the draft construction management plan. While it could be argued that in the case of minor changes being proposed a public notification of a second DA would not be warranted. However, in this case the changes are significant and have the strong likelihood of negatively impacting the community, especially in the case of a the prolonged closure of the bikeway that will not allowable.

Council should investigate why the public was not notified of the second DA. At the very least, everyone who lodged a submission in relation to the first application should have been notified. Council should take steps to ensure that this does not happen again.

I look forward to your response on these issues.

Yours faithfully

Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
17 July 2017