



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

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My dear Lord Mayor

Chatsworth Rd, Boundary Rd and Samuel St Intersection “Upgrade”

We refer to the above intersection works and comments made at the Infrastructure Committee meeting of 13th August 2019 to the effect that you will not accommodate on-road bike lanes as part of the work because people do not use ride bicycles on these roads. This is definitely not an “upgrade” where cyclists are concerned.

This letter is long. We do not apologise for this as it sets the context for our anger and disappointment with the designs council has produced; the attitude we saw displayed by some councillors; and what appears to be a lack of recent professional development regarding the latest findings in road safety, especially for people riding bicycles, by council staff at the committee meeting.

We are also disappointed in you – Lord Mayor. We were under the impression you were more favourably disposed towards those of us who choose to walk and cycle, rather than drive cars, and that you were more interested in making Brisbane more liveable than your predecessors.

This one intersection “upgrade” is emblematic of Council’s:

- failure to live up to the commitments it has made through the Transport Plan for Brisbane
- failure to provide a bicycle network as outlined in the 2014 City Plan Bicycle Network Overlay
- failure to comply with the Queensland Government’s Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan
- failure to support the Australian Government’s National Road Safety Action Plan
- failure to support its *Safe Roads and Roadsides* cornerstone of the Safe Systems approach outlined in Austroads guidelines

Transport Plan for Brisbane Strategic Directions

Council’s most recent transport plan states a vision to “... *deliver smart and sustainable solutions*”, with “*residents ... adopting sustainable travel choices including walking, cycling and public transport*”. The inner suburbs will be provided “... *with public and active transport networks ...*” that “*will provide high levels of accessibility.*” So that “*More trips will be made by public and active transport*”. The plan acknowledges that current mode share to cycling is low and that “*areas with good active transport infrastructure with short, safe and direct travel to intended destinations, such as within the CBD and inner city areas*” are more likely to have more people cycling.

“*Do I feel safe travelling during the day and/or night*” needs to “*[take] into account if a sustainable shift is to be made from private car trips to public transport, active transport*”.

“*Breaking ingrained travel behaviour is achieved through a combination of education and awareness, infrastructure and service improvements and/or a change in the transport network that motivates a user to question car travel. This could be a change in parking availability or cost, increased congestion or a new workplace or routine.*”

The following “set of transport principles ... form a checklist for decisions” that mean we are ... “becoming more sustainable, accessible and inclusive and less car-dependent

- *Transport must meet people’s needs and provide suitable choices for movement of people.*
- *Support the safety of people using our transport networks*
- *Provide accessible transport options*
- *Transport provides easily understood and connected paths of travel from trip start to finish.*
- *Manage demands and influence transport choice for movement of people”*

You acknowledge that “A high reliance on private vehicles exacerbates congestion, and increases air and noise pollution. This has adverse effects on amenity, public health and the natural environment. Attracting more trips to sustainable modes of transport and reducing congestion are key strategies.”

And that “In the last 20 years, there has been a 60% increase in kilometres driven by cars in Brisbane, leading to increased congestion, energy use and emissions. Encouraging the uptake of sustainable transport options, including walking, cycling, public transport and motorcycles can significantly reduce the impacts of transport”

Transport Direction number one is: “Encourage reduction in private car travel by improving the attractiveness of sustainable transport options through high-quality public and active travel infrastructure”. The outcome you want for Community health and wellbeing is: “Brisbane residents have improved health and wellbeing through greater use of walking and cycling”.

“Cycling is attracting a growing proportion of commuter trips, even for distances over 10km. Attractive, direct, safe and easily understood pathways to major activity centres along key commuter corridors” are required to achieve a shift in the way people travel.

This intersection is only 6km from City Hall!

Under the Plan’s theme of Convenient Commuting you desire an outcome where “Travel to work options meet commuters’ needs with increased use of public and active transport for commuter travel.” And that “Commuter travel choices are heavily influenced by: ...quality, safety, frequency and cost of service.”

“Making the most of existing networks, improving the attractiveness of sustainable transport options and ensuring networks perform their desired function and are safe and resilient is important.”

Transport Directions 23 and 26 state you will: “Promote effective and sustainable commuter public and active transport networks linking residential areas to employment hubs” and “Develop an accessible, connected and direct commuter cycling and pedestrian network linked to public transport hubs, employment and activity centres”

Under the theme “Well planned, designed and managed networks”, the plan states: “continuing to build new road infrastructure or widening existing road corridors is not a long-term, sustainable solution” and that “Road network upgrades consider the requirements for pedestrians, **cyclists**, public transport, freight and general traffic.”

Transport direction 62 states: “Plan, design and develop transport corridors taking into account the balanced demands for active, public, freight and car-based transport movements” and direction 64 that you will: “Manage transport congestion across all transport networks to provide for more sustainable transport options” and direction 67 states you will “Continually review transport design standards to provide high-value, **safe**, sustainable and fit-for-purpose infrastructure.”

Under the Travel demand management and behaviour change theme you state: “A key demand strategy to manage congestion on the road network is to encourage a reduction of single-occupant car trips, particularly in peak periods, through providing appealing alternatives for current road users.”

“Improving the accessibility, quality, safety, cost and convenience of more sustainable travel choices such as walking, cycling, public transport and vehicle sharing and pooling will support travel behaviour change. Targeting transport infrastructure delivery to facilitate community travel behaviour change is critical.”

Under the Safe transport networks theme: *“Our transport networks need to be safe. Eliminating death and serious injury on our transport networks is a primary principle of transport design, management and operation. Safety considerations must include all transport network users. Safety is a critical consideration for pedestrians and cyclists as our most vulnerable road users. Separation of pedestrians and cyclists from general traffic movements is a key mechanism for improving safety. Real and perceived safety issues are often quoted as a major barrier in choosing cycling or walking as a transport option. Improving safety can encourage more trips by active transport, particularly for people who are not confident in cycling on the road network. Gaps in the primary bikeway network can expose cyclists to potential safety risks when they are required to share general traffic lanes when travelling between sections of dedicated bikeway. Providing separated on-road lanes and completing off-road pathways will improve safety. Gaps in the primary bikeway network can expose cyclists to potential safety risks when they are required to share general traffic lanes when travelling between sections of dedicated bikeway. Providing separated on-road lanes and completing off-road pathways will improve safety. Provision of pathways and bridges over barriers such as major roads, rail lines and waterways can also improve safety as well as providing more direct connections.”*

Transport direction 76 states that you will aim to: *“Separate incompatible transport uses particularly in high-volume or high-speed environments.”*

Under *trends and challenges*, Brisbane Citywide transport network intent you state: *“Congestion at intersections and network pinch-points can also increase safety risks for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians”* and that *“Missing links in the network, network restriction points and congestion all reduce the efficiency and safety of the network. This is the case across all modes of transport.”*

“When full mode separation is not possible, management of transport corridor space and mode priority, such as bicycle lanes and bus priority treatments on the road network should be considered. Designate and provide a primary on and off-road commuter network that provides safe and direct connections to major employment and activity centres”

For the Cycling Network the plan aims to: *“Provide on-road facilities where necessary, suited to the form and function of the road.”*

Given the above fine rhetoric quoted directly from the plan, it is impossible for us to see how the design of this intersection is in keeping with either the intent or word of the plan.

As for the council officer’s assertion that the “Camp Hill Cycleway” is a viable alternative to people who might choose to ride a bicycle through this intersection the transport plan says: *“Safe, direct and easily understood pedestrian and cycling networks designed for all levels of mobility are necessary to encourage more local trips by active transport.”* For some people, travelling through this intersection will be the only way to access the Camp Hill Cycleway.

Given that there is currently no cycling infrastructure at the intersection, the council officer’s statements to the effect that there is little or no current cycling demand at this intersection, is akin to attributing the lack of demand for a bridge across a river to the low number of people swimming there!

2014 City Plan Bicycle Network Overlay

Both roads using this intersection are marked on the City Plan Bicycle Network Overlay as secondary cycle routes. As such, appropriate cycling infrastructure should be provided. At a bare minimum, bicycle lanes should be included to the full extent of the intersection construction works.

National Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2020

“All state and territory governments have set national targets to reduce the annual numbers of fatalities and serious injuries from road crashes by at least 30% by 2020.” Brisbane City Council is clearly responsible for the Safe Roads ‘cornerstone’ of the Safe System approach adopted by the plan - “road safety, accountability for management systems rests with governments.”

The strategy points out that *“In major cities half of all DEATHS are vulnerable road users”* and that *“Vulnerable road user DEATHS as a proportion of all ROAD DEATHS has increased in major cities”*.

Priority 3 of the plan is to: *“Implement safety treatments to reduce trauma from crashes at urban intersections”*. To achieve this, one of the actions it calls for is separation of cyclists. *“Even when programs are not targeted specifically towards safety, all road infrastructure investment at all levels of government projects should apply Safe System principles and treatments as outlined in Austroads guidance ...”*.

Council has clearly not done this in this instance.

The road safety action plan has a chapter addressing *“particular road user groups and issues that have been identified as being of particular concern. This section demonstrates how the actions work together to address road safety.”* Pedestrian and cyclist safety is one of the *“particular concerns”*. It recognises *“There is risk for vulnerable road users even at low speeds, but it is clear that the chance of injury or death increases dramatically above certain speed thresholds. There is a large increase in deaths for collision speeds above around 30 km/h, while the critical speed of impact for serious injury and for particularly vulnerable road users is likely to be less than this. The solutions include lower speed environments; separation of pedestrians and cyclists from other road users; and provision of appropriate crossing facilities.”*

“Action 3 calls for a combination of infrastructure and speed reduction measures to reduce trauma at urban intersections.”

Again, there is a clear disregard for the safety of cyclists in the “upgrade” of this intersection.

Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2015-2021, and Action Plan 2017-19

Safer Roads, Safer Queensland calls on everyone in our community – government, business and citizens – to:

- *reject the notion that death and serious injuries are simply ‘part and parcel’ of using the roads*
- *consider all road activities from the viewpoint of safety*
- *understand that road safety is everyone’s issue and everyone’s responsibility*
- *take action, whenever and wherever, to improve safety on our roads.*

The strategy is in support of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 *“No person should be killed or seriously injured on Australia’s roads’. To move towards our vision, we need to do things differently.”*

Clearly this intersection “upgrade” is business as usual.

Austroads

The **2015 Review of the National Road Safety Strategy** determined as its first priority area – Vulnerable Road Users. It found that *“The Safe System philosophy for vulnerable road users is not as well developed as for vehicle occupants.”* And *“The main finding of the recent review of road safety from the International Transport Forum was that vulnerable road users are receiving smaller benefits from recent road safety improvements than vehicle occupants.”* *“from 2008-13 showed ... There was almost no change in total fatalities involving vulnerable road users, with fatalities of motorcyclists and cyclists rising over the period. The analysis of hospital separations data found a much higher proportion of road-related injuries involving motorcycling and cycling than shown by the police-collected data. It also showed that injury cases among these road user types are increasing.”*

“A number of infrastructure improvements have been shown to improve safety for vulnerable road users; these include improved pedestrian crossings, cyclist friendly intersection design, separation of bicycles and motor vehicles and improved road surfaces.”

In relation to cyclists and pedestrians, *“The major findings of the literature review were:*

- *Recent reports have recognised the need to direct increased effort to countermeasures aimed at vulnerable road users and to focus on reducing injuries as well as deaths*
 - *There is agreement about the importance of adopting a Safe System approach to cycling safety*
- Potential actions included:*
- *Further work on the development and implementation of more appropriate intersection designs to cater for cyclists*
 - *Programs to provide separation of vehicles and bicycles including safe intersection design.”*

Not catering for cyclists AT ALL, let alone programming to provide separation, is a complete failure by council.

Austrroads **AP-R560-18 Towards Safe System Infrastructure A Compendium of Current Knowledge** states that under the Safe Systems approach *“Vulnerable road users require a low speed environment to interact with traffic. If this cannot be achieved then segregation **must** be used.”*

Absolutely relevant to this instance, it cites *“The Tylösand Declaration ... another significant milestone that highlights a moral dimension in relation to road safety. The Tylösand Declaration of citizens’ right to road traffic safety (Lie and Tingvall 2009) states:*

- 1. Everyone has the right to use roads and streets without threats to life or health*
- 2. Everyone has the right to safe and sustainable mobility: safety and sustainability in road transport should complement each other*
- 3. Everyone has the right to use the road transport system without unintentionally imposing any threats to life or health on others*
- 5. Everyone has the right to expect systematic and continuous improvement in safety: any stakeholder within the road transport system has the obligation to undertake corrective actions following the detection of any safety hazard that can be reduced or removed.”*

None of these rights have been met at this intersection as far as cyclists are concerned.

Specifically regarding cyclists, the guide further states:

- *The most fundamental philosophy is to mix cyclists with traffic where speeds can be managed to safe levels and separate where speeds are too high; use targeted speed reduction where pedestrians and cyclists meet motorised traffic*
- *Avoid having cyclists and heavy vehicles stand side by side at stop signals*

“Given the past emphasis on optimising the network for motor cars over past decades, the simple reality is that current infrastructure does not adequately support safe cycling activity across most parts of the road network.”

“Primary Safe System treatments are limited to the provision of low speed environments or where this cannot be achieved, physically separating cyclists from motorised traffic. This is especially important yet most challenging at intersections, where interactions between motor vehicles and cyclists are most likely to occur.”

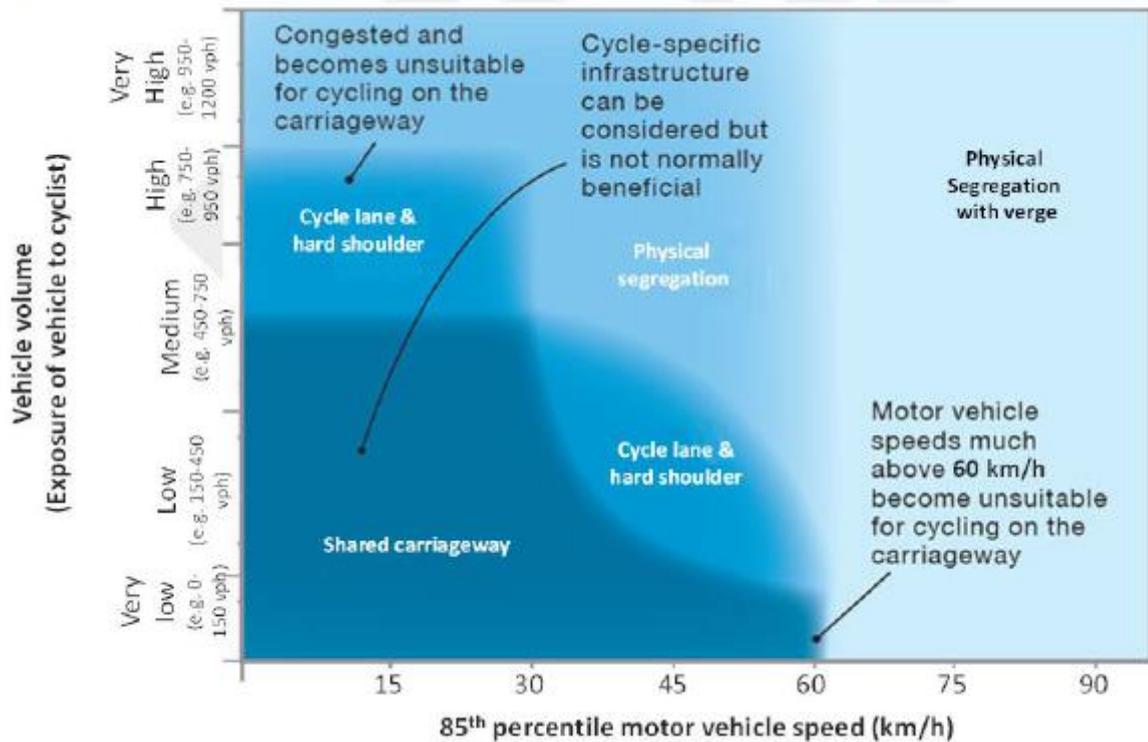
Where a Safe System treatment is not available, the following supporting treatments are suggested:

- *Separate cyclist signals at intersections*
- *Cyclist box at intersections*

Austrroads AP-G88-17 Cycling Aspects to Austrroads Guides

Figure 2.2 of this guide shows that on 50km/h roads cycle lanes should be provided except where the volume of motor vehicles is extremely low.

Figure 2.2: Guidance on the separation of cyclists and motor vehicles for the preferred bicycle route



Regarding the provision for cyclists at intersections the guide states:
 “The types of lanes that may have to be incorporated into traffic routes, and therefore intersections, include:

- bicycle lanes
- bicycle/car parking lanes
- wide kerbside lanes.”

“Because of the wide range of ages and ability of cyclists, it is often necessary to accommodate off-road paths for young and/or inexperienced cyclists within intersection layouts.”

Section 5.2 Issues at Intersections for Cyclists, states a number of issues – all of which pertain to this particular intersection. These include squeeze points, vehicles overtaking and immediately turning left into side streets, motor vehicle converge and diverge areas, lack of continuity and connectivity, safely cross or join conflicting flows, gaining position to turn right, or cyclists not seen by motorists or cyclists speed misjudged. “Provide a bicycle lane” is the one treatment common to all these issues.

Again, under Table 5.3 Cyclist requirements for arterial road signalised approaches, the main common feature is the requirement for a bicycle lane, especially if the traffic volume is greater than 3000 vehicles a day.

Conclusion

We contend that all the above clearly demonstrates that the current “upgrade” of the intersection is nothing but, where cyclists are concerned. At a very bare minimum, this intersection should have bike lanes. We also urge that you remove the left slip lane to improve the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians. This proposed work is likely to be the state of the intersection for at least the next three or four decades. Your administration has the obligation to see that it is made safe for vulnerable road users into the future.

We also ask that with any future transport infrastructure plans brought to committees are accompanied by a check list demonstrating how they contribute positively to the Transport Plan for Brisbane Strategic Directions. Such a check would clearly demonstrate how this particular “upgrade” fails to do so. We urge that all future road works incorporate positive accommodation of all vulnerable road users.

I look forward to hearing from you with regards to these issues.

Yours faithfully

Dr Richard Bean
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
13 September 2019

Cc Jonathan Sri, Councillor for Woolloongabba
Cc Nicole Johnston, Councillor for Tennyson
Cc Jared Cassidy, Councillor for Deagon
Cc City Projects Office, BCC