



Space for Cycling Brisbane

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Cross River Rail Stakeholder Engagement Team

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CC: Hon Mark Bailey MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads
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CC: Cr Ryan Murphy
Public and Active Transport Chair, Brisbane City Council
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CC: Cr Vicki Howard
Councillor for Central Ward, Brisbane City Council
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Dear Stakeholder Engagement Team,

Thank you for your email of 8 June 2020 formally advising us of the Victoria Park temporary path closure and detour. We understand that to allow for work on the Cross River Rail project on adjacent land, the pedestrian and cycle path between College Road and the Victoria Park Land Bridge—colloquially known as “the Grammar Path”—will be closed from 22 June 2020 for at least 6 months.

We appreciate the revised map of the detour, which now illustrates recommended routes for both inbound and outbound cycle traffic as discussed during the briefing to cycling groups last week on 4 June 2020.

The Queensland Government, via the Department of Transport and Main Roads, addresses the requirement for temporary facilities when bikeways and footpaths are closed in the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Part 3, Section 2.3.7 states that “pedestrian and bicycle paths should be provided on the same scale and to the same width as any facilities for pedestrian or bicycle traffic that were existing prior to the works”.

The current proposed detour falls short of this requirement, as it requires people to either cycle on inadequate footpaths, or to cycle with general traffic on the road. The latter is simply not a comfortable solution for a majority of people, and is likely to deter those people from riding.

Research predicts the issue will disproportionately affect children, women, and seniors who are already under-represented in the cycling population in Brisbane.

We suggest some options to facilitate a safer and more inclusionary detour route below, and ask that you work with Brisbane City Council to achieve a better solution than that currently proposed. We note the urgency of this issue given the very short time frame before works are scheduled to commence on 22 June.

Background: significance of the route

The Grammar Path is identified as a top priority route on the Principal Cycle Network Plan. It currently provides the main cycling connection to the CBD for people from Brisbane's northern suburbs. Importantly, it functions as the first stage of the North Brisbane Bikeway, which now provides an off-road route from the Roma St parklands all the way to Woolloowin, thanks to substantial investment from the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council.

The pathway is also a key cycling route for people from Brisbane's western and southern suburbs accessing major destinations such as the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and QUT's Kelvin Grove campus.

Closing this route is therefore highly disruptive. This impending closure comes after two lengthy shutdowns of the path over the past two years to install much-needed lighting and to upgrade sections of the path. This series of closures highlights a lack of resilience in the northside cycling routes to the City, a problem which dates back to the construction of the Clem7 tunnel. With no off-road alternatives, and not even on-road facilities on any of the major routes into the City, bike riders from the northside are regularly disadvantaged by even minor closures because of a lack of options.

We note that College Rd and Gregory Terrace (the proposed detour) are also identified as principal routes in the Principal Cycle Network Plan. Currently, Gregory Tce has only limited cycling facilities, while College Rd has no provision for safe cycling. Our suggested modifications to Gregory Terrace and College Rd to support this temporary detour thus also offer an opportunity to test active transport improvements to these roads in the longer term.

Issues and suggested improvements for northbound route

The proposed detour for outbound (northbound) cyclists involves taking the Normanby Bikeway through the underpass beneath College Rd, then joining College Rd (either on the footpath or the main carriageway) and Gregory Terrace (past Brisbane Grammar School and Brisbane Girls Grammar School) to the pedestrian crossing lights at the intersection with Fortescue St, and entering Victoria Park from there.

We note that College Rd carries a high volume of traffic, particularly in the morning peak. Although it would be desirable to repurpose one of the three inbound lanes to provide a

protected bike lane, we acknowledge that would be challenging in the timeframe available. Although not ideal, the footpath along College Rd is navigable by bike with care.

- ★ We do ask that Cross River Rail engage with Brisbane City Council to remove the advertising screen on the bus stop “College Rd near Kelvin Grove Road stop 3b” which currently blocks visibility and makes it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to safely negotiate past this obstacle.

Along Gregory Tce—particularly past Brisbane Grammar School and Brisbane Girls Grammar School—the footpath is very narrow and cluttered, making it unsuitable for bike riders to share with pedestrians. Thus the proposed detour will require people to cycle on the road along Gregory Terrace. While there are painted on-road cycle lanes along most of Gregory Tce, these are in the “door zone” of parked cars along the frontage with Victoria Park.

Cycling in the door zone is dangerous. A rider who is hit when a driver or passenger opens a car door into their path is likely to be impelled to the right and fall into the path of any vehicle moving in the adjacent traffic lane. The risk of a serious injury or death resulting from such an incident is high. Experienced cyclists know to avoid the door zone, but doing so requires them to mix with general motor traffic. For many people, that requirement is enough to deter them from cycling altogether.

We therefore ask that you work with Brisbane City Council to ensure a safe route is available along Gregory Tce which does not require cyclists to ride in the door zone. We request the following:

- ★ Temporarily close the on-street car parking bays (17 metered spots) on Gregory Tce between Brisbane Girls Grammar School and the crossing lights at Fortescue St. Use temporary bollards or similar barriers to exclude cars and create a protected bikeway along this section.
- ★ Modify the kerb ramp just before the Fortescue St intersection to make it safe for cyclists to leave the road onto the footpath and enter Victoria Park.
- ★ Create a temporary path connecting from the kerb ramp to Jubilee Walk (the shared path in Victoria Park), avoiding the unsafe wiggle in the existing concrete path. By way of illustration we point to two recent examples of similar work: the temporary asphalt path through Harmony Gardens to bypass works on Gladstone Rd, Dutton Park, and the temporary asphalt path around C-Block at QUT next to Gardens Point Rd during work on the Bicentennial Bikeway by Queens Wharf Brisbane.

Issues and suggested improvements for inbound cycle route

The inbound (southbound) route involves crossing Gregory Tce at the pedestrian signals at the intersection with Fortescue St, riding west along Gregory Tce, and then either down the steep

hill on Parkland Bvd, or turning right into College St to join the Normanby Bikeway using the ramp near the underpass.

The painted on-road bike lane on Gregory Tce in this direction between Fortescue St and 95 Gregory Tce is problematic due to its proximity to parked cars, as described above. However we acknowledge that closing parking spaces here is likely to be contentious as there are more marked bays on this side (22), and these are available for long-term parking by residents with a permit. There is also a loading zone at 95 Gregory Tce. Fortunately, the footpath on this side of Gregory Terrace is wider and less cluttered than opposite. Although not ideal, cycling on the footpath when travelling in this direction is at least feasible, and thus an option for people who are not prepared to ride on the road.

In order to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians, we ask that Cross River Rail work with Brisbane City Council to:

- ★ Adjust the signal timing at the intersection of Gregory Tce and Fortescue St to make the pedestrian crossing more responsive.
- ★ Investigate closing car parking on Gregory Tce inbound between Fortescue St and 95 Gregory Tce, or alternatively:
- ★ Reverse the position of the bike lane and car parking in this section to provide a 1.8m wide bike lane next to the kerb, a 0.5m buffer (marked with paint and bollards or a temporary kerb), a 2.2m wide row of parking spaces, and a 3.5m general traffic lane.



- ★ Implement no-standing zones along Gregory Tce between 95 Gregory Tce and Wickham St where short-term parking is currently permitted at certain times, blocking the painted kerb-side bike lane.

Conclusion

Although Gregory Tce is controlled by Brisbane City Council, we note that Cross River Rail are responsible for providing a safe cycling detour while their work necessitates the closure of the critical arterial bikeway through Victoria Park. We trust that you will act with the necessary haste to assist Brisbane City Council in providing a safe and suitable detour route ahead of the bikeway closure.

Thanks and regards,

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