



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Office of the Lord Mayor
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My dear Lord Mayor

This letter concerns open data for cycling in Brisbane, kiosks near the Go-Between Bridge, and issues on Sylvan Road, Toowong, Gladstone Road, Dutton Park, and Stevens Street, Yeronga.

Summary of requests

- Open data - the release of:
 - Automatic and manual bike counts - to be published as soon as available with continual updating
 - CityCycle usage statistics to be published on a regular basis – at least quarterly
 - Statistics on CityCycle’s ambassador program
- Protected bidirectional bike lanes on Sylvan Road Toowong as soon as the trial ends
- Improvement of council research concerning crashes on Sylvan Road Toowong
- Removal of car parking outside 50 Sylvan Road, Toowong for safety reasons, and also given the huge increase in “free” car parking in the adjacent park
- Removal of car parking at 271 Gladstone Road, Dutton Park for safety reasons
- An update on the kiosks on the Bicentennial Bikeway at the Go-Between Bridge, with consideration given to moving them to Riverside Drive as they have now been closed more than 18 months
- Stevens Street at Yeronga – please update on progress of removal of banana bars and smooth the lip at this location

Open data and “enabling” versus “encouraging”

At the 16 August 2016 Brisbane City Council meeting, Deputy Mayor Adrian Schinnerer stated that he wanted councillors and BCC staff to use CityCycle wherever possible. This is a commendable sentiment.

The BUG would love to see councilors riding for transport wherever possible, as they would become directly familiar with the issues facing people who choose to commute via bicycle in Brisbane, instead of hearing about these secondhand. In fact, the BUG and other groups and individuals have had limited success inviting councilors to ride in their wards or to join slow riding events.

*Deputy Mayor: We are extending the hours of the CityCycle contact centre and we are introducing a CityCycle ambassador’s program, and I am asking all Councillors to be a part of that ambassador’s program. And we will give you free CityCycle membership and we encourage you to use it.*¹

There are two issues here.

¹ https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/20160825_-_council_-_minutes_-_ordinary_-_16_aug_2016.doc

(a) The statement is “encouragement” and this is Council’s main focus (Cycling Brisbane, confidence courses, websites, brochures, social media posts), whereas what is needed for growing cycling as transport is “enabling” (separated infrastructure so that *potential* riders feel protected from motor vehicle traffic). “Encouragement” is cheap and ineffective while “enabling” requires a reallocation of space away from motor vehicles. Council must be well aware of this which makes people rather cynical about efforts being made. This needs to be more than just a publicity stunt.

Mikael Colville-Andersen of Copenhagenize stated: *All of the marketing around cycling is really geeky. It doesn't work. We know that nothing works. Every campaign that says “ride a bike, it's healthy, it saves the planet”. It doesn't work. But, if you make driving a car difficult then people are forced to make a choice.*

(b) Unfortunately the call is just another empty statement without some kind of measurement being adopted. CityCycle usage is growing (about 0.68 trips per bike per day in 2016) but other indicators that Council is not publishing (e.g. bike counts declined in absolute numbers from October 2014 to October 2015 and October 2013 to October 2014, and Australian Bicycle Council surveys) indicate cycling is declining in Brisbane. This is a disgraceful performance given that \$60 million was spent in these two years on bikeways. Clearly much of the money was wasted (upgrades of existing infrastructure, bicycle awareness zones, bike lanes that cars can park in, banana bars) instead of being directed towards projects that would *enable* the “interested but concerned” demographic in Brisbane to start cycling.

Thus, there is an urgent need to publish metrics so the public can start seeing honest accounting. The Department of Transport and Main Roads publishes similar metrics – e.g. Average Bicycle Counts by Day and Hour.²

One example of Council misreporting was a statement by Cr Peter Matic when he was Public and Active Transport chairman; that female cyclists in Brisbane had increased from 11% in 2012 to 17% in 2013 and 20% in 2014.³ After Council released the data in October 2016 in response to CBD BUG’s Right to Information request, it was clear that much of the data, including the 2012 data, had been incorrectly recorded (see Appendix) and that Cr Matic’s statement was in error. If Council had released the data sooner or if more resources had been allocated to checking the data, the errors could have been identified beforehand.

Council has dropped reporting of the growth rate of cycling out of the Annual Report while it was declining. Mark Pattemore of the BCC noted at the October 2016 meeting of CBD BUG that the long-term growth rate of cycling was now 5.6%. Given that the previously reported ten-year figure was 6.7% this seems to imply another drop in the absolute number of bikes counted between October 2014 and October 2015. As explained previously⁴ a growth rate of around 9% from 2011 to 2026 would be needed to meet the 5% cycling target by 2026.⁵

The omission of any kind of growth targets from Council Corporate Plan 2016-17 to 2020-21 seems to indicate that Council has given up on actual cycling growth in Brisbane. At the same time these drops are occurring Council makes the absurd Annual Report claims that progress on Active Transport is “on track” and no “Brisbane Bicycle Infrastructure Plan” as promised in 2012 has yet been seen.

² <https://data.qld.gov.au/dataset/average-bicycle-counts-by-day-and-hour>

³ <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/1970/01/0/CBD-BUG-letter-fr-BCC-re-claimed-female-rider-%25-20150806.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/1970/01/0/CBD-BUG-Letter-to-LM-Active-Transport-Targets-20160405.pdf>

⁵ It is only in the footnote to the “Brisbane Shared Pathway Counts Summary Report 2014” released by RTI that Council acknowledges these rates are insufficient: *Census journey to work cycling mode share increased from 1.5% in 2006 to 1.9% in 2011 (or 6.9% growth per annum). Brisbane’s Active Transport Strategy states that at 2011, 1.6% of all trips (not just work trips, as recorded in the Census) were by cycling and identifies a target of 2.5% of all trips to be by cycling by 2016, and 5% by 2026. These require annual compound growth rates of about 11% and 9.5% respectively. The October counts since 2004 indicate cycling growth rates that, while impressive, do not yet support these targets.*

Council also chooses metrics such as the number of users of the Cycling Brisbane website, the number of kilometres of “bikeway” and amount of money spent on “bikeway” regardless of the safety, quality and connectedness of those “bikeways”. This is not useful except for Council’s own PR purposes.

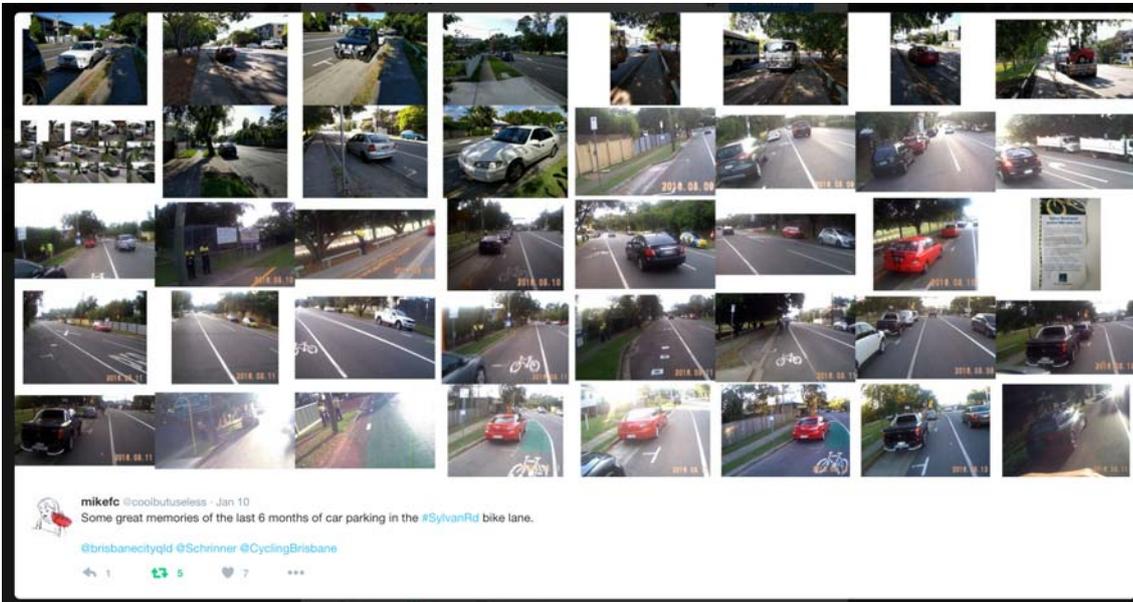
Thus we call for

- Automatic and manual counts to be published as soon as available with continual updating
- CityCycle usage statistics to be published on a regular basis – at least quarterly
- Statistics on CityCycle’s ambassador program to be published

Could you please advise on how these projects are proceeding?

Sylvan Road, Toowong Car Parking

The Sylvan Road part time bike lane trial cannot be said to be working well. For example, the following pictures are the reports of illegal parking by just one person commuting along Sylvan Road every weekday in the last six months. Violations occur continuously and the \$121 fine appears to be treated more like a service fee in some cases. It only takes one car to park illegally to force people riding bikes to veer out into motor vehicle traffic. Regular Council patrols appear to have little effect.



#SylvanRd bikelane: my ref nums for reporting illegally parked cars last year
#memories @Schrinner @brisbanecityqld

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5455440 5439418 5439428 5439451 5439461
5439478 5434003 5422377 5406696 5406707
5393893 5394023 5394043 5394110 5394172
5394210 5394236 5394290 5392564 5392579
5387342 5387365 5376970 5372065 5372051
5365898 5345716 5335653 5335661 5329051
5315132 5308103 5286562 5286497 5255595
5248269 5240805 5224066 5224078 5195576
5142874 5117057 5117080 5111941 5098177
5098181 5060574 5053025 5053041 5045841
4941709 4941716 4941734 4916183 4916202
4916209 4895160 4900236 4900245 4665016
4672196 4678984 4685609 4513987 4477422
4476326 4470876 4469718
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RETWEETS
2
10:38 AM - 11 Jan 2017

There is a huge amount of parking available (113 extra) in the new Wests Bulldogs development and plenty of parking in the side streets as well. The new café at Wests Bulldogs, Pitch and Fork, is owned by the same people from the Corner Store Café who campaigned against the lanes. Their change.org petition against the lanes achieved only 78 signatures compared to 763 for the original petition.

The original August 2010 traffic report for the Corner Store Café, Development Application A003049638, prepared by Adam Pekol Consulting, noted that there were 211 parking spaces within 200 metres of the site and the absolute maximum of occupied spaces was 75 around 10 to 11 a.m. and 80 around 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. The following figure is from the report.

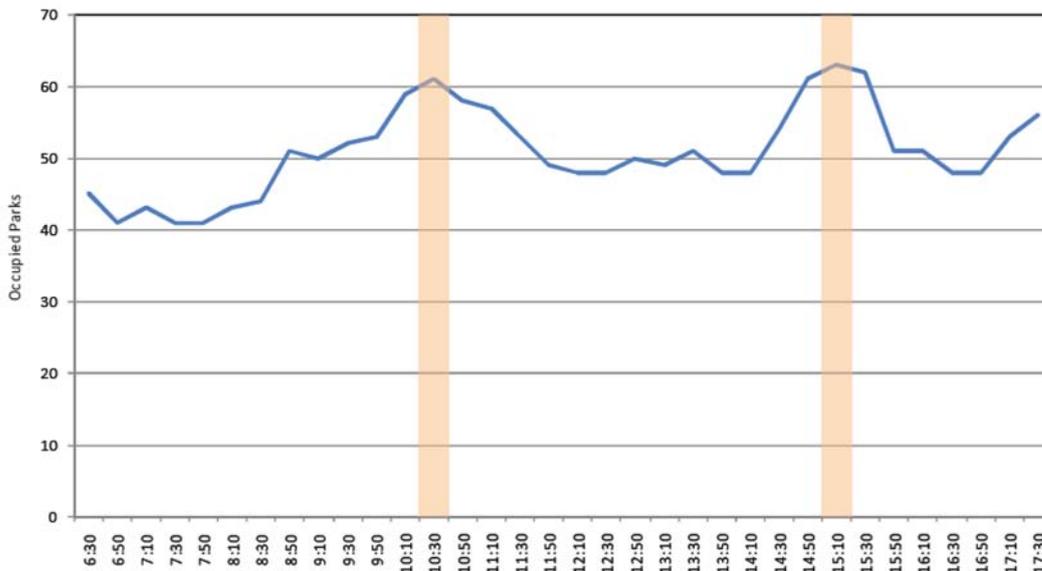


FIGURE 2: EXISTING ON-STREET PARKING - THURSDAY

Thus even with part-time bike lanes, the Corner Store Cafe has a huge amount of parking available. Council’s original claim in the Sylvan Rd petition response that “Parking demand and on-road parking stress is particularly high on Sylvan Road” could in no way be supported by the data.

The whole road needs protected bike lanes so that it is suitable for those aged 8 to 80 to ride on.

Council attitudes must improve past those of the former Chairman of Public and Active Transport who stated the lanes were “a bid to balance the competing demands of cyclist safety with parking across the city” and that “removing car parks would be detrimental to businesses”.

Apart from the cavalier attitude this demonstrates toward public safety, all available research indicates that bike lanes are in fact good for business, including the only affected business on Sylvan Road, the Corner Store Cafe. The Heart Foundation publication "Good For Business"⁶ contains more information.

BCC officers wrote in May 2015 that "based on available data, it appears that bicycle accident occurrence on Sylvan Road is trending downwards, although further updates of the DTMR WebCrash database are required to confirm the trend."

This is incorrect and was incorrect at the time of writing. Council research on this and the alleged parking “stress” has been of poor quality. Also, the crashes were not "accidents"; they were preventable incidents caused in large part by poor road design and high speed limits.

There have been at least five hospitalisations of people riding bikes hit by cars in off peak hours since the Webcrash data ended (three females on 15 May 2014, 4 August 2014, 11 June 2015, and two males on 23 February 2016 and 28 February 2016). Officers should use sources of data other than Webcrash; for instance Twitter and Queensland Ambulance Service.

Concerning cars parked outside “White Dawn” (50 Sylvan Road) there is no space in the layout for an average car plus an open door. This is not a safe situation – the car parks on the other side of the road were removed to remove the risk of “dooring” causing injury or death to people riding bikes. Could these car parks be removed as part of any review or upgrade?



Gladstone Road, Dutton Park Car Parking

In this case the situation is worse – in a Council designated “bike lane” which has been recently “upgraded” priority has been given to car parking instead of people riding bikes in a location where this is completely unnecessary (just east of Pope Street). As many heavy vehicles use this route and there is a 60 km/h speed limit this is not a safe situation. Could these four car parking spaces outside 271 Gladstone Road be removed?

⁶ <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/Good-for-business.pdf>



Metal boxes near GBB

These kiosks were opened September 2013 and the last lease ended June 2015. They have now been empty for more than 18 months⁷ and are not advertised for lease.

CBD BUG contacted Deputy Mayor Adrian Schrinner on Twitter concerning them but did not receive a reply.

⁷ <http://www.brisbanecyclist.com/forum/topics/bicentennial-bikeway-community-juice-coffee>



The building process was apparently not an open tender and it is unknown how much they cost. Is this situation going to persist and the boxes slowly degrade until they become an eyesore like the Drift Restaurant?

Can they at least be moved to Riverside Drive which is a much quieter environment than next to one of Brisbane's busiest roads?

Yeronga - 62 Stevens Street lip

I received one call from Mr Richard Welch to determine the location I was talking about. According to your letter, there was a further call to inform me that smoothing out the lip would be impossible because of drainage.⁸ This call did not occur. I refer to the location here directly in front of the camera in both photographs. As there is kerbing for drainage (right hand side of first photo) such a steep drop at this location should be unnecessary and is most inconvenient and uncomfortable here for people riding bikes. I can assure you that this section is anything but the "smooth ride for bicycles" claimed in the letter. Could this issue please be examined again?

⁸ <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/correspondence/CBD-BUG-From-LM-re-Banana-Bars-20161213.pdf>



Regards

Dr Richard Bean
Co-convenor CBD BUG
9 February 2017

Appendix

The DAS data re male/female ratios contains serious errors.

Previously the Council had claimed that 11% of observed cyclists in 2012 were female, increasing to 20% in 2014. The 2012 figure was so far below Census and BUG counts that it did not seem credible. Census figures showed that in 2011 Brisbane had the lowest percentage of female commuter cyclists of the eight Australian capital cities, around 19%, and BUG and Census figures were aligned.

The raw data has now been released and it is now clear why the figures seemed absurd. It contains serious errors in some years. The BUG has conducted 54 counts over a four year period (Jan 2012 - Sep 2016) on the Bicentennial Bikeway and Goodwill Bridge on weekdays from 7:15 to 7:55 am; the percentage of females has always been between 14% and 27% in these locations. Compared to this, one of the Bicentennial counts in the RTI data is 3% female in this period on a day in 2015; and 7% female on the Bicentennial over a whole day in 2012.

CBD BUG has 29 weekday observations from 7:15-7:55 am on the Bicentennial counting between 338 and 710 riders each time (Jan 2012 to Sep 2016).

We have 25 weekday observations from 7:15-7:55 am on the Goodwill counting between 246 and 499 riders each time (May 2012 to Nov 2014).

The CBD BUG count Bicentennial female ratio is between 15% and 27% with most values around 18%; Goodwill 14-22% average 18%.

Looking at M05 (Bicentennial) and M17 (Goodwill) in 2014 (Skyhigh) the female to total ratio is mostly ok (a bit low for Thursday on the Bicentennial).

Bicentennial

Saturday 11 October 2014: Males 1968, Females 483 – 19.7% female

Sunday 12 October 2014: Males 2361, Females 614 – 20.6% female

Thursday 16 October 2014: Males 3069, Females 436 – 12.4% female

Tuesday 14 October 2014: Males 2834, Females 477 – 14.4% female

Goodwill Bridge

Saturday 11 October 2014: Males 1953, Females 419 – 17.7% female

Sunday 12 October 2014: Males 2075, Females 711 – 25.5% female

Thursday 16 October 2014: Males 2970, Females 525 – 15.0% female

Tuesday 14 October 2014: Males 2689, Females 506 – 15.8% female

In 2015 (DAS) there seems to be some problem with the Tuesday at M05 (Bicentennial)

Bicentennial

Tuesday 13 October 2015: Males 3530, Females 217 - 5.8% female, from 7:15 to 8:00 count was 564 Males, 20 Females or 3.4% female

Thursday 15 October 2015: 22.2% female

Saturday 10 October 2015: 35.8% female

Sunday 11 October 2015: 31.5% female

Goodwill Bridge

Tuesday 13 October 2015: Males 1171, Females 411 - 26.0% with 253 “unsure of gender” figures

Thursday 15 October 2015: Males 1114, Females 369 - 24.9% with 263 “unsure of gender” figures

2013 - DAS on the Bicentennial. The female ratio is too low on all days and is not credible.

Saturday 12 October 2013: Males 1962, Female 258 – 11.6% female

Sunday 13 October 2013: Males 2175, Females 359 – 14.2% female

Thursday 17 October 2013: Males 3089, Females 323 – 9.5% female
Tuesday 15 October 2013: Males 3516, Females 474 – 11.9% female

2012 – DAS on the Bicentennial. As for other years.

Tuesday 16 October 2012: Males 1570, Females 125 – 7.4% female
Thursday 18 October 2012: Males 1427, Females 102 – 6.7% female

Appendix – Kiosks

New Stop on Brisbane's busiest bikeway
18 January, 2013

Lord Mayor Graham Quirk is forging ahead with his plan to activate Bicentennial Bikeway, with refreshment and information pods to be housed under the Coronation Drive overpass.

The Lord Mayor said construction would begin in early 2013 with three separate pods, a coffee kiosk, juice bar and information stand, and seating to be provided under a shaded rest stop area close to the Go Between Bridge.

“This is the first time Council has installed recreational facilities along a bikeway and is a wonderful example of how we can make active transport a more attractive option for residents and visitors,” Cr Quirk said.

“As Brisbane’s busiest bikeway, carrying more than 5,500 pedestrians and cyclists daily, it makes sense to activate this piece of unutilised land for more vibrant purposes,” Cr Quirk said.

“With so much existing foot traffic and some of the best views of the river, this is the perfect place to bring to life and refresh walkers, joggers, cyclists and tourists on their journey.”

The three pods are to be privately operated on a licence arrangement and are expected to be operational by mid-2013.

Cr Quirk said the project coincided with an upgrade to a section of the Bicentennial Bikeway, between Park Road and Lang Parade, Milton.

“Over the next four years we have committed a record \$120 million for Council’s Better bikeways 4 Brisbane program to upgrade Brisbane’s bikeways,” he said.

“Once the next stage of the Bicentennial Bikeway upgrade is completed these works will be an important social and cultural connection with the Brisbane River.

“Both of these projects will complement one another and will go a long way to ensuring our bikeways are both a great active travel route and recreational link.”

The Bicentennial Bikeway upgrade works begun in January 2013 and is expected to be complete in mid-2013, weather permitting.