



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 the goals of the BCC *Active Transport Strategy* 2012-2026¹ and the reported progress in the BCC *Annual Report* 2014-15.²

We congratulate Council on publishing a scorecard as part of the Annual Report. However, we

- are disappointed with the level of transparency associated with the scorecard,
- take issue with Council scoring itself and
- dispute the scores you have given yourself.

Active Transport Strategy

MODE SHARE TARGETS

The first non-introductory page of the *Active Transport Strategy*, the Vision page, on page 3 lists the "Projected share of all transport journeys in Brisbane" as follows.

2011 - 12.7% walking, 1.6% cycling
2016 - 13.3% walking, 2.5% cycling
2021 - 14.1% walking, 3.6% cycling
2026 - 15.0% walking, 5.0% cycling

It is unclear how the 2011 transport share values were measured, as the incoming Newman Queensland Government terminated the 2011 South East Queensland Transport Survey abruptly. The last complete survey was undertaken in 2009. As this is the starting point for the goal, transparency is crucial but is lacking.

- **How are these values measured?**
- **How frequently are they measured?**

The modal share target for 2016 (2.5%) will not be met. The target requires a growth rate of 11.0% annually (see Appendix). The Annual Report has stated the growth rate of cycling based on annual counts was 6.7% (2004-2014 - page 58). This reported growth rate is at odds with other published sources.

The recent "National Cycling Participation Survey"³ found the opposite of Council's figures: Cycling participation of residents in Brisbane declined from 18% in 2011 to 15.5% in 2015 (in the last week), from 26.3% in 2011 to 21.9% in 2015 (in the last month), and from **40.5% in 2011 to 34.9% in 2015**

¹ http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/active_transport_strategy_2012-2026.pdf

² http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/20150909_annual_report_2014-15_full_document.pdf

³ <https://www.onlinepublications.austroads.com.au/items/AP-C91-15>

(in the last year). This last value was a statistically significant decline, taking error bars into account. The survey report stated "the participation rate appears to have declined steadily since 2011."

Thus, for the cycling component of the strategy, to use the words of the Council *Annual Report* "Scorecard", progress should be described as "*insufficient to achieve the objective*".

- **Will Council publicly release the October 2015 cycle count data (absolute numbers, locations, growth rate, percentage of female cyclists) by the end of 2015?**
- **What new and different action will you take to ensure the growth rate increases to that required to meet your targets?**

PATHWAY NETWORK

The Active Transport Strategy states that the vision is "*a high quality, connected, accessible pathway network which will attract people of all ages to walk and cycle.*"

With respect to the "all ages" component, the CBD BUG's view is that Council is not on the right track for this, as 43% of the 262 km length of the 2011-2015 "bikeways" built was BAZ ("Bicycle Awareness Zones").

International research has shown that BAZ (or "sharrows") provide no objective safety benefit and do not attract new users.⁴ Professor Kay Teschke of the University of British Columbia stated that 'Sharrows do not encourage cycling, and therefore have no value as an addition to a "bike network"'.

The CBD BUG considers that "*high quality*" infrastructure would be that found in Technical Note 128 "Selection and Design of Cycle Tracks"⁵ published by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

The *Annual Report* states that the progress for the two objectives "Active transport to achieve more than 16% share of all journeys in Brisbane by 2018" and "Provide a well connected network of safe and continuous bikeway routes" is "On track: work is continuing as planned and budgeted".

Certainly, work is occurring as planned and budgeted; however, as stated the CBD BUG is concerned that emphasis is not being directed to objectively "safe and continuous routes".

We acknowledge that this rate of BAZ build does meet the target for 1,700 km of "bikeways" by the BCC definition as in *Brisbane Vision 2031*. In fact, at the current BAZ build rate the Council will reach the target by 2028 solely by painting BAZ.⁶

The self-report is meaningless if "well connected", "safe", and "continuous" are not objectively defined. As previously stated⁷ the CBD BUG disagrees that Brisbane has a bicycle network with length 1324.8 km versus a road network with length 5724.8 km.

The assessment would be meaningful if performed by an external agency.

For example, recently the Western Australian Auditor-General audited the cycle paths of Perth⁸, and ARRB produced the "Principal cycle network validation and ground truthing" for Queensland

⁴ <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/1970/01/0/CBD-BUG-letter-to-Trans-Minister-BAZ-20141010.pdf>

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<http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/~media/busind/techstdpubs/Technical%20notes/Traffic%20engineering/TN128.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/cbdbug/posts/884068174962558>

⁷ <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/1970/01/0/CBD-BUG-letter-to-BCC-LM-re-claimed-1100km-bikeway-20140411.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-14/perth-cycling-network-underfunded-auditor-general-finds/6853732>

Department of Transport and Main Roads.⁹

Other examples include the impressive "Protected Bicycle Lane Data Analysis" of New York City, which contained 12 pages of analysis of new protected lanes showing a decrease in crashes with injuries and an increase in bicycle traffic in each location.¹⁰

- **By what criteria are "well connected", "safe", and "continuous" judged?**
- **Who assessed the network as "on track" to be "well connected", "safe", and "continuous"?**
- **By which bicycle infrastructure building reference standard can you support this?**
- **Does Council consider that painting a yellow bike symbol on a road or designating a route "informal on-road" makes a road "safe"?**

BRISBANE BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Priority Three Action Two of the *Active Transport Strategy* is stated as: "*Complete planning for a Brisbane Bicycle Infrastructure Plan*".

The BCC *Corporate Plan 2012/13 to 2016/17* (dated January 2015)¹¹ lists one goal more emphatically as "*Complete a new Brisbane Bicycle Infrastructure plan*."

There is no reporting on this in the *Annual Report*.

It is difficult to find public information concerning this - one source is the Wilston Grange Precinct Study¹² dated April 2015, which states "A draft bicycle infrastructure plan for the Brisbane area has recently been updated by the Transport and Strategy Branch (TPS)."

There is certainly a Bicycle Network Overlay Map¹³ but we have not seen any Bicycle Infrastructure Plan as yet.

In contrast, in the city of Wellington in New Zealand, in the Cycling Framework 2015 the public can contribute to what they want to see.¹⁴

The Wellington framework outlines the:

1. *overall network plan (what we are trying to connect from where)*
2. *the types of cycleways we want to create*
3. *who we are trying to attract*
4. *the design principles for the type of cycleway we choose to use*
5. *the decision principles for how these are applied to real locations*
6. *the limits for decisions that we will make within the scope of the policy and for decisions that will require further Councillor input*

The Seattle Bicycle Master Plan of March 2015¹⁵ prioritizes five themes (Safety, Connectivity, Equity, Ridership and Livability) using scoring criteria. This is also useful for transparency purposes.

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<http://bicyclecouncil.com.au/files/research/PrincipleCycleNetworkValidationAndGroundTruthing.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2014-09-03-bicycle-path-data-analysis.pdf>

¹¹ http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/20150119-corporate_plan_2012-13_to_2016-17.pdf

¹² http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/20150430-wilston_grange_technical_report_ch1-2.pdf

¹³ <http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/planning-guidelines-tools/brisbane-city-plan-2014/city-plan-2014-mapping/bicycle-network>

¹⁴ <http://wellington.govt.nz/services/parking-and-roads/cycling/cycling-framework>

¹⁵ <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/bmp/BMPImplementationPlanMarch2015.pdf>

- **When will the Brisbane Bicycle Infrastructure Plan be ready for public release?**
- **Will the six aspects outlined in the Wellington framework be addressed in the Plan?**
- **What sort of public consultation is being undertaken in preparing the plan?**

Regards

Dr Richard Bean
Co-convenor CBD BUG
28 October 2015

Appendix

Growth rate calculation

We make the reasonable assumptions that trip growth will be proportional to population growth and that the age structure of the population has not changed significantly in the five year period.

This is based on calculation using the Brisbane LGA Population projections¹⁶ from the Queensland Government Statistician's Office.

2011 population and target: $1,089,879 * 1.6\% = 17438$

2016 projected population and target: $1,176,418 * 2.5\% = 29410$

$17438 * 1.1102^5 = 29410$

Infrastructure included in total

Brisbane City Council considers "informal on-road" (a quiet street), "bicycle route" (a road with blue and white bicycle signs on the side), "bicycle awareness zones" (BAZ – "sharrows" or yellow bike symbols on the road), "bicycle lanes" with cars parked in them etcetera to be "bikeway" infrastructure, and counts each lane or lane marking multiple times, unlike for the road length figure in the *Annual Report*.

In other jurisdictions, Denver no longer counts sharrows as bikeway infrastructure¹⁷ and others have suggested weighing reported New York City lengths by bikeway quality.¹⁸ For Brisbane City Council, even reporting the length figure broken down by infrastructure type would be an advance.

History of missed mode share targets

The 2016 missed target just adds to the long history of Council and state government missed targets as follows. It seems that no kind of historical review is ever performed as to why the targets are continually missed.

Brisbane City Council "TravelSmart - a traffic reduction strategy for Brisbane" (1995)
"Reducing the proportion of trips by private vehicles from 75% in 1992 to 60% in 2011 by increasing the public transport mode share from 8.5% to 17% and cycling from 1.5% to 8% in the same period."
Integrated Regional Transport Plan (IRTP) for South East Queensland (1997)
Increase public transport trips from 7% to 10.5% of trips, and cycling trips from 2% to 8% of trips by 2011.
Transport Plan for Brisbane 2002-2016
Increase cycling trips from 2% (2001) to 8% (2016)
Transport Plan for Brisbane 2006-2026
Increase cycling trips from 2% to 5% (2026)

¹⁶ <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/subjects/demography/population-projections/tables/proj-pop-lga-qld/index.php>

¹⁷ <http://denver.streetsblog.org/2015/06/26/bikedenver-releases-map-showing-bike-lanes-to-nowhere/>

¹⁸ <http://www.streetsblog.org/2015/09/22/dot-nyc-to-install-record-number-of-protected-bike-lanes-in-2015/>

Wellington Framework

Protected bike lanes: We will not use roundabouts on busy routes. This is in contrast to Brisbane City Council's approaches at new work on Bennetts Road and Gailey Road. The Toowong to Indooroopilly "bikeway" route was chosen with community consultation but the form was chosen without any community input.

Council approval will only be required if:

... Any key cycleway project proposal increases vehicle travel time along a route increases by more than 10% at peak times.

... car parking occupancy within 100 meters of a key cycleway is above 95% of observed residential parking demand.

... Any parking proposal results in walks of more than about 160 metres (approximately 2 minutes) compared to current provision

Again in contrast to Brisbane, there is no council approval threshold for removing commuter car parking.

The Wellington Cycling Framework is an amazingly enlightened document and we can only hope that the Brisbane City Council can adopt its planning principles.