



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

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The Honourable Campbell Newman MP
Premier of Queensland
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Dear Premier

Appropriate incorporation of cyclist needs into Master Planned Government Administrative Precinct (GAP)

I refer to your announcement of 29 May 2012 regarding the development of a Precinct Master Plan for renewing the GAP between George Street and William Street in Brisbane.

The CBD BUG has a keen interest in this project, as based on the limited details provided by government to this time this project will encompass the stretch of Bicentennial Bikeway between the Goodwill Bridge and the Victoria Bridge. This bikeway is a high volume route for commuting and recreational bike riders. Accordingly, the CBD BUG will advocate for Government to deliver appropriate outcomes for cyclists.

As a matter of policy the CBD BUG's focus with respect to the project will be to ensure that:

1. all construction or other works are conducted only after consultation with cyclists representatives including CBD BUG, to prevent negative impacts on cyclists' utilisation of the Bicentennial Bikeway and surrounding roads, and to improve active and sustainable transport outcomes; and
2. cyclists representatives including the CBD BUG are consulted during the design phase for any new and / or replacement bikeways or cyclist facilities occurring as a result of the development, to ensure new and/or replacement facilities are designed to meet the needs of bike riders.

Accordingly, the CBD BUG will look for the redevelopment to embrace key policies relating to active transport, including as a minimum the planning guidelines of the Brisbane City Council (BCC) and Queensland Government. All cycling facilities should be designed using AUSTRROADS Part 14 as a minimum standard. There are clear targets for the growth of cycling and active transport, which should be embraced for this project. These principles should be stated explicitly by the Master Plan's transport and cycling policy.

Further to this in-principle position, the CBD BUG proposes the following as essential elements need to be included in the GAP Master Plan.

End-of-trip facilities

End-of-trip (EoT) facilities are essential requirements of most cycling and some walking trips, and are known to be a major determinant of people choosing to cycle in preference instead of driving or using public transport. EoT facilities include fully secure bicycle parking; showers and changing areas; mirrors; washbasins; lockers and/or equivalent storage facilities in close proximity to users' destinations. Best practice EoT facilities also include iron and ironing board, clothes and towel drying areas or vented lockers; pump and minor bicycle repair facilities/equipment; air-conditioning and notice board. Guidelines on such facilities are readily available, but CBD BUG would be pleased to provide comment on designs, well before they are finalised.

Apart from the provision of the above EoT facilities for "long stay" cyclists, there would also be a need to provide appropriate facilities for "short stay" cyclists, such as those looking to patronise the eateries and retail outlets that occur in mixed use developments. The primary EoT facilities required by these cyclists are sheltered bike racks placed in very close proximity to the intended destination. In order to make these racks less prone to theft and more attractive to cyclists it is essential they are located in highly visible positions that are subject to passive surveillance by passers. It is worth pointing out that where designed bike racks are not available, cyclists will tend to park their bikes anywhere they consider convenient and safe.

On a final note, each building should have bike racks installed within ten metres of their major pedestrian entrances, to cater for bicycle couriers and other casual visitors arriving by bicycle.

Design of safe and convenient bikeways

The current Bicentennial Bikeway is a continuous pathway along the river under the Riverside Expressway. While this bikeway is far below current standards it does allow users to enjoy the river vista up close. This path is a major route for commuting and recreation cyclists and carries large numbers of people in both modes. This facility must be preserved at its current standard as a minimum, and preferably improved, as it is below the standards in AUSTRROADS Part 14. It should be noted this facility is essential because of the woefully inadequate capacity of Brisbane CBD streets to provide cyclists with safe passage. It should also be noted the connections from the present path to the CBD are generally of a very poor standard.

A critical concern for this bikeway is the GAP's redevelopment will likely bring many people wanting to walk and run along the river and this must be anticipated in path design. This has been observed with the Milton reach of the Bicentennial Bikeway. Extensive new commercial/residential developments and a lack of significant parks in this area have resulted in many people running and walking on the bikeway, which was previously not designed for this pedestrian traffic volume. As a result there have been conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians.

With their appropriate segregation of cyclists and pedestrians and location on the river's edge the sections of the Bicentennial Bikeway between the CBD and Toowong that have been upgraded by the BCC (with funding assistance from the Queensland Government) are viewed as an ideal template for re-application in this precinct.

Another issue that continues to occur in the construction of cyclist infrastructure has been the lack of connectivity between different projects. Regrettably, this was a prominent feature of the Kurilpa Bridge and is viewed as a factor in this river crossing's low usage level relative to other Brisbane green bridges. Without appropriate links between existing bikeways and those constructed via this project cyclists will be either deterred from using them, or needlessly exposed to additional risks as they try to bridge the gaps between the completed, but not integrated infrastructure results.

Finally, a mistake that is still too commonly made in planning new cyclist infrastructure is to provide meandering paths that include fixtures e.g. seating, art installations etc. encroaching on the path, mixtures of surface treatments that create a visually confusing environment, and inadequate segregation of cyclist and pedestrians. While these features may provide some appeal to uninformed planners they make paths too inconvenient for commuting bike riders and unnecessarily dangerous for all users.

Alternative transport

The proposed redevelopment has a strong potential to result in a large movement of workers, shoppers, residents and visitors into this precinct and will have major transport impacts. As vulnerable road users cyclists are critically interested in general transport strategies. The redevelopment must not be taken to end at its boundaries, as the impact of car-based transport goes far beyond these boundaries. The application of a sustainable transport principle is critical, including: limiting allocation of car parks for apartments, hotels and business premises; excellent facilitation and encouragement of public transport; and high profile development of active transport (walking and cycling).

Detours during construction

It is likely the current Bicentennial Bike way will need to be closed temporarily during construction. We strongly urge consultation with CBD BUG, other relevant cycling organisations and the Brisbane City Council at an early stage on this project and to plan all aspects carefully. Previous instances of slipshod planning by entities such as Energex and private contractors have resulted in needless aggravation and inconvenience for cyclists and pedestrians. There is no justification for inconveniencing legitimate users of the path. With care and good consultation, high quality detours can be provided and should be, just as they are routinely provided for people who choose to drive.

I look forward to receiving your early advice the CBD BUG will be one of the stakeholder groups involved in the process to ensure the precinct's redevelopment embraces key policies relating to alternative transport and encourages, rather than deterring cycling and cyclists.

Yours faithfully



Paul French
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Brisbane CBD BUG
/ June 2012