Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group
CBD BUG
GPO Box 2104, Brisbane 4001
convenors@cbdbug.org.au
0423 974 825
www.cbdbug.org.au

The Director
Wynnum Road Corridor Upgrade – Stage 1
City Projects Office
Brisbane City Council
GPO Box 1434
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Sir or Madam

This submission details the CBD BUG's views on Brisbane City Council's proposed Wynnum Road Corridor Upgrade Stage 1.

In-principle opposition to this road expansion project

The CBD BUG strongly opposes Council's proposal to spend $115M of Brisbane ratepayers' money to widen from four to six lanes the 750 metre stretch of Wynnum Road between Latrobe St and the Canning Bridge.

Increasing Brisbane's road network to attempt to address traffic congestion is just throwing more good money after bad. This is a 1960's approach that has not worked anywhere else in the world - and it will not work here.

At best, this road capacity expansion project will only provide short term relief for people driving motor vehicles. Increasing the capacity of this short stretch of Wynnum Road will simply feed motor vehicles at a more rapid rate during the peak travel periods on to other nearby arterials. Such road network expansions don't make traffic congestions disappear; they only push the traffic along to the next bottleneck further down the road while increasing private car use through the perception of better roads.

A nearby example of this result is Stanley St. Over recent years the CBD BUG has observed how successive changes to Stanley St e.g. converting the in-bound left hand lane at the intersection with Annerley Rd from a "left-turn only" lane into a "through lane"; and between Annerley Rd and Dock St creating a third in-bound lane, have been implemented with the objective of increasing this thoroughfare's capacity to carry motor vehicles. Each of these has created a traffic environment that is more hostile to people riding bicycles. Despite these changes Stanley St in-bound continues to be gridlocked during the peak periods. At the same time along this same corridor motorist rat-running has also persisted, with the result that people riding bicycle along Stanley St and surrounding local streets are now exposed to increased risk from motorists.

This result was totally predictable.

There is a large body of evidence showing that expanding the road network to try and address traffic congestion attributable to excessive use of single occupant vehicles is futile because of induced demand. The following references are only a small sample of the most recent articles emerging from this body of work.

"Our empirical results indicate that network capacity expansions can cause substantial increases in aggregate urban traffic volumes such that even major capacity increases can actually lead to little or no reduction in network traffic densities. This result has important implications for optimal urban transportation strategies."[1]

"We investigate the effect of lane kilometers of roads on vehicle-kilometers traveled (VKT) in US cities. VKT increases proportionately to roadway lane kilometers for interstate highways and probably slightly less rapidly for other types of roads. The sources for this extra VKT are increases in driving by current residents, increases in commercial traffic, and migration. Increasing lane kilometers for one type of road diverts little traffic from other types of road. We find no evidence that the provision of public transportation affects VKT. We conclude that increased provision of roads or public transit is unlikely to relieve congestion."[2]

"Although the phenomenon of induced traffic has been theorized for more than 60 years and is now widely accepted among transport researchers, the traffic-generating effects of road capacity expansion are still often neglected in transport modelling. Such omission can lead to serious bias in the assessments of environmental impacts as well as the economic viability of proposed road projects, especially in situations where there is a latent demand for more road capacity."[3]

It has been realised in many jurisdictions around the world that trying to building your way out of traffic congestion is expensive futility as the expansion of road capacity simply induces more increases in traffic. Brisbane is no different to other cities around the world.

The CBD BUG also questions BCC's decision to spend $115 million to facilitate the car-based travel behaviour of the relatively small number of people who drive along this section of Wynnum Rd during the morning (7-9am) and evening (4-7pm) peak travel periods. According to BCC's most recent Key Corridors Performance Report (July-December 2014), the 10.5km length of Wynnum Rd carries a daily average of 39,063 vehicles. However, on average only 13,109 (33.6%) of these vehicles use this corridor during the five hours in total that comprises the morning and evening peak travel periods.

As the Wynnum Rd motor vehicle traffic typically flows freely outside of these hours there will be little if any benefit from this expenditure for the majority of each day and for the majority of Wynnum Rd users. Furthermore, during school holidays, public holidays and weekends, which during 2015 comprise 46.3% (169 days) of the calendar year, traffic also generally flows freely during the peak travel periods.

---

1 *Quantifying Causal Effects of Road Network Capacity Expansions on Traffic Volume and Density via a Mixed Model Propensity Score Estimator*. Daniel J. Graham, Emma J. McCoy & David A. Stephens. pages 1440-1449. Journal of the American Statistical Association Volume 109, Issue 508, 2014.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01621459.2014.956871#.VSteM1O4ZdJ

2 *The Fundamental Law of Road Congestion: Evidence from US Cities*. Duranton, G. and Turner, M. A. American Economic Review 101 (October 2011): 2616–2652
http://arts.ademloos.be/sites/default/files/meccano_docs/The_Fundamental_Law_of_Road_Congestion_Evidence_from_US_Cities.pdf

3 *Traffic forecasts ignoring induced demand : a shaky fundament for cost-benefit analyses*. Næss, P., Nicolaisen, M. S., & Strand, A.. European Journal of Transport and Infrastructure Research, 2012(3), 291-309.
http://forskningsbasen.deff.dk/Share.external?sp=S18f4c9f9-934d-42c7-b640-0056d9e7ec9e&sp=Saau

On the basis of the likely poor return on investment from this road capacity expansion project the CBD BUG suggests the $115 million BCC has announced it will spend widening this 750 metre section of Wynnum Rd will be far better spent on delivering the long awaited cyclist and pedestrian bridge connecting Bulimba/Hawthorne and New Farm/Teneriffe. The proposal is made in the context of the UK Department for Transport finding that investing in cycling brings huge economic, social and health benefits, with some cycling schemes have a benefit-to-cost ratio of up to 35 to 1.

CBD BUG requests that you disclose the benefit-to-cost ratio of this project. If less than one, we request details of the reasons you see fit to proceed with the project.

The CBD BUG has noted in the Wynnum Rd upgrade project documents, recently obtained from BCC via the Right to Information process, that buses are currently delayed in the traffic congestion along Wynnum Rd. The CBD BUG is a strong supporter of BCC enhancing public transport as a sustainable alternative to travel by private motor vehicles. Therefore, the CBD BUG proposes that should this road capacity expansion project proceed the new, additional lanes created through this project should be dedicated bus lanes during the morning and evening peak travel periods. By allowing buses sole use of this road space during the peak travel periods would reduce the delays experienced by public transport users and provide an additional incentive for people to switch to this mode from driving their cars.

<u>Specific comments on published concept design</u>

Prioritisation for bicycle riders

Map 8 of the SEQ Principal Cycle Network shows this section of Wynnum Rd as a "Future Principal Route". (http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Projects/Name/S/South-East-Queensland-Principal-Cycle-Network-Plan.aspx). As part of the Brisbane City Centre Master Plan 2014, Council has proposed a “green” bridge connecting Kangaroo Point and the CBD. This will significantly cut the cycling time and distance from the Bulimba peninsular to the CBD. On this basis CBD BUG sees a clear case for providing a fully separated cycle track as part of this project.

With the large number of crashes and close calls between people riding bicycles on the footpath and motorists entering/exiting premises along Wynnum Rd there is a clear need to ensure that conditions for people who cycle (and walk) along and across this corridor are dramatically improved. The information provided so far offers little detail of what is being proposed in relation to active transport outcomes.

People wanting to ride bikes to the CBD, Fortitude Valley and inner northern region from many of Brisbane’s eastern suburbs currently have very few options other than use the Wynnum Road corridor. However, Brisbane City Council’s hitherto failure to provide safe access for people riding bikes along this corridor has been evident in the large number of crashes between bicycle riders using the Wynnum Rd footpath and pedestrian and motorists entering/exiting Wynnum Rd properties.

Evidence for the poor state of infrastructure suitable for people riding bicycles is shown in the 2011 census journey to work data. Of the suburbs a similar distance from the CBD, Hawthorne, Balmoral and Bulimba have among the lowest cycling mode share at around 2.5%. While better that the whole of Brisbane, the average for the rest of those inner city suburbs is 4.8% with West End at 8.6%.

Therefore, it is major omission by BCC that the concept design for this project does not indicate improvements to the cycling (and walking) facilities along the corridor. Accordingly, BCC needs to entirely review this design to appropriately incorporate the needs of people who ride bikes (and walk). The CBD BUG's position on this project is that it must include dedicated facilities for walking and cycling that are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic and are of a standard that will encourage and accommodate future growth (Council’s stated aim). The

CDB BUG proposes that as Wynnum Rd is one of the principal cycling routes for eastern suburb residents it should be upgraded to a standard equal to the upgraded sections of the Bicentennial Bikeway at Toowong and Milton.

Not including space provision for a facility of this scope is effectively excluding it for the foreseeable future.

Urban Amenity Issues

CBD BUG would also like to highlight that the current reference design and cross section do not appear to factor in the space required to incorporate elements that will support a high standard of urban amenity - including wayfinding signage, large street trees, landscaping and street furniture, not to mention public transport infrastructure like bus stops - that would be expected as part of an upgrade of this expense and scale.

It is hard to see how these types of elements will be accommodated into a 3.75m reserve without compromising the provision of quality walking and cycling facilities. Creating a public realm where people feel safe, secure and welcome is vital in encouraging more people to walk and cycle as well as curtailing the visual and physical impacts of six traffic lanes through an inner urban area. It is critical that the reference design and cross section acknowledge the space required to achieve this.

Norman Creek Bridge

The CBD BUG commends BCC for constructing the Norman Creek Bridge to link Heath Park, East Brisbane to Norman Ave, Norman Park. However, this link in no way replaces the function of Wynnum Rd for people riding bikes, nor the need to provide appropriate cycling infrastructure along Wynnum Road east of the Heidelberg St intersection.

Heidelberg St Intersection

The redesign of the Heidelberg St intersection will be critical in determining the effectiveness of the Norman Creek Bridge link. The redesign of the Heidelberg St intersection - including signal phasing and crossing times - must ensure that the needs of people walking and cycling are fully considered. Given the scope of the works, it is appropriate that protected cycletracks are provided as set out in Transport and Main Roads recently updated Technical Note TN128 Selection and Design of Cycle Tracks

Laidlaw Pde Intersection

CBD BUG commends the proposed closure of Laidlaw Pde at its intersection with Lytton Rd as this will greatly improve the safety of cyclists entering and exiting Laidlaw Pde. The new signalised intersection that is proposed west of Laidlaw Pde along Lytton Rd is also strongly supported as it will significantly improve the accessibility and safety for people wanting to cross Lytton Rd in this area.

In closing I want to reiterate the importance the cycling community places on the Wynnum Rd Corridor as being the primary upper east side route for people riding bikes to and from the CBD and surrounds. I cannot stress enough the need for Council to provide high quality dedicated walking and cycling facilities - which are separated from motorised traffic - in the current and future upgrades. To that end the CBD BUG is very keen to work constructively with BCC to ensure the best possible active transport outcomes are achieved. I remind you that Council is committed to increasing the number and proportion of people cycling for transport. The current rate of growth is insufficient to meet the targets have set out in the Transport Plan for Brisbane.

The CBD BUG would appreciate the opportunity to meet with project team members prior to the final concept design being publically released to discuss the project further.

Yours faithfully

Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
20 May 2015