



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Dear Sir or Madam

Have your say - Creating healthy and active communities

This submission provides the views of the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) on the proposed new Queensland model code for neighbourhood design.

As background to this submission, the Brisbane CBD BUG is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 800 members, representing the interests of the very large number of people riding bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre. We are active in seeking policy decisions at all levels of government supporting people who want to cycle, and in particular relating to improved infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities, integration of cycling needs with other transport modes and a regulatory environment friendly towards people riding bikes. CBD BUG members meet monthly to exchange information and ideas, discuss issues of relevance and determine the direction of policies to benefit CBD cyclists.

While the CBD BUG focuses on issues affecting people riding bikes, we also strongly support initiatives enabling people to: 1) walk more, and 2) utilise public transport more often.

CBD BUG members see many positive aspects in this new code and commend the Queensland Government for taking this step to improve the health of residents through making suburbs more walkable and providing better connectivity for people walking. We are pleased to note this code will also support the increased usage of bicycle riding for transport.

Elements of this proposed new code CBD BUG members particularly appreciate are that neighbourhoods:

- be structured on grid-like street networks
- footpaths complemented by street trees on both sides of most streets
- street blocks no longer than 130m with longer blocks having mid-block pedestrian breaks, and
- parks and open spaces within comfortable walking distance of every dwelling.

The CBD BUG also strongly supports provision of footpaths with a minimum width of 1.5 metres, as the current narrow widths required by local councils (typically between 900mm to 1.2 metres) are too narrow for people passing in opposite directions to remain on the sealed path.

However, to enable this new code to fully deliver the expected benefits to the community - all elements of this new code must be made mandatory.

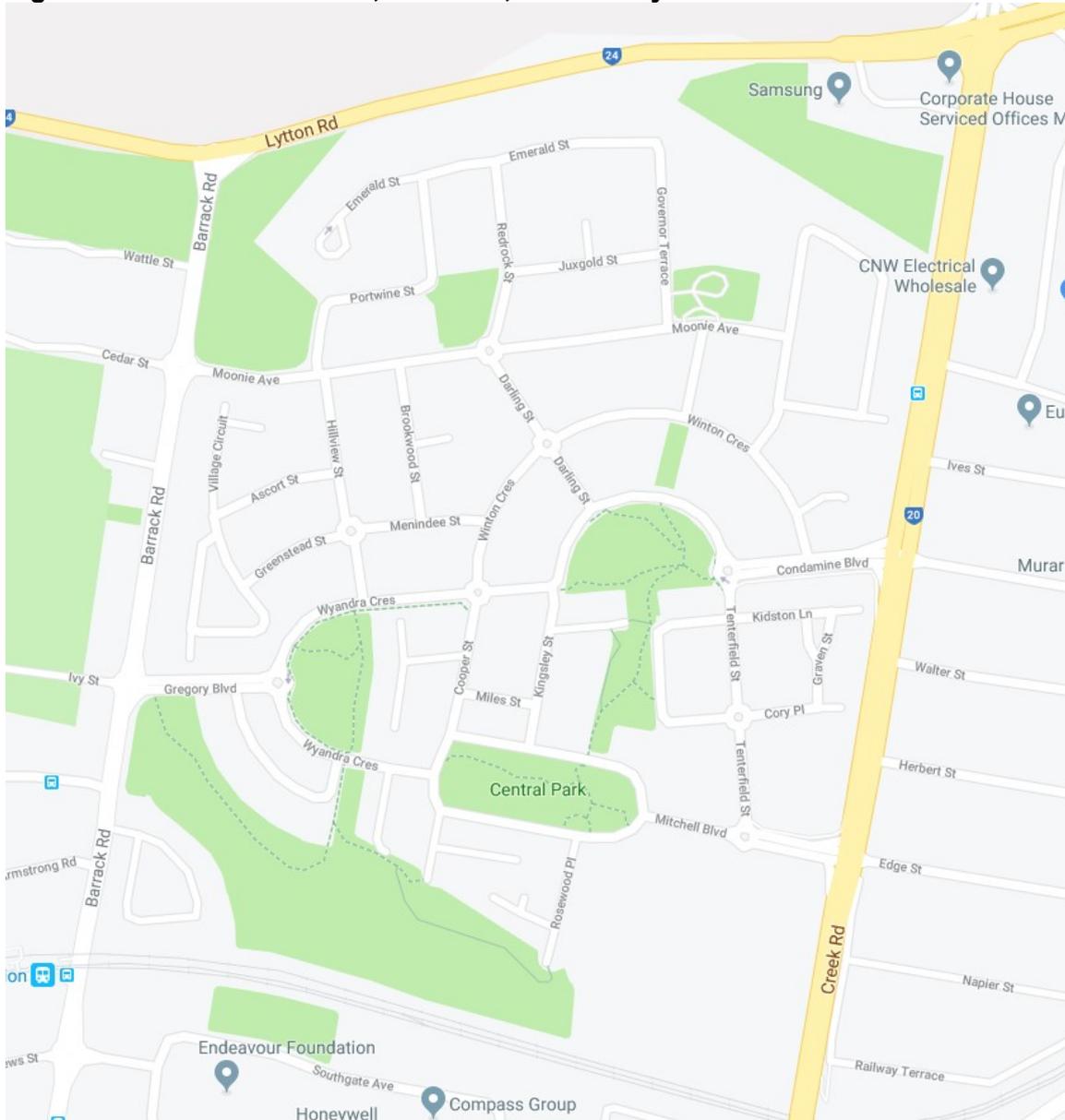
A key reason underpinning this view is that Queensland's development code in relation to private dwellings places very few requirements on property developers. It is not unexpected that short term

profitability is generally the focus of property developers, which results in the longer term social, health, environmental and economic costs having to be met by the community. Sadly, the property development sector's claims to be delivering cheaper housing do not eventuate, as the many financial (e.g. higher motor vehicle operating expenses) and non-financial (e.g. poorer health status) costs of badly designed new suburbs then fall on the community and the various levels of government.

At the more granular level, the CBD BUG would point to the high desirability for as many cul-de-sacs as possible to be installed in new developments – because of their ability to exclude 100% of through-driving motorists. Rat running motorists who use otherwise quiet back streets as shortcuts endanger local residents. This rat running makes streets unpleasant for locals and forces them to stay in their homes and back yards. In contrast, as cul-de sacs experience low levels of traffic children can play on the street while their parents watch on, this facilitates neighbours meeting each other and builds a community. In this manner streets will focus on people "being" rather than "going".

Further to this agenda, at the whole-of-suburb level there is another approach to protecting suburbs and their residents from the dangers and loss of amenity caused by rat-running motorists that needs to also be incorporated into this new code. This involves limiting the number of access/egress points for motorists. A prime example of this approach is provided in Figure 1 below, showing a section of the suburb of Murarrie on Brisbane's southside.

Figure 1: Suburb of Murarrie, Brisbane, south of Lytton Rd and west of Creek Rd



This example shows how precincts can be designed to make them unattractive for motorists to use as a through-route – in this case to travel between Creek Rd, Lytton Rd and/or Barrack Rd. However, had this precinct been designed to a grid plan with many local streets allowing direct access for motorists to/from the major surrounding roads, this would have facilitated the widespread rat-running that occurs widely across Brisbane today as motorists try to avoid busy roads and congested intersections.

Another important element missing from the current draft code is the requirement for new segregated cycling infrastructure.

In greenfield developments the installation of this infrastructure is much easier than in established suburbs and needs to be made mandatory to avoid one-off opportunities being missed.

An example of the approach that should be applied is available in the Caloundra South Priority Development Area. Here Economic Development Queensland worked with the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the developer (Stockland) and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to incorporate separated cycle tracks as a key feature throughout the entire development, which will ultimately be home to approximately 50,000 people.

The cycle tracks are bicycle-only facilities that provide priority at intersections and complete separation from the vehicle lanes and pedestrians, creating a safer ride for cyclists and a better traffic flow. In this instance the developer was keen to introduce these cycle tracks as they were able to save money through the provision of narrower roads that allowed incorporation of these cycle tracks.

As a result, the residents and visitors of this community now have the option to jump on their bike and ride safely to services, shops, work and community spaces - saving them money, improving their health and helping the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this proposed new development code.

Yours faithfully



Paul French
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Brisbane CBD BUG
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Cc: Bicycle Queensland
Space4Cycling Brisbane