



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Mr Adam Flaskas
Director
Howard Smith Wharves
5 Boundary St
BRISBANE CITY QLD 4000

Via email to: contact@hswco.com

Dear Mr Flaskas

I refer to your letter dated 12 September 2019 responding to the negative issues the Brisbane CBD BUG has sought to have addressed in relation to the shared path through the Howard Smith Wharves (HSW) precinct.

As background for you the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (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 highly 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.

The CBD BUG always encourages people riding bicycles to travel in a responsible manner to maintain the safety of all path users and that of the other people who may also be in the vicinity e.g. service personnel. However, the CBD BUG has observed that due to the path poor design provided "personnel space" is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve between user groups.

We note the statement in your correspondence that "since opening in late 2018, the river's edge at Howard Smith Wharves has become publicly accessible for the very first time". However, this overlooks the fact that the community has enjoyed access to the river all the way from the central business district to New Farm since the RiverWalk floating walkway was completed in 2003.

This connection through the HSW precinct will for the foreseeable future continue to play a critical role as an off-road commuter and recreational path for cyclists and pedestrians travelling between the CBD and Brisbane's inner north eastern suburbs.

We are certainly thankful for the recent modifications to this path by the HSW group, as the new bitumen surface has been a very much needed improvement from the loose surface initially installed.

However, the speed platforms also now in place appear to be a yet another approach that does not align with the recommended treatment for managing the speeds of cyclists according to the Department of Transport and Main Roads *Technical Note 130 Speed management on shared paths* (November 2014) (Source: <https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/-/media/busind/techstdpubs/Technical-notes/Traffic-engineering/TN130.pdf?la=en>).

Furthermore, as far as we are aware these speed platforms do not align with the recommendations for provision of accessible footpaths (Source: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/frequently-asked-questions-access-premises#footpath>).

Our members have also now raised concerns about the bollards recently installed in the vicinity of the elevator connecting the HSW precinct with Bowen terrace. Our assessment is that the positioning of these bollards is another non-standard approach intended to slow down people riding bicycles, as motor vehicles are already prevented from reaching this location by another physical barrier. Our assessment is also that the low height of these bollards has created another crash hazard for bicycle riders, as they can be easily obscured by people waiting for the lift and thus further expose HSW to the potential of a compensation claim. (Source: <https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/-/media/busind/techstdpubs/Traffic-management/Traffic-and-Road-Use-Management-manual-TRUM/Volume-1/Volume1Part6.pdf?la=en> 4.1 Crash risks with physical barriers)

We also note your statement that HSW “has worked with industry leading experts to deliver the shared pathway, which complies with all relevant standards”. Sadly though, in our view the HSW path does not comply with AustRoads “Guide to Road Design part 6A: Pedestrian & Cyclist Path” (2009). While not a mandatory standard it is certainly a “relevant” document when providing a shared path (Figure 1).

The ongoing installation of non-compliant, sub-standard and even dangerous infrastructure raises serious questions about the quality of the advice HSW has been receiving.

We acknowledge that HSW did meet with the CBD BUG in mid-2015 with the CBD BUG providing feedback directly to HSW (Figures 2, 3 and 4). It was clearly conveyed in this correspondence that the following four key elements needed to be addressed when constructing the path:

1. Segregation of pedestrians and cyclists
2. Designed to cater also for bicycle commuters
3. Direct / straight path alignment, and
4. Clear lines of sight.

Considering the path constructed you can appreciate our perspective that HSW’s consultation / engagement with community members and grassroots advocacy groups has not been meaningful. The lack of a safe path through this precinct for all users is frustrating and disappointing for us.

We suggest that for HSW to avoid further, unnecessary expense on unsafe path changes, the negative media attention these changes attract and the resulting HSW brand damage, it is in your interests to deliver a safe path.

The CBD BUG has a record stretching back almost 15 years of providing constructive input for the planning of urban infrastructure projects impacting upon bicycle riders. We would welcome a face to face meeting to discuss how this path can be rectified to achieve compliance with Queensland and Australian minimums.

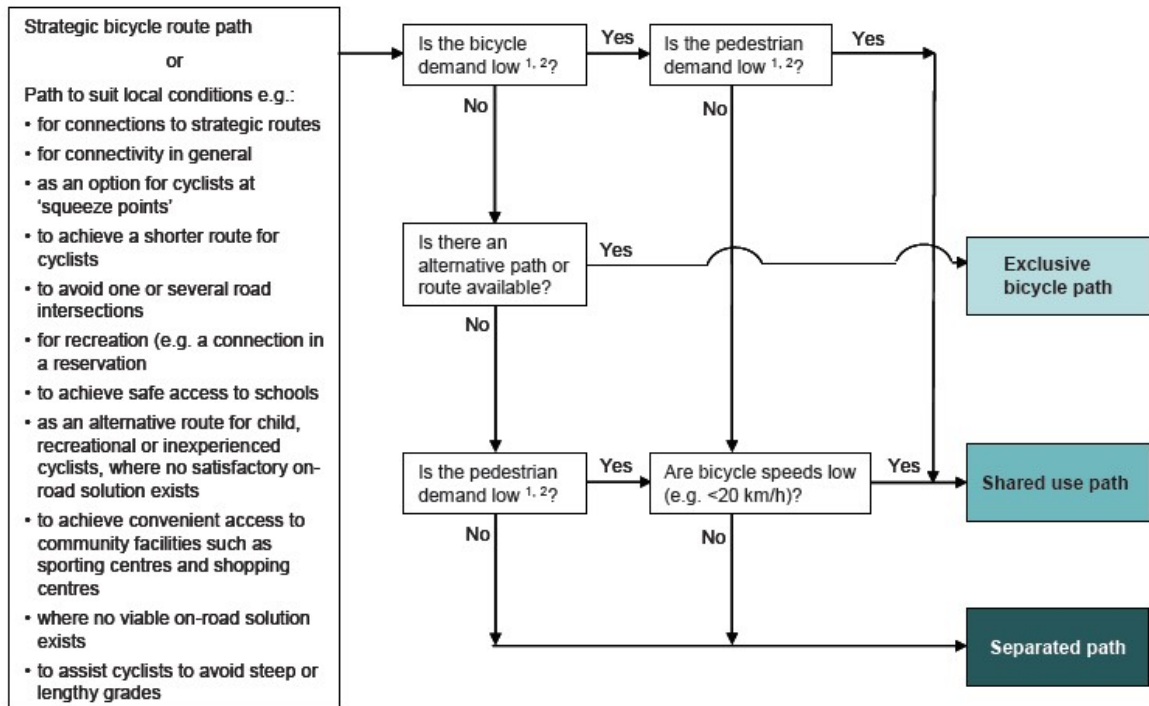
Yours sincerely



Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
16 September 2019

Cc: Cr Vicki Howard Central Ward
Grace Grace MP McConnell
Hon. Coralee O’Rourke Minister for Disability Services & Seniors
Space4Cycling Brisbane
Bicycle Queensland

Figure 1 – Guideline for shared or segregated paths



Notes:

1. The level of demand can be assessed generally on the basis of the peak periods of a typical day as follows:

- a. Low demand: Infrequent use of path (say less than 10 users per hour)
- b. High demand: Regular use in both directions of travel (say more than 50 users per hour).

2. These path volumes are suggested in order to limit the incidence of conflict between users, and are significantly lower than the capacity of the principal path types.

Source: Austroads (1999)

Figure 2.1: Guide to the choice of path treatment for cyclists

Figure 2



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Howard Smith Wharves Redevelopment

Dear Luke Fraser

This letter formally conveys the views of the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) on the essential characteristics of the proposed cycling corridor through the proposed Howard Smith Wharves Redevelopment.

In line with previous CBD BUG submissions regarding proposed projects we are limiting our comments to issues directly affecting cyclists.

The CBD BUG actively called for Brisbane City Council in replacing former floating Riverwalk that previously provided an essential connection between the CBD to New Farm for cyclists and pedestrians. As such overall the CBD BUG has been pleased with its replacement but is concerned that with how the proposed Howard Smith Redevelopment may affect people riding bikes between New Farm and the City.

Before the 2011 floods that washed away the former Floating Walkway over 3,000 pedestrian/cycle movements were traveling through the Howard Smith Wharves precinct and as such due to it being a shared area there were signs of design issues. The CBD BUG would like to also point to the fact that the cycling corridor through the Howard Smith Wharfs development is included in the South East Queensland Principal Cycle Network.

The following factors have been identified by the CBD BUG in this regard to increase the amenity for cycling

1. Segregation – As a shared facility the current path is less than ideal due to the potential for conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists, particularly during the peak travel periods. The CBD BUG welcomes the indication that the new facility will be segregated in a similar manner to the recently constructed Riverwalk. It is suggested that due to traffic volumes the minimum cycling path width of 3.5m be designed for. For further detail see Figure 1 and Figure 2
2. Designed for commuters – While the current function of the Howard Smith Precinct is as an area to travel through the CBD BUG completely understands the desire to turn it into a destination in itself. However the precinct will continue to be an area that commuters will travel through highlighted by being in the SEQ principal cycle network. In that sense the new path primarily needs to meet the needs of people travelling to and from their regular work and study destinations. Segregating cyclists and pedestrians goes a long way towards achieving that outcome.

Advocacy

Advice

Action

Figure 3

3. Direct/Straight path alignment – The CBD BUG strongly urges that any unnecessary curvature of the path should be avoided and any required bends be as gentle as possible. Bends encourage both cyclists and pedestrians to cut corners, creating unnecessary conflicts. Curvature may be used to move the path away from areas of high activity, but should not be used for 'traffic calming' or purely aesthetic reasons.
4. Clear lines of sight – For user safety clear lines of vision are essential to reduce the chance of conflict occurring. On that basis the CBD BUG prefers straight paths, rather than curving paths, as well as foliage that do not obscure the view forward.
5. Ability to be used during Heavy Downpours – Some of Brisbane's busiest bikeways are regularly being submerged by flood and/or storm-water. Since reopening in September 2014 Howard Smith Wharves' current path has been submerged by storm-water on a frequent basis. It is hoped that this issue will be resolved.

The CBD BUG is aware of concerns within the Howard Smith Wharves regarding the potential for some cyclists to travel at 'excessive' speeds. The CBD BUG wishes to stress that hard built environment treatments of unnecessary bends and pinch points should be avoided. As well signage with speed limits and "Slow Down" should be avoided; both treatments lead to conflict and negative perceptions. Preferable options include soft landscaping and changed surface textures & patterns as discussed previously in person.

The Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads Technical Note 130 - Speed Management on shared paths (November 2014) contains similar guidance on this issue. Section 2.1 states, 'Counter data shows that the average speed of each facility at peak times approximates a reasonable design speed for each location. It is therefore posed that the cycling community is able to self-moderate speeds that are appropriate to the location.' It then uses strong language on the issue of speed regulation, 'There is no defensible justification for imposing regulatory speed limits on shared paths.'

In closing, the Howard Smith Wharves currently carries over 3000 pedestrian and cycle movements through it each day. This will only increase into the future and it essential that cycle movements are well designed for to avoid the mistakes that were done at Southbank. With the corridor also being listed in the South East Queensland Principal Cycle Network the Queensland Government itself expects patronage through the area to also increase

Yours faithfully



Donald Campbell
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
2 July 2015

CC Brisbane Lord Mayor
Brisbane Central Councillor
State Member for Brisbane

Graham Quirk
Vicki Howard
Grace Grace

Figure 4

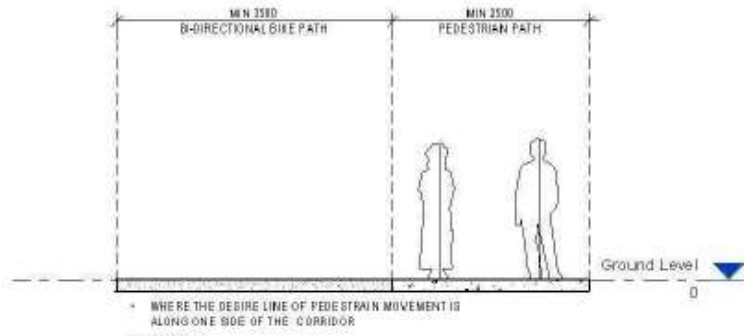


FIGURE 1

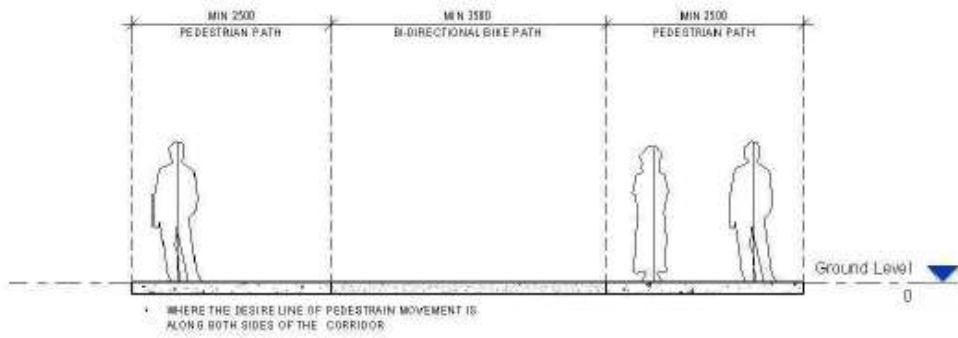


FIGURE 2