



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

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The Director
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Via email to: greenbridges@brisbane.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam

Brisbane CBD BUG submission on Toowong/West End and St Lucia/West End Green Bridges

We applaud Council for progressing these important new pieces of active transport infrastructure. We point out that these assets are likely to be part of the city for more than 100 years, but the corridor will likely be preserved in perpetuity. Getting the right outcome will ease the way for the next green bridge. The wrong outcome will condemn it.

Our comments that follow on these two individual projects focus primarily on the outcomes for people cycling.

West End/Toowong Green Bridge

The very close proximity of the locations of the current options for this bridge suggests there are only marginal differences in the resulting benefits and accordingly, our preferences from among these options are not strongly held.

For this connection we prefer Option A.

Option A is preferred as it provides the most gentle bridge gradient suiting all users and the most direct connections at the Toowong end to other cycling and walking paths.

However, it is also recognised Option B offers a more direct connection into the commercial and transport hub at Toowong Village. Additionally, this option is indicated in the patronage forecasts to likely benefit the greatest number of people.

Option B also offers a slightly safer intersection on the West End side as it is mid-block with fewer potential distractions.

West End/St Lucia Green Bridge

Some of the community's questioning of the need for this bridge has suggested a ferry service may be a better alternative. This is a misguided notion as Brisbane ferries do not operate 24/7, and even when operating as a cross-river service would be highly unlikely to deliver the same efficiency for users as a bridge.

The University of Queensland (UQ) (along with the Brisbane Airport) is one of the largest trip generators outside of the Brisbane CBD. A new bridge between West End and Toowong will greatly improve active transport usage between not only West End and UQ, but also between UQ and the CBD. The currently routes used by people making these trips involves circuitous paths, unfriendly roads, poor connections and hilly topography hindering people wanting to travel by bicycle and other active travel modes between UQ, West End and the CBD. Accordingly, the CBD BUG views this bridge as being as essential as the West End to Toowong connection.

We support, in order of preference: Option A (strongly), Option C and Option B.

We consider Option A far superior to Options B and C in providing the best outcomes for people walking and cycling. This is obviously indicated by the projected patronage numbers for Option A being two thirds greater than the next most patronised - Option C, and more than twice that of Option B. This option allows for a much more convenient two-bridge connection from the Bicentennial Bikeway (discussed later).

For the West End landing, Option A offers much better cycling connections to the more densely populated corridor between Riverside Dr and Montague Rd, as well as reasonable grades to the commercial centre of West End via Hardgrave St.

We note there has been some opposition to Option A by a vocal minority concerned about the potential impacts to Guyatt Park. Our responses to their claims and similar concerns expressed about the landing at Orleigh Park follow in italics.

- Children from the nearby playground being put at risk by fast moving cyclists.
 - *The claim about risk from passing cyclists to children playing in this park is overblown, with an observational study of more than 4,500 cyclists performed by CARRS-Q at six Brisbane CBD locations showing only 1.7% of cyclists were involved in conflict, either with a pedestrian or motor vehicle, and no collisions were observed .*
[\(https://eprints.qut.edu.au/79101/\)](https://eprints.qut.edu.au/79101/)
 - *A barrier could be installed to prevent children from straying from the playground in the direction of cyclist traffic. One existing example of this treatment is in the Shaftesbury Street Park, Tarragindi.*
 - *We would hope, if Option A were selected, Council would take the opportunity to redesign all of Guyatt Park to accommodate the bridge in the most sensitive manner and encourage more people to use the park. As part of this redesign, the playground (although relatively new) could be relocated within Guyatt Park.*
- Loss of green space due to the landing.
 - *Much of the green space in Guyatt Park is currently under-utilised. The area fronting Macquarie St currently offers very little encouragement for people to linger, and the area close to the river to the east of the CityCat pontoon has very poor sight lines to the river.*
 - *Macquarie St is quite wide with cars permitted to park on both sides, and there is a carpark with capacity for over 30 cars closer to Sir Fred Schonell Dr. We would encourage Council to consider trading some of this “black space” to compensate for the loss of green space resulting from the project.*
 - *The existing CityCycle station will also soon be redundant and could be reallocated for a small amount of green space.*
 - *Council should consider green offsets nearby to compensate for the green space that will be lost.*
- Increased commuter and cyclist traffic in recreational areas.
 - *We understand the concept of the bridge is to encourage more people to ride bicycles (and walk), thereby reducing the amount of motor vehicle traffic.*
 - *With appropriate design it is possible to safely separate cyclists from recreational users of the park. There are numerous good examples of this in Brisbane, and a number of poor examples from which to draw lessons.*

- *The number of people currently cycling through the park seems to have been overlooked by the opponents of Option A. If Option B or C is chosen, many people will continue to cycle through the park. Under Option A, fewer people will cycle between Hiron St and Macquarie St as their route choices have increased.*
- *The alternative to installing this bridge is continuing traffic congestion and car parking pressure in St Lucia, with the associated negative lifestyle and economic consequences for local residents and businesses.*
- Duplication of the cross-river CityCat.
 - CityCat services are not “on demand”, and do not run 24/7. In contrast, people will be able to cross the river via this bridge whenever they please.

Further, we have several other concerns regarding the impression given to people about the impacts on Guyatt Park:

- The concept images showing large areas of hard paving at the landing in St Lucia is indicative of the amount of green space that will be lost under Option A. Our view is that more sensitive design of the landing location will not need to have such a significant impact. The Goodwill Bridge landing at South Bank accommodates many thousands of pedestrians and cyclists daily with a much smaller footprint than shown in the architectural renderings.
- The aerial image of Option A shown in the November 2020 paper foldout Project Update is misleading in that it shows a spiral on both the West End and St Lucia sides of the river. The more detailed images on the website show the spiral is only required on the West End side. Our concern is that people who only see this image and are worried about the loss of green space in Guyatt will be needlessly alarmed about the scope of the impact on the park.
- Patronage forecasts for Option A (and to a lesser extent Option B) may not consider the potential for people to make a two-bridge crossing when travelling between St Lucia and the Bicentennial Bikeway. This will offer a more direct, flatter, and safer route, avoiding a number of traffic signal delays and the crash prone intersection of Sandford St and Brisbane St. It will also significantly reduce the risk from vehicles exiting driveways as the entire route on the West End side is adjacent Orleigh Park. The two-bridge connection will relieve any longer-term pressure to provide a Riverwalk “in-river” solution to connect Macquarie St to Toowong.
- We would also question if the patronage projections take into account a shift in traffic volumes from the Bicentennial Bikeway (e.g., for people commuting between the CBD and UQ and for people enjoying the recreational “River Loop” cycling route) while the potential for multi-bridge Park Run circuits also appears to not have been considered.
- The option of a landing at Laurence St has not been fully explored. A Laurence St landing will remove all the community objections regarding loss of green space in Guyatt Park, while retaining all the active transport advantages of Option A. The following reasons for rejecting Laurence St were offered by project staff at community consultations. Our responses are italicised:
 - *impact on the heritage listed ferry shelter. This could be relocated closely nearby, with very little loss of heritage value.*
 - *Greater risk to people walking and cycling due to driveways along Laurence St. There are five driveways on Laurence St. Exposure along here, while less than that through Guyatt Park, will be much less than already currently experienced along Macquarie St. The tiny increase in risk exposure should be considered in the context of the entire walking and cycling journey people will be making.*
 - *Ferry manoeuvring requirements. We note the proposed landing is much closer to Guyatt Park ferry pontoon than Laurence St. Project staff were unable to explain in detail the added burden that a Laurence St landing will place on ferry operators.*
 - *Relative level of the landing pad. There is very little difference between the level of this site and the indicative landing site in Guyatt Park.*
 - *Laurence St also offers better connections to the bus services along Sir Fred Schonell Dr.*

Option B is the least attractive (as reflected in the patronage projections). It does not connect well into the network in West End. The route from the Ryan St landing to Hardgrave Rd is circuitous and steep northbound, with a difficult and hidden turn east onto Ganges St. Southbound. The turn from

Ganges St to Lower Hardgrave Rd is banned, so connecting from Hardgrave Rd to the Bridge will again be circuitous and inconvenient. The two-bridge connection between Macquarie St and the Bicentennial Bikeway will be less attractive due to the circuitous nature of the Ryan St connection.

Option C, despite the increased length and height, still only lands cyclists partway up the Boundary St hill from the Brisbane River. It does connect well from there to the current West End commercial centre, but connections to Dornoch Tce are steep and circuitous. The grade difference between Boundary St and the West End-Toowong bridge means a two-bridge connection to the Bicentennial Bikeway is much less attractive than Option A.

Consultation process

We note Council's extension of the consultation period on these two green bridges to 31 March 2021, which is a very commendable change.

The CBD BUG would like these much-needed projects delivered as soon as possible. However, the original consultation period, which spanned the Christmas holiday period and with COVID-19 disruptions, did give concerns that the consultation period could be considered by some as being rushed, and that this might compromise the perception of the outcome in some parts of the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on these projects.

Yours faithfully



Paul French
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Brisbane CBD BUG
10 February 2021

Cc:
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Mr Michael Berkman MP for Maiwar
Space4Cycling Brisbane
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