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## Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

### CBD BUG

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The Right Honourable Cr Adrian Schrinner  
Lord Mayor of Brisbane  
GPO Box 2287  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Via email to: [lord.mayor@brisbane.qld.gov.au](mailto:lord.mayor@brisbane.qld.gov.au)

Dear Lord Mayor

On behalf of Brisbane CBD BUG members I write to seek your action on changing the traffic light phasing/sequencing along two of Brisbane's major cycling routes - the Citylink Cycleway along Elizabeth St and Edward St in the Central Business District and the Woolloongabba Bikeway.

These changes are sought so people riding bicycles (and personal mobility devices) and people walking along these routes are not subject to inordinate wait times.

Council's delivery of this new infrastructure has undoubtedly made travelling by bicycle and scooter safer -and thereby encouraged further uptake of these alternatives to driving.

However, these improvements have been undermined at the signalised intersections along these routes as the traffic signals are programmed to prioritise people driving. This leaves active transport users waiting very long times in the heat/cold/wind/rain while motorists stream merrily past in their climate-controlled motor vehicles.

A prime example is the two-stage crossing of the intersection of Stanley St and Annerley Rd, where the people cycling and scooting to/from the city along the Woolloongabba Bikeway have a wait time of 1 minute and 45 to cross Annerley Rd, and also a 1 minute and 35 seconds wait to cross Stanley St. Pedestrians are also subject to these undue wait times that are off-putting to say the least, and lead to illegal road crossings.

Not only do people who choose not to drive or can't drive, have long wait times, they are also subjected to very short times when they do cross, with each of the "Green man" lights lasting just five seconds.

It is clear the traffic signals at this intersection should be re-configured, with a "scramble" implemented to remove this two-stage crossing. Anticipating the BCC response that this will cause the intersection to reach capacity and queue vehicle traffic up for kilometres we draw your attention to a well-researched fact that, just as latent demand means road capacity increases will quickly be taken up by more traffic - and the reverse also applies so that if an intersection reaches capacity motor vehicle drivers seek alternatives.

Additionally, because of the inconvenient wait times for cyclists, some choose to ride on the road for a faster journey. This means the current combination of lane markings and signal timing at the western approach to the intersection create a potential safety hazard. Lane marking in the kerbside lane allows through-running vehicles to share with those turning right. The inside lane is exclusively marked for right turns. The signal sequencing shows green for through traffic and red for right turning traffic. Subsequent phases show green for both through and right turning vehicles. Through one cycle of the light sequence, right turning vehicles in the kerbside lane block through running traffic until the right turners have a green signal, as per the following photo I which the lights are marked with red lines.



A major safety issue arises when a bicycle rider is turning right from the kerbside lane. This is particularly so if they are the only vehicle in that lane turning right, as traffic-aware cyclists tend to occupy the centre of the lane. The visual clutter at the intersection has the potential to obscure their presence. This is especially so at night when a single steady rear tail light of a cyclist can easily be lost in the glare of lighting from the hotel opposite. It is foreseeable that a through running driver will “see through” a stationary cyclist waiting to turn right – creating the potential for a repeat of the tragedy that brought about the redesign of the intersection in the first place.

As there are few vehicles making the through movement, we request these signals are changed to permit the through movement only at the same time as the right turning movement.

Another safety issue with the western approach at this same location is a curved concrete lane separator in the middle of the cycling lane – circled in yellow in the above photo.

It appears the purpose of this bollard is to separate inbound and outbound bicycle/scooter riders. However, looking down to avoid it, draws a riders’s attention from the main task of avoiding on-coming cyclists. Cyclists are generally much better at reading the intentions of approaching fellow travellers than are motorists. Making eye contact is much easier as cyclists travel much slower, the ultimate site distance is not determined by a vehicle hood, and their gaze is not obscured by a windscreen. Therefore, bicycle/scooter riders in this sort of

environment are quite good at avoiding each other. Any collision is also likely to be at such a low speed as to not cause much harm. The concrete lane separator has the potential to cause a fall should a cyclist hit it unexpectedly. The approach is often crowded, and the obstruction is easily obscured by a cyclist in front and though blending into the larger background of the kerb and footpath.

Accordingly, we request removal of this concrete lane separator.

A further safety hazard for bicycle riders at this intersection is a bollard on the south western side, in the middle of the pedestrian/cyclist waiting area as shown in the following photo.



It appears the purpose of this bollard is to separate pedestrians and cyclists/scooter riders into the appropriate crossing lanes. However, when the waiting area is crowded, or when there is a high volume of people crossing it is easily obscured as it is only about one metre in height. The crossing lanes are well marked and the cycle/scooter crossing area is painted green, so there should be no confusion about which user should be using which crossing lane. Besides, as discussed earlier, eye contact is much easier when walking and cycling/scootering.

The designers seem to acknowledge the bollard has the potential to cause harm as it has been fitted with reflective tape. We request removal of this bollard as it serves no useful purpose.

The Citylink Cycleway in the CBD also needs revisiting by Council. One obviously needed change is a cyclist green arrow for riders wanting to turn right from Elizabeth St into Edward St to travel towards the Botanic Gardens. At this time without a right turning green arrow bicycle (and scooter) riders have to wait unnecessarily while motorists use a 30 second green right hand turning arrow. Right turn green arrows for cyclists should also be installed further along Edward St at Charlotte St and Mary St.

At Charlotte St riders currently have just 15 seconds out of the complete traffic lights cycle. This could be increased by shortening the green arrow time for motorists turning right into Charlotte St with not congestion impacts as there is clearly excess time for these road users based on the video at [https://youtu.be/z\\_6\\_AeVMN5k](https://youtu.be/z_6_AeVMN5k). The situation is hardly better at Mary St where Citylink Cycleway users receive just a 20 second green light out of the complete traffic light cycle that can be viewed at [https://youtu.be/lbX\\_ntVjkUQ](https://youtu.be/lbX_ntVjkUQ).

The wait time for people cycling/walking/scootering to cross Alice St at the Edward St gates of the City Botanic Gardens is 1 minute and 30 seconds. As can be seen from the video at <https://youtu.be/LIKuscLUSKq>, this wait time can be reduced by 30 seconds without any motor vehicle traffic impacts as there are no vehicles passing through this point for this duration - even at 5.30pm on a Thursday afternoon.

Another aspect of the improvements needed to CityLink in the CBD is that riders travelling down Edward Street find they have to stop at every intersection due to the light sequencing.

Council spends many millions of ratepayers dollars every year "improving" roads to save just a few seconds in travel time for motor vehicle drivers. These savings are soon lost as the extra capacity is taken up by the induced additional traffic. We call for a more balanced approach that doesn't force people not driving to have to stand around waiting inconveniently long times as motor vehicle drivers pass by.

Yours sincerely



Paul French  
Co-convenor  
Brisbane CBD BUG  
5 March 2023

Cc: Cr Vicki Howard (Central Ward)  
Cr Jonathan Sriranganathan (The Gabba Ward)  
Bicycle Queensland  
Space for Cycling Brisbane  
Queensland Walks  
Queenslanders With Disability Network