



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Urban Renewal (Brisbane's knowledge corridor)
Brisbane City Council
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Via email to: urban.renewal@brisbane.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam

Submission on *draft Albert Street and Roma Street precinct renewal strategies*

This submission provides the views of the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) on the draft Albert Street and Roma Street precinct renewal strategies.

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 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 for transport, we also strongly support initiatives enabling people to leave their cars at home and instead: 1) walk, and 2) utilise new mobility devices e.g. e-scooters and/or 3) travel via public transport.

We note the themes underpinning both these renewal strategies place a heavy emphasis on attracting knowledge workers as a key component of developing Brisbane's knowledge corridor that runs north-south through Brisbane's inner city spanning the nine km bicycle ride between the Brisbane Showgrounds precinct and the Boggo Road precinct.

The CBD BUG supports this approach, as the overwhelming majority of our members are knowledge workers; while encouraging more knowledge workers to reside and work in Brisbane will contribute significantly to Brisbane's future prosperity.

However, there is no indication in either of these documents that Council has investigated the factors that attract knowledge workers. We are happy to help BCC out on this front with this piece of locally developed peer-reviewed literature "In a knowledge worker environment, urban pathways, for walking and cycling, and local public transport that allows the human body to see and be seen are at a premium¹". In this paper these authors subsequently summarise their analysis in stating the knowledge worker wants a "transport rich environment".

¹ Yigitcanlar, Tan & Baum, Scott & Horton, Stephen. (2007). Attracting and retaining knowledge workers in knowledge cities. *Journal of Knowledge Management*. 11. 10.1108/13673270710819762.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/27474139_Attracting_and_retaining_knowledge_workers_in_knowledge_cities

Both these draft renewal strategies mention Council's aim to improve conditions for people riding bikes in/through these precincts. For example, the same "Connectivity" strategy appears in both documents – indicating an intent to "deliver efficient movement networks that enhance public transport journeys and improve the walking and cycling experience", which the CBD BUG welcomes.

However, when it comes to the detailed actions to deliver on this ambition that are accompanied by definitive timeframes, both renewal documents are deficient.

Prior to closing off the section of Albert Street between Charlotte Street and Mary Street to cycling this thoroughfare was an important link for people riding bikes to/from the Goodwill Bridge and the Bicentennial Bikeway via the City Botanic Gardens.

The current Albert Street precinct renewal strategy does not make it clear cyclists will again be able to ride along this section of Albert Street after the Cross River Rail works are completed. Accordingly, we call on Council to deliver cyclist access along Albert Street between Alice Street and Elizabeth Street via a six-metre-wide segregated space that can also be shared with scooter riders. We also call for this amenity to be delivered along with the streetscape upgrades between Elizabeth and Mary streets that will include the permanent closure of Albert Street to motor vehicles between Mary Street and Charlotte Street.

We note the comments in the Albert Street document about "enhanced cyclist connectivity" along Alice Street, Edward Street and Albert Street between the gardens and Mary Street. With Edward Street and Alice Street also indicated to continue as "key public transport and vehicle movement streets". However, to be of genuine value this "enhanced cyclist connectivity" must entail bikelanes that are physically segregated from motor vehicle traffic.

Furthermore, for the much-needed cyclist permeability of the CBD there is no indication of a treatment involving physically segregated space for cyclists along George Street, which is a major failing of this document.

In the draft Roma Street Precinct Renewal Strategy people riding bikes fare little better. This precinct is also critical to cyclists for a range of reasons, including it encompasses the closest point the North Brisbane Bikeway junctures with the Bicentennial Bikeway, while "Upper" Albert Street west of King George Square is the most cyclist-friendly incline between the CBD and Spring Hill. Again, there are multiple mentions early on in this strategy about the need to improve the cyclist network.

But, when it comes to the priority actions to be undertaken in this regard, the only action other than "investigations" to be undertaken within the next 10 years is improving pedestrian and cyclist connections between Roma Street and the South Brisbane Cultural Precinct. This project stated is to be delivered to "link together key cultural destinations", implying incorrectly that cycling is more of a recreational activity than for regular transport to between home and work / educational destinations.

There is plenty of scope for reallocating some of the road space within this precinct from kerbside car parking to provide safe segregated space for people riding bikes, in line with the priorities identified in BCC's 2014 Brisbane Parking Taskforce report.

In conclusion, the current drafts of these strategies require a major reworking to appropriately incorporate the needs of people who ride bicycles for transport. Such revisions require substantial expansions on the unacceptably meagre planning offered so far, and must involve delivery timeframes to be of any real worth.

Yours faithfully



Paul French
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Brisbane CBD BUG
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Cc: Space4Cycling Brisbane
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