



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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The Director
CityLink Cycleway trial
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Via email to: bikewayprojects@brisbane.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam

Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) submission on CityLink Cycleway trial

In response to Brisbane City Council's request for the community to have its say on the CityLink Cycleway trial the Brisbane CBD BUG is pleased to provide the following submission.

From the CBD BUG's perspective, trialling this infrastructure has been a wonderful improvement in the balance in the amount of CBD road space available between people driving motor vehicles and people travelling by the healthier and environmentally friendly modes of walking, bicycle riding and e-mobility devices such as e-scooters.

The changes made during the trial, including moving the cycleway on Edward St to the western side of the road between Margaret St and Alice St and the additional surface markings indicating e-scooter riders can use the CityLink space, have further enhanced this infrastructure and ensured its success.

We would like to also acknowledge Council's perseverance in repeatedly reinstating the bikeway counters after the numerous instances of these devices being disabled.

It is important to recognise that while this infrastructure has benefited people riding bicycles through improved safety via segregating them from motor vehicles, it has also delivered the same outcome for the rapidly increasing number of people using e-scooters and other e-mobility devices who tend to travel at about the same pace as cyclists, many of whom would have formerly stayed on the footpath. Pedestrians too have also benefited from the additional safety and comfort, by not having to share limited footpath space with faster-moving wheeled travellers.

Not only has this trial improved permeability of the CBD for wheeled active travel users, it has also improved travel times for cross-CDB journeys. Previously, bicycle and e-scooter riders wanting to travel across the city would for safety use the more circuitous route following the overcrowded pathway along the river's edge and through the City Botanic Gardens.

We view this trial as aligning with Council's City Centre Master Plan 2032 - Stage 1 in several important ways - such as enhancing access to the city centre and improving the public realm. We support the objectives of this plan as it is critical for the post-COVID-19 recovery of the CBD that the entire region is made people-focused instead of the long-standing car-focus. City streets filled with large volumes of fast moving motor vehicles make the environment noisy, dirty, smelly, unpleasant and unsafe - discouraging people from lingering and spending money that supports local businesses.

Despite construction of the Clem7 and other CBD bypasses there is still a significant proportion of motor vehicle through-traffic travelling via the CBD. This traffic only detracts from the city centre's amenity and vibrance. In contrast, active travel users are much more likely to stop and generate revenue for local businesses. To enable more people to enjoy travelling safely via active travel modes we need to reallocate more street space to people so they can safely walk and ride bikes/e-scooters.

We would also point to the emergence of digital economy operators who also use these new lanes, such as the food delivery services that have grown even faster since COVID-19 arrived and make living and working in the CBD more attractive.

We expect the counts of people traveling via CityLink Cycleway have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This would be particularly the case with shared e-scooter commuters, who the CBD BUG understands from CARRS-Q research to be an even younger demographic than bicycle commuters and privately owned e-scooters commuters. The closures of city centre workplaces have seen many CBD workers working from home across all age groups. However, trips by younger people to the CBD have been especially impacted by COVID due their formerly high rate of attendance at hospitality and entertainment venues as either workers or patrons, as well as students at universities that moved to conducting classes on-line. The large international student cohort that was very obvious in the city pre-COVID has also been conspicuously absent.

Another factor likely to have negatively impacted recent CityLink Cycleway utilisation has been the 2022 flood. Apart from the inundation, obstruction and damage to many Brisbane bikeways and key routes such as the South Bank riverfront - the government calls to the public to avoid non-essential travel and temporary closures of CBD businesses/agencies saw fewer people travelling to/through the city.

Suggested future improvements

Regarding the naming of this infrastructure as the "CityLink Cycleway", we are not convinced there is a genuine need for such an approach as BCC hasn't specifically named city footpaths, or the road network in the CBD e.g. the "CBD RoadLink". We suggest that by naming this infrastructure it may then be misconstrued as not just being an ordinary, everyday part of the urban transport system that it should be.

If Council wants to apply a special name to this infrastructure - for two reasons we suggest it is changed. The first reason is that as these lanes now also explicitly cater for e-scooter riders - the title should reflect their usage. Secondly, with the name including a wider variety of users this will deflect some of the narrow-minded criticism alleging Council is pandering to bicycle riders. We haven't spent much time on this, but one suggestion is to rename the project as the CityLink Active Travelway.

BCC also needs to install "No stopping" signs and yellow lines markings along the footpath kerbs of the CityLink Cycleway - to prevent motorists misusing this space as free and unregulated parking.

The existing kerb ramps when crossing Eagle St at the fig tree island are quite narrow. This is limiting the ability of people to use this crossing effectively and safely. At this location we suggest the kerb ramps are widened and a footpath build-out constructed. Addressing this issue will improve capacity and safety for people crossing at this point.

The existing sequencing of the lights along Edward St is resulting in increasing travel times for people using the protected lanes. This is particularly impacting people traveling from the City Botanic Gardens. Some people when traveling to the Botanic Gardens are choosing not to use the lanes due to the excessive travel times. We ask that to encourage greater utilisation of the lanes the sequencing of the lights be amended.

Accessing the Edward St lanes when traveling along Edward St as one crosses Elizabeth St is not the easiest. To improve accessibility we suggest extending the Edward St lane across the intersection to the Queen St side of the intersection. This will provide the ability for people to access the lanes before focusing on traffic flow at the lights.

In closing, the Brisbane CBD BUG would like to express its strong support for this infrastructure becoming a permanent feature of the CBD, and for the current network to be extended along other CBD streets. To Council's list of future stages of this network we would like to add George St, Adelaide St and a route connecting the City and Fortitude Valley.

We thank Council for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Yours sincerely



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Brisbane CBD BUG
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Cc: Space4Cycling Brisbane