



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

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Hudson Rd & Bridge St Black Spot Improvement Project
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Dear Project Team

Thank you for meeting with representatives of the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG), to receive feedback about the planned upgrade of the Hudson Road and Bridge Street bridge intersections ('the intersections'). The CBD BUG thanks the Project Team for its assurances that the current design proposed in the project's community newsletter dated November 2014 is a draft only, and there is significant scope to incorporate changes to address community concerns.

The purpose of this letter is to provide more detailed feedback to the Brisbane City Council (BCC) about the concerns held by CBD BUG. We also want to detail solutions to those concerns.

Contraventions of Austroads Design Guidelines

The CBD BUG has a number of specific concerns with the proposed plan, and proposed solutions are detailed below. However, it is CBD BUG's view that most of these concerns would be avoided if the project design incorporated BCC's own policies and complied with Austroads' guides to road design, traffic management and road safety.

Contraventions of BCC policies

BCC's *Transport Plan for Brisbane 2008 - 2026* recognises that 'a safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle network will require better facilities and connected infrastructure', which BCC states it will achieve by 'developing and maintaining quality paths and crossing points' and 'wherever possible ... ensure that pedestrian and cyclist planning opportunities are integrated with transport initiatives early in project and policy development'. BCC states that continuing to integrate amenity for pedestrians and cyclists into future road upgrades is one of the initiatives it will use to achieve this outcome. (Strategic Objective 6, page 48 and following).

BCC's *Transport Plan for Brisbane 2008 - 2026* also recognises the importance of achieving a sustainable level of travel demand, which cannot be 'addressed through road expansion alone'. The plan also states that 'to encourage sustainable travel behaviour, transport and land use planning will be managed to support movement, whether by foot, bicycle, public transport or car to permit quick and efficient travel.' The plan also states that BCC will ensure that 'road projects reinforce the road hierarchy'. (Strategic Objectives 2 and 3, pages 30 and 31).

The CBD BUG submits that the current draft changes to the intersections contravene BCC's policies and transport plan objectives. While the intersections are identified in BCC's planning scheme as being suburban roads, and therefore unsuitable for traffic calming treatments, CBD BUG submits that these intersections are one of the few connecting points between the quickly developing suburbs of Woolloowin and Albion for pedestrians and cyclists. CBD BUG notes there are a number

of medium to high density residential developments slated for construction within a 500 metre radius from the intersections, including developments at the flour mill site, the site adjacent to the Holy Cross school, and Queensland Rail land adjacent to Albion train station (currently for tender).

Specific concerns about the current draft plan

The CBD BUG submits that the current draft design will significantly increase motor traffic speeds and volume through the intersection, by:

- removing existing give way requirements;
- increasing turn radii for through traffic;
- increasing motor confidence by introducing barriers between oncoming traffic for the main approaches of the intersection; and
- creating right turn slip lanes (into Merehaye and Madden Streets).

The CBD BUG believes the draft changes will:

- sever current pedestrian routes through the intersections rather than enhance them, by creating increased traffic flow and physical barriers in the middle of the road for current pedestrian desire lines;
- sever the safest cycling route through the intersection, namely the commuting route between the northern section of Hudson Street and the southern section of Bridge Street (which currently carries as many cyclists as BCC's preferred route along Bridge Street);
- lead to more serious crashes, by replacing current fail to yield incidents with more high-speed impacts as a result of faster and increased volumes of traffic failing to negotiate the newly created chicane;
- create more risk for vulnerable road users, who will continue to follow desire lines through the intersection despite faster and heavier volumes of traffic; and
- significantly increase motorist 'rat running' through streets surrounding the intersections, for traffic to overcome the prohibitions on through traffic along Hudson Road and Bridge Street (particularly over the Fraser Street bridge).

However, the CBD BUG's greatest concern is the treatment of cyclists along BCC's preferred cycling route as a result draft changes. Rather than being catered for, in accordance with BCC's overarching road transport policies, cyclists following BCC's preferred cycling route along Bridge Street are simply directed off the road altogether.

Under the current draft proposals, cyclists travelling southbound to the city along BCC's preferred route will be significantly delayed due to being required to exit the roadway, then give way to both northbound and southbound streams of on-road traffic, then give way to any vehicles entering or exiting Merehaye Street, and then give way to any northbound vehicles entering the intersection from Bridge Street, and then give way again to any southbound vehicles entering Bridge street from Marne Road. The CBD BUG notes that the proposed route across Merehaye Street creates a type of crossing that has a high propensity for conflict, due to many road users incorrectly assuming right of way. CBD BUG also notes BCC's concessions that, due to the proposed changes, a higher volume of traffic can be expected to utilise the surrounding streets including Marne Road and Madden Street. This fails requirements for connectivity and continuity (see for example Cyclist Aspects of Austroads Guides (2014) sub-section 3.6).

As well as no provision for cyclists who currently traverse the safest north/south corridor through the intersections as noted above (utilising the northern section of Hudson Road and the southern section of Bridge street), there is also no provision whatsoever for cyclists travelling along the identified suburban route: the main traffic route through the intersections (utilising the northern section of Bridge Street and the southern section of Hudson Road). People riding bikes who must travel this way will be forced into the path of traffic of increased speed and volume when passing through the intersections, where there are reduced sight lines for passing vehicles and narrow lane widths in contravention of road design requirements (see for example Cyclist Aspects of Austroads Guides (2014) sub-section 4.3.3).

Similarly, people riding bikes northbound from Albion to adjacent suburbs are prohibited from leaving the main roadway in order to travel north along Hudson Road.

Alternatives to the current draft plan

The CBD BUG strongly urges BCC to go back to the drawing board and consider options that do not completely favour motor vehicle drivers traffic and completely disregard other legitimate road users, such as pedestrians, bicycle riders and the mobility impaired, given this route traverses residential areas; and given that the vast majority of motorised traffic who will benefit from the proposed changes are commuters and commercial vehicles travelling to from the CBD and beyond, with a number of other options available to them. The CBD BUG notes that there are already a number of main traffic arterials available for north/south motorists, including Sandgate Road (less than 400m away), Lutwyche Road (less than 800m away) and Airport Link (with an entrance approximately 1,200m away). For east/west connectivity through this route, motorists can utilise Airport Link, Rose Street and Junction Road (both approximately 1,200m away) or the Albion overpass (less than 600m away).

The CBD BUG also notes that significant funding originally set aside to increase liveability in and around the intersections and surrounding suburbs, as part of the Airport Link project, has already been redirected to upgrade road intersections along the Rose Street and Junction Road corridor.

The CBD BUG is happy to work with the project team to explore alternatives that recognise all legitimate road users, including vulnerable road users. Options that can alleviate potential crashes (and thereby meet Federal black spot funding criteria) include:

- Changing the proposed future route classification for these intersections from suburban route to district access, given that this route forms part of BCC's preferred cycling route for the northern suburbs and aligns with Transport and Main Roads' proposed North Brisbane Bikeway. This will allow a range of safety measures including reduced speed limits, traffic calming treatments, provision of on-road or separated cycling infrastructure, and pedestrian crossing points that align with desire lines.
- Given that traffic is likely to increase over the Fraser Street bridge as vehicles (including cyclists) seek to avoid prohibitions at the intersections, create one way roads along Hudson Road and Bridge Street between the two traffic bridges. This will increase road capacity, completely remove conflict between oncoming vehicles and remove risks from failure to give way which are the predominant causes of crashes at this site, and provide ample road space for dedicated cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Road treatments to the north and south of the intersections along the proposed suburban route, which will encourage non-local traffic to use other main arterials and significantly reduce the amount of traffic through the intersections, which will allow more equitable upgrades to the intersections.
- Reducing the proposed lane widths and, given BCC's commitment to this route as a future suburban route, enhancing the Federal black spot funding with BCC funding to incorporate signalled crossings and traffic lights.
- Given BCC's commitment to this route as a future suburban route, providing additional BCC funding for the project to allow an upgrade, expansion or replication of the existing bridge to meet traffic demand.

Specific solutions to mitigate the dangers of the current draft plan

However, if BCC chooses to ignore its policies and continue with the current proposed changes, the CBD BUG would like to suggest the following minor modifications to mitigate the inequitable treatment of vulnerable road users.

(1) Facilitating cyclists turning right into Merehaye Street

Currently, on-road bike lanes along Dickson Street in Woolloowin are also car parking lanes, which means that most cyclists who choose BCC's preferred Dickson Street and Bridge Street route to the CBD are confident, male riders. Most of these riders will not utilise the 'bike cross over point' when travelling south inbound to the CBD. More commonly, riders will take the lane and perform a right turn into Merehaye Street, in order to access the footpath in front of the heritage listed fire station. Road treatments in the current draft proposal, however, indicate to southbound motorists that bicyclists will exit the roadway left, whereas most cyclists will merge right and exit the roadway right.

Accordingly, the CBD BUG suggests changes to road treatments and signage at the southbound approach to Merehay Street to ensure approaching motorists are made aware of merging cyclists. These changes are especially important given the proximity of the crest in the road.

The CBD BUG also suggests a hard barrier between the southbound right turn lane into Merehay Street, and northbound traffic, given the increased speed and volume of traffic and the need to protect cyclists waiting to turn right.

(2) Facilitation for cyclists and pedestrians crossing Merehay Street

Given the increasing number of active travellers TMR hopes will use this route as the North Brisbane bikeway nears completion, the CBD BUG suggests the inclusion of a raised speed control platform, with set-back give way signage and stopping bay, be placed at the eastern end of Merehay Street to ensure (a) approaching road traffic slows, and (b) to indicate crossing pedestrians and cyclists have right of way. Failing this, the CBD BUG alternatively suggests a pedestrian refuge island at the eastern end of Merehay Street.

(3) & (4) Pedestrian and cyclist access east/west

As noted above, the current draft proposal has no facility for pedestrians crossing the intersections along desire lines. Additionally, less confident cyclists will choose to dismount and also follow pedestrian desire lines. To facilitate this, the CBD BUG suggests a pedestrian refuge on Bridge Street, closer to the intersections, to facilitate mid-block crossings of Bridge Street between Merehay Street and the heritage listed fire station.

The CBD BUG also suggests the continuation of the footpath along the eastern (in-bound) side of Bridge Street, linking the currently proposed bike cross-over point to the northern footpath across the bridge between the intersections.

The CBD BUG also suggests the inclusion of a raised speed control platform be placed across Hudson Road for pedestrians exiting the bridge from its northern footpath to ensure (a) approaching road traffic slows, and (b) to indicate crossing pedestrians and cyclists have right of way. Failing this, the CBD BUG alternatively suggests building the kerb out further on Hudson Road for pedestrians exiting the bridge from the northern footpath, and pedestrian refuge islands for pedestrians crossing Hudson Street both north and south of the intersections.

(5) Facilitation for pedestrians crossing Madden Street

CBD BUG notes the project team's recognition of increased traffic utilising Madden Street to avoid the prohibition on traffic continuing north on Hudson Road. In light of this, the CBD BUG suggests the inclusion of a raised speed control platform be placed at the western end of Madden Street to ensure (a) approaching road traffic slows, and (b) to indicate crossing pedestrians and cyclists have right of way. Failing this, the CBD BUG alternatively suggests the inclusion of a pedestrian refuge island at the western end of Madden Street.

(6) Facilitation for cyclists and pedestrians crossing Marne Road

Similarly, it is likely that increased southbound traffic will be entering Bridge Street from Marne Road. The CBD BUG therefore suggests the inclusion of a raised speed control platform be placed at the eastern end of Marne Road to ensure (a) approaching road traffic slows, and (b) to indicate crossing pedestrians and cyclists have right of way. Failing this, the CBD BUG alternatively suggests the inclusion of a pedestrian refuge island at the eastern end of Marne road.

(7) & (8) Cyclist friendly treatments for the shared path

The CBD BUG notes the proposed widening of the existing footpath on the western side of the intersections, in front of the fire stations. However, the CBD BUG is concerned that the proposed draft changes show this path being widened to only 2 metres. This is less than the required Austroads standard for a bi-directional, shared path. The CBD BUG suggests this path is widened to meet the relevant standard. This will also prevent wasting State government funds to expand the width of this path when this stage of the North Brisbane Bikeway is constructed.

The CBD BUG also suggests that a cycling-specific, angled entry ramp connect the roadway to the path, rather than northbound cyclists being required to enter the path at the Marne Road intersection in front of oncoming traffic, or perform a 90 degree turn in front of approaching from behind at the stop sign in front of the heritage listed fire station.

(9) Cyclist friendly treatment for the southernmost Bridge Street crossing

The CBD BUG notes that BCC intends all southbound cyclists to cross at the stop sign in front of the heritage listed fire station. Therefore, the CBD BUG also suggests a raised speed control platform be placed at this crossing to ensure (a) approaching road traffic slows, and (b) to indicate crossing pedestrians and cyclists have right of way.

(10) A safe option for northbound cyclists on Hudson Road

The BCC plan offers no viable option for cyclists headed north on Hudson Road from Albion, who are continuing north along Hudson and on to Eagle Junction. Hudson Road is one of the few viable options for cyclists coming from Newstead and points beyond, including New Farm, who wish to connect with the Kedron Brook Bikeway and other northern destinations.

The CBD BUG suggests widening the path along the east side of Hudson St between Madden St and Renwick St, so there is room for northbound cyclists to avoid riding in the southbound traffic lane. The existing path does not even have sufficient room for two pedestrians to pass without stepping onto the road, so a wider path will benefit all modes of active transport.

Please find attached an amended plan detailing the above proposed changes. Again, we wish to thank the project team for taking the time to meet with the CBD BUG and for accepting this feedback on the proposed changes to these intersections. We welcome changes that consider the safety and convenience of all users of the roads and surrounding paths.

Yours faithfully

Donald Campbell
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
22 January 2015