



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

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The Right Honourable Graham Quirk
Lord Mayor of Brisbane
GPO Box 2287
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Dear Lord Mayor

This letter concerns the area where the Bicentennial Bikeway crosses Archer Street in Toowong and the immediately surrounding areas.

The poor treatment of cyclists at this intersection is symptomatic of a larger malaise in the Brisbane urban environment, highlighted in such reports as "A People Oriented Vision for Brisbane" (Jan Gehl Architects, 2009).¹ This malaise has been the subject of concern for groups like the Brisbane CBD BUG for some time.

The CBD BUG is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 700 members, representing the interests of the very large number of Brisbane residents who ride bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre. The CBD BUG actively seeks policy decisions at all levels of government that support cycling. In particular, CBD BUG seeks improved infrastructure, end-of trip facilities, integration of cycling with other transport modes and a cyclist-friendly regulatory environment.

At this point on the Bicentennial Bikeway, cycling traffic heading away from the city faces a Stop sign.

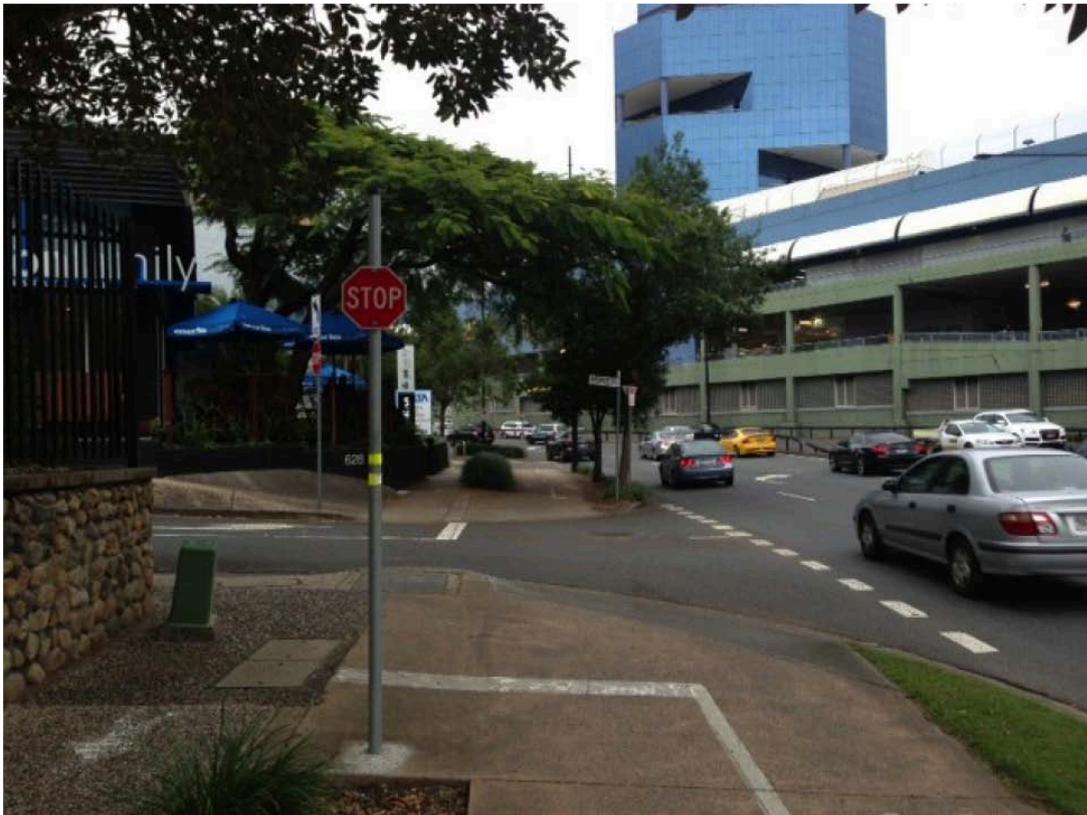
Cyclists almost universally ignore this stop sign, if they even notice it at all, as it is inconvenient to stop at this point and the situation seems analogous to Rules 72 to 75 of the Queensland Road Rules whereby traffic turning left should give way to pedestrians crossing. (In reality, these are some of the least known sections in the Road Rules.) Turning traffic also has to cross a give way line. The speed limit on Coronation Drive at this point is 60 km/h and the speed limit on the local street, Archer Street, is 40 km/h. The speed limit on the next street to the left, Glen Road, is also 40 km/h.

A summary of the current situation is:

- bicycles inbound have a give way sign, yet bicycles outbound have a stop sign.
- motorists exiting Archer Street have a stop sign also
- motorists have a give way marking before entering Archer Street from Coronation Drive
- there is no requirement for pedestrians to stop at all (which makes the bicycle signs all the more confusing).

¹ <http://www.weca.org.au/?page=31:news-extra>

Picture of where Bicentennial Bikeway crosses Archer Street, Toowong



This is also an issue local of concern to Toowong residents, but if it were to be resolved effectively, it would affect bikeway policy across Brisbane in a positive way.

In March 2014, the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads published a “Separated Cycleways Guideline”². It provides the following guidance on intersections (Section 4).

Where motorised vehicles cross the path of pedestrians or bicycle riders, higher severity conflicts result, even if the relative speed is low. At conflict locations such as intersections where motor vehicles cross a cycle route, priority for bicycle riders should be highlighted in the design with safe turning speed, give-way lines and signs and green pavement treatment.

The guide then goes on to quote the Dutch Design Manual for Bicycles on the main requirements of Directness, Safety, Comfort and Attractiveness. Section 4.2.1 described “Unsignalised intersections with bicycle priority over the side road” and notes that “*in urban areas, the design of unsignalised intersections must highlight the priority of bicycle riders on the bicycle facility over traffic on the side streets.*” This priority is clearly not being met in the case of Archer Street and the nearby driveway crossings.

The Bicentennial Bikeway facility is excellent and the “crown jewel” in the bikeway system in Brisbane. The BUG is very pleased with the recent upgrades since the 2011 floods and is hoping that the Stage Four and Five upgrades (Land Street through to Glen Road) finally help to resolve these priority issues that have festered for so long. We note that the signage around the bus stop west of the Regatta is quite poor in terms of faded symbols and lack of colour treatment for pedestrians and cyclists, and pedestrians are often to be found on the bikeway there.

However, if no resolution is forthcoming, and the status quo is preserved, this will be a negative sign that Council is not serious even about the currently woefully low cycling modal share targets

² <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/business-industry/Technical-standards-publications/Traffic-and-Road-Use-Management-manual.aspx>

of 2.5% by 2016, 3.6% by 2021 and 5.0% by 2026.³ These targets are considered low as historically, the target was for an 8% cycling modal share by 2011 (1997 IRTP⁴). Failure on these kinds of issues will indicate that these figures are really just a kind of “lip service” to cycling by the Council without corresponding investment to prioritise cyclists.

The CBD BUG considers that cyclist priority at the Archer Street intersection is a “test case” for when cycling will be taken seriously as a transport mode in Brisbane.

There are many possible solutions to the cyclist priority problem. We would like to see a redesign which removes the stop sign and give way sign (on the other side of Archer Street) for cyclists.

This redesign could consist of one or more of a combination of

- switching the bikeway and the footway so that the bikeway is further away from the street
- raising the bikeway across Archer Street and providing a coloured treatment to give implicit priority to bikes
- squaring off the corner to slow down vehicular traffic turning left - this was suggested by Jan Gehl Architects for the Boundary Street / Vulture Street intersection in West End. The report suggestions were ignored, as has unfortunately been the wont of the car-centric local government politicians and planners
- Queensland road rule changes and signage to make it explicit and clear that traffic turning left from Coronation Drive must give way to bike traffic
- Forbidding motorized traffic turning left at this point, possibly by the use of a bollard, and making motorized vehicles turn left at Glen Road instead – the speed of cars turning left there is generally lower; making Archer Street one way
- the use of “shark’s teeth” or other give way symbols

In summary, the issue has become more urgent with

- the planned extension of the Bicentennial Bikeway (Stages Four and Five), which will increase the number of cyclists in the area
- plans for a 2.5% modal share of bikes by 2016. There will be a higher modal share induced by superior infrastructure as well as the converse. A higher number of cyclists increases the potential for conflict, requiring safer infrastructure and clarity of “give way” rules. The Council cannot merely rely on the “safety in numbers” effect or free training programs as a safety strategy.
- higher density living called for in the Brisbane plan. We note the acquisition of 600 Coronation Drive, the former ABC site, by Sunland Group (15,000 square metres, \$20 million) in September 2013.⁵ A Development Application (A003849902) was lodged in April 2014 for a partial demolition of the site. Neighbourhood planning allows for permission for 15 storey apartments in the area.⁶ Construction of the Sunland project should not affect bikeway access in

³ “Draft Active Transport Strategy, 2012-2026”,

http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/2010%20Library/2009%20PDF%20and%20Docs/1.About%20Council/1.6%20Council%20vision%20and%20strategies/Active_Transport_Strategy_full.pdf

⁴See references to 1997 Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland at http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/documents/plans_strategies/active_transport_strategy_strategies_part1.pdf

⁵ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-19/property-developer-buys-abc-brisbanes-old-toowong-site/4967934>

⁶

http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/downloads/planning_building/current_planning_projects/neighbourhood_planning/toowong_auchenflower_np.pdf

any way. Access should of course not be via the bikeway but via the river or the Archer Street entrance to the site. We note that ABC site development calls for any ABC site development to “enhance the pedestrian experience”.⁷ We call for the development to also enhance the cyclist experience given the huge number of cyclists who use the area every day. The Plan notes that development should “[provide] an arcade between Coronation Drive and Archer Street.”

- the acquisition of 2-6 Land Street nearby for apartments; another planned project on Jephson Street, Toowong; the “Aspect” project nearby at 68 Benson Street; planned apartments at 573 Coronation Drive (“Coronation Drive Apartments”). All of these developments will increase the number of cyclists and motorists in the vicinity and cause more interactions and potential for conflict.

CBD BUG realizes that the main Archer Street issue would be part of future design work for “Bicentennial Bikeway Stage 5” but sees no reason the stop and give way signs cannot be removed or modified when cycling advocates have been calling for this for 15 years (see Appendix).

Yours sincerely

Dr Richard Bean
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
7 July 2014

⁷ <http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/CP/ToowongAuchenflowerLP>

Appendix

The issue has been discussed on the BikeQld mailing list as far back as August 2000, where Bruce Campbell reported that “There could be cases both for observing and for ignoring that stop sign in the event of an accident.”⁸ Michael Fanning commented in August 2005 that “The design and layout of the pedestrian and cycle paths outside the ABC and in Benson Street are very poorly done and are the cause of confusion and conflict among many of the users”. This remains the case as of July 2014.

Bicycle Queensland’s “Queensland Cyclist” magazine had an article in the August 1999 edition calling for cyclist priority at this intersection. The infrastructure and amount of cycling traffic has massively increased since then. The number of cars turning here during the day would probably be of the order of tens, versus the order of more than 1,000 cyclists crossing.

⁸ Bruce Campbell, 7 March 2000: <http://www.bikeqld.org.au/old/ancient/bikeqld-3/0977.html>; Kim, April 2007: <http://www.bikeqld.org.au/pipermail/bikeqld/2007-April/004164.html>; Michael Fanning, August 2005: <http://www.bikeqld.org.au/old/archive/2005/08/msg00158.html>

B Doubles

There have been B Double trials in the Rockhampton area, on the Byfield Road. Local member Owen Ronalds points out this road narrow bitumen and in many places just wide enough for one car.

The trial turned out to be one truck proving it could get through. QT therefore labelled it as a success. We hope this is not the thin (or double?) end of the wedge for other roads.



B-Double - Maximum length 25m

Talking with BCC

BQ had long and useful talks with Councillors Maureen Hayes (Chair of the Transport Committee) and Kerry Rea from Brisbane City Council in July. We discussed . . .

1 Bikeweek and Promotion. We are disappointed than again in 1999 the BCC budget didn't provide more for promotion, but are encouraged that Cr Hayes said she would see if she could find funding from elsewhere in Council to support Bikeweek 99.

2 The Budget. Cr Hayes seemed to agree that spending \$2.6 million from a \$3 million budget on just two projects (repair to the Riverside

Bikeway and the crossing of Cabbage Tree Creek at Sandgate) could mean that many smaller projects were neglected. BQ suggested a greater role for the Bicycle Planning Unit so that there would be a better strategic overview of cyclists' needs in future.

3 Bus lanes. Continued access to bus lanes is vital for cyclists, and we are encouraged that BCC is signposting all bus lanes "cycling permitted". We hope cyclists' needs and safety will be noted in future projects, with 4 to 4.5 metre bus lanes. We remain at loggerheads about Waterworks Road.

4 Bikeway at Toowong. BQ is disappointed that the council rejected our proposal to give cyclists the priority over cars at Archer Street. This seems to be against stated Council policy. We stated our wish to revisit the site with the designers to discuss other possible solutions.

5 Banana rails. We know the yellow rails are well intentioned, but they can be dangerous. We would like to see most of them removed.

6 Bloody speed. High speeds are a discouragement to cycling and safety. BQ is disappointed at the removal of 40 kmph zones. We understand QT is calling the tune on the speed limit issue, but we would like support for our efforts from BCC.

Overall, productive discussions.

The issue of cycle tracks having priority crossing roads or driveways has been largely solved in leading cycling countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark by the use of "shark's teeth" as give way symbols, whereby all vehicles and pedestrians facing the "teeth" (the point of the triangles) must give way to everyone else.

The following picture shows an example of this in Assen, the Netherlands.⁹



The cycling promoter Mark Wagenbuur visited Brisbane in October 2013 and made an excellent video about his experiences.¹⁰ While filming the area around Archer Street, he commented that the priority at intersections (driveways and streets) near this point is completely unclear as there are no markings of any kind. In fact, the visible signs call for cyclists to be cautious of vehicles exiting driveways when cyclists have legal priority on the bikeway. A similar approach is currently being used on Bouquet Street in South Brisbane where the “Spice Apartments” are planned. This kind of approach is not used in leading cycling countries but is often seen in the UK.¹¹

The priority issue also remains a problem in the UK. British cycling bloggers have provided a great deal of discussion about infrastructure and laws concerning the issue, which should be highly relevant to Australia, given our similar legal system.¹² The campaign director for CTC (the national cycling charity in the UK), Roger Geffen, commented in 2012 that “an important prerequisite for segregation to work is legal priority for cyclists at junctions”. CTC provided further discussion at another post, promoting the idea of “shark’s teeth” as give-way symbols.¹³

The Brisbane City council Toowong and Auchenflower plan¹⁴ calls for “extension of the Bicentennial Bikeway through the [ABC] site to connect with Archer Street”.

The Draft City Plan¹⁵ indicates the existing infrastructure (left side) and the future “Active and

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https://www.google.com/maps/@52.993969,6.548656,3a,75y,242.84h,88.31t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1sZb_6H-AG-OcNd6YBNgEE3Q!2e0?hl=en

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ixxpetgAq0>

¹¹ <http://aseasyasridingabike.wordpress.com/2014/05/27/transferring-responsibility/>

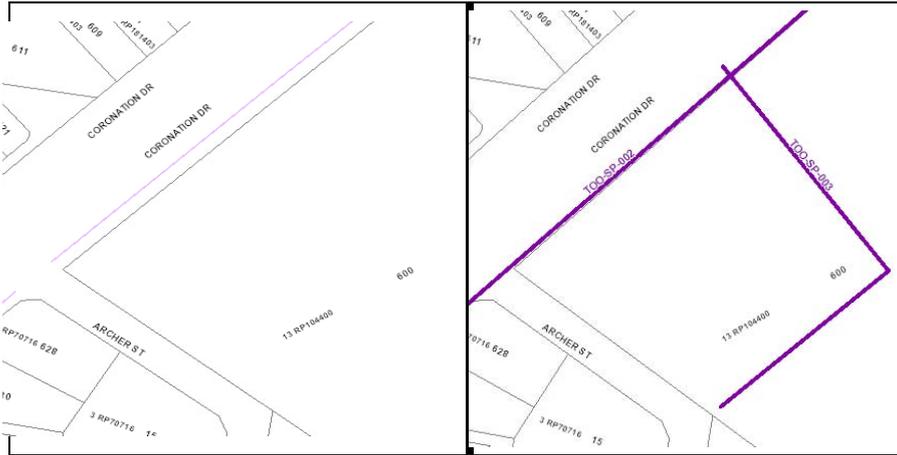
¹² “Priority of cycle tracks across side roads”, Mark Treasure (chair of Great Britain Cycling Embassy), July 2012: <http://aseasyasridingabike.wordpress.com/2012/07/11/priority-of-cycle-tracks-across-side-roads/>

¹³ <http://www.ctc.org.uk/blog/chris-peck/cycle-infrastructure-trials-could-finally-mean-good-cycle-tracks-are-built-0>

¹⁴ <http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/CP/ToowongAuchenflowerLP>

¹⁵ <http://eplan.brisbane.qld.gov.au>

Public Transport PFTI” infrastructure (right side), marked “TOO-SP-002” (part of “Bicentennial Bikeway Stage 5”, planned completion by 2016). By all appearances, priority over side traffic is planned in the “future” infrastructure.



Archer Street is marked as a “future key pedestrian/cycle connection” (see figure from Plan).

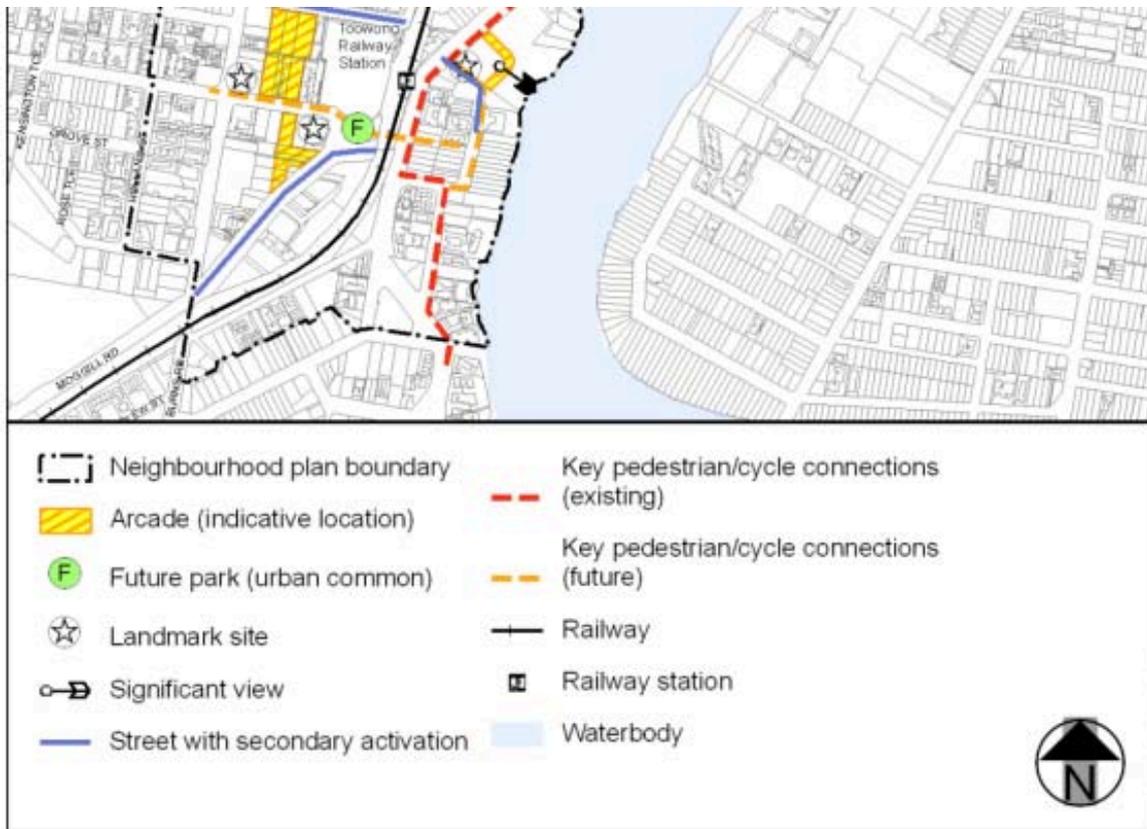


Figure b—Public realm