

Translink Cycle Facilities at Busway Stations

The policy appears to be limited to cycle facilities at busway stations and stops. It does not include cycle facilities along busways except as planned by Smart Travel Centre – Queensland (STC-Q), Department of Main Roads (DMR) and local government authorities (LGAs). This is a major omission and would be a missed opportunity to take advantage of the corridors provided by busways. A current example of the lack of adequate support for bikeways paralleling busways is the South East Busway Bikeway. This was planned, would have been a highly beneficial piece of infrastructure, but was never completed. This has since obliged cyclists to continue using a far inferior facility, the South East Bikeway.

Para 2.1: The final dot point accepts the current limitations on carriage of bikes on public transport (PT). Improvement of carriage opportunities, via such measures as bike racks on all buses, changes to interior design of rail cars, is not foreshadowed. The CBD BUG strongly urges Translink to include development of improved carriage opportunities in the policy. Without this stated intention the current deficiencies in public transport infrastructure, which prevent the full integration of transport modes, will remain.

Para 2.2: This paragraph needs to reflect the policy development process for cycle routes, the Principal Cycle Network Plan of Queensland Transport's Integrated Transport Plan. Correct the reference to STC-Q. Translink requires a formal relationship with ITP, DMR, relevant LGAs, as well as STC-Q.

Para 3.2: Services: The CBD BUG views the policy's failure to identify situations in which bicycles may be carried on Translink services as a major omission.

Para 5.1: Translink needs to define what they consider minimal, desired, premium and ultimate provision for end of trip at Bus/train Stations, Interchanges and stops.

An additional dot point should recognise provision for carriage of cycles on Translink services, whether bus, rail or ferry, looking to a future when provision is universal and routine.

Para 5.2: The sentence "This could be due to more end of trip..." should be changed to "This is due to there being end of trip...". The CBD BUG's argues strongly that more passengers cycle to train stations because there is some end of trip provision, albeit at the basic level of bike lockers.

Also the sentence "Major arterial stops (signature stops) may also incorporate..." should also be changed to "Major arterial stops (signature stops) should also incorporate ...". Any signature stop should have cycling provision to increase the stop's catchment.

Para 5.5: Add: "Access should be seamless with no potential conflict with other modes of travel. Cycling end of trip facilities will be located at, on or immediately adjacent to station or stop."

Para 5.7: This table needs to be comprehensively reviewed. For example, many of these points need the phrase “perceived or actual” added to them. The table should be closely related to Smart Travel Choices Green paper. The drafters of the Translink paper appear not to be aware of all the work done in Brisbane on Smart Travel Choices; therefore, this work should be outsourced to the Smart Travel Choices authors.

Paras 5.2 and 5.4: Neither paras recognise the role of station management in the take-up rates of lockers. Provision of facilities of this kind only works with appropriate management, otherwise the facility is under-utilised and degrades. Currently, Queensland Rail manages bike lockers at rail stations, and ensures good take-up of these facilities. Elsewhere in Australia bike lockers are less well managed and take up rates are lower.

Para 5.9: This para suggests cycling access to PT is more important for locations in closer proximity to the CBD. However, the basis for this statement is unclear. It is true that there are more cyclists closer to the CBD. But commuter cyclists living in closer proximity to the CBD are more likely to cycle to the CBD on radial routes that are better developed than for more distant origins. If the statement reflects a greater number of bike lockers being taken up, then it may indicate simply that there are more of these lockers close to the CBD. If it is derived from the Census journey-to-work data, then it does not relate to PT. Mixed mode journeys are poorly measured, if at all. The statement would appear merely to reflect bias or preconceptions, and poorer provision of on- and off-road cycle infrastructure further out from the CBD.

The role of cycle routes as orbital connections for PT users who would otherwise have to take two radial journeys to get from home to work is not mentioned. SEQ, and Brisbane in particular is well served by radial transport arteries but poorly served by orbital arteries. Where these exist, they exist for motor traffic and have developed in a somewhat ad hoc manner, with orbital routes being upgraded as they become congested. Lacking orbital PT routes, demand has not become obvious, and these routes thus under-provided. Using bicycles for such connections implies the need for carriage of the bicycle on PT services, so the bicycle is available for the non-PT centre section of the journey.

Para 5.10: Monitoring of existing facilities does not measure unmet demand where facilities currently do not exist. Use of TravelSmart data should allow currently unmet demands to be articulated. This information will also highlight access problems and solutions. Monitoring should not be limited to currently ‘high profile’ or ‘high usage’ stations and stops but include those currently ignored by provision of facilities in order to understand the importance of facilities.

Paras 5.12 and 5.13: Role of provision for cycling as a means of reducing demand for high-cost road expansions should be embedded in both QT and DMR road infrastructure policies. Suggest 5.13*: Provision of cycle access to PT and cycle routes co-located with PT corridors will reduce the expected cost of expansion of road and motorway lanes by delaying the need or removing the need, in the same way that expansion of the PT network has the same effect.

Main Roads' interest in both PT and cycling can be seen as an interest in reducing and delaying investment requirements.

Para 5.13 The last sentence of the paragraph needs to be more directed to cyclists e.g. if access to a station or stop is not easily accessible to cyclists, a stop will not be accessed by cyclists.

Para 6.2:

Infrastructure

5. Cycling end of trip facilities should be located at, on, or immediately adjacent to a Public Transport station, stop and interchange.
6. Bullet Point three. Bike path spurs should be built to all station and stops where possible. This should also include stops on BUZ routes as these routes are of increasing importance in Brisbane.
7. TRANSlink should be ensuring that Bus Operators safely share the road, not just encouraging.

Para 7. Public transport information and promotional material should incorporate maps of cycle links to all stations and stops not just key ones. Bike parking locations should be indicated on all maps and promotional material for public transport.

Para 8. An additional dot point should be added stating that "bikes are allowed on ferry services at all times.

Conclusion:

Policy outcomes have to be measured appropriately, to enable the analysis of the results for their reflection of the policy intent. This has not been the case in the past. The CBD BUG looks forward to the more meaningful measurement of outcomes.

The CBD BUG notes that it has been all too easy for success to be seen in SEQ's investment in busways and rail services – demand is booming with every demand projection being far too timid. This is unlikely to be the case for investment in some but not all cycle facilities in a network. Either routes are connected but end-of-trip facilities are ignored, or end-of-trip facilities are provided where the route connection is left incomplete or sub-standard. This has partly been due to planning by "experts" with little understanding of commuter cyclist needs or behaviours. Improvements in understanding of commuting by bicycle should lead to improved decisions and measurable positive outcomes.

The CBD BUG also looks forward to the reforms announced by the Premier, the Honourable Anna Bligh, MP, in which Translink will be subsumed by a more powerful authority coordinating all PT in SEQ. This will make the task of raising the number and proportion of cyclist mix-mode public transport users easier to accomplish and measure, as necessary mode switch nodes will provide a more seamless service to users.