

BOROONDARA

Bicycle Users Group

Boroondara Bicycle Users Group
Response to:

City of Banyule
Draft Bicycle Strategy

31 August 2009

All feedback on the Draft Bicycle Strategy must be sent to Council by 12th September 2009

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Introduction

Boroondara Bicycle Users Group exists to promote cycling and to advocate for improvements to cycling infrastructure in Boroondara and surrounding areas. BBUG thanks Banyule Council for providing us with the opportunity to reply to the Draft Bicycle Strategy. BBUG will make this response available on its website.

Referenced documents:

Draft Banyule Bicycle Strategy 2009 – 2019

Executive Summary

Boroondara BUG endorses many of the actions proposed in the Draft Banyule Bicycle Strategy. We believe that the document is on the whole very sound. However we draw attention in particular to the need for consistency in naming and signing of trails across the Melbourne Metropolitan area and the work currently being done by Parks Victoria on this issue. It is also important to make clear, in relation to the Victorian Bicycle Strategy,

that the Box Hill CAD covers all of the Main Yarra Trail in Banyule, this being in addition to those parts that fall within the CBD 10km radius - so Council is eligible for priority funding for these additional areas as well.

BBUG suggested recommended actions

3.7.3 Standard of Off-Road Trails

Surfaces

Firstly we congratulate Banyule Council on the quality of the surface of the new section of path linking Banksia Rd to the Warringal Parklands and continuing as the River Gum Walk. This surface makes for smooth, easy and safe riding and the low-key, grey-beige colour is extremely pleasing to the eye. It is highly desirable that in future as work is done on new and existing trails they be constructed to this standard.

Sections of off-road trail that are in particular need of improvement with respect to surfacing and/or width are:

- The Main Yarra Trail alongside Banksia St past The Greenery. This section is so rough and ill-defined that many people must doubt it could be part of the trail.
- The Main Yarra Trail between Banksia Park and Burke Rd. Remnants of wooden edges of the much narrower original path here constitute a hazard for the unwary cyclist.
- The Plenty River Path between the Historic Bridge on Old Lower Plenty Rd and the Yarra. The combination of heavy gravel and steep grades makes this section very hard work for cyclists.

Another very high priority is the complete redesign of the spiral descent of the Yarra Trail on the north side of Banksia St and under Banksia St. This is a serious hazard for less experienced cyclists. The descent to the underpass needs to be rebuilt. In the interim multiple warning signs "Steep descent" need to be put in place. Note that this is covered by the Box Hill CAD radius.

On the Plenty River Trail east of Lambruk Ct and Tarcoola Dr there is a need to build a path to replace the desire line that shortcuts the peninsula at this point.

The Donaldson Creek Path is mentioned in the Strategy as being important (p38) but it is not shown on the map or discussed as an off road route p53 to p55. We are not sure if this is a deliberate omission or not.

Trail width

Given the heavy usage on the Main Yarra Trail and the potential for conflict between various types of path users a minimum width of 3m should be specified for all future works. We agree with the 'High' priority assigned this goal in 'ORT 2 Main Yarra River

Trail'. We believe that 2.5m wide paths are past history, that all new paths should be 3m minimum and that 3.5m is highly desirable for highly trafficked paths. Governments need to plan for future growth in shared path use and to minimise pedestrian/cyclist conflict.

Line-marking

Centre line marking is an important visual guide as to where the main trail goes as well as a safety feature reminding path users to keep left. It is of course difficult to mark a centre line unless a path is sealed. Given its heavy and growing usage, sealing the entire length of the Main Yarra Trail is a desirable goal, if only to allow for centre line marking.

Trail Names and Signage

There is no detailed discussion of signage in the draft strategy. Boroondara BUG has made a submission to Parks Victoria, VicRoads, the Emergency Services and Telecommunications Authority and Bicycle Victoria regarding problems with naming of and signage on off-road trails, see http://boroondarabug.org/wiki/index.php/Trail_names

We understand that a project group, convened by Parks Victoria to look at improvements to the system for naming trails and registering these names with VicMap, will meet again soon and will include discussion of signage in their agenda. It is highly desirable that greater standardisation of both trail names and signage occur across the Melbourne Metropolitan area as soon as possible.

We note that both 'Main Yarra River Trail' and 'Main Yarra Trail' are used in the Draft Bicycle Strategy. One of these, preferably the shorter one, should be adopted uniformly.

Signage is currently quite deficient on the Main Yarra Trail, especially considering the popularity of this trail with recreational riders who will not necessarily know the way. There are many trail intersections which are quite bereft of signage. Examples are many trail junctions in the vicinity of the Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands. Ideally there should be signs at every point where a trail user may be uncertain as to the main path.

Another example of deficient signage is on the Plenty River Trail where the cable stayed suspension footbridge crosses the Plenty River between the oval and tennis courts east of Kalparrin Av. The route of the trail is totally counterintuitive at this point and needs to be signed clearly on both side of the bridge.

Again we agree with the high priority assigned to this goal.

We also strongly recommend the style of signs adopted in Western Australia: refer to <http://tinyurl.com/n3v2us>

Missing links

A number of missing links are identified in the ORT section of the strategy. However there are some that do not appear to be mentioned.

The Greensborough Bypass Path seems to be identified as the Banyule Shared Trail and no mention made of the additional section north of Grimshaw Rd. Presumably there is some intention to close the gap between Yallambie Rd and Grimshaw Rd?

Another connection is needed between the northern section of the Greensborough Bypass Path and Yando St (Melway 10 G12) This would facilitate access from the Bypass Path to Kalparrin Gardens and the Plenty River Trail and should be relatively simple to provide. Recreational riders in particular like to make connections between different off-road trails, often with a view to designing a circuit ride or making connections with train stations.

It is highly desirable that the City of Banyule work with the Shire of Nillumbik to have VicRoads connect the Western Ring Road Trail to the Plenty River Trail west of the roundabout at the junction of Booyan Cr and the Plenty River Trail. Poor sections of the Plenty River Trail from Western Ring Rd down to Yando St also need to be reconstructed to a higher standard.

We are also highly concerned about the official/unofficial usage/squatting of land on the transmission line easement. One example of this is the trail from Watsonia Station to the Plenty River Trail which is blocked by properties just to the west of Tarcoola Dr and Yallambie Rd.

On-road issues

Gruyere Cr and The Boulevard would make a good quiet on road route to the Yarra Trail at Burke Rd.

The on-road lanes from Banksia St to Upper Heidelberg Rd along Studley St are not shown on the maps, eg page 45. We are not sure if this is a deliberate omission or not.