

BOROONDARA

Bicycle Users Group

Boroondara Bicycle Users Group
Response to:

City of Boroondara
Balwyn Structure Plan

29 May 2009

All feedback on the Draft Structure Plan must be sent to Council by 29 May 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 the council for providing us with the opportunity to reply to the structure plan. BBUG will make this response available on its website.

Referenced documents:

Balwyn_Draft_SP_consult_brochure_9April_49f65ee5809c3.pdf

Draft_Balwyn_Structure_Plan_17April_2009_Part_1.pdf

Draft_Balwyn_Structure_Plan_17April_2009_Part_2.pdf

Draft_Balwyn_Structure_Plan_17April_2009_Part_3.pdf

Executive Summary

Review structure plan together with Council's bicycle strategy in particular the following deficiencies:

- No definitive suggestions re: cycling routes to the Balwyn area are incorporated in the plan.
- Cycling is not considered in its own right as a legitimate transport but is lumped in with pedestrian movements
- With appropriate bicycle parking multimodal transport could be improved by allowing greater access to tram & bus routes.
- No cycling infrastructure beside parking is suggested

Discussion

With General Motors heading for bankruptcy – and with every single USA citizen paying \$127 AUD just to keep the company going while it restructures – we now hear that GM is being called Government Motors. We are subsidising cars in Australia as well.

<http://business.theage.com.au/business/general-motors-bankruptcy-now-appears-assured-20090528-bp0z.html>

We also have the USA intending to make it mandatory that new cars average 39.0 miles per US gallon by 2016 equivalent to 6.72 ltrs per 100km. Australia will probably follow suit. Our fleet average was 11.5 ltrs per 100 km in 2007 according to the ABS and has been hovering around that figure for the past decade.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/18/AR2009051801848.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miles_per_gallon

<http://www.ptua.org.au/myths/efficient.shtml>

To achieve these sorts of figures we will all be driving around in quite small cars. Look at the fuel consumption figures for these cars:

<http://www.drive.com.au/Editorial/ArticleDetail.aspx?ArticleID=19019>

The above indicates that things are changing, including the climate – we need to be looking at alternatives. Cycling is a useful alternative. This doesn't mean we all need to be riding bikes – that's unrealistic. However, we need to provide desirable infrastructure for those that choose to cycle at any point in time. Drive one day; cycle on another day. Drive the car for a weekend break in the country – cycle to the local coffee shop and pick up the bread on another day.

BBUG suggested recommended actions

Review structure plan together with Council's bicycle strategy.

As an example in the bicycle strategy we have the following:

Item 62: "This route commences at the Anniversary Trail at Burke Road and along Gordon Street to Balwyn Road. It crosses Balwyn Road and continues along Yarrbat Avenue until Union Road, then onto Strabane Avenue and the existing off-road pathway."

Miscellaneous minor points:

Rochester Rd is a one way in the morning school times just south of Whitehorse Rd, ie no southbound traffic is allowed. Signage should exclude cyclists from the no entry condition.

Referring to the Balwyn Structure Plan brochure:

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points 29 and 39 ...co-ordinate landscaping, furniture, lighting and signage design along Whitehorse Road...Add "More bike parking"

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"Issues - Traffic congestion, notably around the intersection of Balwyn Road and Whitehorse Road, which acts as a physical and community barrier. There is a need to improve access to the town centre by tram, bus, bicycle and by foot." Support Tram (and bike) signal priority at intersection - investigate right hand turn ban during peak

Point 42 mentions upgrading routes. Document does not specify any.

Point 43 raised "wombat crossings at side streets." Support this but do as per recent Macedon Ave (Nth Balwyn Village) smooth-style, not Bluestone, non-DDA compliant version favored by council trying to introduce 'faux-heritage'.

Point 44 "Upgrade the car parks and laneways to the rear of Whitehorse Road businesses to facilitate their use as alternative walking / cycling routes through the centre." What exactly does this mean?

Point 47 "Provide well located bicycle facilities (e.g. parking racks and shelters) in the Balwyn Activity Centre." Very welcome but do responsibly. Don't just spray them around. Target higher volume zones such as Cinema, Library, pedestrian crossing near Yerrin St.

Point 49 "Advocate to the State Government for the implementation of the central

platform option for the proposed Tram 109 route improvements that will increase the public transport priority along Whitehorse Road and create DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant tram stops throughout the centre.”

Strongly oppose central platforms. Take up far more road width than kerb outstand models. The 'Le Bump' models as done in Danks St - Sth Melbourne, Harbour Esplanade Docklands and proposed for Route 86 (High St Northcote) are favored, far cheaper and safer than central platforms.

Point 50 Greater Bus Service along Balwyn Rd. Strongly support.

Page 11 - Map

Map does not indicate one single bicycle improvement. ALL are pedestrian despite heading of “New and improved ped/bike links”.

Whitehorse Rd is part of PBN. So is Balwyn Rd. Complete lanes approaching/leaving Whitehorse Rd. Yerrin and Rochester are probably worth consideration. Yerrin could in future accommodate a separated back-of-kerb path on one side. Gordon St is also in the scope and should be raised.

Currently every street is trying to prioritise all modes of transport all concurrently. Council needs to look at tuning some up for vehicles and others for other modes.

Page 13 Area 1 - Balwyn Cinema

Greater Bike parking

Page 16 Area 3: Safeway and Car Park

Greater Bike parking at both front and rear

Page 18 Area 4: The Library

Greater Bike parking at front precinct