

BOROONDARA

Bicycle Users Group

Boroondara Bicycle Users Group
Response to:

City of Boroondara
Kew Junction Structure Plan

21 April 2008

All feedback on the Draft Structure Plan must be sent to Council by 28 April 2008
kew.junctsp@boroondara.vic.gov.au

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Introduction

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:

BCC Kew_Junction_Structure_Plan_February_2008_pgs_1-60.pdf
BCC Kew_Junction_Structure_Plan_February_2008_pgs_61-118.pdf
BCC KewJunctionPlan_web.pdf

Executive Summary

The research and development of the study area master plan inadequately addresses cycling in the study area. The study is primarily about building heights and car parking and fails to address 2030 aims.

BBUG suggested recommended actions

These points need to be reviewed:

- 2030 goals in relationship to cycling as sustainable transport in high density living areas, acting as car replacement for short trips and being part of multi modal transport
- all existing cycling routes in the study area be evaluated ie refer to Travel Smart maps as part of the plan
- cycling routes need to be seen as an additional map overlay that needs to be planned for – the council’s Eview GIS system should contain these cycling route overlays. How can you plan for the future, if you are unsure what exists in the present?

BBUG’s map: <http://tinyurl.com/2q66lz>

- cyclist crash data in the study area needs to be reviewed and also be made available on the council’s Eview GIS system (assuming it isn’t).

BBUG’s map: <http://tinyurl.com/yyscaa2>

Or in Google Earth

<http://www.boroondarabug.org/jp/kml/CyclistCrashesBoroondara.kml>

- all structure plans need to be considered in conjunction with the Boroondara council's draft bicycle strategy
- differentiate the facilities provided for pedestrians, from those provided for cyclists. They are only in common when a path is signed as a “shared path”.
- the days of supplying boilerplate answers to cycling infrastructure needs such as more parking rings on the street are passé. Cycling needs well thought out routes implemented as dedicated cycling boulevards or the like. ie detailed infrastructure
- looking at the population density figures for Boroondara our calculations show that 40,000 people are within a leisurely ten minute bicycle ride of the study area. – refer to our response re the Camberwell Junction Structure plan for detailed calculations.
- regardless of the structure plan; a lot of work needs to be done in the study area to improve cyclists safety immediately, starting with the remarking of the highly worn existing road markings and implementing solutions at the known black spots in the junction area. As VicRoads is responsible for the majority of, if not all the

roads at the junction, they need to be enrolled in the process. We have written to VicRoads about these issues on the 28 March 2008.

The Weekly shopping trip

Page 64

While the weekly shopping trip will probably always be made by car by most people, other trips that don't require transporting heavy goods could be encouraged to be taken by bike.

The above statement comprehensively illustrates the lack of vision in parts of the study - parochial and naïve at best. Please change “could” to “should” to start with in the above paragraph.

Few people in the major cities of the world own cars. They have adapted, for example, by shopping on the way home from work, at their corner store located near the train station. Perhaps they have their shopping delivered. In other cases the corner store is simply located in their own apartment building. People may just eat out more often.

This is what the structure plan is about; society reorganizing itself to meet the new challenges and disgrading the now irrelevant paradigms of the past.

Regardless of the future – look at the present. There are people who:

- cannot drive a car due to lack of a license
- are incapable of driving a car
- are too young or too old to drive
- cannot afford a car
- have nowhere to park a car
- decide not to own a car
- have no access to a car
- decide to cycle to-day, maybe drive to-morrow

These people need to be accommodated.

School access relative to the study area:

In relationship to cycling and schools we have these statements:

Page 58

• There are many improvements that could be made to cycling routes and facilities in the centre. For example, cycle routes should be better developed in residential streets and more cycle parking provided. Community education is an important part of encouraging cycling in the area and raising driver awareness of cyclist safety, particularly around school drop off points.

Page 64

However, approximately 70% of the trips within Boroondara of 2km or less are made by car (53% as driver and 17% as passenger), a distance suitable for walking or cycling.

The schools listed below can be found within a 2km radius of Kew junction. Given the statement that 2km is a walkable distance, they are certainly in cycling distance. At a leisurely 15 km/hr, 2km represents an 8 minute trip on a bicycle. There are literally thousands of students within the 2km capture area, who could make use of the junction's facilities, such as the library. Or perhaps do a bit of shopping on the way home.

How is the access plan catering for these students?

Schools within a 2km radius of the study area:

Glenferrie Primary School
Hawthorn West Primary School
Kew East Primary School
St James Primary School
Yarra Primary School
Eramus School
St Josephs School
Carey Baptist College
Genazzano
Melbourne Girls College - in Yarra CC
Methodist Ladies College
Preshil Prep School
Ruyton Girls School
Sacred Heart School
Strathcona Baptists Girls Grammar School
Swinburne Senior Secondary College
Swinburne University of Technology
Swinburne University of Technology TAFE
Trinity Grammar School
Xavier
Xavier Prep. College

School drop off points

Page 65

Support and provide for increased use of bicycles by students as a means of travel to school.

Page 68

Adopt lower speed limits of 40km per hour in areas of high pedestrian activity such as

within the heart of the centre and around schools or community facilities.

Page 58

• There are many improvements that could be made to cycling routes and facilities in the centre. For example, cycle routes should be better developed in residential streets and more cycle parking provided. Community education is an important part of encouraging cycling in the area and raising driver awareness of cyclist safety, particularly around school drop off points.

It is suggested we spend money and time on educating drivers not to run over other people's children or our own, while dropping off children at school – (p58 above).

Admirable sentiment and nothing wrong with more education on safety issues. Encouraging cycling to school and discouraging car travel as suggested on page 65 is more to the point, as per the 2030 goals. Why not go further? How about disallowing older students from being dropped off outside schools completely, by placing no standing zones around secondary schools.

Or perhaps the council should designate specific locations for drop off/pickup that are not actually in front of schools but are instead located elsewhere. They could be located in positions that actually facilitated traffic flow in the immediate area, rather than clogging up local streets.

One could think of this as “drop off and walk” as per the “park & bus” facilities built by VicRoads by the Eastern freeway at Doncaster Rd and High St. Those who choose to cycle to school can cycle right up to the school entrance, away from the less safe vehicular activity at the drop off/pickup areas.

What about charging for drop off/pickup parking? Charge by vehicles based on their fuel consumption or green house gas emissions. Sound far fetched? Charging in this manner is becoming a reality in Europe. Any new vehicle on sale in England must display these figures prominently to potential purchasers and the vehicle is subsequently categorized on a pollution scale and therein after charged as appropriate during its lifetime.

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2001/20013523.htm>

<http://www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk/search/search.asp>

Residents in areas of London will be charged for their on street parking permits based on the type of car they drive:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/breakfast/6082820.stm>

Pedestrians vs cyclists

Page 64

Similar principles apply to cyclists, as outlined above for pedestrians. The main constraints to cycling in Kew Junction are the hilly topography, the poorly defined cycle routes and the lack of facilities. However, approximately 70% of the trips within Boroondara of 2km or less are made by car (53% as driver and 17% as passenger), a distance suitable for walking or cycling.

Need solutions here:

- Pedestrians are not cyclists. Cycling needs to be considered its own right.
- The cycle routes are poorly defined.
- Parking facilities are poor.

Looking at the population density figures for Boroondara our calculations show that 40,000 people are within a leisurely ten minute bicycle ride of the study area. – refer to our response re the Camberwell Junction Structure plan for detailed calculations.

http://www.boroondarabug.org/wiki/index.php/City_of_Boroondara_Bike_Plan

Access Maps - page 61 and page 62

The cycle routes as shown on the maps totally misrepresent the situation on the ground:

High St, Princess St, Studley Park Rd, Denmark St, Cotham Rd and Glenferrie Rd are all treated/painted as Wide Kerbside Lanes (WKL).

The important thing to note here is that WKL lanes are purely advisory and have no legal significance whatsoever. They are not bicycle lanes under the law. From a cyclist's point of view they are the lowest form of road markings for cyclists - one better than no markings. In addition these "lanes" can only be utilized during clearway times as parked cars cover them at other times. Many of the WKL road markings have been painted out in the immediate junction area even though they are only advisory. Currently the majority need to be repainted due to their poor condition.

There is only one true bicycle lane at the junction. It is located on the west side of High St, between Cotham Rd and the five ways. Once again this lane is only available during clear way times. It has no counterpart on the east side of High St. In addition its hours of use are signed incorrectly.

So while the 5-way intersection is well used by commuters, the cycle routes shown in the study area have no legal significance and are not useable outside clearway times. They should be removed from the structure plan maps or labeled as "advisory only - available peak hrs only".

Wellington St has legally valid bicycle lines but they are short and do not reach Denmark St as indicated on the study area map.

Other quieter local routes in the study area are not shown eg

- Malmsbury
- Walpole
- Barry
- Stevenson

Refer to the Travel Smart map for the area.

Cyclist crash data

Council's cyclist crash data shows a high number of crashes in the study area.

Page 58

Cycling

• *It is dangerous to cycle through the five ways or on the main arterial roads through Kew.*

Cyclist crash data does indicate that the junction is a high risk area. Having stated the facts in the structure plan how is the structure plan going to address this situation? Solutions need to be proposed in the structure plan.

For example the junction of High St and Derrick St is a black spot. Derrick St is used as a rat run by motorists. Cyclists heading to the city are on a downhill run and may be doing high speeds as they pass Derrick St and cars turning in or out of Derrick St may badly misjudge the cyclist's high speed resulting in a crash.

A green painted strip with associated bicycle symbols placed on High St, at the intersection with Derrick St, would go a long way to minimizing accidents at this point in the short term.

This previous comment is very specific for a structure plan; how about we broaden that out and suggest Derrick and Union St are closed with mid way blocks encouraging cars to use Charles St only. Cyclists could still pass through the mid way blocks. Other ideas include cyclist head start lanterns as seen at Flinders St and Swanston St in the CBD.

Please consider the following, which illustrates cycling infrastructure techniques here in Melbourne and abroad.

<http://www.bv.com.au/change-the-world/41229/>

<http://www.bv.com.au/change-the-world/41230/>

Passing through or a destination

February 2007 figures show 162 cyclists using the junction during the AM peak and 146 cyclists during the PM peak. The majority are traveling up and down High St and secondly Studley Park Rd. Heading in and out of the CBD in both cases and making use of the Yarra River crossings afforded by these routes. While clearly the study area is not their destination, they need to be catered for with facilities that enhance their safety.

The cyclist counts presented above do not include the more conservative cyclists, who completely avoid the junction at all costs, by using more circuitous yet safer routes, such as Wellington St. Clearly by 2030 these figures are likely to be much higher given that a stated aim of 2030 is that public transport and sustainable transport are to have priority over other less sustainable methods.

Although the junction itself may be deemed unsafe, the junction area can still be very accessible to cyclists. The junction can be a cyclist's destination without a cyclist ever having to ride through the actual junction. Quieter side streets can provide access and on arrival cyclists can park their bicycles or walk them in the shopping areas. These routes needed to be discussed/presented in the structure plan.

Eddington Transport Study, Recommendation 7, Project 5

"A separated bike lane along Highett and Crown Streets in Richmond to the Capital City Trail, then onto a new river crossing into Hawthorn. This new bridge would provide a high quality link from the eastern suburbs to the central city along Crown, Highett, Lennox and Albert Streets. Estimated Cost: \$5 million Total Length: 2 km"

The study area is 1.7km from where this proposed bridge would "touch down" in Boroondara once constructed. It appears that it is designed to attract cyclist traffic that would normally use the bridges at Victoria/Barkers Rds (Victoria Bridge) and Bridge/Church/Burwood Rds (Hawthorn Bridge). It recognises the need for a safe river crossing for cyclists. Cyclists would be then be funneled along the existing bicycle lanes in Highett St, Richmond.

Regardless of the efficacy of such a bridge, the recommendation illustrates that there is a need to cater for the substantial number of commuters that use the roads in the general area – this includes Kew junction. The numbers will only increase with time and the structure plan needs to accommodate the commuter routes through the junction.

The fact that the Eddington report specifically makes a recommendation dedicated solely to cycling is indicative of how matters are changing in Melbourne – congestion is now a major concern. Trip replacement by cycling works. Accommodating cyclists appropriately will encourage more people to cycle.

VicRoads

The VicRoads office in Denmark St perhaps paradoxically has a large number of employees who cycle to work. It would be useful to develop a questionnaire specifically for these employees that would illicit what they believe needs to be done in the Kew Junction area given their commuter expertise is certainly specific to this location. As a bonus, some of these people may well be traffic engineers.

Wellington St

The junction of Wellington St and Denmark St was/is a cyclist black spot. Given that Wellington St is well known cyclist route this not unsurprising. It would be useful if a route could be developed to link Stevenson St and Wellington St utilising Stratford Avenue and an east west link through the VicRoads property south of the tower blocks in line with Stevenson St. A pedestrian crossing/traffic lights would be required at Stevenson St & Denmark St – ditto at High St south. It would create a safer route for students cycling to schools in the east when coming from the west and would obviously be of particular benefit to Xavier and VicRoads employees.

It is clear that the existing Wellington St bicycle lanes need to be extended and connected to other nearby cycling routes – specifically:

- To the north - Davis St, Adeney St and the Victoria Park Trail
- To the south – Davis St, Wrixton St, Auburn Rd
- To the east – Sackville St and Mont Albert Rd
- To the west - Stevenson St and High St South
- Fenton St through to the junction

As these routes cover a lot of the local schools, it is essential that a high priority is given to the routes, at the expense of the morning afternoon school drop off/pickup by car. In order to provide more protection to young cyclists, the cycling boulevard approach may be a better approach than just marking bicycle lanes. 40kph signs should be installed at a minimum. The council's Draft Bicycle Strategy also looks at this route.

Please take the time to compare these two YouTube videos of children being dropped off by their parents at school:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gK6r9ocFk9w>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n_znwWroGM&hl

Malmsbury St

This residential street could benefit by becoming predominately a cycle route at the expense of through traffic. To some degree this is already the case and the road is well utilized by cyclists. It allows good linkages through to Leo's and the like via Brougham St and Walpole St.

Topography

Page 64

Similar principles apply to cyclists, as outlined above for pedestrians. The main constraints to cycling in Kew Junction are the hilly topography....

While the gradients due to the local topography can be extreme to the west of the junction area, the rest of the area is not unreasonable. Not unsurprisingly the roads in and out of the junction tend to follow the more favorable gradients – ridges and valleys. No doubt this was because when the roads were built in the first place, horse and carts were the means of transport. If horses can handle the gradients, cyclists can as well.

Regardless, it is no doubt true, that hills result in significant cyclist/car speed differentials when cyclists travel up hill. And surprisingly very little speed differential, when cyclists travel downhill. This can lead to motorist frustration for the former and misjudged motorists movements on the latter. On the former, this explains why the one and only cycle lane in the area is located between the 5 ways and Cotham Rd on the west side – it's uphill for cyclists, so it allows motorists to pass easily.

These speed differentials need to be catered for throughout the junction study area. Cycle lanes are needed for uphill and warning devices for downhill, for example some sort of sign along the lines of: “Fast cyclists” – with an exaggerated bicycle leaning into the wind. Green strip treatments for cycle lanes and T intersections are also badly needed.

Speed differentials are a common problem and there appears to be the need for signage specifically designed to alert road users to the possible speeds cyclist might be traveling at, in particular locations, whether that is very slowly or at high speed.

Parking

An inspection of the area shows that cycle parking is pretty much non-existent. The structure plan recommends “public art installations”. Around the world it is not uncommon to see sculptures that also encompass the utilitarian aspect of acting as bicycle parking. Just as any street art, they can enhance a space and provide a focal point.

Tram 109

Of the three reference documents, only one sentence mentions the VicRoads Tram 109 project. As the Tram 109 plans also affect cyclists, they should be reviewed in conjunction with the council's structure and access plans. It would be useful if they were shown in the artists' impressions and shown on the maps/plans.

Bicycle Victoria presents further information on the Tram 109 project here:

<http://www.bv.com.au/change-the-world/10797/>

We note that the Tram 109 project gets a specific mention in the council's own submission to the Eddington Transport Study. If however the council now considers the Tram 109 ideas as irrelevant then this also should be stated.

Minor layout error

P65

Recommended Strategies

- *Council advocate for improved priority for public transport services in its role as the management authority for the local road network.*
- *Promote greater signal priority for trams and buses at the intersections.*

Minor typo - these two statements should be moved to the "Public Transport" objectives in the document.