



Boroondara Bicycle Users Group
Response to:

City of Boroondara/ Parks Victoria
Yarra Bend Park Strategic Management Plan

18 January 2010

All feedback on the Strategic Management Plan must be sent to Mr Robin Crocker, Planning team robin@crocker-jones.net.au (9830-2242)

Boroondara Bicycle Users Group (BBUG) – Contact:

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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:

Yarra Bend Park Sports and Recreation Facilities Plan
Yarra Bend Park Precinct Directions (Draft) November 2009

Executive Summary

The Yarra Bend Park is a very popular destination and currently caters for a diverse group of cyclists from families exploring the network of trails, road riders training on the Yarra Boulevard and criterion circuit to Mountain bike riders and pedestrians.

The BUG believes that there is scope to improve and extend on the current facilities, thereby encouraging more people to engage in healthy outdoor activity.

BBUG suggested recommended actions

<i>Issue/topic</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Studley Park Boathouse precinct (7A)	Incorporate bicycle parking facilities within the picnic areas (and at all of the sporting facilities). Car parking is very limited and car parking facilities expensive to build and maintain. Many families and individuals ride to the park thereby reducing the number of vehicles entering the park and utilising the car park facilities yet there is no bike parking. Even at the Boat house, cyclists line their bikes up along the fence at the entrance to the boat house. Bike parking facilities located close to the picnic / barbecue facilities will enable cyclists to secure their bikes and also send a message to other visitors that it is a bike friendly park, encouraging them to ride to the park or bring their bikes and explore by bike
Par 3 Golf Course (8A)	The decommissioning of this golf course would create a great opportunity to establish a mountain bike park close to the city. Incorporating a range of abilities within the course would enable families riding to the park to utilise the park and further develop their riding skills as well as more advanced riders to have access to a conveniently located mountain bike park. During the summer months this facility would also attract riders during the week day evenings
Andrews Reserve (8B)	The proposed bridge at Clarke St across the Yarra would link to the proposed mountain bike area. As shown on the map here: http://boroondarabug.org/wiki/Gipps_Street_Stairs
Studley Point Loop Road (criterion Circuit) (7D)	Retain the closed road loop for cyclists. Signage needs be erected to deter motor cyclists using it. There is great potential to establish mountain bike facilities here for the more advanced riders. Care needs to be taken to ensure those trails are clearly identifiable from walker's trails to avoid user conflict. Shelter and bike parking (triathlon style parking rails) would be useful Encourage formation of a local support / friends group as per MBUYT (Mountain Bike Users of the Yarra Trails) to provide input on mountain bike specific trail design and maintenance.

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	<p>Creating a link between the criterion and the boat house and also the potential par 3 Mountain bike trail and entrance points to the park could be considered to encourage users to ride to the park, reducing the need for vehicles to park along the roadside</p>
<p>Deep Rock Area (3A) and River View Area (3B)</p>	<p>Develop the Eastern Freeway Bike Path. Cyclists in the Kew East & Balwyn North areas have no direct route to the north of the CBD or Melbourne University. The Yarra River Trail in the vicinity of Yarra Bend Park is used but the route is circuitous, hilly and snake infested. The Eastern Freeway Path would provide a direct route to the north of the CBD. Other suggested names include the Ceres Trail and the Dights Falls.</p> <p>It would meet up with the two routes as proposed in the Eddington Report ie Johnston St and Nicholson St/Landridge St. It would provide a good link to the Anniversary Trail. Cyclist traffic from the proposed Darebin Creek link could make good use of such a path leaving the existing Yarra Trail less trafficked.</p> <p>http://boroondarabug.org/wiki/M3#Eastern Freeway Path The 18 hole golf course (precinct 4) uses potable water, when the Yarra cannot be pumped from. They are talking about building a dam at the NE end of the course next to the freeway, which potentially could interfere with a cycleway at this location</p>
<p>Trig Point (5)</p>	<p>Develop the Yarra River Trail: The Yarra Trail starts at Southbank and follows the river upstream. It enters Boroondara at the Fairfield pipebridge and leaves at Burke Rd, where it continues to Westerfolds Park.</p> <p>Currently there is a large grade difference between the Fairfield pipebridge crossing the Yarra River and Chandler Hwy, as the trail is routed via a high point on Yarra Boulevard - green colored route. The route needs to be ironed out by removing the ascent to Yarra Boulevard - refer to mauve colored route. A substantial staircase at Chandler Hwy also has to be negotiated. The staircase needs to be eliminated.</p> <p>http://boroondarabug.org/wiki/Yarra River Trail</p>
<p>Merri Creek Valley and Escarpment (2B)</p>	<p>It has been suggested that the Merri Creek Trail would be moved from the road on the west side of Merri Creek at the confluence with the Yarra (at Dights Falls) to the path on the east side directly under the Freeway. There is already a path there (Yarra Trail) but the link to the footbridge on the north side of the Yarra needs to be improved.</p>
<p>Wills St Willsmere (6B)</p>	<p>It has been suggested that an observation tower built near the restaurant at the Par 3 golf course (8A) at Studley road. A better place would be at the trig point near the old Hospital. The paths</p>

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	leading to the old hospital should be improved. It's provides breath taking views that justify the walk / ride and has tourism potential
All precincts	Implement trail signage through out the park to identify the trail and designate their usage. (Refer to Boroondara Off road Signage Strategy)
All precincts	DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliance. A number of areas have been targeted as walking areas for older people. Consideration to wheel chair access to some areas of the park should also be considered (it's not just the elderly who use wheel chairs; pram access is also very limited). Parts of the Yarra Trail are very suitable for walking, riding and wheel chair access, yet are limited by stairs at some of the links eg: Chandler Highway Steps which limit access to the pathway alongside Yarra Boulevard. Existing Toilet facilities at the Loop Picnic Area have narrow access and steps making it impossible for wheelchair or walking frame access. . Any new toilet facilities should cater for DDA compliance
All Precincts	Establish and publicise off lead dog areas within the park where dogs can be exercised and socialised but ensure that measures are taken to keep dogs on leads at all other places in the park to avoid conflict with wildlife, pedestrians and cyclists
All Precincts	Access to drinkable water to refill drink bottles – spring loaded variety that turns off automatically. Locating drinkable water within the park can be difficult
Yarra Boulevard	Publicise more frequent closures of Yarra Boulevard through councils and cycling organisations to give more people the chance to discover the park and the connecting bike paths. A park showcase opportunity to promote the many facilities this park has to offer. The Boulevard should be recognised as a training ground for cyclists from Walmer St to Chandler Hwy
Communication	Ensure that the new facilities are communicated to the local councils so that they can be incorporated in their Travelsmart Maps: http://boroondarabug.org/wiki/Maps_and_Routes

Conclusion:

The key is to making the park assessable to a wide range of users is to ensure linkages and connectivity between the park entry and exit points enabling movement through the park and to the recreation areas. Encouraging more users to explore and enjoy the park on bike or on foot, will potentially see a reduction of vehicle reliant visits, thereby improving the safety of it's many users. The park offers great scope to provide high quality recreational and commuter facilities without compromising its attractive bush setting.