

# Submission to the draft Brunswick Structure Plan

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Moreland Bicycle Users Group  
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## Introduction

The Moreland Bicycle Users Group (BUG) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the draft Brunswick Structure Plan, which we see as a major opportunity to ensure that future development in Brunswick facilitates the continued growth of cycling as a key form of transport and recreation.

The BUG supports the nature and objectives of the draft Structure Plan, particularly the emphasis on active and sustainable transport and pedestrian amenity. This submission seeks to highlight opportunities for the Structure Plan to improve existing facilities and connections for cycling and raise concerns that have not been addressed in the draft Structure Plan.

The key areas of concern for BUG in relation to the draft Brunswick Structure Plan are as follows:

- North-south routes – main roads (particularly Sydney Rd)
- North-south routes – minor streets and Upfield Path
- East-west links and connectivity between cycling routes

### *About the BUG*

Moreland BUG was formed in 2006 through the cooperative merger of BrunsBUG and CoBUG (the Bicycle Users Groups of Brunswick and Coburg), which had both been active in the Moreland area for many years. The BUG is a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers who love cycling and wish to share the enjoyment.

The BUG's objectives are:

- To promote greater and safer commuter and recreational cycling in the City of Moreland
- To liaise with local and state government authorities regarding on-road and off-road bicycle facilities in the City of Moreland
- To liaise with other bicycle groups for the promotion of cycling
- To provide affordable and accessible membership and activities for all members
- To organise recreational rides for Moreland Bicycle User Group Inc. members
- The promotion of cycling in general.

### *Cycling in Moreland*

There has been a boom in cycling in Melbourne and Moreland is a key growth area. The 2006 Census indicates around 20,500 journeys were made to work each day by bicycle, up from 14,500 in 2001 – a huge increase of 42.5%. This is great news as it shows that people across Melbourne are opting to use a healthy and sustainable way to travel to work and make local trips.

Moreland has become Melbourne's epicentre of cycling, as shown in Figure 1 (below). There was an 80% increase in the number of Moreland residents cycling to work between 2001 and 2006: 1132 people in 2001 compared with 2052 in 2006. Bicycle Victoria's 2008 Super Tuesday count, commissioned by the City of Moreland, indicates nearly 20% increase in the past 12 months to April. Council must take a proactive approach to ensure this growth continues and that existing and future cyclists are catered for as the city's key cycling routes reach capacity during peak times.

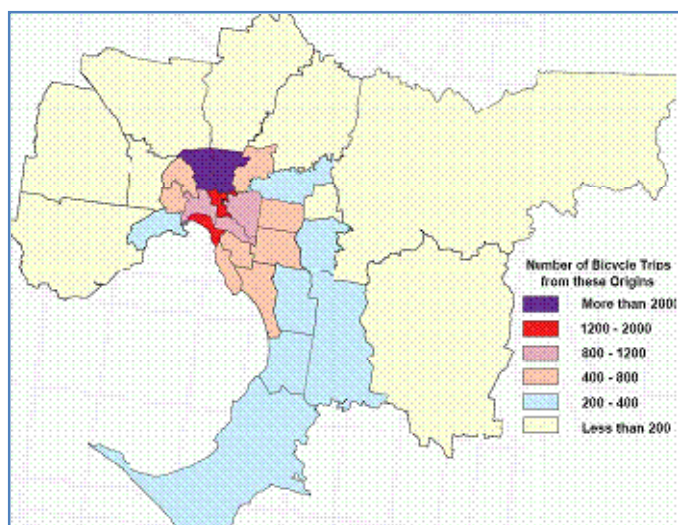


Figure 1: Number of bicycle trips by region (Vic). Source: 2006 Census data, Bicycle Victoria

# Response to Draft Brunswick Structure Plan

## General Issues & Themes

### *Pedestrian priority*

The BUG notes that the Brunswick Structure Plan places strong priority on pedestrian access and amenity. Recognising the important role that pedestrian-friendly streetscapes play in facilitating economic, social and environmental sustainability in the urban environment, the BUG encourages Council to ensure that the similar role that cycling plays is also treated as a matter of priority. Pedestrian and cyclist amenity often go hand in hand and should complement one another; the BUG wishes to ensure that this complementarity is recognised by and enshrined within the final Structure Plan. Footpath extensions, for example, should be designed in such a way that adequate bike lanes are still able to operate either on the adjacent stretch of road or within the footpath extension.

### *Transport interchanges and super stops*

The Structure Plan proposes the introduction of super stops and key transport interchanges at various locations; the BUG urges Council to ensure that the design of these stops and interchanges facilitates bicycle travel. The design of super tram stops to date has often had the effect of hindering rather than facilitating cycling: the stop at the northern approach to the Bourke St Mall in the CAD, for example, provides no route for cyclists to access Swanston St, while super stops along Collins St don't prevent bicycle access but instead force them into a very narrow "bicycle lane", creating dangerous squeeze points where cars speed up to pass trams even when there is not enough room to pass cyclists safely. The BUG will support improved transport interchanges that seek to improve bicycle access and amenity.

### *New roads*

The draft Structure Plan proposes a number of new streets. BUG recommends that any new roads contain on-road bike lanes as a matter of course.

### *North-south routes*

The BUG agrees that there is a shortage of north-south routes in Brunswick providing safe, unhampered, direct commuting options for cyclists. The Structure Plan process presents significant opportunities to address this issue with regard to Sydney Rd (which is part of the Principal Bicycle Network), Nicholson St (which is wide enough to allow for substantial cycling facilities to be incorporated into the road space and whose role as a key route is likely to increase with residential densification and commercial diversification along the corridor) and Lygon St (which falls under Council's jurisdiction rather than VicRoads).

The BUG contends that all major on-road north-south routes (particularly Sydney Rd, Lygon St and Nicholson St) should be significantly improved to facilitate safe and amenable cycling. Short-medium term options include on-road bicycle lanes and priority signalling for trams and bicycles, as well as bike "storage boxes" at all signalised intersections. The Structure Plan also presents opportunities to identify improvements for minor or "back-street" routes commonly used by cyclists, such as Barrow St, Truscott/Amess St and Grantham/Pearson St.

### *East-west routes*

There is a need for east-west bicycle links between the Sydney Road, Lygon Street & Nicholson Street precincts. Victoria Street & Albert Street have been highlighted in the draft plan for pedestrian streetscape improvements – this should be expanded to include bicycle infrastructure.

## Volume 1

### 3. Vision

The BUG supports the vision's emphasis on encouraging modal shift towards active and public transport. The following desired outcomes are particularly welcome:

- Improved street and open space networks that allow the majority of people to arrive and move around Brunswick on foot, by bike or by using public transport.
- That the provision and location of services and facilities allow the majority of people to arrive and move around Brunswick on foot, by bike or by using public transport.
- That improvements to the bicycle network allow every street to be a cycling street (Moreland Bicycle Plan 2000).
- That pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities are given priority access around the Brunswick Activity Centre.
- Strengthened east-west pedestrian and cycling connections along Albert and Victoria Streets link Brunswick's regional open spaces.

The vision includes the desired outcome that pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities are given priority around the Brunswick Activity Centre. The BUG supports this outcome, noting that while the emphasis on public transport and walking is clear throughout volumes 1 and 2 of the Plan, the emphasis on cycling is less consistent. The BUG sees an opportunity to ensure that the role and priority status of cycling is fully incorporated into the language of the final document.

## Volume 2: Sydney Road/Upfield Corridor

### *1.2.4.7 Transport & Movement Issues*

The section on cycling on page 8 makes reference to the **conflict between pedestrians and commuter cyclists on the Upfield Shared Path**, and the BUG agrees that this is a significant issue that will continue to grow as the area surrounding the path densifies and greater volumes of pedestrians and cyclists wish to use it. The issue is of particular concern around the entrances to train stations and where “blind” corners are created (for example, where east-west streets cross or meet the path).

Whilst acknowledging conflict between users on the Upfield Path, this section makes no reference to any issues for **cyclists on Sydney Rd**, which is a part of the Principal Bicycle Network. The volume of cyclists travelling along Sydney Rd is roughly the same as on the Upfield Path, and given that the Upfield Path is now operating at capacity during peak times we expect that Sydney Rd will remain a key north-south route for cyclists. Cyclists also shop and access businesses and services on Sydney Rd, contributing to the economic sustainability of the area.

However, many cyclists avoid Sydney Rd due to safety concerns, as the volume of motorised traffic combined with tram tracks and poor road surfaces makes it a dangerous and unpleasant option. These cyclists seek other routes, which are generally less direct and, in the case of the Upfield Path, slower. The BUG believes that making Sydney Rd safer and more attractive for cyclists will ensure that existing cyclists are better served, and is also likely to lead to greater uptake of cycling by those who currently use other modes. The Brunswick Structure Plan provides a key opportunity to improve Sydney Rd in relation to the concerns raised above and the BUG encourages Council to include a study into potential options as part of the final plan.

### *1.2.4.8 Transport & Movement Strategies*

The BUG agrees with the need to develop **on-road bicycle routes on Sydney Rd and elsewhere**, not merely as a duplicate for the Upfield Shared Path but to encourage commuter cycling on Sydney Rd (which is identified as a key cycling route within VicRoads’ Principal Bicycle Network).

### *1.2.5 Key Initiatives*

The BUG supports the proposed **reconfiguration of Wilson Avenue** to the Jewell Station/Barkly Square public realm, establishment of a **west-east link continuing Wilkinson Street** through from Sydney Rd, and **improved access to Anstey Station**. BUG notes that the entrance to Anstey Station and surrounding area is currently hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians, and although the recent installation of a stretch of unmarked bitumen next to the existing path has helped to reduce conflict at the station entrance there are still a number of issues to be addressed, including the misalignment of the path on either side of Albion St.

## Precinct 1A: Jewell Station/Sydney Rd Gateway

### *1.3.2 Issues*

The BUG agrees that the **quality of access to Jewell Station** and **integration of the Upfield Shared Path** at this point are poor.

**Hooper Reserve** and the intersection in which it is located is also an issue for cyclists, and the BUG notes that cyclists and pedestrians do not appear to have been factored in to traffic engineering treatments at this intersection.

### *1.3.3 Strategies*

The redesign and redevelopment of the **Jewell Station and environs** including the Upfield Shared Path should aim to minimise conflict between those entering the station and cyclists travelling through via the path.

## **Precinct 1B: Civic and Cultural Precinct**

### *1.4.2 Issues*

The BUG agrees that there is **poor coordination between public transport modes**. This could be expanded to include poor links to cycling networks that may act as ‘feeders’ to public transport.

The BUG agrees that the **Upfield Shared Path is currently at capacity** during peak commute times.

### *1.4.3 Strategies*

**Major streetscape improvements** should make provision for cyclists, including through routes where possible/appropriate, and bicycle parking to enable people to cycle to the area, park their bikes and make use of the enhanced pedestrian amenity.

## **Precinct 1C: Brunswick Station/Frith St**

### *1.5.2 Issues*

This section focuses on poor pedestrian amenity with no mention of **poor cycling amenity**. Given that outside of peak commuting times the majority of cyclists are likely to be coming to the area as a destination rather than passing through, the lack of cycling amenity should be addressed.

## **Precinct 1D: Anstey Urban Village**

### *1.6.1*

BUG supports a **bicycle link from Blair St through Randazzo Park to Beith St**.

### *1.6.2 Issues & 1.6.3 Strategies*

The BUG agrees that the Upfield Shared Path issues need to be addressed, particularly in the area around **Anstey Station**; there does not appear to be any strategies identified in 1.6.3 to address those issues.

The BUG supports a **generous shared path** between the northern and southern access points to Anstey Station.

## Volume 2: Lygon Street

### *2.2.4.7 Transport and movement issues*

The BUG agrees that **Lygon Street does not provide a safe north-south route** at present, and adds that there is significant demand among the cycling community for this route to be dramatically improved. Two bike shops currently operate inside the area of Lygon St covered by the Structure Plan – Lygon Cycles in Precinct 2A, and My Mountain in Precinct 2C – and these, along with the growing range of cafes, retail outlets and service businesses are increasingly popular destinations for cyclists. BUG expects that demand for Lygon St to be made safer for cyclists will continue to increase as the area densifies.

BUG agrees that car traffic undermines the identity and function of the Lygon Street activity corridor as a social and economic space, and supports initiatives that will seek to increase the modal share of active and public transport in the Lygon St area.

### *2.2.4.8 Transport and movement strategies*

The BUG supports the proposal to **reduce traffic speeds** along Lygon St. Our preferred option is for a speed limit of 40km/h.

The BUG supports **enhanced tram stops** that do not impede cyclist movement or negatively impact upon cyclist safety.

The BUG supports, and expresses desire to be involved in, a **feasibility study into the future transport role** of Lygon St. We contend that any study should seek to identify and assess options that will improve cyclist safety and amenity along Lygon St and surrounds. As noted in the draft Structure Plan, given that Lygon St is not controlled by VicRoads it is not required to function as a through-route for car traffic.

## Precinct 2A: Lygon St South

The BUG notes that **Lygon St widens considerably as it approaches Brunswick Rd** (heading south); this may provide scope to improve cycling amenity along this stretch by installing separated cycling lanes such as the Copenhagen-style lanes on Swanston St in Melbourne, or similar.

## Precinct 2C: Lygon St North Gateway

### *2.5.2 Issues*

The BUG agrees that the **gateway to Lygon Street** is dominated by traffic making it unpleasant and dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists, and that the uncoordinated movement of traffic through the intersection and the clearway further add to the unpleasantness and danger of the area.

### *2.5.3 Strategies*

The BUG supports the preparation of a **streetscape and traffic management plan** to improve the public realm and a **feasibility study for an enhanced transport interchange**, and wishes to be involved in the development of these documents.



## Volume 2: Nicholson Street

### 3.2 Nicholson Street

#### 3.2.4.1 Economic Issues

The BUG agrees that access to the north and east is made difficult by **poorly aligned connections** to St Georges Rd and Holmes St. Bicycle travel between Moreland and Darebin is made difficult by the lack of safe, amenable routes – north of Miller St, the only connecting route is Separation St which is unpleasant and dangerous for cyclists due to its narrowness, fast-moving motor traffic and lack of bicycle lanes.

#### 3.2.4.6 Transport & Movement Issues & 3.2.4.7 Transport & Movement Strategies

The BUG agrees that the **lack of bicycle lanes on Nicholson St** detracts from the street's potential to serve as a north-south route for cyclists. The BUG supports the proposed strategy to undertake a **feasibility study for Nicholson St's future transport role**, and recommends that all canvassed options include designated facilities for cyclists. Figures 2 and 3 show examples of separated bike and tram facilities in the French cities of Strasbourg and Montpellier.



Figure 2: Separated tramway and bikeway in Strasbourg, France. Source: [www.tramsinfrance.net](http://www.tramsinfrance.net)



Figure 3: Tramway between general traffic lanes and pedestrian/bikeway, Montpellier, France. Source: [www.tramsinfrance.net](http://www.tramsinfrance.net)

The BUG agrees that **clearways on Nicholson St** have negative effects for retail activity and pedestrian amenity, and adds that clearways also reduce cycling amenity. It is well known that higher speed limits make roads more dangerous for cyclists, and studies from around the globe have consistently found that speed is the single most important determinant of the number of road fatalities generally<sup>1</sup>. Further, fast-moving traffic during clearways forces cyclists to the edge of the outer lane, which places them at the periphery of drivers' view and may lead to cyclists riding in the gutter.

The BUG supports the proposed strategy of **reducing traffic speed** along Nicholson Street and recommends a speed limit of 40km/h.

#### *3.2.4.8 Public Realm Issues & 3.2.4.9 Public Realm Strategies*

The BUG supports the development of **pedestrian-priority streetscapes** and encourages Council to seize all opportunities to ensure that these treatments also include provisions for cyclists, such as bicycle parking, to encourage people to cycle to activity nodes. BUG also urges Council to ensure that the design of pedestrian-priority streetscapes does not hinder bicycle access to and through activity nodes. As mentioned previously, in some areas treatments such as the O'Hea St bike road in Coburg/Pascoe Vale may be applicable to encourage both cycling and pedestrian activity within a defined area.

### **3.3 Precinct 3A: Nicholson St South**

#### *3.3.2 Issues & 3.3.3 Strategies*

The BUG agrees that the **Capital City Trail bicycle path is 'pinched'** at the Nicholson St/Video Ezy point and notes that the City of Moreland has previously committed to realigning the path at this point. Any future plans for this site, including the proposed enhanced transport interchange, should take into account the current plans for realignment and the high volume of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the Capital City Trail.

#### *Map 3.3*

The route that crosses Brunswick Rd via Amess St in the south and Truscott St in the north forms part of a key north-south cycling route, however the **crossing at Brunswick Rd** is currently dangerous and causes long delays for bicycle traffic, as it requires the navigation of four busy lanes of traffic with no signalised crossing or traffic island. BUG notes that these streets are identified as being "active movement links" to improve pedestrian amenity; it would significantly improve amenity and safety for both cyclists and pedestrians if a **signalised crossing** were installed at the intersection of Amess St/Truscott St and Brunswick Rd. BUG expects that a signalised crossing at this point would also significantly improve access to the primary school to the west, and reduce delays for the 251 bus (which turns right onto Brunswick Rd from Amess St and experiences long delays).

### **3.4 Precinct 3B: Nicholson St Central**

#### *3.4.1 Role*

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria Public Transport Institute (2007) 'Speed Reductions: Strategies that Reduce Traffic Speeds', *Online TDM Encyclopedia*.  
[www.vtpi.org/tm/tm105.htm](http://www.vtpi.org/tm/tm105.htm)

The BUG notes that a new **neighbourhood shopping centre** is proposed for this precinct – any shopping precinct should contain ample bicycle parking and excellent bicycle access to encourage customers to ride to the centre.

#### *Map 3.4*

John St is identified as an active movement link within this precinct; as it is part of a key “backstreet” north-south route, the number of cyclists travelling along John St can be expected to grow with densification in this area. BUG recommends that Council investigate traffic conditions where John St crosses Glenlyon Rd and consider installing a **signalised crossing** at this point.

A signalised crossing may also be beneficial where Albert St crosses Nicholson St, particularly if Albert St is to act as a catalyst streetscape to connect the Merri Creek Parklands to the Brunswick Activity Centre.

### **3.5 Precinct 3C: Nicholson St North & Merri Creek Parklands**

#### *3.5.2 Issues & 3.5.3 Strategies*

This section notes that pedestrian **access to the CERES Environment Park** is poor, but does not mention that cyclist access is also poor. CERES is a significant destination for cyclists and any strategy to encourage spin-off environmental businesses could also be expected to generate high volumes of bicycle traffic (both staff and patrons). The Structure Plan should specifically address bicycle access issues in this area.

This section states that the Blyth St intersection is an unpleasant and dangerous pedestrian environment; **this intersection is also problematic for cyclists**, which should be addressed.

A key aim for Precinct 3C is to activate “catalyst streetscapes” to improve pedestrian **links between the Brunswick Activity Centre and the Merri Creek Parklands**; it should be noted that these parklands are also a significant destination for cyclists, and that the Merri Creek Trail is a cycling trail as well as a walking path. As such, improved bicycle links should also be an aim.

#### *Figure 3.2*

3.2 (A) should read: “CERES will be better integrated with pedestrian *and cyclist* networks...”.

## Volume 2: Core Employment Precinct & Central Parklands

### *General comments*

The draft structure plan does not make much mention of the use of cycling as a means of transport to, within and from the central parklands precinct, despite the area's key function as a **sport and recreational precinct**. The sporting complex proposed for this area should also have good bicycle parking facilities.

There is an opportunity to develop a **children's cycling area** in Brunswick Park between the Croquet Club and Victoria St. The existing figure eight bitumen path is already commonly used as a training area for small children learning to ride their bikes. Further nearby areas could be used to develop a Pump or BMX track.

### *4.2.5 Transport and Movement issues*

This section identifies the issue that "Bicycle routes through the area, especially north-south, are not well defined", however this is not addressed in the following Transport and Movement Strategies (4.2.6).

This document was prepared by the Moreland Bicycle Users Group (Inc) as part of the community consultation process for the Brunswick Structure Plan.