



Moreland Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) Review

Submission by Moreland BUG
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Moreland Bicycle User Group (Moreland BUG) is a community organisation run by volunteers that has been advocating for safer bike riding in Moreland for thirty years.

Much transport and accessibility policy assume disabled people arrive by motor vehicles. The fact is that for many disabled people, independent use of a motor vehicle will never be an option due to either licensing and/or physical limitations. Policy that prioritises the use of motor vehicles for disabled access also works to make a potential source of independent travel, by bicycle, less accessible for the disabled.

While Moreland Council has an active transport policy designed to encourage residents to travel by foot or on bicycles when possible, there could be more recognition of the role bicycles, whether standard or adapted, can play in providing independent mobility choices for disabled residents. Many people living with disabilities use bicycles as mobility aids¹.

Disabilities that prevent people from driving a car often do not prevent that person from travel by bicycle. And a bicycle can often provide an active transport option to someone who cannot walk any distance. Residents in Moreland with disabilities already travel by bicycle, either on standard bicycles, tricycles, recumbents or on adapted bicycles customised to their needs. But this option would be available to many more if travelling by bicycle were safer and more accessible².

1.0 Protection from motor vehicles.

Protected bicycle lanes play a significant role in giving residents the confidence to make local trips by bicycle. They are even more significant for riders with disabilities as it is often not a case of them swapping out one means of independent mobility for another, but of accessing a mode of independent travel, when they have less options for that independence than others.

Some disabled riders rely on bicycles that are even more vulnerable in motor vehicle traffic than standard bicycles, for example, recumbent bicycles close to the ground. Bicycle lanes that are protected from motor vehicle traffic are even more important to these riders' confidence to travel by bicycle than they are for riders on more upright bicycles such as tricycles and standard bicycles.

Disabled riders may be able to get an exemption to travel on the footpath by bicycle but shared spaces with pedestrians are a source of stress and conflict for all riders and are not practicable in the busiest areas, such as shopping strips, where residents are most likely to want to go. Protected bicycle lanes that give disabled riders safe access to shops, businesses transport and services, in particular those provided by Moreland Council, are essential to help provide equitable access to these services and destinations.

Protected bicycle lanes and other infrastructure for bicycle riders need to be of a width that can be used by all the bicycles people may use, including tricycles and adapted bicycles.

2.0 End of trip access

In addition to ensuring that all Council services and shops, medical and transport services are accessible via a protected bicycle lane or purpose designed shared path (not a re-signed

footpath) it is essential to consider the needs of disabled riders once they reach their destination.

Disabled riders can often not lift their bicycle over a kerb from a road surface or bike lane. Kerb ramps need to be provided at destinations so that bicycles can be ridden or rolled off the bike path or road to appropriate parking. Not all riders are able to walk any distance and this needs to be considered when providing access to bicycle parking.

3.0 Parking all sorts of bicycles

It is also important to consider whether bicycle parking provided by Moreland Council allows for the parking of bicycles used by disabled riders. Tricycles, whether recumbent or upright, need more space between bicycle racks and to manoeuvre. Recumbent bicycles have longer wheelbases that require bigger turning circles and adapted bicycles also often do not fit into 'standard' spaces. Bicycle parking should be provided as close to the destination as possible for those riders unable to walk far and be accessible from the bike/shared path by cycling, not only by walking and/or pushing a bicycle.

4.0 Path/road works and detours

Paths and roads are often closed due to building and/or path and road works and the alternatives provided for people on bicycles are often not suitable for those riding with disabilities. It is often the case that cyclists are asked to dismount and walk, but this is not an option for some disabled riders. The knowledge that they may come across this situation is enough to deter people from using a bicycle.

Detours when provided are often not of the same level of separation from traffic and comfort as the original route and again this can deter people from riding.

It is important to ensure that alternatives provided during road or path closures are accessible to ALL riders and if that can't be done that communication advising riders of the changes is directed at those most likely to be affected.

5.0 Multi-modal travel

Bicycles are an important means of giving disabled people access to public transport options. Many stations are accessed by elevators that cannot accommodate some of the bicycles disabled people may be using, for example at Flinders Street. When there are no ramps in place, such as at the new Moreland and Coburg stations the station is effectively off limits to these riders.

The 510 bus service on Moreland Road that runs from Essendon to Ivanhoe has racks to carry bicycles but again these can only accommodate standard bicycles, not many of the bicycles that disabled riders may be using. And yet disabled riders may be the ones that would benefit the most from use of this service.

Resources:

Invisible Cyclists? Disabled people and cycle planning – a case 2 study of London

http://rachelaldred.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Accepted_Author_Disability_JTH.pdf

A Guide to Inclusive Cycling

<https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FINAL.pdf>

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/jan/02/cambridge-disabled-people-cycling-rolling-walking-stick>

² <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/6513/5468>