



GreenBridges@brisbane.qld.gov.au

31 March 2021

Dear Green Bridges Team,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Brisbane City Council's proposal for green bridges from Toowong to West End and West End to St Lucia.

Space for Cycling Brisbane is an association of the Bicycle User Groups of Brisbane. We therefore recommend the submissions from Brisbane CBD BUG and from Brisbane West BUG which you would have already received.

Brisbane in 2021 is a city with a high reliance on private motor vehicle transport. Better connected infrastructure for walking, cycling and e-mobility will empower residents to switch a portion of car trips, reduce the load on the road network, and create a healthier, safer and more sustainable and connected community. We therefore commend Brisbane City Council, under the leadership of Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner, for your commitment to new green bridges for Brisbane.

Our views on the proposed alignments for the bridges from Toowong to West End and West End to St Lucia are as follows:

Toowong to West End

We believe the case for a walking and cycling bridge between West End and Toowong is strong. Such a bridge will:

- offer Toowong residents direct access to markets, restaurants, art and music venues and green space in West End
- link West End residents to shopping, business and health facilities in Toowong
- enable commuters to interchange at Toowong Railway Station, walk across the bridge and access high-frequency bus services to destinations in West End and South Brisbane.

A bridge in this location would provide most benefit to people walking and accessing public transport. For those travelling by bike, there is already a good protected and mostly flat cycling route via Riverside Drive, the GoBetween Bridge, and the Bicentennial Bikeway. However this bridge offers a substantial shortcut (subtracting as much as 5km from a journey), which will undoubtedly encourage more people to consider cycling.

We think the maximum value for cycling will be achieved if the two proposed bridges are delivered in combination. However we still support a green bridge between Toowong and West End even if the St Lucia Bridge does not proceed.

Our thoughts on the 3 proposed alignments for a bridge from Toowong to West End are as follows:

Option C

On the Toowong side, this alignment would land at a site which is currently empty, but is in private hands. This block is on the corner of Archer St, near the corner of Glen Rd, and appears to almost share the road access with the driveway of the neighbouring property. The existing footpath on Archer St at this point is very poor, and there are limited options to improve it or the cycling route due to the terrain.

Together with the information provided by Council that a bridge with this alignment would need to be quite steep, and could impact established trees on the West End side, this is sufficient for us to rule out this option as a realistic possibility.

Option B

This option puts the Toowong landing on Archer St closest to the walkway and link through to Toowong Village and Toowong Station. However, it would require resumption of an existing character home. From the Bicentennial Bikeway, or from Glen Rd, reaching this landing site would require a steep climb up Archer St.

From a cycling perspective, the slightly shorter distance from this bridge to the Toowong Walkway (where cycling is banned anyway) really isn't enough to outweigh the disadvantages of this landing location.

Option A

With Options B and C feeling like strawman proposals, we believe Option A is the only realistic alignment proposed. It has the advantage of the lowest profile, and the best connection from the Bicentennial Bikeway – particularly if a connection is created through the old ABC site at 600 Coronation Drive as required under the Brisbane City Plan and the Local Government Infrastructure Plan. (We also support calls for that site to be returned to public ownership for parkland).

Conclusion

For the Toowong to West End green bridge, we favour Option A. Our support for this option still insists that the detailed plan:

- minimise (or preferably totally avoid) impact on established trees in Orleigh Park

- preserve the important Sorry Site at Cranbrook place
- minimise the bridge landing footprint, and activate the space under the bridge to create quality public space.

West End to St Lucia

We consider that alone, the case for a bridge connecting West End to St Lucia is not as strong as that for a connection from West End to Toowong. However we think the real value is in delivering these two bridges together.

In combination, this pair of bridges could provide a car-free cycling (and walking/running) route with gentle gradients connecting the Bicentennial Bikeway along the river at Toowong to the University of Queensland. Currently, the options are either a slow, steep, and difficult route along the 'back-streets' including Jerdanefeld Rd and Hiron St, or braving motor vehicle traffic along hectic multi-lane Sir Fred Schonell Drive. (Unfortunately, Council have previously strongly opposed improving Sir Fred Schonell Drive to make it safer and more attractive for walking and cycling.)

This link would also improve active travel options to the University of Queensland for people from West End and the inner south-side, as well as from Toowong, Milton, and most of Brisbane's western suburbs. Improving active travel connections to the University will encourage more staff and students away from driving – which will pay dividends to residents of the St Lucia peninsula. A bridge to West End would also provide those St Lucia residents better access to frequent bus services.

In combination with the existing Eleanor Schonell Bridge, these two new bridges would complete a missing east-west connection on the inner south side of Brisbane, connecting Toowong through to Greenslopes, Coorparoo, and the V1 Veloway.

Option A – Guyatt Park

From a connectivity perspective, option A makes a lot of sense. It would connect from Orleigh St to Macquarie St, where there is then a relatively flat, low-traffic route to the University of Queensland. It would also link Guyatt Park with Orleigh Park, creating a long linear park along the river, and giving residents on both sides more options for accessing green space.

This option would not require any resumption of private property. (We note that none of the proposed landing sites require resumption of property at St Lucia, but options B and C would involve property resumptions for the West End landing).

We are aware that option A has sparked protests from residents about the impact on local green space; both at Orleigh Park and at Guyatt Park.

In Guyatt Park, the plans suggest a landing point just downstream from the ferry terminal in an area with BBQs, picnic tables and a playground. We would prefer a landing on the eastern side

of the park which is largely open space. This would also reduce the number of people cycling through Guyatt Park, which is another issue of concern for some local residents.

We also question why the bridge could not land at nearby Laurence St where the land remains zoned for public transport. A landing at Laurence St would seem similar to a landing at Munro St (proposed option B). We note that there appears to be room for a green bridge landing adjacent to the old shelter without impacting it – in the same way the old ferry terminal buildings at Bulimba and Hawthorne have been incorporated into the new terminals. There are examples all around Brisbane where heritage infrastructure has been moved or removed to make way for roads (eg. Kingsford Smith Drive and Lytton Rd) or to suit the plans of private developers (eg. Howard Smith Wharves and Lambert St, Kangaroo Point).

Option C

Option C offers some advantages, as it lands closer to the University of Queensland, between the Toowong Rowing Club and St Thomas's Kindergarten. Although this would also impact riverside green space, it appears to be an area that is less well used, and not as controversial as Guyatt Park.

However, with the proposed landing point half way up Boundary St at West End, this option misses much of the connectivity value of Option A.

Boundary St is steep; it is a tough ride up from the river to the proposed bridge landing. It's also a long, steep ride or walk from the commercial precinct on Boundary St, and there's no good connection to Dornoch Tce which is the main east-west cycling route.

Bus connectivity at Boundary St also appears problematic – there's no good location for a high-frequency bus turn-around.

But the main issue we see with the proposed Boundary St landing is that it would require resumption of multiple private properties – which are not just empty blocks, but people's homes. It would also significantly impact on a number of other neighbouring properties. A walk around the local streets demonstrates strong and well-organised opposition to the proposal.

It's clear that any bridge landing at Paradise St would be a very imposing structure, and it's not hard to understand the opposition to land resumptions and the effect this bridge would have on the character of this pocket of West End where residents have valued being tucked away over the hill and away from any major traffic routes.

The cycling community have witnessed the hurt inflicted on the community in East Brisbane where a whole row of homes were compulsorily resumed to widen Lytton Rd. We would not support similar action here without a clear demonstration of wider benefits.

Since option C is not a good cycling connection – with the access streets being steep and/or narrow – its main value would seem to be for walking trips. The main beneficiaries could then be

expected to be the people living close by. We note that the density in this part of the Kurilpa Peninsula is much lower than other areas like that between the Brisbane River and Montague Road.

Option B

On the St Lucia side, the landing at Munro St would appear to be similar to a landing at Laurence St. It doesn't have the advantage of linking two parks like Option A, but it would provide a good, flat cycling route to the University of Queensland via Macquarie St like the other two options.

On the West End side, the proposed landing is a privately owned block of land on Ryan St. That land is currently empty, so we assume a resumption would be a matter of a commercial transaction, rather than taking someone's home.

Ryan St provides a reasonably flat cycling connection to Hoogley St, but it's typically lined with parked cars, and only has narrow footpaths. It would not readily support a frequent bus service, so accessing public transport would involve a substantial walk to an existing stop.

Conclusion

Our preference for a bridge from West End to St Lucia is for Option A, with Option B a poor second. We don't support option C.

However we would like to see a review of the landing options around Guyatt Park. We think there are alternatives to address legitimate community concerns with this landing. We will be disappointed if a bridge at this location is dismissed based on impacts that could be easily mitigated or avoided.

Thank you for considering our input. We look forward to progress on detailed designs for these bridges.

Regards,

Belinda Ward

for Space for Cycling Brisbane
0434 906 364