

WESTERN BRISBANE CYCLING PRECINCT

PROPOSAL BY

Road Cycling Clubs
Triathlon Clubs
Mountain Bike Clubs

SUPPORTED BY

Local schools
Cycling coaches
Cycling Queensland
Mountain Bike Australia

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Cycling Precinct Proposal

The proponents of this proposal seek to provide a:

- Cycling adventure park to attract young and old to one location where they can develop cycling skills, confidence and fitness
- Competitive venue for a variety of cycling events

History

Mountain biking in Brisbane has proven to be very popular in the Gap Creek Reserve area of Mt Coot-tha Forest since Brisbane City Council approved a network of cross-country trails in 2004. It is conservatively estimated that at least 400 riders visit Gap Creek Reserve on the weekend with another 200 riders through the week.

There are a couple of issues arising from this popularity that need resolution. Firstly Brisbane City Council provides no other venue for mountain bike riding, so there is a high concentration in one location. Secondly, there is no venue whatsoever for training and competitive events, so clubs hire private property even for small club events. With no public training venues, mountain bike athletes train at the Gap Creek Reserve area, which adds further issues of impact and conflict.

Road cycling is suffering similar access issues for riding, training and racing. Traffic is becoming heavier, increasing the sense of danger for cyclists. Young or inexperienced cyclists have increasing difficulty feeling safe while negotiating traffic.

Road racing is more difficult to organise as small rural towns object to the disruption of their roads and police permits are becoming more difficult to obtain. The UQ Cycling club, in the western suburbs, has recently been prohibited from training and racing at the University of Queensland campus. The road criteriums on Wednesdays and Saturdays each week were very popular with both road cyclists and triathletes. Now these cyclists ride from the western suburbs in order to race at the Nundah or Murarrie criterium circuits.

These issues affect mature cyclists. Youngsters are having even more difficulty finding safe places to enjoy cycling, whatever form it takes.

The Solution is a Cycling Precinct with a Variety of Courses

An adventure park, for anyone with a bicycle, projects a vision that the whole community can relate to.

Every second household has a bicycle in the garage.

The 2007 South-east Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand study found 29% of residents cycle at least once a year, the median frequency being 12 times. This is an increase from 26% in 2001.

The 2007 figures equate to 7.4 million activity events per year in SEQ which far outstrips walking or picnicking with 3.8 million activity events each per year.

It is proposed that a cycling precinct should contain a variety of courses.

- Mountain bike short course
- Mountain bike skills area
- Mountain bike pump track.
- Road criterium course
- Road riding skills area
- Road safety course

Mountain Bike Facility – Short Course

The essential feature of mountain bike (MTB) courses is they are constructed on a natural surface. Brisbane has examples of MTB trails designed and constructed to world's best practice at Gap Creek Reserve, Mt Coot-tha Forest.



Mountain bike trail at Gap Creek Reserve, Mt Coot-tha Forest

Normally a MTB cross-country course used for racing is several kilometers in length, but recently a new form of racing has developed which borrows features from the road criterium.

The MTB Short Course has the following features:

- The course can be from 1 – 2 km long
- Natural surface, only wide enough for two bikes side by side
- The course is not overly technical so speed and cadence are maintained

The race is short in duration with the pack circulating for a maximum of 20 minutes. The format is suitable for elite sprinters but also for young or less fit riders. They simply elect to race in a slower class, such as B, C or D grade.

In Melbourne, short course racing is held in Westgate Park every Thursday evening with over 100 participants regularly attending.



Short course race at Westgate Park, Melbourne



Kids at short course race at St Ives, Sydney

Mountain Bike Facility – Skills Training Area

Brisbane City Council provides exercise equipment in many suburban parks for the general public to freely use during walks and runs through the park.

Similarly bike skills features can be constructed specifically for mountain biking. Naturally occurring obstacles are utilised, such as logs to ride along or over, rocks to provide rough ground or solid blocks to drop off or climb back over. The aim is to build balance, control and technique to increase confidence and ability. Falls are common while mountain biking but basic skills training will make riders much safer.



MTB skills training for women

Mountain Bike Facility – Pump Track

Brisbane City has many BMX style courses in suburban parks. Pump Tracks are a tight, exhilarating version of these. According to an international proponent a Pump Track is “a continuous loop that you ride without pedaling by pumping rollers and berms. Great for mental strength, focus and discipline. Your grades will improve!”



Small BMX course at Payne Road, The Gap



Pump Track at Clarke St, Cleveland

Road Cycling Facility – Criterium Circuit

In Brisbane, there are currently three road criterium circuits. All are 6m wide and tar sealed.

- Murarrie Circuit, Murarrie Recreation Reserve, is 1.4km long
- Lakeside (formerly the Speedway), near Petrie, is 2.4km long
- Nundah Circuit, Albert Bishop Park is 1.2km long. Opened June 2005.

In western Brisbane, the University of Queensland roads were used for regular (albeit unofficial) weekly criteriums. The UQ Cycling Club has recently been forced to discontinue these unofficial races. Cyclists now ride to Nundah or Murarrie (often through heavy traffic) to participate in crit racing.



Nundah Criterium Photo by Nick Schultz

Road Cycling Facility – Road Skills and Road Safety Area

The on-road bike lanes and off-road bike paths in Brisbane are developing at a fast rate. To encourage and support residents to cycle more, new cyclists, both young and old will benefit from bike handling skills training.

The Redcliffe PCYC has created an extensive bike education circuit. Road conditions have been recreated with white lines, road markings and signs. Incorporated in the circuits is *Bike Mania* equipment to teach skills such as balance, steering and one-handed riding (to prepare riders for making hand signals). The extensive bike training facility is regularly booked by local schools.



Bridge, wobble board and chicane at Redcliffe PCYC



One-handed riding. Traffic signs in the background.

Cycling Adventure Park

Imagine all these cycling facilities incorporated in one location.

1.6 million bicycles were sold in Australia in 2007 and 80% of these were mountain bikes. All these facilities are suitable for mountain bikes. All these activities can be enjoyed by young and old, experienced and inexperienced.

In addition, cycling enthusiasts will have a venue specifically designed for training and racing.

A western Brisbane cycling precinct creates a pathway for development from beginner to enthusiast. This facility offers skills development to increase confidence and safety of new cyclists, which will lead to an increase in cycling to work and school. It is hoped that more people cycling will also lead to a growth of clubs, and cycling and mountain biking as a sport.

Potential Sites

Cycling and mountain bike clubs have identified several sites in western Brisbane that have potential to be developed as a cycling precinct.

The following list includes potential sites.

1. Anzac Park, Toowong
2. Oxley Creek Common, Rocklea

Anzac Park, being directly connected to the Centenary Bike Path, is easily accessible by bicycle. A large population can cycle to the sites, leaving their cars at home.

Sustainable Sport

Ideally a cycling precinct is accessed by bicycle, helping reduce Brisbane carbon emissions. Events could even aim to be carbon neutral.

Cycling is also a sport which does not use water, compared to field sports.

After initial infrastructure is installed, maintenance should be low.

Benefits

Cycling has a very high frequency rate, probably due to the many benefits participants gain. The bicycle is an efficient machine, rewarding effort with speed leading to the exhilaration of traveling long distances with relative ease.

Participation can be solo or in a group or team. With a mountain bike you choose on-road or off-road on a bush trail. You can ride to work, to the shops or simply for pleasure.

Cycling can become a life style, a way of life and a means of exercise, recreation and transport.

1 Anzac Park, Toowong Ward.

Councilor Peter Matic, Chair of Environment, Parks and Sustainability Committee

Anzac Park is a large suburban park located six kilometres from the CBD and bordered by the Western Freeway and bike path and the suburbs of Toowong, Taringa and Bardon. There are vehicle entrances on Dean Street and Wool Street, with a Park and Ride facility nearby.

Picnic and barbeque facilities are popular with families as is the play equipment in the eastern corner of the park. A small number of parking bays around the internal ring road cater for about 30 cars. There is a large dog off-leash area to the south, with about 10 car parks. Other infrastructure includes public toilets open 24 hours and tap water.



Anzac Park, Toowong

The above photo shows an existing sealed road within Anzac Park, which is 1km long and immediately usable for road training. Use as a road criterium circuit would require modifications to the surface and surrounds as well as additional management of other park visitors. The red line indicates a potential mountain bike short course area.

Centennial Park in Sydney manages to incorporate mixed uses such as roller-blading, running, walking and vehicle traffic, even while cycle racing is on.

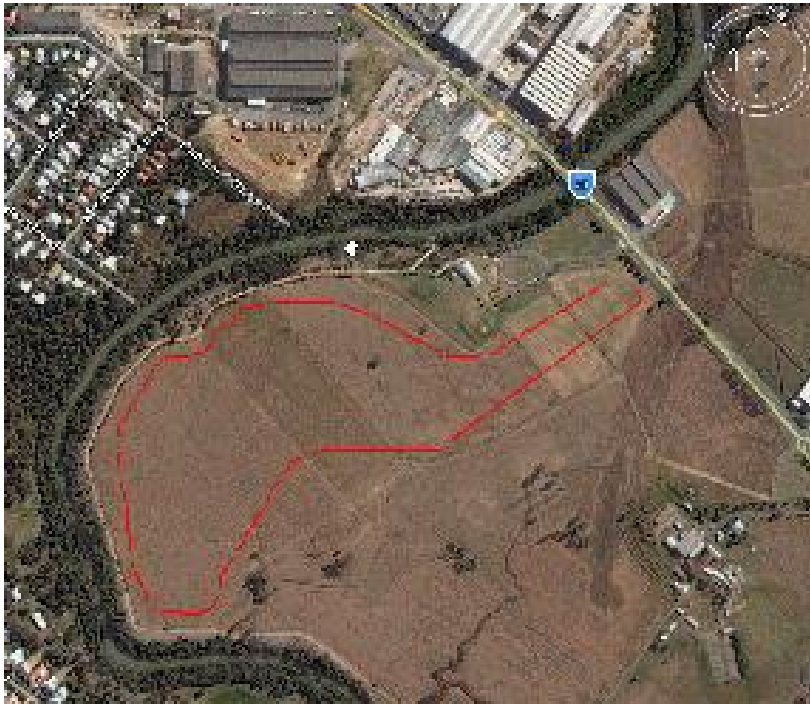


Grand Drive in Centennial Park in Sydney



Beginner's track at Centennial Park

2 Oxley Common, Rocklea.
Tennyson Ward, Councillor Nicole Johnston. Deputy Chair of Council



Possible site plan of a criterium circuit

Formerly the DPI Research Station, this entire 131ha site has been set aside for community use. Current facilities include an impressive environmental center, picnic area and wide path following Oxley Creek. An original plan included provision of a circuit for racing cyclists. Oxley Common is located close enough to the university to be a very good alternative, only 8km from the CBD.

Since closure of the University of Qld circuit for training and unofficial racing, local cyclists have crossed the Green Bridge to use the Brisbane Corso for training. This is not the best situation for cyclists' safety or for residents.

Site Analysis

Bike path access	Distance from CBD	Strengths	Constraints
1 Anzac Park Excellent access directly from Western Freeway path and close to Coronation Drive path	6km	Excellent bike access for a large population. Access strengthened by ped/cycle bridge. Existing 1km sealed internal road. Few cars, mostly accessing playground and dog off-leash area. Parking at Wool St and the Park and Ride. Close to high density housing. Near University and Park Rd.	Existing use of playground and dog off-leash area. Vehicles on ring road. Park managed for conservation and not recreation.
3 Oxley Common Good on-road path access to Oxley Road	8km	Large, flat area for community use. On/near popular cycling route. Opportunity for mixed uses, including ecological restoration.	Park managed for conservation and not recreation. Wetland