

new cross city cycle links

RECOMMENDATION 7

A number of specific links should be progressively built to improve cross city cycle connections and cater to the growing number of Melburnians cycling to work.

Cycling is growing in popularity across Melbourne, with something of a 'boom' taking place in the numbers of people travelling to work by bicycle. The Study Team believes that there are compelling reasons for encouraging greater take-up of cycling – including health, environmental and neighbourhood amenity reasons, as well as making a contribution to reducing congestion – and that opportunities exist within the Study Area to tackle bottlenecks, improve the connectivity of the cross city bicycle network and generally provide a better environment for cycling.

The Study Team's view is that a number of small scale projects would significantly improve east-west cycling connectivity, improve safety for cyclists and cater for the growing number of Melburnians commuting to work by bicycle.

The strong increase in cycling along key routes demonstrates that providing good quality, separated bike paths will result in increased patronage from cyclists. Additional quality separated paths and appropriate intersection treatments will also make it easier for cyclists to travel across town.

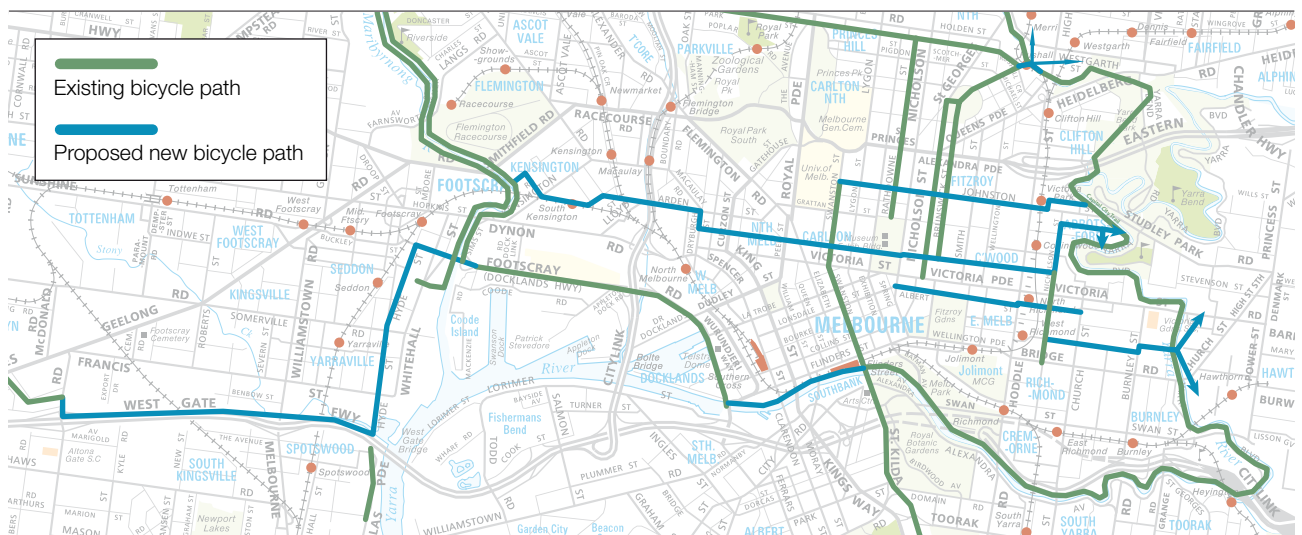
Building a 'cycling culture' across Melbourne is hampered by a fragmented approach to cycling policy and infrastructure within government, with responsibility for cycling initiatives spread across several agencies, including VicRoads, the

Department of Infrastructure, the Department of Human Services and local councils. The Team's view is that cycling should be treated as a distinct traffic category, with a co-ordinated, whole of government approach adopted to planning and financing cycling initiatives.

To achieve this, the Victorian Government should establish a long-term, strategic program for walking and cycling, supported by significant and reliable recurrent funding and located within one central department or agency. A key aim of such a program should be to make cycling an accepted alternative to cars and buses as a transport choice for shorter trips.

The Team also notes the importance of ensuring that all new infrastructure projects in Melbourne accommodate walking and cycling access at the very early planning stages. Should the Victorian Government proceed with the major infrastructure recommendations in this report, every effort should be made to ensure that walking and cycling opportunities are enhanced by these projects.

For example, in relation to the recommended rail tunnel, the Team would expect to see good walking and cycling access to the new stations and state-of-the-art cycle facilities at these stations. In relation to the proposed road link, opportunities should be taken to further extend the on- and off-road bicycle network.



Project costs

Estimated total cost: \$60 million

While not specifying specific funding sources for these projects, the Team notes that it could be possible for the City of Melbourne to apply a greater portion of its allocation from the congestion levy to improving cycling connections within the central city. The Victorian Government could also consider allocating funds from the levy directly towards these projects.

Project benefits

- Significantly enhances cycling connections for people making journeys to and from the central city and across the city
- Supports the strong growth in commuter cycling (especially from the west) and encourages greater take up of cycling for travelling to work
- Provides much improved cycling connectivity around the central city by addressing specific gaps in the bicycle network

Project details

The Study Team recommends that priority be given to seven small scale projects designed to enhance east-west cycling connectivity.

Project 1: Extend the Federation Trail (which runs from Werribee to Millers Road, Brooklyn) from Millers Road to Hyde Street (around 4.2 km) and upgrade the existing facility from Hyde Street to Footscray Road (around 3 km), which links with the Riverside Park bike path to Williamstown. This extension would provide a high quality western link all the way from Werribee and Williamstown to Docklands and the central city.

Estimated cost: \$17 million

Total length: 7.2 km

Project 2: Upgrade to a separated or 'Copenhagen' standard the east-west cycling link from the Maribyrnong Trail at Footscray to the northern CBD and on to the Capital City Trail at the Abbotsford Arts Precinct and the Collingwood Children's Farm. This route extends from the former stock bridge on the Maribyrnong Trail along Hobsons Road and Childers, Arden, Queensbury, Gertrude, Nicholson and Abbotsford Streets to the Capital City Trail. This upgrade would provide a high quality parallel link to Footscray Road, connecting the northern part of the central city to the Maribyrnong and Capital City Trails. It would provide a separated east-west cycling link across the city, giving access to Footscray, Kensington, North Melbourne, Carlton, Fitzroy, Collingwood and Abbotsford.

Estimated cost: \$7 million

Total length: 8.8 km

Project 3: A separated cycling trail linking Melbourne University to the Capital City Trail via Johnston Street or Alexandra Parade (in conjunction with the development of the EWLNA recommended road link). This would provide a high quality eastern link to the Yarra River from Parkville and Melbourne University through Carlton, Fitzroy, Collingwood and Abbotsford. It would link with the Swanston Street 'Copenhagen' bike treatment and intersect with the important north-south cycling routes of Brunswick, Canning, Rathdowne and Napier Streets.

Estimated cost: \$3 million

Total length: 3.3 km

Project 4: A separated bike lane ('Copenhagen' style) along Albert Street, East Melbourne, into Elizabeth Street, Richmond to Church Street. This would provide an eastern link for CBD commuters that crosses Lennox Street – an important north-south route.

Estimated Cost: \$2 million

Total Length: 2.5km

Project 5: A separated bike lane along Highett and Crown Streets in Richmond to the Capital City Trail, then onto a new river crossing into Hawthorn. This new bridge would provide a high quality link from the eastern suburbs to the central city along Crown, Highett, Lennox and Albert Streets.

Estimated Cost: \$5 million

Total Length: 2 km

Project 6: Bridge and trail upgrade around Merri Creek in the vicinity of Rushall Station (North Fitzroy/Northcote). While this is an area of high pedestrian and cycling traffic (including pedestrian access to the rail station and a popular commuter cyclist route), the narrow paths, rail underpass and bridge are unsuitable for the existing high levels of use. This project untangles and improves a significant cycling route to the north eastern suburbs of Northcote, Fairfield and Thornbury.

Estimated Cost: \$4 million

Total Length: 0.4 km

Project 7: Upgrading the North Bank of the Yarra Trail (Charles Grimes Bridge to Princess Bridge), providing an alternative for cyclists to avoid pedestrian conflicts in Southbank and the Yarra Promenade. This project addresses a longstanding concern for cyclists by separating them from heavy pedestrian traffic around the Southbank entertainment precinct and providing quality access to and through the CBD. The project involves some construction complexities in building the new path along the northern bank of the river.

Estimated cost: \$22 million

Total Length: 1.9 km