

Identified Pedestrian and Cycle Blackspots in Brisbane

presented to queensland transport and brisbane city council, 2 July 1999

compiled by eric manners

SUMMARY

The following report contains the input of 26 Brisbane cyclists who were asked to identify those locations where they feel most vulnerable as cyclists or pedestrians. The data has been collected over the months since November 1998, so some locations may have changed.

This report has two intended purposes:

1. to identify roads and intersections in Brisbane that are in need of re-evaluation and possible redesign in order to protect pedestrian and cyclist safety; and
2. to serve as a record that Queensland Transport and Brisbane City Council have been made aware of the danger posed to pedestrians and cyclists by the specific locations and types of locations listed herein.

Generalisability. Rather than simply list specific blackspots, I have attempted to identify the key factors that make each road or intersection unsafe to pedestrians and cyclists, thereby allowing some generalisability. The report lists blackspots by type, with the specific examples supplied not meant to be exhaustive, but merely illustrative.

High Speed Traffic. Most if not all of the blackspots submitted by the participants in this "study" were listed as blackspots at least partially because of the high speeds of motor vehicle traffic in those areas. Many participants specifically stated that the blackspot they were identifying could be solved by a lowering of speed limits (and thus a drop in the speed of traffic). *The excessive speed of motor vehicle traffic must be seen as the primary source of danger to pedestrians and cyclists.*

Network of Danger. Many of the blackspots listed are located on Brisbane's main roads, which means that the quickest and most convenient cycle routes are all but locked off to cyclists, and pedestrians find the roads impossible to cross almost everywhere there are shops, bus stops and other services. It is worth noting that some of the examples below are part of BCC's bicycle route network, which was identified in 1995 as those routes most important to cycle use in Brisbane. It is particularly disappointing that some of bicycle route network blackspots listed have been created since the publishing of the Bicycle Brisbane Plan, as a result of poor design and a lack of integration in Council transport planning.

Types of Blackspots. The following different categories of blackspots have been identified, with causes of danger and examples listed:

- multi-lane, high-speed roundabouts;
- large volume, high speed intersections;
- narrow 60 km/h roads;
- busy right-hand turns without right-turn lane/signals;
- high speed merging of two lanes;
- steep uphill;
- forced to merge right to go straight;
- unmarked lanes at intersections;
- right-turn lanes in 60+ km/h traffic;
- non-freeway roads with a freeway-like feel;
- sub-standard bikeways and bikeway access;
- bikeways crossing roads/driveways;
- pedestrian refuges that pinch cyclists;
- temporary road works blackspots;
- blackspots specifically relevant to pedestrians

MULTI-LANE, HIGH-SPEED ROUNDABOUTS

Problems for cyclists:

- right turns are difficult
- the new Australian Road Rules are set to make going straight difficult
- large, wide roundabouts allow motorists to pass through far too quickly

Problems for pedestrians:

- impossible to cross on foot

Examples:

- Western Freeway/Milton Rd at Miskin Street, Toowong
- Moggill Rd at Denmac Ford, Indooroopilly (high speeds)
- Enoggera Rd at Pickering St, Enoggera
- Logan Rd at O'Keefe St, Buranda
- East-West Arterial Rd/Airport Dr at Gateway Arterial, Hendra

LARGE VOLUME, HIGH SPEED INTERSECTIONS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- yellow lights are timed for motor vehicle speeds, often not giving cyclists enough time to cross
 - greater number of variables for motorists and cyclists alike makes accidents more likely
 - the dangers of “jockeying for position” through and after intersection make running the red light sometimes *safer* than waiting at the light
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- frequent long waits for crossing make J-walking very tempting, and dangerous
- Examples:**
- Normanby Five-ways, Petrie Tce
 - Turbot St at Wharf St, City

NARROW 60 KM/H ROADS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- motorists often do not have space or time to overtake safely, which means cyclists must either ride in the middle of the lane to prevent unsafe overtaking, or must unsafely hug the gutter or brush next to parked cars
 - decreased visibility and a lack of “escape routes” in the case of dangerous situations make these roads unsuitable for such fast-moving traffic
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- blind spots are numerous
 - many of these streets are primarily residential streets, with many children nearby
- Examples:**
- Swann Rd between St Lucia Village and Ironsides Primary School, St Lucia
 - Vulture St at Cordelia St, South Brisbane (me)
 - Indooroopilly Rd between Lambert Rd and Swann Rd, Indooroopilly (Mick)

BUSY RIGHT-HAND TURNS WITHOUT RIGHT-TURN LANE/SIGNALS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- vehicles continuing straight must squeeze around them to the left
 - continuous flow of traffic leaves cyclists sitting in the middle of the road indefinitely
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- anxious right-turning motorists are paying attention to oncoming traffic, not pedestrians crossing the side street the motorist is about to enter
- Examples:**
- Newmarket Rd to Wilston Rd, Newmarket

HIGH SPEED MERGING OF TWO LANES

- Problems for cyclists:**
- motorists are primarily looking to their right, and sometimes squeeze between a cyclist on their left and another vehicle on their right to merge right
- Problems for pedestrians:**
-
- Examples:**
- Muriel Ave/Ipswich Rd, Rocklea
 - Ipswich Rd, Annerley (uphill as well)

STEEP UPHILLS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- larger speed differential between cars and bicycles
- Problems for pedestrians:**
-
- Examples:**
- Dornoch Tce (eastbound) at Hampstead Rd, West End
 - Indooroopilly Rd at Todd St, Indooroopilly

FORCED TO MERGE RIGHT TO GO STRAIGHT

- Problems for cyclists:**
- cyclists are perceived to be “in the middle of the road” (plus the problem that this is perceived to be unacceptable)
- Problems for pedestrians:**
-
- Examples:**
- Saul St/Skew St/Grey St Bridge, City
 - Melbourne St (westbound) at Merivale St, South Brisbane
 - Bradfield Highway (southbound) at Main St/Shafston St, Kangaroo Point
 - Vulture St (eastbound) at Stanley St, South Brisbane
 - Enoggera Rd (northbound) at Samford Rd/South Pine Rd, Alderley
 - Ann St (westbound) at George St/Riverside Expressway, City
 - Roma St (eastbound) at Turbot St, City
 - Upper Roma St (westbound) at Petrie Tce/Milton Rd, City
 - Moggill Rd (inbound) at Western Freeway onramp, Chapel Hill
 - Stanley St (westbound) between Annerley Rd and Vulture St, South Brisbane
 - Annerley Rd (northbound) at Stephens Rd, Woolloongabba

UNMARKED LANES AT INTERSECTIONS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- ambiguity of where the lane is to lead makes collisions likely
 - motorists approaching a cyclist from behind do not know the cyclist’s intention (especially when a downhill makes signalling impossible for the cyclist)
 - cyclists turning right from a lane that goes both right and straight are perceived to be “holding up traffic”
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- cannot be sure of drivers’ intentions
- Examples:**
- Logan Rd (inbound) at Wellington Rd, Woolloongabba
 - Vulture St (eastbound) at Stanley St, South Brisbane
 - Ann St (westbound) at George St/Riverside Expressway, City

RIGHT-TURN LANES IN 60+ KM/H TRAFFIC

- Problems for cyclists:**
- to access the right-turn lane cyclists must merge into high speed traffic, hindering traffic flow and endangering themselves
- Problems for pedestrians:**
-
- Examples:**
- Cordelia St (northbound) at Melbourne St, South Brisbane
 - Stanley St (westbound) at Vulture St/Dock St, South Brisbane (important connection to Southbank)

NON-FREEWAY ROADS WITH A FREEWAY-LIKE FEEL

- Problems for cyclists:**
- motorists perceive that cyclists should not be there
 - high-speed traffic cannot stop or manoeuvre at short notice
 - greater percentage of drivers exceeding the posted speed limit
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- impossible to cross except at rare crossings at intersections
 - J-walking is tempting, and dangerous
- Examples:**
- Bradfield Highway, Kangaroo Point to Fortitude Valley (Story Bridge)
 - Bowen Bridge/Lutwyche/Old Gympie Rd, northside
 - Kelvin Grove Rd
 - Waterworks Rd (soon)
 - Coronation Dr (especially between Hale St and Adelaide St in the City – and soon to get much worse)
 - Ann St/Wickham St, Fortitude Valley
 - Hale St, Milton Rd, Moggill Rd
 - Lytton/Wynnum Rd, East Brisbane/Norman Park
 - Fairfield Rd/Home St/Noble St, Fairfield/Yeronga/Yeerongpilly
 - Ipswich Rd, southside
 - Kessels Rd, Macgregor (especially between Mains Rd and Logan Rd, over freeway)

SUB-STANDARD BIKEWAYS AND BIKEWAY ACCESS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- numerous dangers, spelled out well in Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 14
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- high levels of pedestrian use on shared pathways and exclusive bikeways mean that high standards must be kept, or on-road alternatives supplied for fast cyclists
- Examples:**
- Coronation Drive Bikeway access point from Victoria Bridge
 - Coronation Drive Bikeway between Victoria Bridge and Hale St
 - Centenary Bridge access point from Kenmore Rd, Fig Tree Pocket
 - SE Freeway Bikeway access from Mains Rd, Macgregor (requires contending with freeway-bound 70 km/h traffic)
 - connection between Western Freeway and Coronation Drive Bikeways
 - Western Freeway Bikeway access from Moggill Rd
 - Old Cleveland Rd bike lanes, Coorpooroo (frequent parked cars)

BIKEWAYS CROSSING ROADS/DRIVEWAYS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- motorists are not required to give way to cyclists
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- [same as for cyclists]
- Examples:**
- Coronation Drive Bikeway at Archer St, Toowong
 - Annerley Rd Bikeway in front of old prison/police station, Dutton Park
 - Western Freeway Bikeway at Sumners, Dandenong and Sinnamon Rds, and at Moggill Rd, Indooroopilly
 - SE Freeway Bikeway alongside Bapaume Rd, Tarragindi (6 road crossings in 1 km)
 - Deshon St, Coorparoo “vanishing cycle lane” (50 metres long; leaves motorists and cyclists confused)

PEDESTRIAN REFUGES THAT PINCH CYCLISTS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- parked cars before and after the refuge require cyclists to curve far to the left at the refuge rather than maintaining a straight line, as suggested in BCC’s Brisbane Bicycle Maps
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- conflict between cyclists and motorists at refuges take attention away from pedestrians attempting to cross the street
- Examples:**
- Hardgrave Rd, West End
 - River Tce, Kangaroo Point

TEMPORARY ROAD WORKS BLACKSPOTS

- Problems for cyclists:**
- guidelines for road works traffic control do not seem to consider the needs of cyclists *at all*
 - worsened conditions rarely are accompanied by legal (or even advisory) speed limit reductions
 - essential cycling routes and connections are often disrupted
- Problems for pedestrians:**
- decreased accessibility, plus temptation to J-walk
- Examples:**
- Stanley St (westbound) at Mater Hospital, South Brisbane (SE Busway construction)
 - [Stanley St eastbound is a good example of solving a temporary blackspot with a temporary 40 km/h speed limit]

BLACKSPOTS SPECIFICALLY RELEVANT TO PEDESTRIANS

- **Where the major flow of traffic must compete with pedestrian traffic at a mutual green light**
Solution: "Scramble" crossings
- **Where pedestrians must wait for gaps in left-turning traffic without a Walk/Don't Walk signal**
Solution: more zebra crossings; lower speed limits
- **Car parks without proper pedestrian facilities**
Solution: requirement of pedestrian safety and accessibility audits for all new and existing car parks and shopping centres
- **Blind spots (near corners, crests etc) with or without zebra crossings, especially on roads with high-speed traffic**
Solution: lower speed limits; zebra crossings

Examples:

- Brunswick & Ann Sts, Fortitude Valley
- Albert & Elizabeth Sts, City

Examples:

- Ann St at Gipps St, Fortitude Valley
- Countess St at Roma St, City

Examples:

- Kenmore Village Shopping Centre, especially from Brookfield Rd and the bus stops

Examples:

- Gladstone Rd at Lochaber St, Dutton Park
- Sir Fred Schonell Dr, St Lucia (several points)

CONCLUSION

The regularity of quite devastating blackspots throughout Brisbane make people very impatient about the changes QT and BCC have already committed to. If it were promised that a particular blackspot would be fixed five years from now, this would mean to the regular pedestrian or cyclist that s/he must only navigate that potentially fatal spot another few hundred or thousand times before it is fixed. But we do not even have a promise of five years, or ten, or twenty...

Until we make a *serious* commitment to remove all known blackspots as soon as possible, we cannot expect to halt the current drop in the number of people walking, using public transport and cycling. A scarcity of cycleways and safe pedestrian crossings will continue to lead individuals to the presumed safety of the motor vehicle, rather than taking their chances with more vulnerable transport modes.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Elaine Abery
Trevor Anstey
Jenny Attreed
Scott Beatson
Anthony Cook
Andrew Demack
Richard Dennehy
Michael Fanning

Bill Guy
Scott Hadden
Ron Heard
Stafford Hiller
Brad Lindsay
Rob Logie
Duncan McDonald
Graham Robbins

Michael Roth
Owen Ronalds
John Simmonds
Ann Stephens
Duane Walker
Michael Yeates
And others...