

Strategic Cycling Corridors – Are we Ready?

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Abstract

VicRoads is planning for a cycling renaissance through the establishment of a metropolitan-wide network of high quality Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCCs). If developed in their entirety (and to the standard proposed), this network could radically transform the way Melbournians move around the city.

To provide this network of cycling corridors in heavily constrained urban environments, however, require tough decisions to be made. Through GTA's work in developing SCCs we ask the question: Are we ready?

Overview, The Process, Challenges and Questions

A key electoral commitment of the current Government was to establish a \$100 million Safer Cyclists and Pedestrians Fund that invested in new, dedicated paths and segregated routes across Victoria. VicRoads and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) was tasked with prioritising and investing in infrastructure that keeps cyclists and pedestrians safe through this fund. Prioritising the development of certain Strategic Cycling Corridors formed a significant part of this commitment.

The development of the Strategic Cycling Corridors is aimed at creating safe, direct and accessible corridors that attract and encourage bicycle commuter trips (increased bicycle mode share) as well as short, local trips through the provision of dedicated cycling infrastructure.

GTA Consultants was engaged to review and develop a number of SCCs, including two that travel through the Melbourne CBD. While the whole routes are long, due to various constraints, a focus was given to addressing the challenges associated within the CBD.

The corridor treatments seek to reduce the occurrence of serious injury crashes wherever possible while balancing the requirements of all network users. The treatments developed were guided by Safe System principles. The desirable treatment type for a SCC is a fully separated cycling facility. These facilities are generally considered to be international best practice and afford a high level of safety and assurance to riders of all ages and abilities.

Achieving separated facilities on major vehicle and public transport roads within a heavily constrained CBD environment presents significant challenges. Challenging decisions need to be made with respect to the allocation of road space to ensure equity. SCCs have the potential to create a transformational shift in the way the City prioritises modes.

This presentation charts the process of developing sections of two SCCs and highlights the hurdles and challenges associated with parking loss, lane reductions, targeted crash reduction measures and changes to signalling priorities.

Conclusions

The proposed SCC treatments for the CBD included protected intersection treatments. It was generally agreed by stakeholders that while these treatments have drawbacks, they also deliver improved safety outcomes for riders. The challenge for a number of sites, however, was not being

able to achieve approval to reallocate road space to provide a continuous protected bike path on the approach and departure sides of the intersections which can undermine the benefits.

On a positive note, most councils were generally very supportive of high quality infrastructure treatments that prioritise cycling, with one Council comfortable with the potential increased congestion and delays that this may cause to vehicle traffic. The implementation of SCCs require a step-change in thinking around how we prioritise our road space to be more equitable for vulnerable road users.

At the time of writing, the proposals were being presented for funding with the outcome to be determined. Tune in to the presentation to find out the results!