Jacka Trail

Bicycle route plan
Kew East | Balwyn North

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Legend

- Existing off-road trail
- Existing on-road lane
- Existing route
- New proposed route

Map created by Philip Mallis (Ver 1, June 2017).
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Source: OpenStreetMap contributors (2017)

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Introduction

This plan proposes the creation of an east-west bicycle route linking Balwyn North with the off-road bicycle network

The Jacka Trail would serve multiple functions in Balwyn North and Kew East including local travel, school transport and recreation. This area is not well-serviced by north-south transport connections and lacks a clear and safe link to the well-used off-road shared paths.

This proposal offers a practical and affordable solution to supporting the backbone of a sustainable transport network in northern Boroondara and beyond.

Kew East and Balwyn North lack bicycle infrastructure that is safely separated from traffic for both pedestrians and cyclists.

SAFETY

Everyone has a right to be safe, regardless of transport mode.

From 2012 to 2017, 12 cyclists were injured in crashes in Balwyn North. Four of these were classified as 'serious' (VicRoads, 2018). Mode share of bicycles is 0.5 percent (ABS, 2016).

Infrastructure should be provided to separate bicycles and cars. Speed differentials between motor vehicles and cars can be over 300% on 60 km/h roads.

Where possible, pedestrians should also be separated from cyclists on busy commuter routes.

At present, there is no separated on-road infrastructure for bikes in East Kew or Balwyn North. This is a major barrier to encouraging utility cycling.

The existing disjointed off-road paths are separated by busy four-lane 60km/h roads with few crossing points.

Some on-road bicycle lanes exist, such as Balwyn Road, but they lack complementary infrastructure. In many cases, they make streets less safe for cyclists.

Designing bicycle routes should include safety as its first concern. Everything else is secondary.

"Everyone has a right to be safe, regardless of transport mode"

Issues

CONNECTIVITY

The existing paths through Balwyn North are small in number, disjointed and do not connect to the wider network of bicycle infrastructure.

The current paths through the centre of Balwyn North do not connect with each other. To the east, the path begins in Jacka Street Reserve with no signage or infrastructure to direct users onto Greythorn Road or nearby destinations. To the west, this path comes to an abrupt end in Gordon Barnard Reserve at the former Balwyn Leisure Centre. Other paths to the west, such as those in Macleay and Hislop Parks, fail to provide a contiguous route through the suburb.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The existing paths in Balwyn North are mainly unsealed and unsigned. The gravel and ground surface is prone to damage from erosion and provides poor grip for bicycle tyres, wheelchairs and prams in wet weather conditions.

While much infrastructure is already in place, small connections between the isolated segments is required. Both on and off-road paths require infrastructure to encourage cycling.

Most of these initiatives can also be used by other paths users.

Proposal

A safe and direct bicycle route through Kew East and Balwyn North will link communities for both utility and recreation.

The Jacka Trail would run for 3.4 kilometres through Balwyn North and Kew East. It would begin at Jacka Street in Greythorn and run through parklands and local streets to connect with the Glass Creek Trail at Stradbroke Park in Kew East.

The Link would provide a safe and direct connection for hundreds of residents into the existing off-road network.

It would begin in Jacka Street Reserve and run through parklands and local streets to connect with the Glass Creek Trail at Stradbroke Park.

This would be achieved by filling in 'missing links' between existing infrastructure.

Should the Glass Creek Link proposal proceed, the Jacka Trail would complement that project well. Completing both would allow one route to leverage significant benefits off the other.

The proposal is of low cost but high potential benefit. By improving local connectivity for both cyclists and pedestrians, significant gains can be achieved.

"Improving local connectivity for both cyclists and pedestrians"

Proposal

JACKA STREET TO BALWYN ROAD

The existing path begins at Renown Street in North Balwyn and runs through Jacka Street Reserve west through to Gordon Barnard Reserve.

One improvement to the existing path should be the crossing at Jacka Street. This is a low-volume residential street running from Belmore Road in the south to Hosken Street in the north. An uncontrolled pedestrian/cyclist-priority crossing, such as that installed on Belford Road in North Kew, would be the ideal treatment at this point.

The route then would follow the newly-constructed path through Gordon Barnard Reserve and continue through to Balwyn Road once the second section is completed.

A signalised pedestrian crossing at Balwyn Road, as already investigated by Boroondara Council, would be essential at this location.

Without this crossing, the route cannot be considered to be implemented.

BALWYN ROAD TO BUCHANAN AVENUE

After crossing Balwyn Road, there are currently no safe practical options for continuing west.

At this point, two options are possible: one off-road and the other on-road. The off-road proposal would be a shared path along the southern or northern boundary of Hislop Park. The on-road option would involve treatments on Albury Road to make them safe for cyclists.

Off-road is the preferred option given that it would also benefit pedestrians and provide a much lower gradient for cyclists.

Once the route arrives at the western boundary of Hislop Park, it would follow the existing path along the boundary of the North Balwyn Tennis Club.

Given their existing narrow width and uneven surfaces, these paths would need to be upgraded and potentially separate pedestrians and cyclists if necessary.

A safe crossing of Buchanan Avenue and a shared path designation on the western side of the street would be necessary to direct users to the Macleay Park path network.

Proposal

BUCHANAN AVENUE TO BURKE ROAD

Path users can follow the existing path within Macleay and Myrtle Parks through to Severn Street. Some parts of these paths will need upgrading to fix surface and drainage issues.

A safe crossing point and traffic calming would be needed at Severn Street to allow users to safely access Maylands Avenue.

On-road treatments would be required on Maylands Avenue to make the route safe for cyclists. The new roundabouts installed at two intersections are an improvement but more must be done to make the street safe.

Here the route follows the old Glass Creek creekbed and gradients are minimal.

BURKE ROAD TO STRADBROKE PARK

Crossing Burke Road is presently very difficult and unsafe at the Maylands Avenue intersection.

As proposed in the Glass Creek Link project, a signalised pedestrian crossing at this location would be necessary given the high traffic volumes and speeds. It would also assist other traffic entering and exiting Maylands Avenue.

After crossing Burke Road, the route would connect with the proposed Glass Creek Link at Lawrence Street.

This connection can take the form of either a shared path on the southern side of the street or on-road treatments on this quiet no through road.

After exiting Lawrence Street, the route follows the existing path past Kew High School and across High Street to connect with the sealed shared path through to Harrison Reserve and Hays Paddock.

Users can then continue through to the Yarra and Koonung Creek Trails or join the on-road lanes at Kilby Road.

Proposal

CONNECTIVITY

Several key destinations and connections lie within close proximity to the proposed route. These include local shopping centres, education facilities and parkland.

The map and table below show the trip generators that would be covered by the proposed route (within 400 metres).

Linking these destinations primarily allows for increased bicycle usage for utility purposes. Local travel to shops, students travelling to and from school and visits to parks are all enabled by providing safe and direct routes.

Key destinations and connections within 400 metres of proposed route

Destination	Type
284 bus route	Transport
285 bus route	Transport
302 bus route	Transport
304 bus route	Transport
48 tram route	Transport
548 bus route	Transport
Balwyn High School	Education
Balwyn North Primary School	Education
Belmore Heights Shopping Centre	Retail
Belmore School	Education
Boroondara Sports Complex	Recreation
Gordon Barnard Reserve	Parkland
Greythorn Primary School	Education
Hislop Park	Parkland
Jacka Street Reserve	Parkland
Kew High School	Education
Myrtle/Macleay Park	Recreation
Nicholson Street Reserve	Parkland
North Balwyn Bowls Club	Recreation
North Balwyn Tennis Club	Recreation
Stradbroke Park	Parkland
Stradbroke Park Shopping Centre	Retail

Proposal

Key destinations within 400 metres of proposed route

With most infrastructure requirements already in place, implementation of the Jacka Trail would be cost-effective and timely.

Implementation of the Jacka Trail would not require significant financial or time investment from Council or other bodies.

As the majority of the route utilises existing infrastructure, most proposed works would improve facilities already in place.

These include installing drink taps, adding bicycle parking and improving path surfaces.

While this report does not seek to be prescriptive on specific project items, there are some aspects that are vital to the success of this project outlined in this section.

"Installing new signage at key decision points and where the route is unclear would be of significant benefit to all path users"

Implementation

ON-ROAD TREATMENTS

The vast majority of this route would follow existing off-road trails. Some limited sections will require on-road treatments in residential streets with low traffic volumes. Such treatments could include sharrows and other linemarkings to indicate the presence of cyclists to motorists for safety and wayfinding purposes.

Traffic calming and infrastructure for bicycles would be required along small parts of the route. The main area for on-road treatments would be along Maylands Avenue in Balwyn North.

To make the project as attractive and safe as possible, traffic calming measures should be contemplated.

WAYFINDING

Existing wayfinding along almost the entire route barely exists at all.

Installing new signage at key decision points and where the route is unclear would be of significant benefit to all path users.

Such signs can include key destinations and distances.

New wayfinding infrastructure will need to be implemented given the lack of existing infrastructure.

MAIN ROAD CROSSINGS

The Jacka Trail would cross two arterial roads and two collector roads/residential streets.

Providing safe and convenient crossings at all locations is an essential step that needs to be made for this proposal to be effective.

The two arterial roads, Burke and Balwyn Roads, are the most dangerous points along the route. Both have 60km/h speeds and lack existing crossings. Controlled pedestrian/cyclists crossings would be necessary to exploit the full potential of this route. While arterials are controlled by VicRoads, this is an important safety improvement that would benefit all path users.

Severn and Jacka Streets are the two residential streets that would also require safe crossings to make the route as safe and attractive for users as possible.

BICYCLE PARKING

Areas designated for parking bicycles have significant benefits when positioned correctly. Bike racks, particularly in covered areas, encourage people to visit local shops and facilities.

These are inexpensive and easy investments in the designated areas along the route.

Boroondara has already significantly increased the provision of public bicycle parking throughout the municipality.

Continuing this rollout by strategically locating parking along or near the proposed route would encourage usage.

Implementation

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Some existing infrastructure along the route is unsafe or not fit for purpose.

This includes long sections of path without lighting, metal grates and lack of 'pram ramps' from paths onto streets.

Cheap and simple improvements can be made while making a significant difference to the safety and comfort of all path users.

A safety audit of the existing conditions should be undertaken before detailed works are undertaken.

PATH SURFACE UPGRADES

Some of the existing path surface along the proposed route is adequate. However, significant safety issues remain in some locations.

Areas such as Macleay Park have water runoff that creates dangerous erosion on gravel and ground path surfaces. This creates unstable surfaces that are impossible to be used by wheelchairs or prams.

They also result in tripping hazards for pedestrians and crash hazards for cyclists. These effects are particularly pronounced at night where lighting may not exist or be negligible.