

OXLEY CREEK BIKEWAY STAGE 2.

SUBMISSION from Friends Of Oxley Creek Common (FOOCC) November 2011

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc was first incorporated in 2005. We, as Friends of Oxley Creek Common, seek to protect it from unsustainable use and development, and investigate and develop potential uses that sustain its natural values. One objective is to acknowledge our stewardship role and responsibilities to present and future generations with respect to the Common.

While FOOCC is in favour of safer bicycle and walking access to Oxley Creek Common, we do **not agree** with the proposed bridge site at Nosworthy Park. FOOCC prefers the option of a crossing at **Kennard Street**.

FOOCC is disappointed that BCC chose not to consult with local stakeholders about this proposed Bikeway before final decisions were selected, and an announcement made that Nosworthy Park was the preferred site for a bridge. Research has shown that consulting with communities and sharing ownership of projects gives a high rate of the success of the resulting project. BCC has a policy of consulting with communities, but this **has not been visible** with **Oxley Creek Bikeway Project Stage 2**.

Neither costs nor details are available to date comparing the total cost of a bridge at Kennard to the total cost of a bridge at Nosworthy Park including approximately 800m extra bike track plus lighting and substantial earthworks on both sides of Oxley creek. How can we comment constructively when few details are disclosed? Despite repeated requests, FOOCC had been awaiting costing details from BCC, to be informed on 24th November 2011 that no costing figures on this project are to be released. Therefore we assume the Kennard Street Option is less expensive, and there is not a single argument in favour of the Nosworthy Park Option.

FOOCC was informed the route from Sherwood Road on to Oxley Creek Common will be close to Oxley Creek, leaving very little riparian zone as a buffer. The riparian zone is ultra-important for both the health of the creek and as habitat for local wildlife. With considered planning, this proposed route would not even be an option. A concrete path will fracture the riparian zone further. Run-off from the path will lead to further soil erosion. Suitable vegetation in the riparian zone both protects the soil and creek bank, and provides habitats. The turbidity in the water is caused partly by particles in the run-off from the catchment area. Vegetation catches most of these particles. A concrete path allows their passage to the creek. Ideally this riparian zone on Oxley Creek should be much wider, and not be split by a sealed shared track.

The Environment Centre area on Oxley Creek Common is used for multiple purposes. Family BBQs, engagement parties, children's parties, organised picnics for senior citizens, home-schooling groups, BCC Festivals, BCC educational and environmental activities, as well as the average walker or dog-owner all use it. Having the mixed use track pass through this complex shows lack of foresight, and disrespect for safety. The proposed route then **crosses** other tracks, between the toilets and the pontoon. This is not an acceptable safety feature, as people are often distracted, and may be unaware of approaching cyclists as visibility from surrounding vegetation and path curvature is poor. Cyclists often are concentrating on conversations, and impatient with slow pedestrians. Many commuter cyclists say they will not be using the track. Mixing walkers, children, dogs and cyclists on one track will not be neither pleasant nor relaxing. Shared tracks already installed by BCC have attracted adverse criticism.

At present there is only one walking track on the Common, leading to varied habitats where 190 species of birds have been officially recorded. Allowing a 3m wide concrete track and the faster movement and noise from users will cause distress to bird populations, and alter habitats. On one walk starting at 6.30 a.m. on 4th September 2011, 79 different species were recorded along this present track. A concrete track and altered use and conditions will decrease this variety. Oxley Creek Common has become an icon amongst bird-watchers, with local and international visitors spending extra time - and hence dollars - in Brisbane to visit. It is in Brisbane's interest to foster this open community-zoned area to encourage biodiversity. Many thousands of hours of volunteer-time has been freely expended on bushcare and restoration and management along Oxley Creek. It is in BCC's interests to work **with** these volunteers towards richer habitats, towards a "greener Brisbane".

On the Nosworthy Park side, considerable earthworks will be involved to prepare a track to required standards. Adding fill to reduce the gradient would contravene rules for riverbeds and floodplains. The project manager has openly said that earth movements/bulldozing will occur to finalize a track to required gradients and angles. These actions will cause disturbance, soil compaction, and impact on existing biodiversity. Gradients are also unlikely to meet the standards set by the **Disability Discrimination Act**.

The track route proposed through Nosworthy park will break up the flat space available for imaginative play, such as free ball games. As Brisbane's population increases, open space will become increasingly valued. Cyclists are not due consideration ahead of other forms of recreation. The basketball court, toilets and present play equipment area, and the associated active movement of small children, are very close to the proposed track, as is a blind corner. This combination is not an area for rapid bicycle movement. Especially since the January 2011 floods, this park has become even more popular for birthday party venue. Excited children at a party do not look out for cyclists. This route is completely unacceptable for these reasons.

However, there is adequate space for the shared track to loop from Kennard Street, across Oxley Creek then along the edge of the fields to Sherwood Road. This separates movement and picnickers, with only one path intersection. Furthermore a bicycle track here is far less damaging to the environment than one which passes through native vegetation at Nosworthy Park and along Oxley Creek.

Attached are a table prepared in November 2011 by Dr Claudia Baldwin, Regional and Urban Planning, University of the Sunshine Coast; former resident of Corinda and also for your information, a copy of a summary of the very productive and focussed community meeting held on 16th November arranged by a consortium of concerned residents. It was very disappointing that no representatives from BCC or the Bikeway Team attended. We strongly suggest that the current proposal be further reconsidered in light of the above concerns, preferably with greatly improved community consultation, including detailed costs and plans.