

"May sustainable transport systems be at the heart of Adelaide's success as a people-friendly and environmentally responsible city."

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Future walking and cycling path along Lower Brown Hill Creek

Bike Adelaide wishes to express **support** for the proposal of creating a continuous shared-use path following the alignment of the lower Brown Hill Creek drainage channel.

This is a strategically important project that would provide a vital east-west walking and cycling link between the Cities of West Torrens and Unley. Currently, there are no separated east-west active transport routes between the two areas, nor are there any established road corridors which provide adequate safe, direct, or uninterrupted routes for cycling. This is a major inhibitor to transport cycling, and therefore to reducing congestion and transport emissions. Specifically, we support the project for these reasons:

- necessary east-west active transport link between West Torrens and Unley.
- connections with the Westside, Mike Turtur and Reece Jennings Bikeway, and Captain McKenna Pathway.
- broader connections facilitated to Sturt River Linear Path and Park Lands Trail via Westside Bikeway, and Marino Rocks Greenway via Mike Turtur Bikeway.
- potential future similar treatment along Keswick Creek providing north-south connection towards Henley Beach Rd and Airport Bikeway (on-street Bike Direct route), and neighbourhood bike route via Clifford-Beachway-Autumn St/Ave.
- demonstrated utility and efficacy in supporting active transport through existing projects eg Charles Walk, Windsor St, Wilberforce Walk.
- opportunity to provide access to new community green spaces and reintroduction of native habitat.
- the project's multipurpose outcomes would likely attract considerable State and/or Federal Government funding support.

Strategic need

The new path would be important in achieving several positive outcomes for Adelaide's active transport network, and enhance the transport options of western suburbs residents. The City of West Torrens, according to 2021 Census data, has among the highest rates of car ownership per household in South Australia, despite its proximity to the city centre. This contributes to growing stress on existing road networks, thereby increasing congestion, emissions and Council's road maintenance liability.

The pathway would recognise the growing need for safe and sustainable transport options between the council areas, especially noting the growing employment opportunities in the City of Unley centre and the Adelaide Airport precinct. Creating new and consolidating existing connections to the Westside and Mike Turtur Bikeways will also encourage greater participation in cycling journeys to the Adelaide CBD. Without safe and direct routes residents, workers and visitors alike are unlikely to choose to walk or cycle in the first place. Facilitating those choices, especially noting the increasing popularity of e-bikes and cargo bikes as car alternatives, will assist the City of West Torrens to decongest roads, decarbonise transport and support social and economic opportunities for children, young people and the elderly by supporting independent car-free mobility.

In addition to their recent efforts creating Wilberforce Walk, City of Unley is making long-term efforts to also introduce a walking and cycling corridor following the alignment of Glen Osmond Creek. Capped or lidded corridors are well established with Charles Walk and Windsor St providing exceptionally popular recreational and transport corridors. Incremental improvements are also made along the creek through Myrtle Bank, where it is still largely exposed/uncovered. This is gradually improving the utility of the path for residents to access the Unley City Centre, Fullarton Rd Community Centre and shopping precincts, and local schools. Additionally, it will eventually provide an important link between the Cities of Unley and Burnside, and into the Adelaide Hills via the Crafers Bikeway.

Considering those works, a path along Brown Hill Creek would effectively provide continuation to those paths, linking the western suburbs and the airport to the eastern suburbs and the Adelaide Hills, which is currently not possible without cycling on major freight-bearing roads such as Cross, Glen Osmond and Richmond Roads.

At a local level, the new pathway would greatly improve north-south access across the corridor, allowing more people to make safe and direct walking and cycling journeys. This would be the case at Wyatt St, Debra Ct and Selby St. The increased permeability of the urban form is key in encouraging local journeys to be undertaken without a car.

Project precedent

Further considering the precedent of Charles and Wilberforce Walk, the (draft) *Brownhill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project Stormwater Management Plan 2012* states:

“In conjunction with particular flood mitigation works there are opportunities for non flood related benefits, including rehabilitation of riparian areas, biodiversity enhancement, removal of exotic, vegetation and weed species, improving recreational amenity, reduced stream bed and bank erosion and general stream rehabilitation.”

Capping the Brown Hill Creek along this corridor would allow enhancement of access to green space as has Windsor St and Charles Walk, noting City of Unley already has among the lowest proportions of green space as a land use of any SA council area. Bike Adelaide supports the greening opportunities this project offers, and the opportunity to remove self-seeded and invasive species along the creek. Rehabilitating the creek as a pathway would create opportunities for residents to have direct access to a safe, separated green corridor instead of the existing unlandscaped concrete drainage channel which they cannot access.

Considerations

We wish to offer the following points for consideration in progressing the project:

- A shared path could not be provided along the corridor without capping the drainage channel, nor alongside the channel without compulsory acquisition of property, given the space either side of the existing channel would be insufficient for a compliant path.
- The majority of extant vegetation is likely self-seeded and of little or no conservation value. It is also unlikely to meaningfully contribute to supporting native fauna or insect populations that would be otherwise better served with deliberately planted native species.
- Leaving uncapped the ~400m section of drainage channel running westwards from Watson/Bearer Ave and instead retaining the existing path alongside the channel could contribute to reducing project costs. This area may provide unique opportunities for introducing more natural-appearing swales, channels or basins instead.
- Community sentiment towards Grassmere Reserve in its current form, and how that section of the channel will be managed to provide a pathway while retaining and enhancing the amenity of the park. Consideration must be made to the consistency of the path treatment, and avoiding funneling pedestrians and cyclists on a road. A separated pathway project gains maximum utility through its consistency of separation..
- The map on the consultation website indicates a possible deviation of the path alignment from the creek channel that appears to incorporate a section of the Westside Bikeway and Garfield Ave, assumedly to address cost concerns and incorporate existing infrastructure. Bike Adelaide is not outright opposed to the principle, however; we note that this creates an inconsistency in the route which may discourage use for some, especially children or people cycling with children. Bike Adelaide would be willing to support a diversion if a consistent level of separation can also be provided on Garfield Ave. The road width on Garfield Ave appears to be sufficiently wide to accommodate a separated, on-road, bidirectional bikeway connector that would then be able to mount the wide extant verge outside 70 Daly St, allowing path users to bypass the roundabout and avoid multiple road crossings. A wombat crossing treatment should ideally be located here to ensure continuity and priority for path users. This would allow the path to cross Daly St and reconnect

with the creek alignment. Similarly, a path priority crossing should be implemented where the Westside Bikeway crosses McArthur Ave.

- Design treatments for the creek channel area at South Rd as part of the Torrens to Darlington (T2D) project, and the anticipated increased barrier between sections of the creek posed by a major motorway interchange. DIT concept designs only indicate an elevated crossing point north of Herbert Rd, which would not meet the needs of this project, and has already been conveyed to DIT is not aligned to any existing active transport route.
- T2D designs also indicate including a pathway alongside the motorway running north-south. If the Brown Hill Creek pathway were to become an overpass to cross the motorway, affordances must be included to allow path users to access the north-south path from the east-west path without lengthy or circuitous detours.
- Crossing points at major roads, including Marion Rd, South Rd (as above) and Anzac Hwy must be included, ensuring that crossings are safe to use by users of all ages and abilities, and directly align with continuing paths. Such crossings should be Pedestrian Automated Crossings (PACs) to ensure priority is given to the path, and ensure compliance of giving-way by motorists to vulnerable road users. PACs are the only suitable crossing type for these corridors to ensure children travelling to school can do so safely and independently.
- Crossing points at local roads should seek consistency of crossing types and to reduce crossing distances with protuberances. Raised wombat crossings should be implemented at crossings of Birdwood Ave, Harvey Ave and Watson Ave. This affordance of priority helps improve the overall efficiency of a walking and cycling trip, noting that PACs will create inevitable and accumulative delays while waiting for signal phase changes (unless programmed to be highly responsive).
- If the channel were not to be covered, (and thus no path) there would still be no adequate east-west connection to support active travel journeys. We note that road corridors parallel to the creek would fail to provide suitable alternative routes as they do not align with existing paths, nor existing Bike Direct routes, nor would they enable more people to ride or walk separated from cars. There is also a notable absence of safe or direct major road crossings along these extant east-west corridors which would require installation of new crossings, certainly falling outside the project scope and footprint. Harvey Ave, Galway Ave and Tennyson St are all also bus routes, making them uncomfortable shared road spaces for unconfident riders, especially children or people carrying children. Similarly, the Galway/Tennyson and Barwell/Everard corridors, despite being Bike Direct routes, are significant motor vehicle thoroughfares (rat-runs) further compromising the utility and safety of existing nominated bicycle routes.
- The long project time frame of 15-20 years for construction indicates an immediate need for reducing speed limits and implementation of an LATMP to prioritise traffic calming. This project should not be seen as an opportunity to delay implementation of the LATMP to improve road safety conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The eventual redevelopment of the Keswick Barracks site will likely have traffic impacts on the nearby area. The surrounding road network in West Torrens may face increased demand and will require safe and useful active transport alternatives to support increased activity there.

Bike Adelaide is excited by the prospect of progressing this much-needed addition to Adelaide's active transport network. It would offer improved access to green space, improved biodiversity and improved active transport options in one of Adelaide's most car-dependent areas. The success of other previous projects of this nature in nearby areas demonstrate clearly how well received and well used they can become, not only as pleasant places to recreate, but pleasant and *important* transport links.

We trust you will consider our feedback.

Regards,

David Elliott, Chair
