

Covering email:

Dear [Ministers for Health, Treasurer, Transport],

The Bicycle Institute of SA has been representing the interests of commuter and utility cyclists for over forty years. We appreciate and support the State government's coronavirus response. We would like to bring to your attention bicycle projects that can assist during this emergency, as well as economic recovery over three timeframes:

- A. Immediate term (0-4 months): cycling as an alternative to public transport; cycling for physical and mental health; reducing traffic-related hospital admissions
- B. Short term (2-6 months): economic stimulus to support existing industries; positioning for longer-term economic recovery
- C. Medium term (> 6 months): longer-term economic recovery and tourism-focused growth.

Our proposals are detailed in the attached 2-page document. We urge your immediate consideration of these. I can be contacted on 0409 284 165 or at fay.patterson@bisa.asn.au if you would like to discuss these further.

Yours sincerely,

Fay Patterson, BE, MAITPM (ret.)
Immediate past Chair
Bicycle Institute of South Australia

30 March 2020

1) Support cycling as transport, for physical health and for mental health during social isolation.

Cycling is an excellent form of exercise and one of only a few that are compatible with social distancing. As well as improving physical health, exercise is one of few measures that actively reduce depression.

- Include cycling in guidance about what is permissible in general, when self-isolating or in lock-down – We would be happy to provide advice.
- Categorise bicycle shops as “essential services” as per petrol stations – To provide access to cycling supplies and bicycle maintenance, and to support bike shops as local businesses.

Many people avoiding public transport are turning to cycling, which improves health, reduces traffic crash potential, frees up road space and will be increasingly attractive as other outdoor activities are cut off. However, people who are injured, unfit, carrying loads, live further from destinations or live in hilly terrain face barriers to cycling.

- Offer 12-month interest-free loans for power-assist bikes and cargo bikes purchased domestically, with a bonus for those with an Australian manufacturing component – This supports cycling, provides short term support for retailers, and helps position domestic manufacturers over the longer term.

2) Invest in cycling projects as an agile, effective economic stimulus.

While road projects offer economic stimulus, major projects currently planned for Adelaide are complicated, requiring coordination and large on-site construction teams. This raises the risk of delay¹ and makes it difficult to accelerate these projects. But a US study² found that 11.4 jobs are generated per \$1 million invested in cycling facilities (compared to 7.8 for road projects).

Bicycle projects that are shovel ready or can be easily accelerated to meet economic stimulus goals include:

- Adelaide City Council’s East-West Bikeway – Council’s March decision to undertake further investigations will delay construction until 2021 at the earliest. We suggest that the Minister for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure inform ACC that the economic benefits of cycling projects are well known, advise of the stimulus value of immediately progressing the project, and strongly encourage the ACC to commit to a preferred EW route at its April meeting to create a \$10 million economic stimulus.
- Goodwood tram overpass – A missing link in the popular Mike Turtur Bikeway, this also addresses access issues at Goodwood Train Station and has significant community support. A Cost Benefit Analysis has been undertaken, designs finalised and Federal Government funding secured. Delaying will only increase the cost of this essential infrastructure project.
- Crafers Bikeway extension to Stirling – This has been designed, with the project approved in 2016 but indefinitely delayed after funding was redirected to fixing flood damage. The project addresses a safety hazard and fills a missing link from the Crafers Bikeway, notably for Tour Down Under tourists.
- City Loop upgrade – The service road that runs alongside the railway line on the western side of the City an ideal base for a bike path to the New RAH and an upgrade of the City Loop route, bypassing several problem locations for the existing path. Built for the rail electrification and no longer used, the service road lies within DPTI’s rail corridor. The project involves fence relocation, sealing and lighting.
- River Torrens Linear Path upgrade – Widening, resealing and lighting to provide a more uniform, high quality standard for this premier piece of Adelaide’s cycling infrastructure. Capacity issues have been identified, with the desirability of path duplication already flagged but not yet delivered.
- Solar cat-eye lighting of off-road paths – Delineation lighting of the Port Adelaide Greenway, Crafers Bikeway, Coast to Vines Cycleway, etc., as a cost-effective way to increase safety and use of these routes. Installation details have been standardised through interstate experience.

¹ E.g. In New Zealand, only construction projects that are essential or key to human health are continuing.

² The South Australian Bike Economy, Margie Caust.

- Amy Gillett Bikeway extension to Mount Torrens – Capitalising on its recent extension to Woodside.
- Seaford to Aldinga Bikeway – As part of the South Road duplication.
- Arterial road crossing program – Arterial roads are a major barrier to using local routes, with few safe crossings currently provided. Existing designs can be used as a template for a broad program.
- Other projects proposed by local councils to implement their Local Bicycle Plans in response to an invitation from DPTI seeking quick deliverables to improve local cycling networks.

3) Federal intervention for access to ARTC land

State government advocacy is a zero-cost initiative aimed at longer-term economic recovery and development in the Adelaide Hills.

Intervention is required to secure access over land controlled by the (Federally-owned) Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). The ARTC prevents councils from developing land adjacent to its freight line being used for shared use paths, despite such land adjacent to passenger rail lines being used safely elsewhere, and paths existing in similar locations in metropolitan Adelaide where ARTC does not have control over the land. In these cases, high fencing prevents access to the rail line and preserves safety.

In the Adelaide Hills, ARTC land provides a strategic opportunity to bypass busy roads and develop tourist trails. Sometimes only short sections of access are needed. As ARTC does not accrue benefits from allowing access to its land, it will not grant access. The impacts of bushfires plus the coronavirus crisis provide the impetus for this to be changed.

4) Road safety initiatives.

Some 30-40 people are hospitalised every week in South Australia due to traffic crashes, with a similar number requiring non-hospital medical treatment³. Meanwhile, people changing from public transport to walking and cycling as part of the coronavirus crisis means that greater numbers of vulnerable road users are using our streets. Many of these new cyclists are not experienced in road traffic.

We would welcome messaging and initiatives aimed at reducing traffic-related hospitalisations as part of the coronavirus response.

- In interviews or a media release, note that people are turning to walking and cyclists for social distancing reasons and ask drivers to be especially mindful of traffic safety.
- Encourage SAPol to look strongly at traffic behaviour to reduce unnecessary road crashes.
- Consider whether some streets should be temporarily closed or have lower speed limits applied – As has occurred overseas in order to reduce traffic crashes and provide more space for social distancing.
- Make clearways full-time, on a short-term emergency basis – The majority of cyclist crashes in metropolitan Adelaide are at side street locations on arterial roads. Most bike lanes on arterial roads operate only during clearway times, leaving cyclists exposed outside these times or if they are travelling in the anti-peak direction.
- Strategic verge sealing/upgrade – We commend the State government for expanding its sealed verge program, for both motorists and cyclists. Sealing and upgrading to a standard to suit cyclists (in terms of width and smoothness) will improve cyclist safety and encourage community and tourist cycling. Strategic locations include verges to Port Wakefield, Auburn (links to the Riesling trail) and Nuriootpa; Mt Lofty Summit Road (Crafers to Mt Lofty, links to Crafers Bikeway); Norton Summit Road (Magill Road to Glen Stuart Road) and generally in the Adelaide Hills (Australia's most popular cycle tourist area). For high speed roads, audio-tactile line marking of edgelines is very desirable.

³ Based on data from Road Traffic Crashes in Queensland 2009, Transport and Main Roads.