



Metro East Bicycle User Group Inc.

Working for better cycling facilities

2019

bridging the Gap

Connecting Box Hill to the *Anniversary Trail*

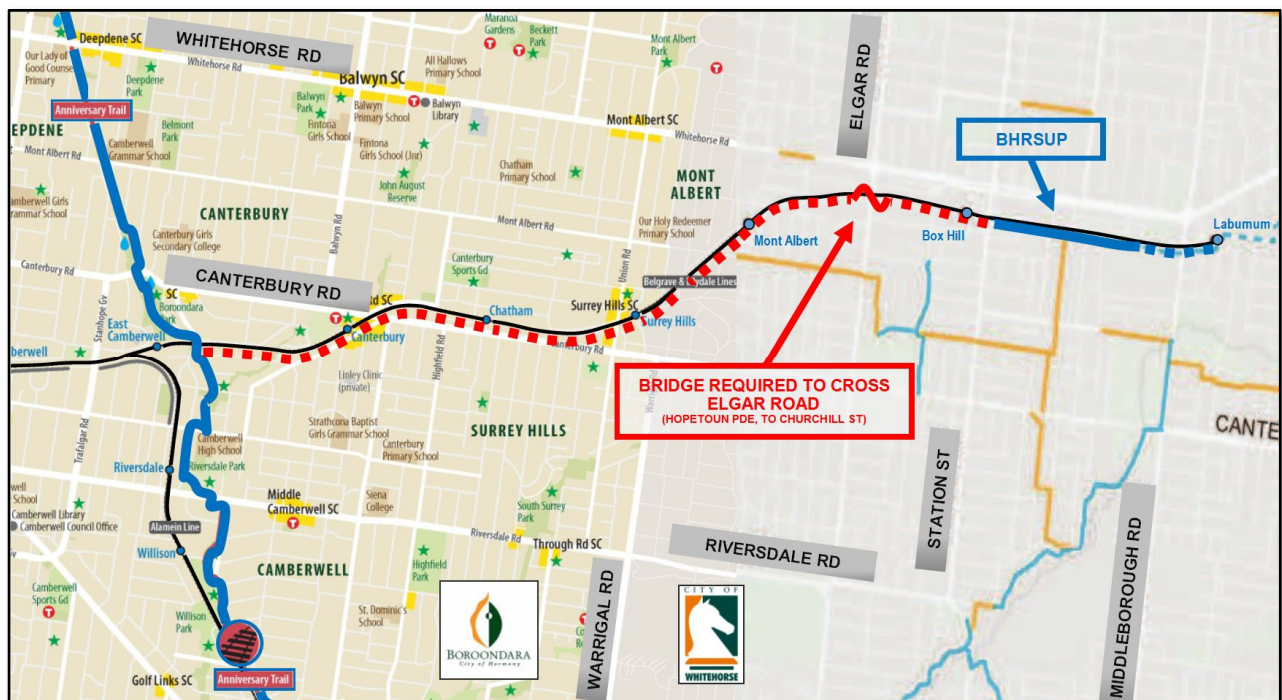


Proposal by Metro East Bicycle Users Group Inc (MeBUG) for the westward continuation of the Box Hill Ringwood Shared User Path (BHRSP)

February 2019

1. Overview

This is a proposal for a near 5km long extension of BHRSP from Station St, Box Hill to link with the existing Anniversary Trail near East Camberwell Station with a route that follows the rail alignment where possible.



2. Context of existing paths

The Box Hill to Ringwood Shared Path (BHRSP) is now 85% complete between Station St, Box Hill and Station St, Ringwood with the remainder scheduled for completion in 2019. It is our understanding that BHRSP represents an investment by the Victorian government of some \$15.8million.

The 10km BHRSP links the Metropolitan Activity Centres (MACs) of Box Hill and Ringwood. Box Hill and Ringwood are important locations in the Principal Public Transport Network.

Major paths linked to BHRSP are the Gardiners Creek, Pipe Track, and the Eastlink Trail.

In addition [MeBUG](https://mebug.org.au/) (<https://mebug.org.au/>) has [produced a report](#) advocating for the extension of BHRSP to Croydon with connections to Lilydale, Warburton and Carrum.

3. Transit-Oriented Development in Box Hill.

Since the release of the Melbourne 2030 strategic plan in 2003, Victorian government policy has supported increasing residential density along transport corridors. Nowhere along the eastern corridor are the results of this policy more evident than at Box Hill, where residential and commercial towers of more than 20 stories are becoming commonplace. This increasing densification coupled with a decrease in the provision of car parking space is increasing the demand for cycling. Even at this still early stage in the 2030 plan, parts of Box Hill CBD are already at a standstill.



For the residents of Box Hill and for those wishing to access Box Hill the absence of a safe, separated shared path is a serious concern.

A Missing Link

There is no safe link from the Major Activity Centres of Camberwell, Hawthorn and Kew or the Melbourne CBD to the Metropolitan Activity Centre of Box Hill.

4.Current Situation.

The State Govt has announced the removal of level crossings at Mont Albert Rd and Union Road Surrey Hills with work scheduled for around 2022

The announced plans by the State Government state that both crossing removals should place the railway below ground level.

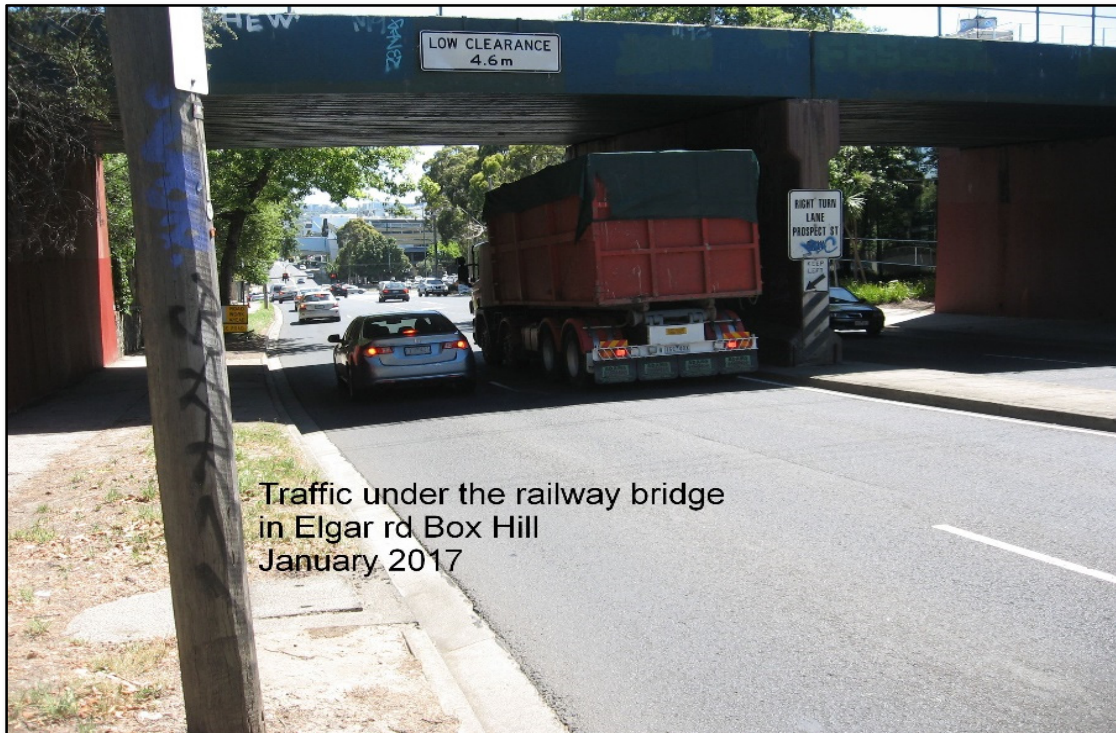
There appears to be adequate space for a SUP on the north side of Churchill St as far as Mont Albert Station. The necessary rebuilding of this station can incorporate the continuation of the SUP on either side of the railway line to Surrey Hills Station.



From the LXR at Union Rd there is space available on the south side of Sunbury Crescent further westwards to ultimately join the Anniversary Trail in Camberwell.

The major impediment to achieving a safe offroad route from the junction of BHSUP at Warrandyte Rd, Ringwood to the Anniversary Trail is the crossing of Elgar Rd, Box Hill.

Elgar Rd is a high traffic arterial road with a raised centre separation kerb which prevents cyclists, disabled scooters, parents with prams and pedestrians from using Hopetoun Pde to reach the vibrant commercial centre of Box Hill. Significantly, Elgar Road has been assigned a traffic stress level (LTS) of 4, the highest level.



Traffic under the railway bridge
in Elgar rd Box Hill
January 2017

A solution to this problem would be to construct a bridge similar to the one constructed by the LXRA at the junction of Brunswick Rd and Cochrane St Mitcham as part of the Mitcham and Heatherdale crossing removals.



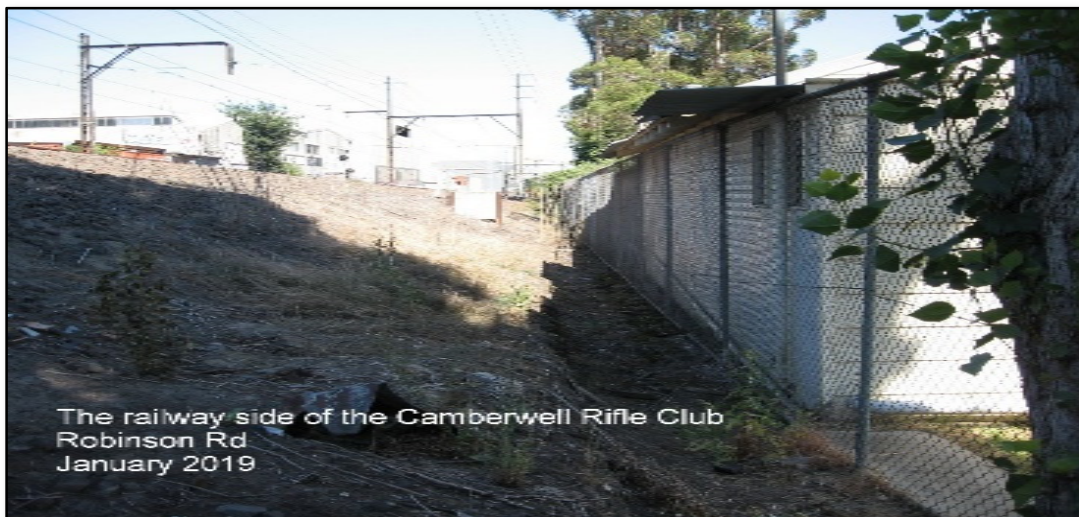
BHRRT Cochrane St bridge
Mitcham 11th Dec 2018
photo 2

5. Proposed Route: east to west commencing Station St, Box Hill

An informal route already exists via the underpass to Main St (Box Hill Mall), Centro Shopping Centre loading area, Centro car park entry road, Hopetoun Pde, Churchill St, Beresford St, Sunbury Crescent, Kingston Rd, Shierlaw Ave, Canterbury Gardens, Maling Rd to link with the Anniversary Trail at Warburton Rd.

6. Challenges and potential route options

- Because this route passes through established occupied areas, the challenge is to place, where ever possible, the path on the railway reserve.
- On much of the route, the rail line is atop an embankment, elsewhere it will be in, or next to, a cutting.



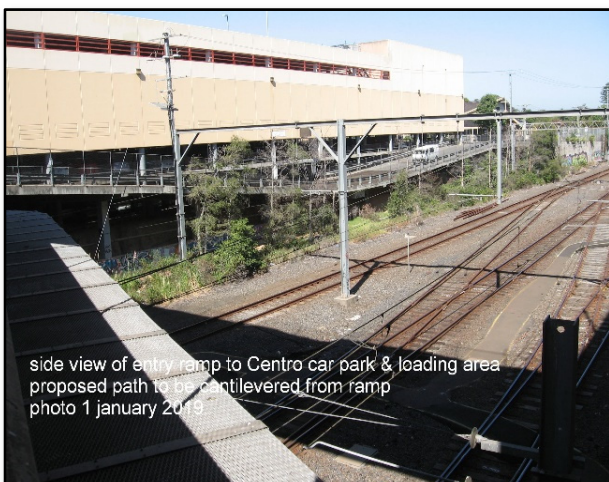
Similar problems on BHR SUP between Eastlink and Wantirna Rd were solved with retaining walls.



- Making the Station St pedestrian underpass permissible for cycling.
- Making the Box Hill mall permissible for cycling (similar to Southbank.)
Much could be achieved by rearranging the street furniture and dwarf walls.



- Making the loading area safe for pedestrians and cyclists. Copenhagen kerbs/green bike lane?
- Making Centro car park entry road safe for pedestrians and cyclists by cantilevering a suspended path over the rail reserve..



- Bridge over Elgar Rd
- Path crossing under Mont Albert Rd and Union Rd.
- Finding space on the rail reserve from Union Road to the Anniversary Trail.
- Finding a more direct route to the Yarra.

Most of these problems stem from 19th century decisions but are capable of being resolved by 21st century engineering and construction techniques.

7. Benefits of the proposal

Creating this vital connection between BHRSUP and the Anniversary Trail will promote greater use of the existing bike path infrastructure by increasing the contiguous network of safe paths to promote community health and well being.

- Forms part of the Victorian Principal Bicycle Network (PBN).
- Forms part of the Strategic Cycling Corridor Project
- Conforms to the current (2016) Whitehorse Cycling Strategy.
- Conforms to the 2007 Boroondara Cycling Strategy.
- Provides an important east/west link through the centre of Whitehorse and Boroondara.
- Improves access for walking, cycling and public transport.
- It will improve access for disability scooters, wheelchairs and prams.
- It will reduce transport congestion by reducing the number of motorised vehicle trips.
- It will make a major contribution to Whitehorse Council Low Stress Easy Ride routes.
- It will make a contribution to Whitehorse Council's Safe Arterial Road crossings.
- It will make a material contribution to "Ride to School" and "Ride to work".

8. Recommended Next Steps

The temporary shutdown of the Lilydale and Belgrave railway line for the level crossing removals at Union Rd and Mont Albert Rd presents an extremely rare opportunity to carry out much of this work without individual parts incurring the total and expensive cost of a rail closedown.

Whilst it can be reasonably expected that the Transport integration Act will ensure inclusion of paths in the vicinity of the crossing removals, we must work to ensure a holistic approach is adopted by the authorities so that broad-scale strategic outcomes are achieved.

9. Contacts and further information

For enquiries and further information regarding this proposal please contact:

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