

Email to Adelaide City Councillors re. Frome Bikeway, 27 February 2017

Dear Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors,

Regarding tomorrow night's tabling of Bikeways consultation results, the Bicycle Institute of SA notes the obvious: there is little support for reverting Regent and Frome Streets to four lanes. The residents want to keep the existing situation. Businesses prefer parking to more traffic capacity. Among the motorists who bothered to respond to the RAA survey, the majority support for reversion was only slight.

And of course the cyclists are strongly opposed – not as a rabid lobby that is trying to swamp results, but as the stakeholders most affected by the outcome.

We therefore query why Council would want to waste half a million dollars and undermine its carbon neutral strategy in ignoring these findings?

Some Councillors argue that the decision has been made; they don't want Council to look indecisive. We would argue that the public judges Council decisions not by its resolutions but by what happens on the ground: Council installing and then removing a separated bike lane on Sturt Street and doing the same thing on Frome Street. That's what looks indecisive!

Some Councillors argue for the existing Bikeway to be ripped up on urban design grounds; that the replacement will look better and at the same time also cater adequately for cyclists.

That may be the true, but for better or worse, you have created a highly valued piece of infrastructure that has met its aims of encouraging cycling by providing a new style of facility in the City. That so many cyclists prize and fear losing this is a testament to the hard work of ACC's Council and staff over many years. Pride, faith and goodwill are embodied in this infrastructure and destroying it for people who don't want or care about the promised extra traffic lane would breach the trust of those you've asked to leave their cars at home and try cycling.

We understand that this seems like an intransigent problem, so we have a recommendation to build cyclists' trust and overcome and perceptions of indecisiveness or money-wasting: rescind the decision to reinstate 4 lanes of traffic, build the rest of the north-south Bikeway, then reassess the existing infrastructure.

If the new design is as good as we all hope it will be, cyclists will call for the existing infrastructure to be upgraded to it. Ratepayers and businesses will see the urban design value of the money you spend – money that can be allocated from a future budget, evening out your expenditures in a fiscally responsible way. Indeed, while the State Government has said its matched funding of Bikeways will not go to ripping out the existing infrastructure, it may well agree to help fund community-supported upgrade works.

Also, the new design may well experience teething troubles, which if they occur in the destroyed section of Bikeway will place immediate pressure and criticism on the whole project.

And if for some reason the new design turns out to be worse than the existing, then you will not have wasted half a million dollars doing something that has little support in the broader community, increases the danger to cyclists and undermines your carbon neutral strategy.

We hope this makes as much sense to you as to us.

Yours sincerely,

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