



## **South West Group Submission**

# ***Western Australian Bicycle Network Plan 2012 - 2021***

**June 2012**

### **South West Group Vision and Mission**

*Local Governments in South Metropolitan Perth, through cooperation with industry, community and the other spheres of government will capture a wide range of opportunities to enhance economic growth as well as supporting a diversity of quality lifestyles whilst servicing and sustaining cohesive, productive communities in an enviable environmental setting.*

*The South West Group will be persuasive, forward looking and influential in representing, supporting and promoting Local Government interests that affect the growth and sustainable development of South Metropolitan Perth.*

# Western Australian Bicycle Network Plan 2012 - 2021

## SOUTH WEST GROUP SUBMISSION

### Introduction

The WA Government has released the Western Australian Bicycle Network (WABN) draft plan for consultation with comments closing on 17 June 2012.

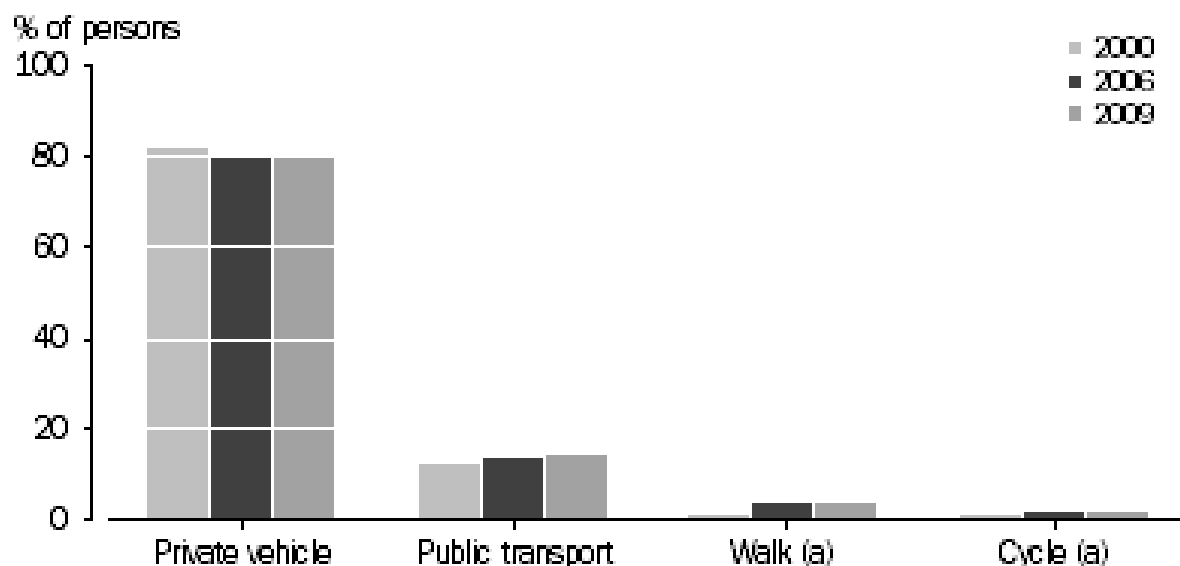
The South West Group has been a strong advocate in the region for improving active transport options and enhanced intermodal transfers. Local Government already plays a significant role by providing the largest component of the Perth Bicycle Network and through undertaking an active role in the promotion and facilitation of the Travelsmart program.

### Performance of the WABN

Performance of the WABN is monitored through an annual survey and bicycle traffic counters. (see <http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/activetransport/25725.asp> )

Information on journey to work is also collected in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census which shows Perth on a par for cycling to work with most Australian cities, but well behind Melbourne.

### Main form of Transport to work or full time study (2000 – 2009)



(a) 2000 data for 'walk' and 'cycle' too small to show.

Source: ABS Environmental Issues: Waste Management and Transport Use (4602.0.55.002).

The increase in cycling journeys to work from 2001 to 2006 was only 16.44% for Perth which represents an annual per capita increase of around one per cent. In the same period, the Fremantle Cordon cycling figures were fairly static (483 in 2001 to 485 in 2006 and 502 in 2011).

The modest increase in cycling does not appear to match the significant increase in the purchase of new bicycles. ABS, in their 2009/10 Australian Yearbook, report that only two per cent of journeys to work or full time study were by bicycle, with private vehicles being the main mode of travel to work (80%), followed by public transport (10 – 15%) and walking (3%).

### **WABN Draft Plan**

The WABN Draft Plan is a welcome addition to promote active transport and contains many worthwhile initiatives such as:

- Increasing funding for the Local Governments Grants Program to \$2 million per year and removing the funding cap
- Increasing Principal Shared Path funding to \$10 million per year
- Improving the Claremont to Fremantle Principal Shared Path as a high priority
- Enhancing bicycle access to rail stations through the Connecting Rail/Major Bus Stations Program
- Enhancing bicycle access to schools through the Connecting Schools Program
- Developing a recreation path from Fremantle to Safety Bay
- Linking Fremantle Cockburn Central and Armadale with a Principal Shared Path
- The appointment of WALGA to the implementation reference group

In summary, the WABN Draft Plan is an excellent document and a good starting point to promote increased active transport in WA.

There are however a number of areas that require review or could be enhanced to improve bicycle utilisation and services in the South West Metropolitan Region, as outlined below.

### **15 kilometre single priority area**

The 15 kilometres priority radius for Principal Shared Path (PSP) and Recreational Shared Path (RSP) projects is inadequate and somewhat simplistic in terms of representing an adequate framework and priority status to support cycling in the Perth Metropolitan Area. In addition, the priority projects have a major focus toward city centric bicycle travel and do not adequately support inter-regional and intra-regional bicycle travel, which forms the major share of recreational bicycle use in the region.

Priority areas should be based on where the greatest demand is and where there are deficiencies in public transport services and facilities. Further data on bicycle utilisation is required to determine priority areas beyond the 15 kilometre radius.

### **Activity centres as priority catchments**

The South West Metropolitan Region incorporates a number of activity centres that should be recognised as priority catchments to develop bicycle facilities and enhance bicycle utilisation. These include Rockingham, Kwinana, Cockburn Central, Murdoch Activity Centre, Jandakot Airport, Booragoon shopping centre and Fremantle CBD.

The allocation of these activity centres as priority catchments will provide a stronger focus for bicycle travel throughout the region and facilitate greater investment in services and facilities aimed at reducing car dependency and increasing recreational bicycle use.

### **Cycling linkages to and between activity centres and specialised centres**

There are a range of activity centres (strategic metropolitan, specialised and secondary) in the South West Metropolitan Region that warrant improved connectivity and facilities for bicycle travel. Key areas that would benefit from a priority catchment arrangement and improved linkages include Kwinana and Rockingham town centres, Murdoch Activity Centre and Booragoon Shopping Centre and numerous east-west connections to and from Fremantle CBD (Canning Highway, Leach Highway, Marmion Street, South Street).

There are also major employment centres (Jandakot Airport, Australian Marine Complex, light industrial and industrial areas) that would benefit through the provision of bicycle facilities that reduce car dependency and encourage bicycle use. These areas are not currently serviced by PSPs or RSPs (or Local Bicycle Networks in some cases) and require significant investment beyond the financial and resource capability of Local Governments. This investment needs to include end of journey facilities to safely and securely store and retrieve bicycles.

### **Greater application of Liveable Neighbourhoods through structure planning and urban design**

The application of the Liveable Neighbourhoods principles via the strategic and statutory planning process is an essential element in the establishment of efficient bicycle path networks at the local level as well as facilitating connections to RSPs and PSPs.

The identification of on and off-road routes to serve arterial routes and destinations such as schools, sports areas and public transport stations in the Perth Bicycle Plan is supported (refer to page 11 of the WABN report), however it is not clear who will be responsible for undertaking this activity. Greater clarity on how this will be achieved is required.

The provision of bicycle facilities in the workplace is also a key factor in encouraging journey to work via cycling. This needs to start at the planning approvals stage, much like car parking is considered. The provision of dedicated bicycle facilities should become a mandatory requirement for new commercial buildings and office accommodation. This would need to include secure undercover parking/storage of bicycles as well as showers and lockers for use by cyclists. In some cases, a reduction of the number of car parking bays to accommodate bicycles may be required.

In addition, there is a need for new developments to include the provision of facilities for parking and safely securing bicycles as part of public open space and street scaping requirements.

### **Funding for regional scale bicycle plans**

Most Local Governments in the Perth Metropolitan Area have developed local bicycle plans to assist with future planning of bicycle infrastructure, facilities and community education activities. These plans show local bicycle networks, but may not address

regional bicycle networks of paths that are required to cross Local Government boundaries.

The member Councils in the region are actively involved in planning, providing facilities and promoting bicycle use as illustrated by the following examples.

The City of Fremantle undertakes the following at a local level:

- Providing missing link routes by upgrading existing or new infrastructure along identified commuter routes into the CBD of Fremantle
- Continued monitoring of the level of rider activity along popular routes
- Additional funding for end of trip facilities
- Providing improved on road facilities (wider cycle lanes, defined demarcation with contrasting pavement colours, highlighted conflict areas on busy routes with green coloured anti skid in the bike lane)
- Support local user group with continued interaction and responding to local rider and community needs
- Inclusion of rider facilities in major capital works projects from the initial design stage
- Active involvement with local business's to advocate for facilities at existing hubs
- Re-appropriating car parking space for cycling parking (see point above)
- Planning to address priority links in Fremantle's eastern suburbs as well as connections to regional centres such as Murdoch and Booragoon.

The City of Cockburn has invested almost \$1.5 million to implement its Bike Network and Footpath Plan in 2011/12, which includes \$818, 700 for new footpaths and the rehabilitation of existing footpaths.

These and other activities undertaken by the South West Group member Councils are highly commended and additional funding is required to support Local Government's in the preparation of local bicycle plans.

However, there is also a need to develop regional scale bicycle plans that translate the Perth Bicycle Network objectives and recommendations to regional scale requirements and provide a framework for local bicycle plans prepared by the Local Governments. There are also some community support activities (e.g. community education and Travelsmart program) that could be undertaken at a regional scale, through shared service arrangements.

The regional bicycle plans would also be at the appropriate scale to assess the bicycle use and facility needs of activity centres and the effective connection of activity centres with bicycle paths and inter/intra-regional bicycle travel demands. The regional plans could also identify the needs for education and behaviour change programs, as well as gaps in service provision.

It is recommended that funding be provided to develop regional bike plans to assist in implementing the Perth Bicycle Plan and support local bicycle plans prepared by Local Government.

### **Increased funding and resources for Travelsmart Local Government Program**

The Local Government delivery of the Travelsmart Program has resulted in positive behaviour change at a community level, including increased bicycle usage.

The Local Government Travelsmart Program has shown to be a valuable delivery mechanism for encouraging public transport and active transport modes, consistent with Department of Transport, Department of Planning and Public Transport Authority objectives.

For example, the City of Cockburn undertakes an active role in the Travelsmart Program at both corporate and community levels as illustrated below.

Corporate:

- Provision of a fleet bicycle policy – four fleet bicycles one of which is an electric bicycle.
- Provision of 6 lockable bike lockers at the City's Administration building.
- Provision of end of trip facilities (EOTF) at the City's Administration building – two unisex showers, hanging space for clothes plus lockers for staff use.
- Provision of corporate Smartriders for all staff to book on our vehicle booking system that allows staff to opt for public transport when completing work meetings or work related study.

Community:

- Supports and encourages staff and community members who commute by bike through provision of the Travelsmart Pledge – staff make a pledge to change their behavior by opting for active transport (e.g. cycling to work at least once a week) and sign a pledge for eligibility for a rewards program.
- Supports local primary schools to implement behavior change programs based around the pilot 'Travelsmart to School' that encourages active transport, including cycling to school.
- Supports and promotes Bike Week, with this year holding a "Bike to Work" breakfast for local commuting cyclists in March.
- Promotes and advocates for a newly formed Cockburn BUG – a community group of local cycling enthusiasts who are looking to promote a safe riding environment for all riders in the City.
- Provides each household with a newly updated 2012 version of the City's East and West Travelsmart Guides – maps that show all public transport routes, cycling paths (PSP, RSP's and trails). These maps are very well received by the local community and will be also available at local libraries and community centres.

Additional funding support is required to assist Local Government with the continued implementation of the Travelsmart and Living Smart Programs where it is currently operating and to encourage the establishment of the Travelsmart and Living Smart Programs in Local Governments not currently actively involved. This funding would need to be provided over a minimum of three years to provide some certainty for the Council and Travelsmart officers.

**Nomination of schools and rail stations in South West Metropolitan Region for mapping and development under the "Connecting Program"**

The nomination of schools and rail stations in the South West Metropolitan Region for mapping and development under the "Connecting Program" will assist in raising the profile on the benefits associated with cycling and active transport modes.

The inclusion of the connecting program for funding under the Local Government Grants Program is supported and will enable this information to be included in Local

Bicycle Plans prepared by Local Government. There may be opportunities for nominations to be undertaken at a regional level should funding be made available by the State Government for Regional Bicycle Plans as recommended in this submission.

### **Greater flexibility and service provision for bicycles on buses and trains**

Restrictions for carrying bicycles on buses and trains (during peak periods) inhibits the use of cycles for journey to work and recreational purposes. Innovative ways of enable mode shifts from bicycle to public transport will significantly enhance bicycle utilisation and facilitate greater private investment in cycling facilities, particularly in the work place.

The use of dedicated cycle carriages on trains during peak periods and sustainable solutions for carrying bicycles on trains and buses in a safe and feasible manner is required to increase the rates of mode share bicycle use. This is particularly relevant given the urban sprawl nature and the large distances required for travel in the Perth Metropolitan Area.

### **Funding options for maintenance of strategic paths that are important for journey to work (not just capital works for new paths)**

The cost of constructing and maintaining strategic bicycle paths (PSPs and RSPs) for the safe use and enjoyment of the public is an expensive and resource demanding activity, with maintenance having ongoing financial demands for Local Government.

This is particularly relevant to PSP's, which undertake a "bicycle freeway" function and therefore the funding and maintenance should be the responsibility of the State Government, similar to the principle applied for Freeways and Highways being the responsibility of Main Roads WA.

Shared funding options between State Government and Local Government for the maintenance of strategic bicycle paths, particularly those paths that are important for journey to work, are required. These funding arrangements could be similar to those adopted for capital costs for new paths (i.e. dollar for dollar) and be assessed on an annual basis based on condition reports and related facilities (e.g. signage, directional arrows etc).

### **Seek better monitoring of behaviour and improved enforcement on Principal Shared Paths**

There have been many reported situations of conflicts and incidents of accidents on PSPs between cyclists as well as cyclists and pedestrians. The safe use of the PSP's is critical to their effective operation and utilisation as a shared resource.

Improved monitoring on level of usage and user behaviour will provide valuable information that can feed into education and behavioural change activities targeting users. This monitoring could be in the form of closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras at strategic locations along the PSPs, as well as random visual surveys during peak periods. The funding of this recommendation requires further investigation, given the high costs associated with required technology.

### **Seek increased promotion of short journeys to shopping centres and similar services**

One of the car journeys that can be easily substituted by cycling or walking relates to the short journeys to shopping centres and local shops/amenities. Further education and promotion of active transport modes for these short journeys would be beneficial from both traffic congestion and health perspectives.

The State Government is in the best position to undertake a broad public promotional campaign encouraging greater walking and cycling for these short journeys. This campaign could be supported by Local Government at a local level through Travelsmart and other community education programs.

### **Link the concept of *Smart Roads* to strategic bicycle paths**

The use of the *Smart Roads* model is becoming increasingly more popular to assess transport needs and mode share. *Smart Roads* is an integrated tool that aims to better manage the use of our roads and better link transport to adjacent land use. *Smart Roads* shows how to make best use of the network by assigning priority to different modes of transport at particular times of the day.

It therefore makes sense for the *Smart Roads* model to be linked to strategic bicycle paths (PSPs and RSPs) to demonstrate the potential implications for mode sharing at key locations, particularly during peak times to enable contributions associated with the transfer bicycles to/from bus or train.

### **Broaden the bicycle traffic counter network to include areas away from the CBD such as Fremantle and Murdoch**

The collection of data associated with cycling use and trends is essential to enable proper planning of facilities and services. Currently, data collection on cycle use is principally only undertaken for the Perth Central business District (CBD) and there is a need to expand daily data collection to other areas in the Perth Metropolitan Area.

The establishment of a network of cycle use monitoring points is required throughout the metropolitan area to monitor travel to work as well as recreational use. The monitoring points need to be positioned to also capture cycling use in activity centres and employment centres. The data gathered from the monitoring points should be used in conjunction with regular bicycle user surveys to gather journey and destination data.

### **State Government investment in education and behaviour change programs**

Cyclist and driver education and behaviour change programs are critical for ensuring safe cycling and encouraging greater use of cycling as a sustainable and active transport alternative.

These programs need to have clear messages and a wide coverage delivered through main stream media such as television and the press.

The wide level of coverage and high standard of program delivery is well beyond the means of Local Government initiatives (e.g. Travelsmart) and requires the State Government to take a leadership role.



The funding and delivery of such education and behaviour change programs by the State Government should be a priority for reducing car dependency and is consistent with the Department of Planning's direction on reducing car parking in the Perth CBD and in activity centres.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The South West Group recommends the following in response to the release of the draft Western Australian Bicycle Plan:

1. Expand the establishment of the single priority area beyond the 15km radius of the Perth CBD planned in the WABN. The development of Murdoch Activity Centre as one of the largest employment centres outside of the CBD should have its own catchment zone as a priority area and priority zones should be established for the other activity centres identified in Directions 2031.
2. Promote cycling linkages to and between Directions 2031 specialised centres
3. Support using Liveable Neighbourhoods promoting active transport to achieve sustainable communities through structure planning and urban design
4. Request WABN include funding for regional scale bike plans on a dollar for dollar funding basis
5. Request increased resources for the TravelSmart Local Government Program to promote active modes of transport
6. Nominate one school in each South West Group member Council area and three rail stations in the South West Metropolitan Region for mapping and development under the "Connecting Program". Murdoch Train Station should be a high priority, given the ambitious reduction of mode share for motor vehicles proposed for this centre by 2014
7. Seek improved flexibility for bicycles to be carried on buses and trains
8. Discuss funding options for the maintenance of strategic paths that are important for journey to work (not just capital works for new paths)
9. Seek better monitoring of behaviour and improved enforcement on Principal Shared Paths
10. Seek increased promotion of short journeys to shopping centres and similar services
11. Link the concept of Smart Roads to strategic bicycle paths
12. Broaden the bicycle traffic counter network to include areas away from the CBD such as Fremantle and Murdoch
13. Greater investment by the State Government in education and behaviour change programs, including widespread media campaigns