

ebv_030815 BV not happy RE eel trap bridge open and dangerous

From: Bart Sbeghen

Sent: Friday, 15 August 2003 11:13 AM

To: 'Docklands'

Subject: RE: eel trap bridge open and dangerous

Glen

Yes, I rode the bridge yesterday morning and have serious concerns with the design of the Eel Trap Bridge which was completed with no consultation with Bicycle Victoria, a representative of one of the main users groups of the bridge.

The separation barriers between wheelchair and steps and shared path make the bridge dangerous especially as it narrows towards the southbank. There is a real risk of collision between path users and potential serious injury due to the design of the bridge.

Specifically here is what concerns me, starting from Northbank:

1. - first flat section is fine and wide with open sight lines and clear space.
2. - the steel barrier between wheelchair space and shared space start at top of slope and effectively take up 1m of usable space as users need clearance of at least 0.5m either side of the barrier (and peds will travel that far away from it anyway). Is the barrier essential at all? Apart from narrowing the space and segregating users into smaller, more cramped corridors the barrier's vertical elements will also catch pedals and handlebars. I also think people will be tempted to ride, rollerblade, walk and jog in the wheelchair corridor as it will clearer most of the time.
3. - the start/end of the stainless steel barrier is not clear enough as it is hard to see looking end on. There is a chance people will run into the end of it. If it remains it should be higher and more colourful.
4. - the low red wall barrier between the steps and smooth ramp seems to be wider than it needs to be and should not be as low. I acknowledge need for barrier between steps and ramp but think a higher and narrower barrier (eg smooth sided fence type but with visible end elements) is more appropriate. The present low wall barrier presents a risk of crashing over the barrier. Bike crashes over low objects tend to result in neck and spinal injuries.
5. - as the bridge narrows toward the Southbank ground level the shared path corridor narrows to about 2.0m - below standard for a shared path especially with a slope and curve (I only paced this out - not accurately measured). Without the barrier between the wheelchair corridor this would be a more acceptable 3-3.5m (again just paced out by me).
6. - Then at the end of the bridge there is a bollard in the middle of the shared path corridor. Again against standards as there is a real risk of collision with the bollard. The bollard reduces the effective width for the shared path corridor to less than 1m for each side. I had trouble getting through with my daughter in trailer behind. In addition, if you are exiting the bridge to the left of the bollard there is a light box past the exit at edge of the water which impedes the path. The light box is close enough to the end of the bridge that path users will need to turn to divert around it. This creates a hazard that compounds the fact that there is no barrier between path and drop off to water and rocks on the left. I recommend a safety barrier for the first five metres beyond end of bridge, removal or repositioning of light box.

To make the bridge safe the following must be done before official opening:

1. - erect safety fence between water and promenade for first five metres beyond Southbank bridge exit
2. - removal or repositioning of light box at Southbank end of bridge
3. - removal of bollard in middle of shared path corridor at Southbank end of bridge
4. - removal of barrier between wheelchair corridor and shared corridor. Erection of "Cyclists slow down and give way to all pedestrians" signage at both ends of slope.
5. - replace low wall barrier between steps and slope with safety barrier fence
6. - at any safety barrier fence install higher and more visible end point elements with chevron linemarking leading up to these points

Glen, I am disappointed that this is the first time Bicycle Victoria have been able to comment on the Bridge design. Bicycle Victoria was never asked, at any stage, to provide input to the design, and it shows. There has been no regard in

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the detailed design to the function of the bridge as a multi-user facility
including people on bikes. This is very disappointing and means Bicycle Victoria
cannot say we support the design of the Bridge in its current form as is has not
been built to accepted standards and poses real dangers to prospective users.

Bicycle Victoria has always said we are keen to help make Docklands the most
liveable inner city suburb in the world. We have attempted to be supportive,
cooperative and practical to help achieve the best outcome for everyone
including developers, residents and visitors. The consultation and design of the
Eel Trap Bridge bears out the lack of consultation on major projects.

The consultation of VicUrban and Docklands with Bicycle Victoria (and other user
groups) needs to be improved and it needs to be sincere so that you get our
input early and at appropriate stages in the design process. We can then avoid
arriving at this awkward position again.

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