

Unley Bicycle User Group

City of Unley, South Australia

Wednesday, 20th December 2023

Attn:

Michael Hewitson AM
Mayor, City of Unley

Dear Michael,

Death of Cyclist on Wattle St, Fullarton

I am writing to you on behalf of the committee and members of the Unley Bicycle User Group, a group of 390+ members who advocate for the interests of people who cycle, walk and use mobility aids in, to and through the City of Unley.

Members of the Unley Bicycle User Group were shocked and saddened last week with the news that a cyclist had been killed outside Sunrise Christian School on Wattle St, Fullarton on the morning of Wednesday the 15th of December 2023. Our condolences go to the victim's friends and family and to those others who were part of this tragedy on a busy school morning.

As tragic as the incident was, however, the unfortunate reality is that this incident (or another like it) **was inevitable to occur** on Wattle St due to its **high car + bike traffic volumes** and **unsafe street design**.

The Park-Wattle-Mitchell corridor is one of the few east-west connections in Unley's southern half and so is popular for both people driving (4,500-5,000 cars/day) and people cycling (64 cyclists on Wattle St at the intersection with Windsor St from 7am-9am in the 2023 Super Tuesday cycle count). The route is also a designated Neighbourhood Cycling Route in the City of Unley's 2022-2023 Walking and Cycling Plan. This popularity has the consequence of bringing large numbers of people cycling into close contact with large numbers of cars at high speeds (50km/hr posted limit), increasing the chance of a tragic incident occurring.

According to the City of Unley's Walking and Cycling Plan, a street with the traffic speeds and volume of Wattle St should have **strong consideration given to providing separated facilities** for the safety and amenity of cyclists (Figure 1). However, the actual infrastructure on Wattle St in the vicinity of Wednesday's incident is that cyclists are directed to ride in an ambiguous zone between parked cars and 50km/hr traffic (Figure 2). This zone is commonly known as the 'door zone' and is widely regarded as a dangerous position to cycle in due to the significant risk of being knocked off one's bike into the path of passing traffic by people exiting parked cars - in other words, exactly what appears to have happened at this very location on Wednesday.

Council is already aware that safety improvements are required to the Mitchell-Park-Wattle St corridor. The route is listed as one of 9 priority projects in the 2022-2027 Walking and Cycling



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Plan, but as priority #9 the delivery timeline falls beyond the five-year scope of the plan. Unley BUG **strongly urges council to consider prioritising cycling safety improvements** to this corridor in light of the recent tragedy. Furthermore, we recommend that any planned improvements endeavour to achieve **physical separation for cyclists** in this area via either a parking-protected or other barrier-protected design.

The international best practice approach to improving safety on our roads recognises that people will always make mistakes and may have road crashes – but those crashes should not result in death or serious injury. This approach is known as the *Safe System Approach* and identifies four overarching pillars that influence road safety outcomes. These are **safe road infrastructure**, safe vehicles, **safe speed** at which people travel and safe road user behaviour.

Of the four principles, two (highlighted in bold) are under the direct control of the council and thus council has a real opportunity to improve safety on Wattle St and other streets in our city.

Unley BUG therefore calls upon council to:

- **Strongly consider fast-tracking planned cycling safety improvements to the Wattle St Neighbourhood Bikeway, including provision of separated cycling infrastructure.**
- Proceed with the planned **speed limit reduction** to 40km/hr on Wattle St in the short term
- Strongly consider further safety improvements in school areas across Unley, including further reductions in speed limits and traffic calming measures.

Regards,

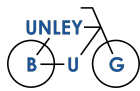
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Guide for establishing the suitability of cycling infrastructure based on traffic speed and volume

Cyclist facility	Traffic volume (vehicles per day)			85th percentile traffic speed		
	<3,000	3,000-5,000	>5,000	<40 km/h	50-50 km/h	>50 km/h
Mixed traffic	✓			✓		
Consider separation		✓			✓	
Separation			✓			✓

Figure 1: Guide for establishing the suitability of cycling infrastructure based on traffic speed and volume, taken from City of Unley Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027. Wattle St, with ~4,500-5000 vehicles per day, falls into the very upper end of the 'consider separation' category.



Figure 2: Bike 'lane' sandwiched between parked cars and 50km/hr traffic on Wattle St. Note the painted bike symbols in the middle ground showing where cyclists are directed to ride.