Assessing footpaths for shared use

Purpose
This note outlines the criteria needed to assess footpaths for safe, convenient and accessible use for all users. It also advises on the signing andWarning. Sections that are crossed out have been removed due to their inappropriateness to the context. Use caution when studying this document.

Current legislation
Legislation to manage the use of shared and separated paths is provided under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management - Road Rules) Regulation 1999. Following are the highlights of the current legislation.

Bicycle specific rules
Bicycle riding is permitted on the footpath in Queensland. The legislation states that “The taking of a bicycle riding on a footpath or shared path must:
- (a) keep to the left of the footpath or shared path unless it is inappropriate to do so; and
- (b) give way to any pedestrian on the footpath or shared path.”

Pedestrian specific rules
1. A pedestrian must not be on a bicycle path or a part of a separated footpath designated for the use of bicycles, if:
- (a) the pedestrian is:
  - (i) in a public transport vehicle;
  - (ii) on a roller-skate, skateboard or a similar wheeled recreational device; or
  - (iii) without traffic control devices, or information on or with a traffic control device, applying to the bicycle path or separated footpath to indicate the pedestrian is not permitted to be on the bicycle path or the part of the separated footpath designated for bicycles.

2. However, a pedestrian may be on a bicycle path, or a part of a separated footpath designated for the use of bicycles, if:
- (a) the pedestrian is:
  - (i) in a public transport vehicle;
  - (ii) on a roller-skate, skateboard or a similar wheeled recreational device; or
  - (iii) without traffic control devices, or information on or with a traffic control device, applying to the bicycle path or separated footpath to indicate the pedestrian is not permitted to be on the bicycle path or the part of the separated footpath designated for bicycles.

Definition of wheeled recreational device (WRD)
A wheeled recreational device means a wheeled vehicle suitable for being used by a child who is under 12 years of age. It includes skateboards, skates, roller skates, roller blades or similar wheeled recreational devices; but does not include a bicycle.

Travelling on WRDs on a bicycle path or separated footpath
1. A person travelling on rollerblades, roller skates or a similar WRD must be on a part of a separated footpath designated for pedestrians unless the person:
- (a) is crossing the separated footpath by the shortest safe route and
- (b) does not stop on the separated footpath for longer than necessary to cross the separated footpath safely.

2. A person travelling on rollerblades, roller skates or a similar WRD, on a bicycle path or a part of a separated footpath designated for the use of bicycles, must:
- (a) keep to the left of the bicycle path or separated footpath for longer than necessary to cross the bicycle path or separated footpath safely.

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Types of problems on footpaths
Despite these rules, causes of conflict between people walking, cycling, and using WRDs on busy footpaths include:
- lack of a defined space or route that is safe for people to ride bikes and WRDs in a bike lane on roads in central business districts and parks;
- footpath furniture such as shop displays, cafe tables and sandwich boards which reduce the amount of space for pedestrians users can share
- inconsiderate behaviour such as travelling too fast or not giving way to other footpath users
- the final destination of the footpath user pumps and pedestrians travelling through same line so to speed and are often less considerate of the needs of other footpath users
- where footpath users are seeking destinations in the area, erratic behaviour such as sudden changes in direction creates a greater risk of conflict.

Determined where a footpath ban is required
An audit of the area is needed where a bicycle and WRD prohibition might be considered. The following criteria must be considered:
- Pedestrian levels of service have been determined on a basis similar to motor traffic flow
- Footpath levels of service have been determined on a basis similar to motor traffic flow

Risk management
Risk management entails the identification and analysis of all safety risks likely to arise from prohibiting the riding of bicycles or WRDs on a footpath. This will include assessing the risk:
- of bike riders and user of WRDs to the footpath;
- of bike riders of being forced to cycle on the road in the particular area

References
- Australian Pedestrian and Bicycle Audit Manual (Qld Transport 2006) provides a framework for assessing the risk of footpath use
- The Audit provides a framework for assessing the risk of footpath use
- The Audit provides a framework for assessing the risk of footpath use

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