

Lindsay Menday
Sustainable Transport Project Coordinator
North Sydney Council
PO Box 12
NORTH SYDNEY
NSW 2059

11th June, 2021

Dear Mr Menday,

RE: Kirribilli to Cremorne Walking, Cycling and Streetscape Upgrades

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed upgrades to the Kirribilli to Cremorne cycle route. Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group now in NSW for over forty-five years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups.

Our mission is to make cycling better for everyone in NSW, and we support improvements to the pedestrian environment and new cycling routes that incorporate dedicated facilities for bicycle riders within the road environment.

The upgrades will help meet the NSW Government's commitment to provide a regional cycle network in Greater Sydney, as outlined in the TfNSW Future Transport 2056 Planⁱ, and reflect the increased emphasis on prioritising active travel, as set out in the January 2021 Road User Space Allocation Policyⁱⁱ.

At a local level, the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028ⁱⁱⁱ defines the future direction for the North Sydney community and identifies that improved walking and cycling connections are a key priority for the community. Feedback from the community consistently indicates that many more people would walk and cycle when safer, more convenient and more attractive routes are available.

Opportunities:

The proposals have many positive outcomes:

- The new separated cycle paths upgrade a section of Route 3, a priority route identified in the North Sydney Integrated Cycling Strategy 2014^{iv}.
- Transport for NSW identifies the route as one of the top 10 most critical links in Sydney, but it is currently used only by very confident cyclists as it is narrow along most of the length, and carries high volumes of fast traffic. By adding separated paths to the uphill sections, safety is improved for **both** drivers and cyclists by reducing conflict where speeds are most differentiated.
- Although the route will still not be suitable for all riders, the new paths will create comfortable cycling conditions for a much broader section of the community, who will use the infrastructure for short daily trips to shops and services and for longer commutes.
- Several new pedestrian crossings will address gaps in the walking network. Pedestrian protection to current technical standards is an important safety feature at traffic control signals.
- Many of the vehicle lanes along the route will be narrowed will help re-inforce slower speeds for vehicles travelling through the area, improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as reducing noise and hazards for local residents.
- New landscaping will provide visual amenity and future tree canopy, contain and clarify parking bays, reduce the width of the roadway where pedestrians cross, and assist with stormwater management.
- A substantial grant of \$2.73m has been offered by Transport for NSW. We applaud North Sydney Council's efforts to take advantage of this to proceed with the highest priority sections.



Figure 1:
Existing environment on Kurraba Road. Note the steep gradient and the very constrained space for people walking.



Figure 2:
Approaching the Kurraba Road / Clark Road intersection before heading south up Clarke Road toward Milsons Point. Note the morning clearway that creates two lanes for city-bound traffic and allows vehicle speeds to remain high. The footpath is again narrow and cluttered.



Figure 3:
Artist's impression of the proposed uphill lane on Kurraba Road



Figure 4:
Artist's impression of the proposed uphill lane on Clark Road.

Concerns:

A new cycle path should increase the scope for local residents of **all ages** to cycle for useful, daily trips. Research from Portland, USA, developed a best practice 'cycling segmentation' model for identifying the type and needs of existing and potential bike riders^v. As a rule, 3% of people who cycle are happy to mix with traffic on fast roads and keep pace with speeding cars. At present, Kurraba Road / Clark Road route is only suitable for these 'strong and fearless' riders due to the constrained space for overtaking, narrow footpaths and dangerous junctions.

Another 19% are confident on a bike but prefer quieter roads and separation where possible. The proposed upgrades will make this route through North Sydney much more feasible for this cohort, providing separation on the slower, uphill sections and reducing general traffic speeds though narrower lanes.



Figure 5:
Four general categories of comfort levels for cycling as transportation.
Source: North Sydney Council

However, the proposed paths are only in a single direction, and provide protection only on the uphill sections of the route. There

are many gaps, particularly at the junction of Clark Road and Kurraba Road and between High Street and the Broughton Street shopping precinct. People cycling towards Cremorne will be mixing with general traffic for 46% of the route, in all the downhill sections and across several junctions. Those heading towards Milsons Point will be thrown into the general traffic for over 68% of the route.

This does not make the route useful to the 48% of people who are 'interested but concerned', expressing that their interest in riding a bicycle for transportation is countered by fear for their safety. By creating infrastructure that caters to the 'interested but concerned' group, a significant proportion of car trips to school, work and extra-curricular activities could be removed from the roads with associated benefits to health, air quality, congestion and the liveability of North Sydney.

A final concern is that the footpaths, which are very narrow in places and impeded by signage and lampposts, particularly on Clark and Kurraba Roads. Widening the footpaths does not appear to be part of the proposals. Any improvements to the cycling network must also improve the pedestrian environment to maximise the benefits of the investment involved with realigning parking, vehicle lanes and intersections.

General recommendations:

Our preferred infrastructure is always bi-directional, completely separated paths that cater for all riders of all ages and abilities. According to the 'cycling segmentation' model, such cycle paths will allow 70% of North Sydney residents to consider journeys by bike (Figure 5).

North Sydney Council has installed some excellent paths, protected from the traffic by parking and landscaping, that are truly safe for all riders from 8-80 years of age (Figure 6).



Source: Bicycle NSW

Figure 6:
Bi-directional separated cycle paths on Sutherland Street and Young St in the North Sydney LGA. The paths are raised to pavement level and protected from vehicle traffic by a parking and landscape buffer.

We recognise that it will be difficult to achieve this along the entire Cremorne to Kirribilli route due to constrained road width and a high density of competing uses. However, bi-directional lanes should be included where there is space.

Transport for NSW's new Road User Space Allocation Policy^{vi} emphasises the importance of prioritising people walking and cycling over those in private vehicles when allocating road space. This aligns with Outcome 2.3 of the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028^{vii}, **to encourage sustainable transport**, and Local Planning Priority P6, **to support walkable centres for a connected and sustainable North Sydney**, in the Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020^{viii}. Any small increase in inconvenience to car drivers will incentivise the mode-shift that Transport for NSW and North Sydney Council seek, benefitting local residents with quieter streets, less pollution, noise and through-traffic.

Order of Road User Space Considerations



Figure 7:
Diagram expressing Transport for NSW's road user priority.
(Source: Transport for NSW)

Suggested improvements to the plans:

- Upgrade the proposed single direction path to a bi-direction path east of Ben Boyd Road and along most of Clark Road. There appears to be sufficient space without further loss of parking. Please refer to the the new Transport for NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox^{ix} and Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6A Section 5.1.5 for diagrams showing the options within a 12.8m road.
- Along the narrow section of Kurraba Road west of Ben Boyd, consider one-way traffic flow only. This would create space for not only a bi-directional cycle path but also much more generous footpaths, improving access to Anderson Park and encourage a mode-shift to walking and cycling.
- The section of Broughton Street between McDougall Street and Greenway Drive is particularly constrained as the houses here have no off-street parking. Ideally, a wide bi-directional cycle path would be created with the loss of parking of the west side. These parking spots are currently affected by clearways for 6 hours each day and could be considered less essential to Broughton Street residents than the spaces on the east side.
- If this can't be achieved, a 30km/h speed limit should be imposed along this stretch of Broughton Street with appropriate traffic calming to ensure that cyclists of all ages and abilities can mix with cars before joining the cycle paths at each end.
- If bi-directional cycle paths are not viable at this stage, it is important to consider reducing traffic speeds to 30km/h along the entire route. This has been shown as an optimal speed limit to allow people driving and cycling to share the road safely^x and is becoming a standard speed limit in many parts of the world. All single lane roads in Spain have been under a 30km/h limit since May 2021 and 30% of UK residents live in 20mph areas.^{xi}

We understand that the new separated cycle path will be created with 'tim tam' concrete kerbs. This is an appropriate treatment as modifications to the road surface and drainage are largely avoided resulting in

considerable time and cost savings. However, it is important to refer to the new Cycleway Design Toolbox^{xii} to ensure that the path is constructed to current best practice.

Access to other local roads needs to be considered during the detailed design stage. Many riders won't ride the full length of the route and the separated lane must allow cyclists to pull off onto local roads.

The proposals do not contain any plans for signage and wayfinding to direct cyclists and warn drivers about increased pedestrian and cycling activity. We recommend developing a signage strategy as per AS1743 Road Signs – Specifications.

Specific issues:

The comments below relate to issues and recommendations for specific sections of the route as currently proposed.

Broughton St between MacDougall Street and Greenway Drive:

We prefer Option A with aggressive traffic calming to ensure vehicles stay below a 30km/h limit and cyclists of all ages and abilities can mingle in the road where there is no space for a separated cycle path.

Intersection Clark Road and High Street:

The removal of the slip road will have great benefits for safety of those walking and cycling. To leave it in would prioritise the movement of cars over other road users which does not align with Transport for NSW's Road User Space Allocation Policy. Reducing convenience for drivers of private vehicles is a key lever to encourage the behavior change and mode-shift sought by the policy.

Intersection Clark Road and Kurraba Road:

We prefer the roundabout which narrows the road space and reduces the speed of all vehicles in this complex intersection. We also recommend landscaping and pavement upgrades outside the shops and cafes to improve the amenity for all users and reduce the dominance of cars.

Intersection of Holdsworth Street and Kurraba Road:

The footpath is very narrow on the north side of the junction and disappears on the south side. Widening the footpaths to improve pedestrian safety should be considered as part of the upgrades.

Intersection of Ben Boyd Road and Kurraba Road:

This junction is on a steep slope, and some riders travelling uphill in the new bike lane will take time to build up speed after stopping for the red light. A short shared path could be included so slower riders can pull off the main path to get across the intersection without holding up other more experienced riders.

North side of Kurraba between Ben Boyd and Wycombe Road, west side of Wycombe Road:

We do not support the painted bike lanes shown in Option B. Painted bike lanes in the door zone, which parking cars have to negotiate, do not contribute to a safe network that will allow residents of all ages and abilities to cycle.

Junction of Wycombe Road and Harriette Street:

It is important that the cycle path is continuous around the intersection. Any attempt to restore the lost parking spaces must not be at the expense of the continuous bike path. A resident parking scheme with 4P or 2P controls could be introduced to ensure that parking spaces are not used by ferry commuters and tradesmen; this would make loss of 5 spaces palatable and enable residents to support active transport infrastructure which has been shown to increase both amenity and property values.^{xiii}

Conclusion:

Bicycle NSW applauds North Sydney Council's goal of developing a network of separated cycle paths that reflect international best practice. Safe infrastructure to support active transport will benefit everyone in the community, reducing congestion and pollution while improving public health and providing more equitable access to employment, services and public transport. We enthusiastically support efforts to increase the share of journeys taken by bike or on foot, and the provision of infrastructure and lower speeds to make this safer.^{xiv}

North Sydney Council is urged to accept the grant from Transport for NSW and proceed with upgrades, focusing on sections that will deliver the most safety benefits. Returning granted funds reduces the likelihood of future investment – a very unfortunate result for ratepayers.

We recognise that the upgrades as currently proposed only meet the needs of more confident cyclists. We support all improvements to the cycling network but always prefer properly separated infrastructure that allows everyone aged 8-80 to ride bikes. If the upgrades cannot meet the needs of cyclists of all ages and abilities, we would like to work with you to develop alternative routes with fully separated bi-directional paths to ensure good connections from the North Shore to the Harbour Bridge and beyond.

We look forward to reviewing revised designs as the project progresses to construction stage and riding the completed path.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW

ⁱNSW Government, Future Transport 2056 [Online 1/4/2020] <https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/plans/future-transport-strategy/future-transport-greater-sydney>, Points 3-5

ⁱⁱNSW Government, Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000, [Online as at 19/2/2021] www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/road-user-space-allocation-policy.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱNorth Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/docs/1_council_meetings/policies_plans/strategic_plans/communitystrategicplan_2018-2028_final_lr.pdf

^{iv} North Sydney Integrated Cycle Plan 2014.

https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/docs/5_recreation_facilities/walking_cycling/north_sydney_integrated_cycling_strategy.pdf

^v Roger Geller. (2009). Four types of cyclists. Portland Bureau of Transportation.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746>

^{vii} NSW Government, Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000, [Online as at 19/2/2021]

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/road-user-space-allocation-policy.pdf

^{vii} North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/docs/1_council_meetings/policies_plans/strategic_plans/communitystrategicplan_2018-2028_final_lr.pdf

^{viii} North Sydney Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020.

https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/Local+Strategic+Planning+Statements/LSPS+2020/North+Sydney+LSPS_Master+Copy_Version+21_2020+03+16.pdf

^{ix} Cycleway Design Toolbox: designing for cycling and micromobility. Transport for NSW.

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/Cycleway-Design-Toolbox-Web.pdf>

^x City of Yarra - 30km/h speed limit: pre-trial final report, 2017. <https://thanksfor30.com.au/sites/default/files/2018-08/City-of-Yarra-Pre-Trial-Report-Aug-2017-FINAL%5B1%5D.pdf>

^{xi} O'Sullivan, F. (2020, November). Why Europe is slowing down. Bloomberg CityLab.
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-18/speed-limits-are-dropping-in-europe-and-the-u-k>

^{xii} Cycleway Design Toolbox: designing for cycling and micromobility. Transport for NSW. [online as at 11/6/2021]
<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/Cycleway-Design-Toolbox-Web.pdf>

^{xiii} How new Sydney cycleways can pump up property values. (2019, Jan 9).
<https://www.realestate.com.au/news/how-new-sydney-cycleways-can-pump-up-property-prices/>