

General Manager  
Cumberland City Council  
PO Box 42  
Merrylands NSW 2160

5<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Cumberland City Council,

**RE: Community Strategic Plan review**

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the review process for Cumberland's Community Strategic Plan 2017-2021. 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 facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. We advocate for new cycling routes that incorporate dedicated paths within both urban green corridors and the road environment, to provide connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips.

**Concerns:**

A review of the 2017 iteration of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) **reveals a lack of benchmarks or measures for expanding cycling infrastructure**. There is some intent to encourage active travel within the 6 Strategic Goals. For example, Strategic Goal 1 includes an outcome to live healthy and active lifestyles; Strategic Goal 3 states an intent to make the best possible use of green space for outdoor activity while mitigating urban heat island effects; and Strategic Goal 5 aims to have a linked network of bike and pedestrian routes to connect town centres but promises only to record residents' satisfaction with cycle ways. There is no plan to measure how the network has expanded.

**Opportunities:**

The new CSP should be developed with regard to other relevant plans for Cumberland LGA to ensure it maximises opportunities to improve the active transport network. These plans include:

Transport for NSW Future Transport 2056 Plan, which commits to provide a regional cycle network in Greater Sydney.

Sydney Green Grid, developed by the NSW Government Architect in 2017 and reflected in the district and region plans, proposes an interconnecting network of open spaces that support walking and cycling. The Green Grid for the Cumberland area is shown in Figure 1.

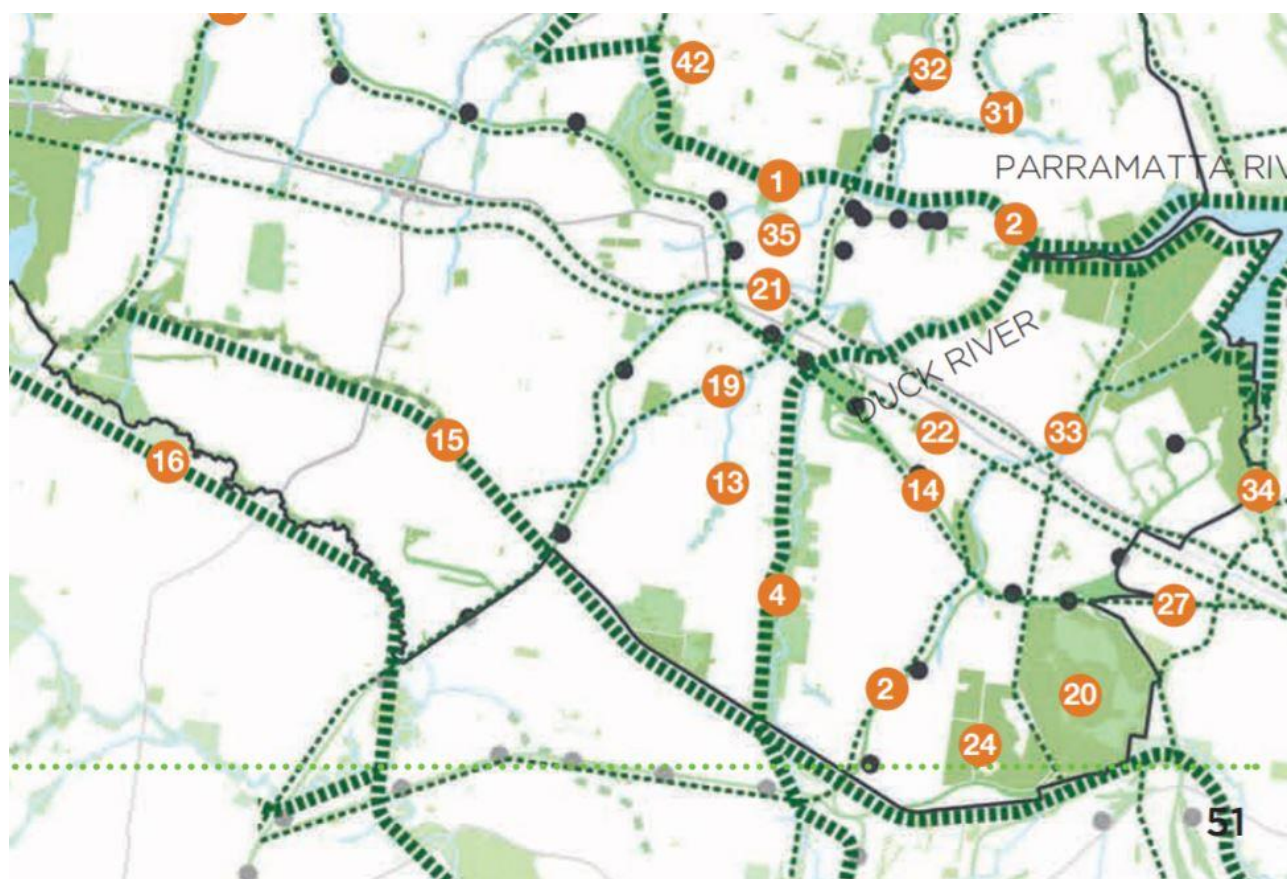


Figure 1:  
Extract from the Green Grid showing project opportunities in the Cumberland area.  
(Source: Tyrrell Studio / NSW Government Architect)

#### Key

- 2. Parramatta Light Rail corridor
- 4. Duck River Corridor
- 15. Prospect Reservoir Water Pipeline
- 16. Prospect Creek Parklands
- 19. Duck Creek
- 23. Toongabbie and Blacktown Creeks

The Green Grid sets out **an excellent vision** for the development of important active transport connections in Greater Sydney, utilising the open space networks to create a diverse, vibrant, healthy and resilient city. The Green Grid reinforces blue and green biodiversity corridors, offers multiple recreational opportunities and acts as a focal point for community and culture.

Greater Sydney Region Plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities (2018) which locates Cumberland in the Central River City.

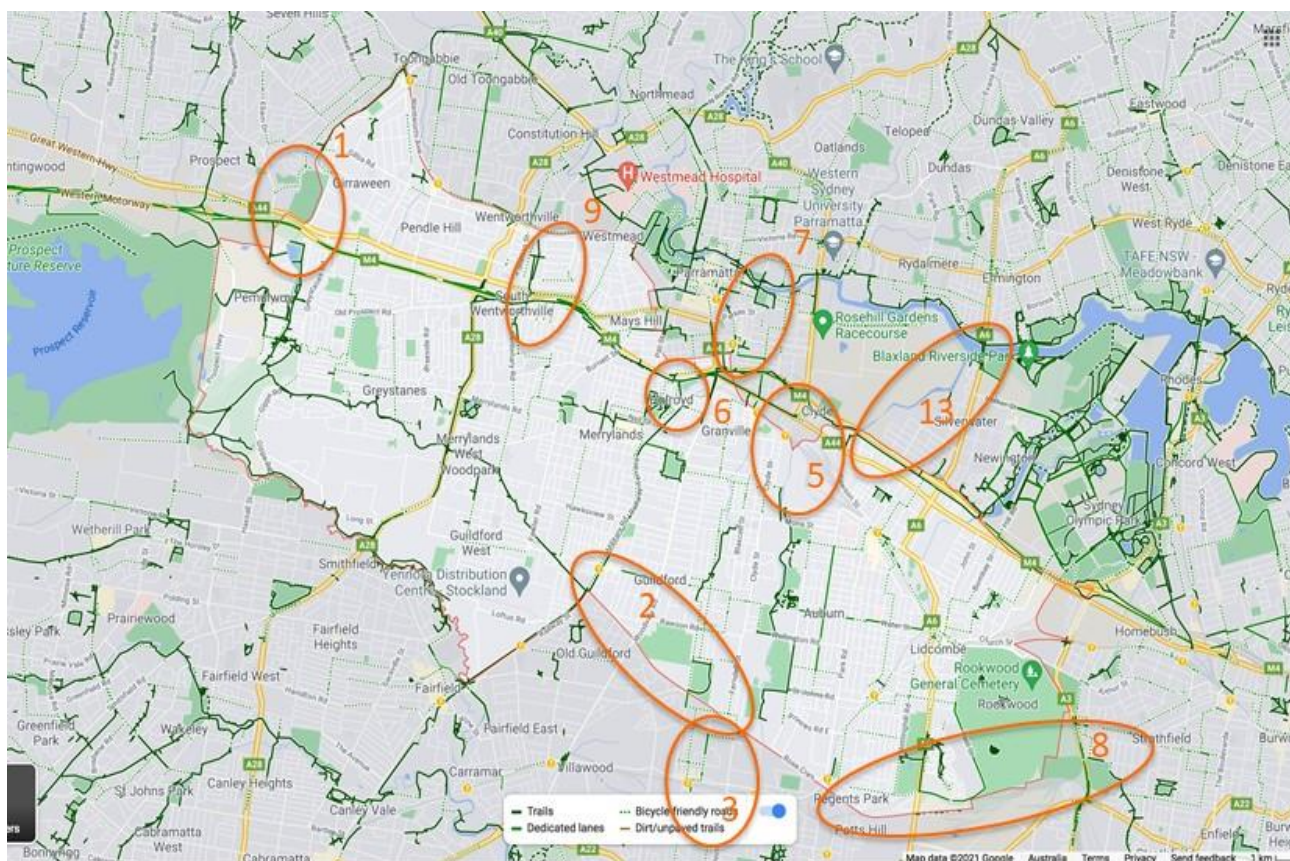
Central District Plan (2018) which aims to improve the 30-minute access to jobs within the area. There is a commitment to increase tree canopy and develop Green Grid Connections (Planning Priority C16) with two Cumberland routes highlighted as priorities – the Duck River Corridor and the Prospect Reservoir Pipeline Corridor.

Cumberland 2030 Local Strategic Planning Statement which expresses an aim to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use as Planning Priority 2 and reinforces the Central District Plan's key actions of developing the Duck River and the Prospect Reservoir Pipeline corridors and implementing urban cooling through increased canopy cover in Planning Priorities 11-16.

We have consulted with local Bicycle User Group CAMWEST and identified a number of missing links and gaps in the local network, as shown in Figure 2. These missing links have been the focus of advocacy by



CAMWEST for many years and should be included in commitments to active travel infrastructure in the CSP. Note that several suggested upgrades are not related to Duck Creek or the Prospect Reservoir Pipeline but involve bridges, underpasses and short connections that would join up existing shared path infrastructure to create a much more useful network for residents of all ages and abilities.



**Key**

- 1. Girraween Creek in Toongabbee to Pemulway
- 2. Guildford railway line to Duck River (the Pipeline Path) – 3.7km
- 3. Princes Park to Birrong Leisure Centre – 1.7km (challenging railway embankment)
- 5. M4 at Clyde to Duck River (and then to Bankstown)
- 6. Underpass for Parra-Liverpool rail trail at Woodville Road
- 7. Route through Harris Park to link M4 and Parramatta River trail
- 8. Duck River at Regents Park to Cooks River – vital missing link
- 9. Wentworthville to Mons Road via Findlayson Creek
- 13. Duck Creek to Silverwater Bridge at PVC

Figure 2:  
Missing links identified by CAMWEST  
(Source: Bicycle NSW / Google Maps)

Also:  
Extend M4 west from Wentworthville to M7  
Better connections from Olympic Park and M4  
Upgrade Girraween Creek and Prospect Creek paths

Many routes contribute to the long-planned **Bay to Mountains** concept of a figure-of-eight shared user path (SUP) joining Sydney Olympic Park with Bankstown Velodrome, Fairfield City Farm, Cooks River and Prospect Reservoir. The Bay to Mountains loop has been at the centre of CAMWEST advocacy efforts for 25 years. A 2019 survey showed that it is 74% built with 22 km of SUP still required. Bicycle NSW supports the completion of the route to Austroads standard for its entire length, creating a lasting asset for both local residents and cyclists from across the city. Iconic bicycle infrastructure links key destinations and encourages residents to use active transport but also attracts visitors and stimulate the local economy.

In 2016, Cumberland recorded a population of 226,052. This figure is estimated to increase by 35% to 304,811 by 2036. Merrylands and Wentworthville are expected to experience the largest population growth<sup>i</sup>.

**Congestion** is a growing problem. Cycling trips have scope for significant growth as two major destinations for work trips (the proposed strategic centre at Merrylands and Parramatta) are within cycling distance for many people. Improving active and public transport infrastructure and increasing the take up of people walking, cycling and catching public transport, will ultimately reduce the number of people choosing to drive.

There has never been a better time to build for bike riding and active transport, as evidenced in the new Transport for NSW policies that require State projects to prioritize road space for active transport:

- Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001<sup>ii</sup>
- Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000<sup>iii</sup>

### Order of Road User Space Considerations



Figure 3:  
Diagram expressing Transport for NSW's  
road user priority.  
(Source: Transport for NSW)

NSW Government has committed to provide a regional cycle network in Greater Sydney, as outlined in the Future Transport 2056 Plan<sup>iv</sup>. The Principle Bike Network (PBN) is being finalised by Transport for NSW and should align with the Green Grid priorities.

The expansion of cycling facilities must be a focus of Cumberland's short-term transport planning. Safe cycling provision gives people travel choices that decongest roads, public transport and parking, that don't contribute to urban heat and environmental pollution, and people who ride bikes can easily stop at local shops en-route, benefiting local businesses<sup>v</sup>.

Bicycle NSW supports cycling infrastructure that is completely separated from vehicles and caters for riders of all ages and abilities. According to the best practice 'cycling segmentation' model, developed in Portland USA to identify the type and needs of existing and potential bike riders<sup>vi</sup>, such cycle paths will allow 70% of local residents to consider journeys by bike (Figure 4). The area has some steep inclines but the increasing use of e-bikes and other micromobility devices will ensure that active transport options are accessible to all residents.



Figure 4:  
Four general categories of comfort levels  
for cycling as transportation.  
Source: North Sydney Council

The Bicycle NSW *Build it for Everyone* policy pillar<sup>vii</sup> sets a standard that cycling infrastructure should be fit for eight year old children or elders to ride on. Door zone bike lanes, bike stencils on the road and dangerous intersections will continue to deter the 48%<sup>viii</sup> of people who are 'interested but concerned', from making the switch to cycling, and parents will still feel driving their children to school and activities is the only way to keep them safe from being hit by cars. Any small increase in inconvenience to car drivers created by reducing road space for driving and parking private vehicles will incentivise the mode-shift that Transport for NSW and Cumberland Council seek, benefitting local residents with quieter streets, less pollution, noise and through-traffic.

The **health** outcomes from increased cycling infrastructure are particularly important in Western Sydney, where research shows that 50% of residents are at risk of developing diabetes<sup>ix</sup>. Western Sydney is described as a *diabetogenic* environment where the local economy and built environment make it difficult for the residents to engage in a healthy lifestyle. There is an urgent need to change the environment in which people live, work and play to address the social determinants of poor health in Western Sydney.

Another critical benefit of more active travel infrastructure is the mitigation of the **urban heat island** effect. Western Sydney is particularly susceptible to extreme heat events which affect residents' ability to work, study, sleep and exercise<sup>x</sup>. We support the efforts of WSROC to increase city resilience by planning and designing to reduce urban heat and help people adapt to a hotter climate. Bicycle NSW endorses WSROC's Urban Heat Planning Toolkit.<sup>xi</sup> Shifting travel mode-share to cycling and walking can help achieve low carbon cities,<sup>xii</sup> but increased tree cover will be needed to provide shade and make cycling cooler. By focusing development on parks, open spaces and tree-lined shared paths rather than roads and car parks, Cumberland will contribute to creating cooler cities and healthy environment for all citizens.

## Conclusion:

Bicycle NSW encourages Cumberland to plan for game-changing upgrades to the active transport network in the LGA. Safe infrastructure to support walking and cycling 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.

Two important considerations must underline the development of all detailed plans for cycle lanes and shared paths:



- Integration of the route with train stations and bus stops is essential to ensure easy access by bike and foot. All public transport journeys start and finish with a walk or cycle. By providing high-quality, safe conditions for walking to the station, residents will be encouraged to use mass transit. If safe cycling is facilitated, the catchment for the train station increases, breaking down the first/last mile barrier which can inhibit take-up of public transport.
- Connections with education facilities along the routes must be maximised. Cycling infrastructure needs to be safe and continuous to increase the mode share of cycling and reduce congestion associated with school journeys.

Cycle paths offer the greatest mode-shift potential when riders are able to connect their whole journey safely. The City of Parramatta and City of Sydney have demonstrated that building safe, well-connected cycleways works to induce mode-shift to active transport.

We look forward to working with Cumberland Council to progress the delivery of active transport infrastructure in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

***Sarah Bickford***

Bike Planner  
Bicycle NSW

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<sup>i</sup> Cumberland 2030 – Local Strategic Planning Statement.

<https://www.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/cumberland-2030-our-local-strategic-planning-statement.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> NSW Government, Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001, [Online as at 19/2/2021] [www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf](http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> 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](http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/road-user-space-allocation-policy.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> NSW 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

<sup>v</sup> Jerome N Rachele. Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good for business, The Conversation [Online as at 24/2/2021] [Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good business \(theconversation.com\)](http://dothesums.com.au/do-the-sums-bicycle-friendly-changes-are-good-business)

<sup>xvi</sup> Roger Geller. (2009). Four types of cyclists. Portland Bureau of Transportation. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746>

<sup>vii</sup> Bicycle NSW (2018) Our Policy, [online as at 24/2/2021] <https://bicyclensw.org.au/our-policy/>

<sup>viii</sup> 70% of people when surveyed said they would ride more if they felt safe  
NSW Government, Sydney's Cycling Future (2013) [Online as at 24/2/2021] <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/sydneys-cycling-future-web.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> Western Sydney Diabetes. Taking the heat out of our diabetes hotspot. [https://www.westernsydneydiabetes.com.au/themes/default/basemedia/content/files/WSLHD\\_Diabetes\\_Hotspot.pdf](https://www.westernsydneydiabetes.com.au/themes/default/basemedia/content/files/WSLHD_Diabetes_Hotspot.pdf)

<sup>x</sup> Climate Council. (2021, Jan 28). Untouchable playgrounds: urban heat and the future of Western Sydney. <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/urban-heat-island-effect-western-sydney/>

<sup>xi</sup> WSROC (2021) Urban Heat Planning Toolkit <https://wsroc.com.au/projects/project-turn-down-the-heat/turn-down-the-heat-resources-2>

<sup>xii</sup> WSROC (2021) Urban Heat Planning Toolkit <https://wsroc.com.au/projects/project-turn-down-the-heat/turn-down-the-heat-resources-2> (p16)