

General Manager  
Georges River Council  
PO Box 205  
HURSTVILLE BC  
NSW 1481

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021

Dear Georges River Council,

**RE: SF21/3209 Georges River Transport Strategy 2021**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Transport Strategy for the Georges River LGA. 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 advocate for new cycling routes that incorporate dedicated paths within the road environment and in green corridors, providing connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips.

The draft Transport Strategy has a vision for Georges River to have a *sustainable transport network that safely connects people to jobs, services and great places*<sup>i</sup>. This is supported by Bicycle NSW and we commend Council's effort to develop a detailed set of documents supported by data, well-researched context studies and consideration of future trends.

However, as the map in Figure 1 exposes, the existing infrastructure for safe bike riding is very minimal. The draft Transport Strategy recognises this and highlights the following issues:

- The cycling network is very limited within Georges River, and generally takes the form of on-road mixed traffic routes.
- Signage is poor.
- Cycling is prohibited on the footpath in local centres even though no formal on-road facilities are provided.
- The few off-road paths are found in parks and reserves and not connected to a wider network.
- The lack of dedicated cycling facilities is a barrier and will hinder the uptake of cycling as a means of transport when commuting throughout Georges River.

One of the three guiding policy themes at Bicycle NSW is 'Build it for Everyone'<sup>ii</sup> and we advocate for safe connected infrastructure that is suitable for riders from 8 to 80 years of age to use independently. It is clear that **a sustained effort** will be required by Georges River Council and Transport for NSW to develop an adequate network of cycling routes that will allow **all** residents to consider trips by bicycle, reducing noise, pollution and congestion and increasing health and well-being.

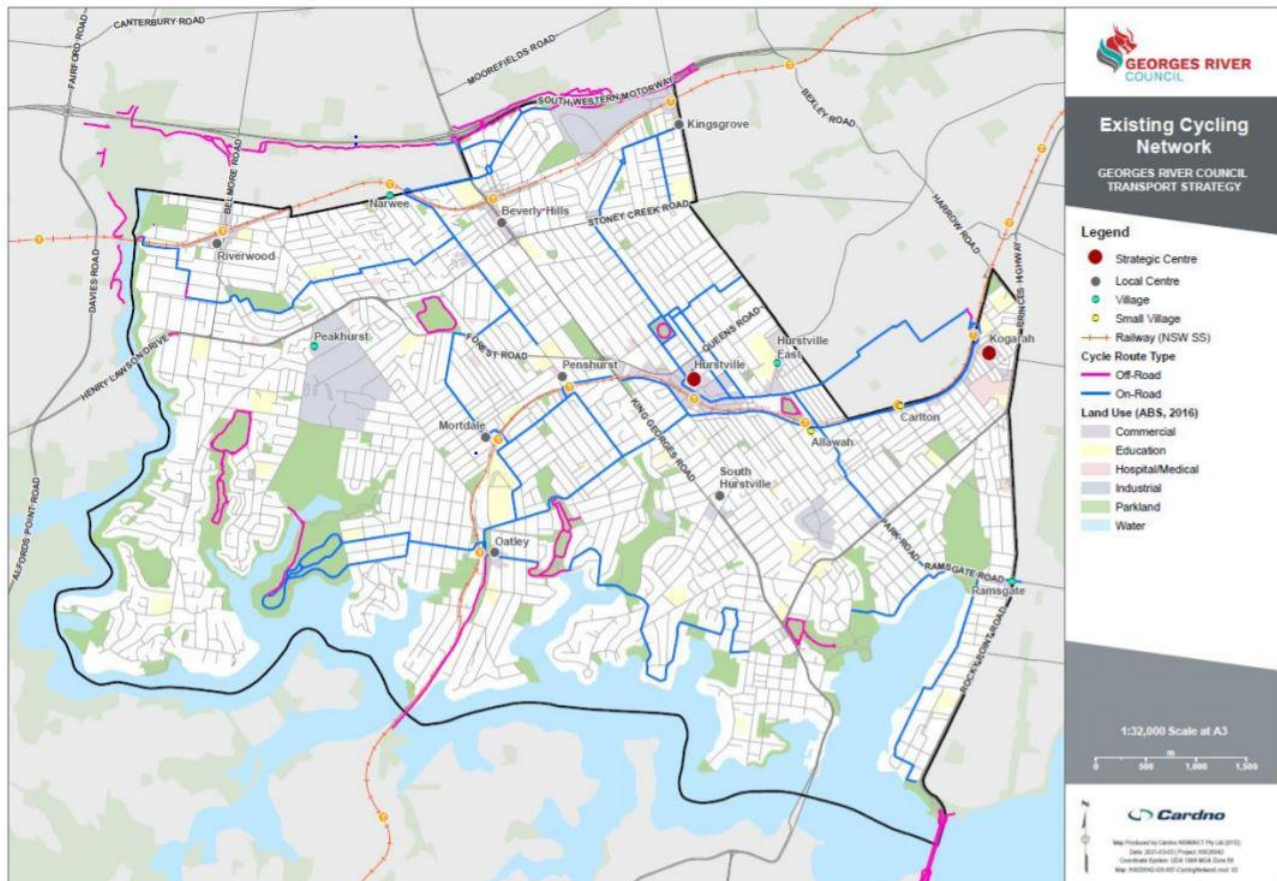


Figure 1: The existing cycling network in Georges River. Only the sections shown in pink are separated off-road paths. (Source: Georges River Council / Cardno)

We have reviewed the draft Transport Strategy alongside other relevant plans that relate to the Georges River area to identify the possible opportunities for improving the active transport network. These plans include:

Transport for NSW Future Transport 2056 Plan<sup>iii</sup>, which commits to providing a regional cycle network in Greater Sydney, known as the Principle Bike Network (PBN).

Greater Sydney Region Plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities (2018) which locates Georges River in the south western corner of the Eastern Harbour City. Kogarah and Hurstville are identified as strategic centres. Kogarah is also a nominated Collaboration Area based on its health and education precinct.

South District Plan (2018) includes Georges River and set outs how integrated land use and transport planning can help achieve the 30-minute city through increasing development density near public transit corridors in Strategic Direction 12. The need for better accessibility, connectivity and amenity for pedestrian and cyclists is emphasised. In addition to the strategic centres of Hurstville and Kogarah, local centres are identified at Riverwood, Kingsgrove, Peakhurst, South Hurstville and Oatley.

Sydney Green Grid<sup>iv</sup>, 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 Principal Bicycle Network will integrate the Sydney Green Grid to create important links between activity centres and support active recreation. The Georges River area is covered by the South District documents which highlight key Green Grid opportunities along the Salt Pan Creek and the Illawarra Rail Line (Figure 2).

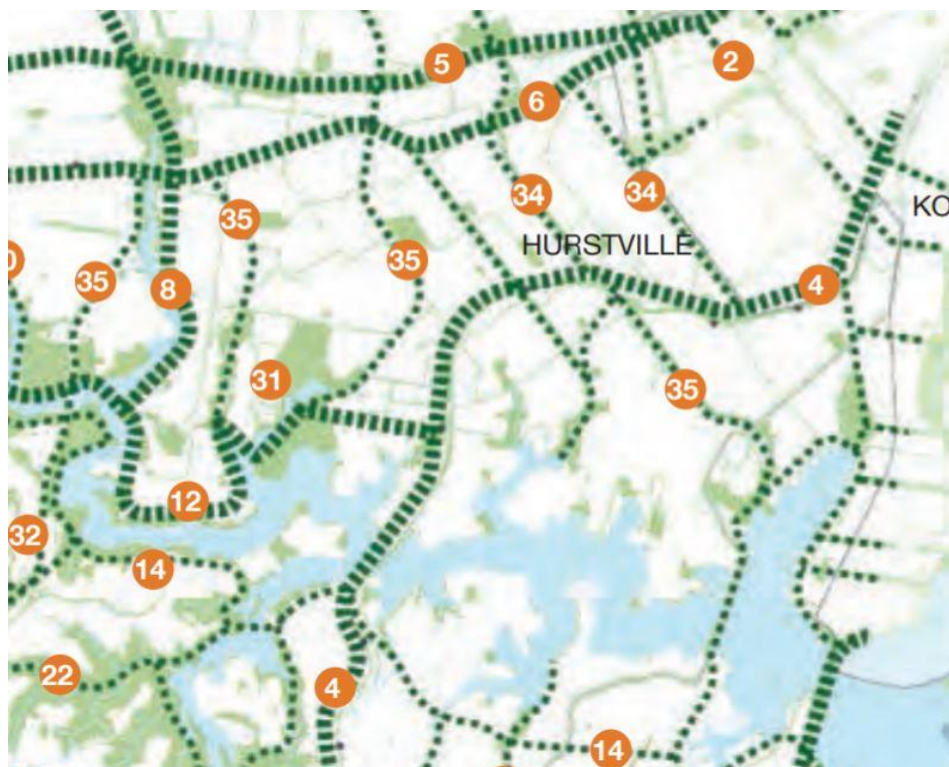


Figure 2:  
Extract from the Green Grid showing  
project opportunities in the Georges  
River area  
(Source: Tyrrell Studio / NSW  
Government Architect)

Priority project opportunities:

4. Illawarra Rail Trail – Wollie Creek to Sutherland
5. M5 Open Space Corridor
6. East Hills Rail Corridor
8. Salt Pan Creek Open Space Corridor
12. Georges River Parklands
34. Inter Rail Line Green Links
35. Georges River Green Links stations + centres

Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028<sup>v</sup>, establishes the vision, themes and goals to guide the Georges River Council to 2028. Community consultation identified six key pillars that are important to the community and underpin future work. Pillar 3 demonstrates an aspiration to ‘active and accessible places and spaces’ but there are no targets for increasing infrastructure for walking and cycling.

Georges River Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040<sup>vi</sup>, guides land use planning and the delivery of significant infrastructure for Georges River to 2040. The LSPS identifies actions to support the long-term vision of “a productive place to live, work and enjoy with diverse, active green, well designed and connected places”. The first theme is Access and Movement under which Council commits to advocate for active transport routes both between and along the T4 and T8 rail corridors and embed pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in all new plans.

Draft Georges River Foreshore Access and Improvement Plan 2020 aims to deliver a resilient foreshore environment in Georges River that supports vibrant communities. The foreshore land has multiple owners which complicates delivery of new paths. Clarendon Road to Riverwood Park along Salt Pan Creek and Oatley Park to Gannon’s Park along St Georges River are key headline projects.



## Review of cycling proposals:

The draft Transport Strategy has 4 themes - sustainability, safety, connectivity and access – and a set of over 120 actions. 22 actions are particularly relevant to active transport (Figure 3). All are supported by Bicycle NSW. However, there is no detailed timeframe for the actions and **no numerical targets** set around reducing private car use and increasing the mode share of cycling and walking.

Sustainable transport		Pedestrian crossings	
ST1	Support, encourage and develop sustainable transport initiatives that reduce reliance on private vehicles, e.g. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) system, electric buses.	PX1	Prioritise additional pedestrian crossings along arterial roads with lengths of 450 metres or greater without a crossing, 200 metres in residential / industrial areas, and every 100 metres in centres (off state roads) where desire lines exist.
Active transport		PX2	Identify intersections where additional pedestrian crossing legs could be provided subject to the location having a pedestrian desire line. Advocate to TfNSW for upgrades.
AT1	Work with TfNSW to provide Sydney Green Grid links through Georges River which link into neighbouring local government areas.	PX3	Investigate the feasibility of longer crossing times at signalised intersections used by vulnerable community members (young, older, parents and disabled people).
AT2	Review street trees and canopy cover to improve shade and reduce the urban heat island effect. (This includes supporting/ improving the Green Grid and linking transport to centres, schools and open space).	PX4	Advocate for pedestrian head start crossing movement at all signalised intersections.
AT3	Prioritise footpath, shared path and cycleway upgrades in the 800 metre catchment of schools.	Bike	
AT4	Implement the strategic walking, cycling and public transport networks to improve public transport and improve pedestrian and cycling facilities within Georges River and along Southern Sydney Corridor, including connection between the T4 and T8 train lines.	Bk1	Implement the strategic bicycle network for a safe, connected network throughout Georges River integrating with neighbouring local government areas and regional links.
AT5	Advocate for the completion of the Illawarra Rail Line corridor active transport route.	Bk2	Collaborate with TfNSW to develop and implement the Principal Bicycle Network links within Georges River.
Pedestrian		Bk3	Advocate to TfNSW for additional cycle parking (including rails and bike sheds) at train stations, particularly at Kogarah and Hurstville stations.
Ped1	Adopt consistent footpath standards for Georges River, specifically adopting wider footpaths along higher demand areas / routes within centres to support walking, cycling and accessibility.	Bk4	Provide bicycle parking in the public domain at all centres. Target at least 5% of the quantum of Council on and off-street parking located at car parks and/ or distributed around centres, i.e. integrated with sign poles and/ or bicycle parking areas in off-street car parks located in a conspicuous location.
Ped2	Implement the strategic pedestrian network that will provide a fully connected and accessible pedestrian network throughout Georges River.	Bk5	New business/ commercial/ industrial developments to provide 5% bike parking based on the total number of car parking spaces provided. Developments should have 1 change room and shower facilities per 10 spaces with a minimum of 1.
Ped3	Provide separation / space/ landscaped buffer between footpaths and vehicle travel lanes along freight routes using on-street parking or landscaping and/ or investigate opportunities for speed limit reductions.	Bk6	New residential development should have at least 1 secure multi-purpose space that can function as bike parking per dwelling and at least 5% visitor bicycle parking provided in a conspicuous location.
Ped4	Investigate locations for potential pedestrian priority treatments, including High Pedestrian Activity Areas, Shared Zones and 40 km/h or lower speed limit zones.		
Ped5	Identify opportunities for redevelopment sites to provide through site links and adequate pedestrian space on footpaths and for waiting at intersections.		

Figure 3: Extract from the table of actions, draft Transport Strategy. (Source: Georges River/Cardno)

A strategic cycling network has been identified as the basis of the first Bike Plan for Georges River. The proposed network (Figure 4) is **very comprehensive** and provides Council with a clear a starting point to focus investment. A very useful map highlighting priority infrastructure interventions is shown in Figure 5.

The network clearly incorporates the **signature active transport projects** identified in the Green Grid – the Illawarra Rail Line corridor, the Salt Pan Creek Open Space corridor, the Georges River Parkland and the east Hill Rail corridor. Several links between the T4 and T8 rail lines are proposed, as promised in the Georges River LSPS and Action AT4 of the draft Transport Strategy. A focus on routes along and between the rail corridors is very important to support mixed mode trips.

The **timeframe** for the delivery of the network is disappointingly long with 15 years needed to complete the routes. However, we support the prioritising the Green Grid routes within the first 5 years. There is an **over-reliance on shared paths** for off-road routes. These are not suitable for all locations, and may lead to future conflict between people walking and cycling, particularly as population increases.

We have studied the results of the online Bicycle User Group survey that are tabulated in the draft Transport Strategy and, in July 2021, we consulted directly with the local St George BUG. The BUG identified a number of missing links and gaps in the local network which have been the focus of ongoing advocacy. It would appear that most requests are reflected in the proposed cycle network but some specific issues are highlighted in the following section.

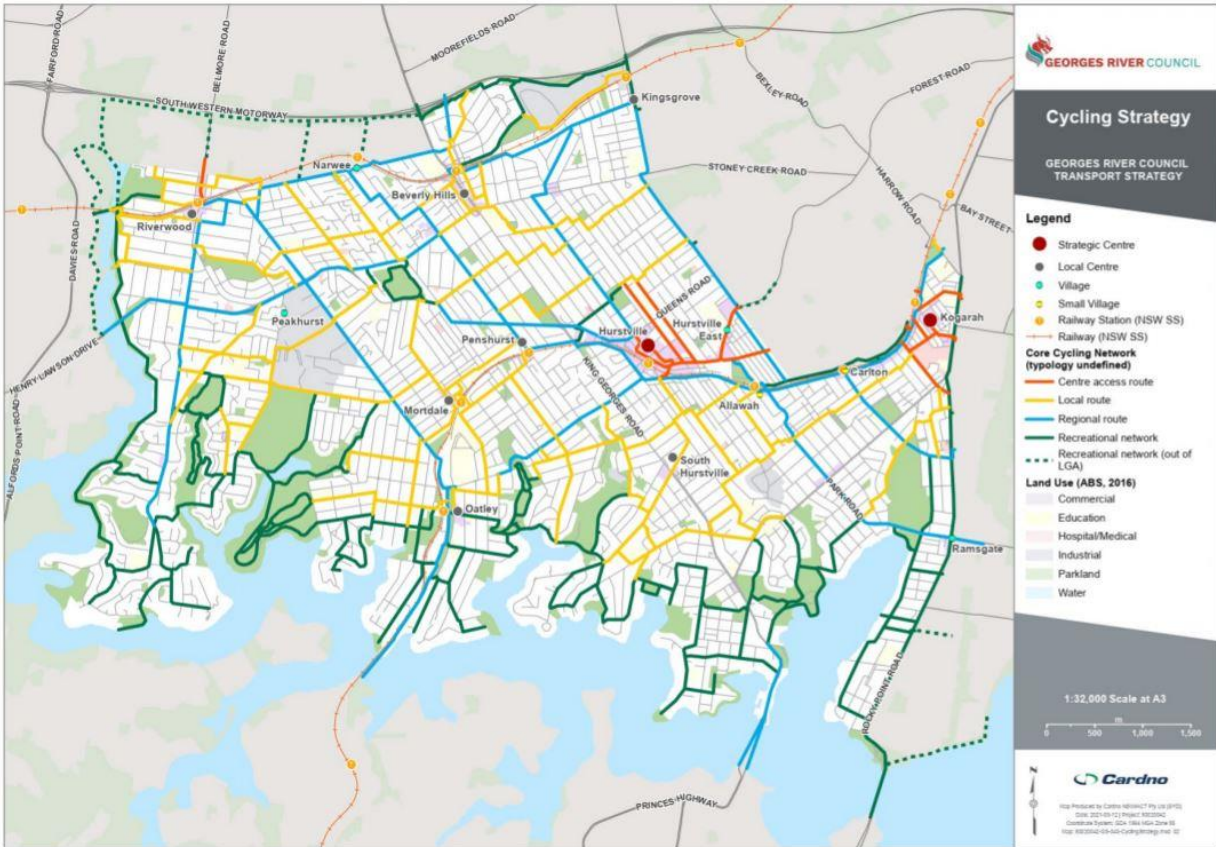


Figure 4: Proposed cycling network (Source: Georges River/Cardno)

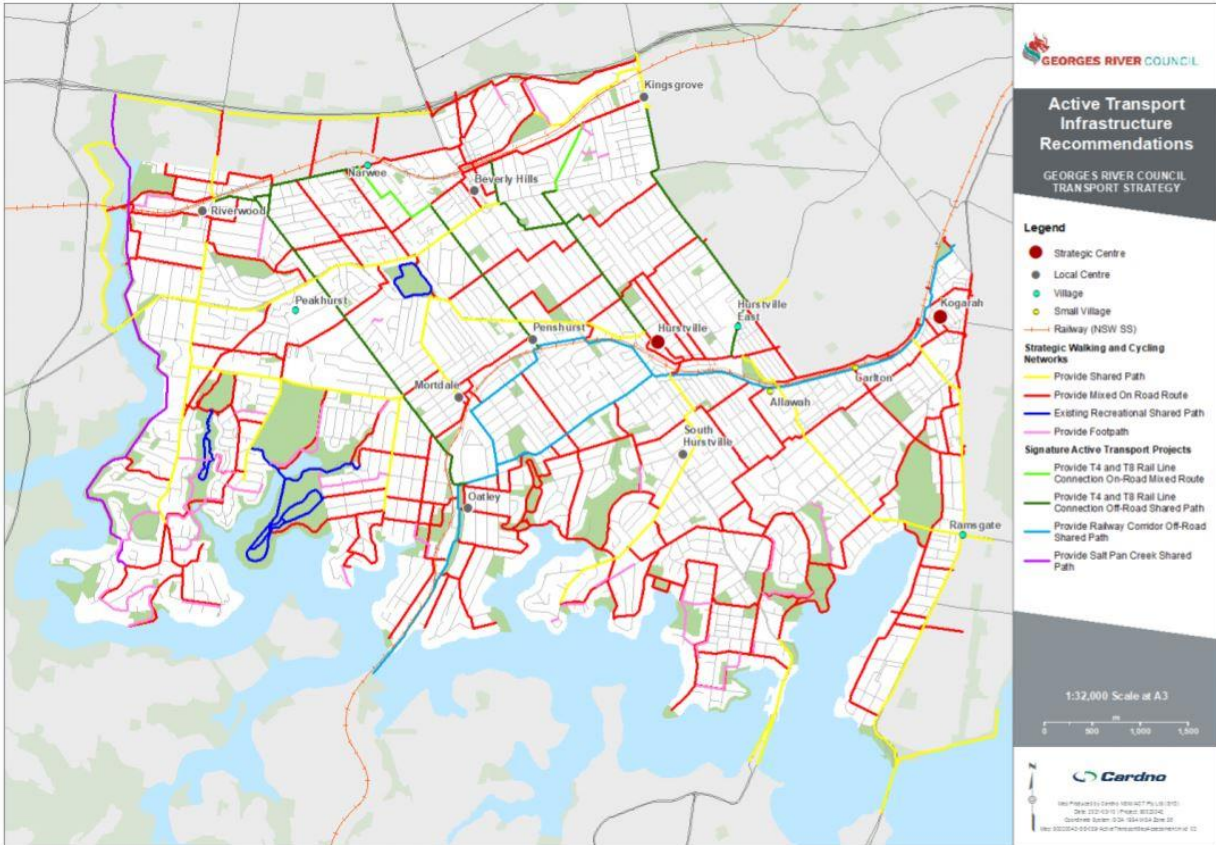


Figure 5: Priority interventions required to deliver the cycling network (Source: Georges River/Cardno)



## Recommendations:

In 2016, Georges River had 153,161 residents. The population is forecast to grow by around 84,000 people to 237,396 by 2056 according to the TfNSW's travel zone projections. This equates to 55 per cent growth and an addition of 2,100 people per year. Hurstville, Riverwood and Kogarah are expected to experience the largest population growth<sup>vii</sup>.

Private car use currently accounts for 69% of daily weekday trips. Only 16% of daily trips are made via walking and cycling which is less than the Sydney average of 18%<sup>viii</sup>. 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.

### 1. Deliver the active transport network as soon as possible

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>ix</sup>
- Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000<sup>x</sup>

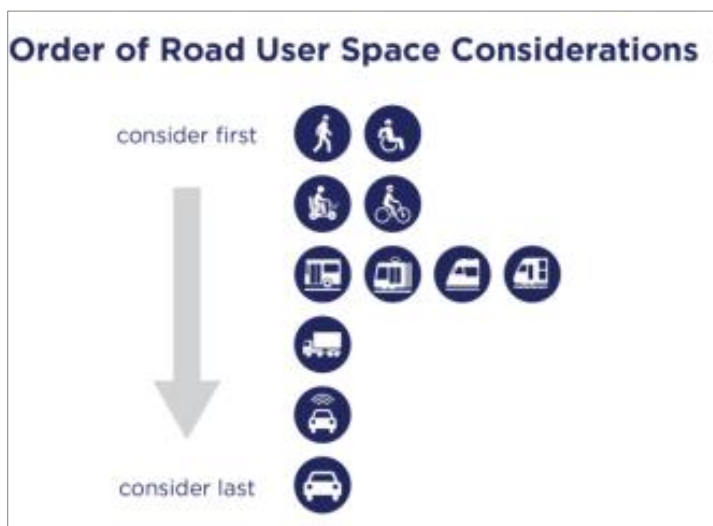


Figure 6:  
Diagram expressing Transport for NSW's  
road user priority.  
(Source: Transport for NSW)

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

The draft Transport Strategy prioritises the construction of Green Grid routes within the first 5 years. We suggest that the delivery of regional routes should occur in the same timeframe, ensuring a rapid roll-out of the PBN and allowing longer commuting trips between neighbouring LGAs.

### 2. Future proof the active transport network

The status quo of walking and cycling activity in the Georges River area is likely to change rapidly. The density of walkers will increase when new housing and retail is delivered as proposed. An upswing in travel by bikes has occurred recently due to Covid, individual reactions to climate change, a surge in local delivery services and the growing popularity of e-bikes. In addition, State policies to address climate change and

urban liveability will add to pressures on councils to secure a much bigger travel share for walking and cycling. It is important to future proof the cycle network by allowing for increased demand at the outset.

### 3. Provide segregated infrastructure rather than shared paths in most locations

Our preferred infrastructure is always completely separated paths that cater for all 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>xi</sup>, such cycle paths will allow 70% of local residents to consider journeys by bike (Figure 7).

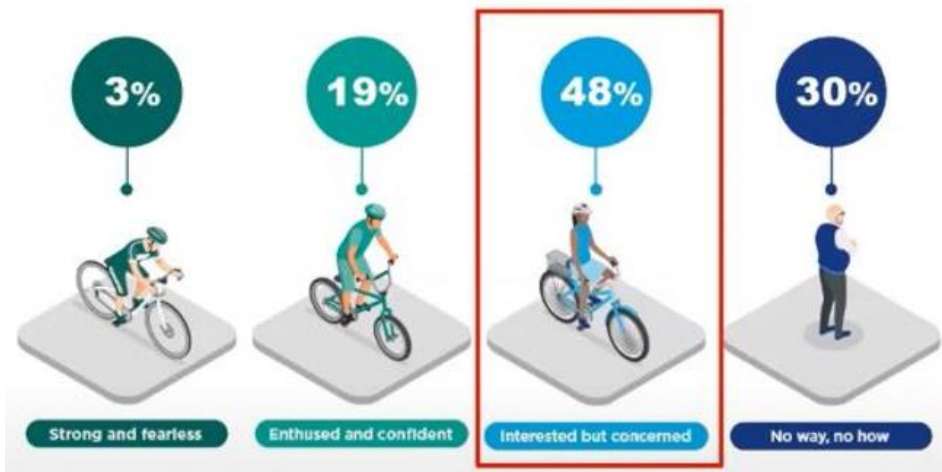


Figure 7:  
Four general categories of comfort levels for cycling as transportation.  
Source: North Sydney Council

The provision of properly segregated infrastructure on key commuter routes with space to accommodate future demand must be a key policy position of Georges River Council. Shared paths are not suitable for areas with high pedestrian and cycling activity and will not lead to an acceptable level of amenity and safety for either walkers or riders with conflict occurring between different users. Door zone bike lanes, bike stencils on the road and dangerous intersections will continue to deter the 48%<sup>xiii</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 Georges River Council seek, benefitting local residents with quieter streets, and less pollution, noise and through-traffic.

It is important to refer to the new Cycleway Design Toolbox<sup>xiv</sup> to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice.

### 4. Reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets with on-road cycle routes

30km/h has been shown as an optimal speed limit to allow people driving and cycling to share the road safely<sup>xv</sup> 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<sup>xvi</sup>.

30 km/h limit streets negate the need for separate bicycle infrastructure. This is suggested in Section 5.3.4 of the draft Transport Strategy but Action Ped4 calls for reducing speeds to 40km/h in shared zones. This is not low enough.

Lower speed limits are an important building block for Vision Zero, an approach to road safety that was launched in Sweden in 1994 with the simple premise that no loss of life is acceptable. The Vision Zero approach has been highly successful and has spread to many other countries. The key policies include prioritizing low urban speed limits, pedestrian zones, physical separation between bicycle and car traffic, data-based traffic enforcement and behaviour-change education<sup>xvii</sup>.

Georges River has a terrible crash rate with 2140 crashes between 2014 and 2018, which led to 9 fatalities, 6 of these pedestrian, and 326 serious injuries<sup>xviii</sup>. We support the target of zero crashes by 2040 set out in the draft Transport Strategy and urge Georges River to prioritise the implementation of low speed limits as part of a Vision Zero approach.

## 5. Set targets to increase the mode share of walking, cycling and public transport

Georges River should set ambitious **numerical targets** for reducing reliance on private vehicles rather than a vague aim to 'increase' active and public transport by 2040.

The population of the LGA is predicted to grow by 55% over 40 years from 153,000 in 2016 to 237,000 in 2056. Private car use currently accounts for 69% of daily weekday trips<sup>xix</sup>. Assuming 2 trips per day per resident, 69% of trips by private car equates to 211,000 trips per day for the 2016 population. A similar mode share in 2056 will result in 327,000 weekday car trips.

Congestion and traffic is already a problem. A target of reducing private car use to 45% of daily trips will be needed just to maintain today's levels of congestion. However, Bicycle NSW encourages Georges River to set a much more ambitious target in the draft Transport Strategy.

The focus of any transport strategy in a dense and lively city should be to reduce the numbers of cars on the roads as fast as possible and free up space for walking, cycling and public transport. Other councils have set proper targets for private vehicle trips. For example, Woollahra's Draft Integrated Transport Strategy 2021<sup>xx</sup> aims to reduce the private car mode share to 40% by 2026. It would be very disappointing for Georges River not to commit to reduce the overall level of congestion and the associated pollution, noise, health and safety issues.

## 6. Maintain a focus on the important details of the cycle network

While the draft Transport Strategy aspires to an excellent future network, it is the **detailed design** of cycle routes, end of trip facilities and wayfinding that will encourage the uptake of cycling and reduce dependence on private vehicles.

It is essential to ensure that popular daily destinations such as town centres, schools and stations are easy to reach by bicycle for all residents of all ages and abilities. In particular, safe connections with all education facilities along the routes must be incorporated. Cycling infrastructure needs to be safe and continuous to increase the mode share of cycling and reduce congestion associated with school journeys.

Integration of the routes 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.



Parking and other end of trip facilities should be provided at journey end locations to further support riders and encourage participation. Wayfinding supports visitors to vibrant centres by clearly articulating and communicating the most efficient and safest route. Signage style for wayfinding should be consistent throughout Georges River.

In addition, we support the following specific requests made by St George BUG:

- Prioritise a safe and convenient crossing of King Georges Road along the M5 cycle path
- Add bike lanes to Mortdale shopping area and move parking away from the street if necessary
- Widen the shared path north of Como Bridge to reduce conflict between people cycling and walking
- Add one-way cycle paths to each side of Captain Cook Bridge.
- Ensure that cycle parking at stations included secure bike cages.

## Conclusion:

Bicycle NSW supports the game-changing upgrades to the active transport network outlined in the Georges River draft Transport Strategy. Now is the time to develop an inspirational vision for allocating road space and integrating transport modes based on desired future outcomes. 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.

Cycle paths offer the greatest mode-shift potential when riders are able to complete a 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 Georges River to progress the delivery of bicycle infrastructure in the area.

Yours faithfully,

***Sarah Bickford***

Bike Planner  
Bicycle NSW

---

<sup>i</sup> Georges River Environment and Planning Committee. 2021, June 15. Draft Georges River Transport Strategy 202. <https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/69981/widgets/342099/documents/208187>

<sup>ii</sup> Bicycle NSW, Policy Framework. [Online as at 19/7/2021] <https://bicyclensw.org.au/our-policy/>

<sup>iii</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>iv</sup> Sydney Green Grid, South District. Tyrrell Studio, 2017.

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/plans/sydney-green-grid-plan-5-south-district-2017.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

<https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/34469/documents/81441>

<sup>vi</sup> Georges River LSPS 2040. 2020, February.

[https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/StGeorge/media/Documents/Development/Strategic%20Planning/LSPS\\_revised-FEB-2020-FINAL-WEB.pdf](https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/StGeorge/media/Documents/Development/Strategic%20Planning/LSPS_revised-FEB-2020-FINAL-WEB.pdf)

- 
- vii Strategic Context Report, Georges River Transport Strategy, 2021.  
<https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/69981/widgets/342099/documents/206977>
- viii Strategic Context Report, Georges River Transport Strategy, 2021.  
<https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/69981/widgets/342099/documents/206977>
- ix 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)
- x 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)
- xi 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
- xii Roger Geller. (2009). Four types of cyclists. Portland Bureau of Transportation.  
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746>
- xiii 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>
- xiv 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>
- xv 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>
- xvi 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>
- xvii Vision Zero Network. (2015, April 13). European Cities Lead the Way Toward Vision Zero.  
<https://visionzeronetwork.org/european-cities-lead-the-way-toward-vision-zero/>
- xviii Strategic Context Report, Georges River Transport Strategy, 2021.  
<https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/69981/widgets/342099/documents/206977>
- xix Strategic Context Report, Georges River Transport Strategy, 2021.  
<https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/69981/widgets/342099/documents/206977>
- xx Draft Integrated Transport Strategy. Woollahra Council, 2021.  
<https://yoursay.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/49010/widgets/259007/documents/199125>