

Project Manager
Sydney Park Junction
71-79 Pyrmont Bridge Road,
PYRMONT NSW 2009

29th September 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Sydney Park Junction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals for Sydney Park Junction. 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 green corridors and the road environment, to provide connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips. Cycling provides a healthy, congestion-reducing, low-carbon form of travel that is quiet, efficient and attractive for all ages with the correct infrastructure design.

Opportunities:

It has been a pleasure to review the plans for Sydney Park Junction and the *Review of Environmental Factors* document. We commend Transport for NSW, City of Sydney and Inner West Council for such a well-conceived proposal. The project will be of enormous benefit to the community, enhancing the pedestrian and cycling connectivity to Sydney Park and improving the place environment of King Street, Princes Highway and Sydney Park Road ⁱⁱ.

The Princes Highway and Sydney Park Road currently experience high traffic speeds, heavy freight volumes, narrow footpaths and limited safe crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. This creates a poor street environment for all, discouraging community activities and business investment.

Key features of the transformation of Sydney Park Junction include:

- Lowering speeds from 60km/h to 40km/h to create a safer environment
- Reducing traffic lanes from 6 to 4 with an estimated decrease in traffic volumes of 50%
- A new multi-modal St Peters Square with links to St Peters Station, bus stops, dynamic community spaces, Sydney Park's green space and the King Street precinct.
- New landscaping and street trees to create vibrancy and community, extending the King St restaurant and shopping precinct south from Newtown.
- Replacing traffic lanes with new cycle paths and pedestrian links.
- New shared cycle and pedestrian priority raised mid-block crossings at May Street, Goodsell Street and Short Street.
- Changing access to side streets, including the removal of the right turn onto May St, reinforcing the guiding philosophy of "local roads for local traffic".

- Removing dangerous slip lanes at Barwon Park Road and Sydney Park Road/King Street.
- Upgraded bus stops with direct access to the station to support multi-modal journeys.

Dramatically improved pedestrian amenity, safe crossing points, new tree canopy, reduced noise and pollution and lowered speeds will attract people to stay and play. The plan in Figure 1 summarises the proposed changes.



Figure 1: Plan showing the proposed changes to Sydney Park Road, King Street and Princes Highway (Source: Transport for NSW)

It is fantastic that Transport for NSW is demonstrating real intent to meet the aspirations set out in the recently-published Movement and Place Frameworkⁱⁱⁱ. Movement is a key enabler of place but needs to be considered very carefully to create places where people want to be. Movement can no longer be considered as the only criteria for success of a street. Achieving the right balance of movement and place is critical for the future of Sydney's main roads. Applying movement priorities to bike riding, rather than just to motor vehicles, will further improve environmental amenity and encourage mode-shift.

The proposals for Sydney Park Junction provide exciting evidence that Transport for NSW now recognises that vehicle traffic will expand to fill whatever space is created for it. When the available asphalt is reduced, demand will decrease and space can be allocated to walking, cycling and public transport. By considering the whole street, from building line to building line, and all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, delivery workers and transit users, whether travelling through or lingering, and allocating the space accordingly, the city can move forward from decades of car domination.

The provision of safe walking and cycling infrastructure at Sydney Park Junction is fully supported by the NSW Government's new Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{iv} which establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last. Multiple environmental and health benefits will flow from

increased walking, cycling and public transport use. The streets will be more equitable for Sydney-siders of all ages, incomes and abilities.

The Sydney Park Junction plans are supported by a several other important strategies:

Future Transport 2056 Plan^v outlines an overarching vision for transport in NSW guided by community desire for better places. Future Transport 2056 commits to providing a regional cycle network in Greater Sydney, known as the Principal Bicycle Network (PBN). A coordinated delivery of bike lanes across Greater Sydney will ensure that routes across council boundaries align and create the most direct path of travel.

Greater Sydney Commission's Eastern City District Plan (2018)^{vi} 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 Planning Priority E10. The need for better accessibility, connectivity and amenity for pedestrian and cyclists is also emphasised in Planning Priorities E4, E17, E18 and E19. An important objective is a "city in its landscape" which has 2 relevant indicators – to create increased urban tree canopy and expand the Sydney Green Grid.

Sydney Green Grid^{vii}, 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 improved access to Sydney Park forms part of the long-term vision for green infrastructure that can be enjoyed by everyone.

We applaud the plans for segregated cycleways on Sydney Park Road and King Street, and we are certain that the level of usage from private riders and food delivery workers amply justifies their provision. The pop-up lane on Sydney Park Road has been successful in trials and it is excellent that it will be formalised as part of this project. It links the Mitchell Road cycleway path with St Peters Station, enhancing possibilities for multi-modal journeys. The King Street path connects with Goodsell Street where an important strategic route heads west. The inclusion of safe, rideable crossings at intersections and at two mid-block location on Sydney Park Road is also welcomed so riders are not forced to improvise, stop riding, or break the law.

Bicycle NSW does not support a 'do nothing' option being included in the REF. Thankfully this was dismissed due to crashes with cars hitting pedestrians and cyclists, and the fact that doing nothing will not encourage mode shift to active transport^{viii}.

Concerns:

Despite overall support for the proposals, Bicycle NSW would like to raise several issues that still need to be resolved:

1. The separated bike lane on King Street is very short and misses opportunities to connect with the existing cycling network, particularly to the north and west.
2. Changes to access may create strong opposition within the community and derail a very beneficial project. There are particular concerns about losing the right turn into May St from Princes Highway and from Mitchell Road to Sydney Park Road.
3. Vehicles may be pushed onto neighbouring streets without careful traffic management, causing increased noise and pollution and a reduction in residential amenity.

4. The Traffic and Transport Assessment (Appendix C) includes modelling of motor vehicle level of service/delay at intersections, but no modelling of pedestrian and bicycle service/delay. This is an unprofessional omission, given the objective of the project is to improve walking and cycling movement and connectivity. Unfortunately, prioritising movement for bicycles is neglected in Movement and Place Framework. However, it must be considered at Sydney Park Junction.
5. The 20-month project timeline will be hard to swallow for a community very weary from many years of disruption related to Westconnex. Night noise, diversions, temporary cycle routes and worker parking need to be resolved before construction commences.

Recommendations:

1. Extend the separated cycleway north to Lord Street

The short section of separated cycleway proposed for King Street must extend north to allow people to cycle safely across the new St Peters Square and connect with important and well-used cycle routes heading west along Lord St to Marrickville Metro shopping area, north-west to the Enmore Road and north-east to Erskville and Newtown, Sydney University and the CBD.

2. Maintain a clear focus on the vision for the place outcomes.

Bicycle NSW wholeheartedly supports Transport for NSW's shift from 'predict and provide' to 'vision and validate' when planning neighbourhood centres. We urge you not to relent to community pressure and allow right hand turns from King Street to May Street or from Mitchell Road to Sydney Park Road. These changes are very important to restrict through traffic from local streets and eliminate rat runs.

3. Plan for no increase in traffic on local streets

Transport for NSW will need to work closely with the relevant councils, in consultation with the community, to develop a local traffic management plan to ensure there will be no traffic volume increases on local streets. Additional traffic calming, modal filtering and one-way flows should all be considered to help reduce the capacity of local streets and discourage through traffic. In addition, making driving less convenient for short trips by residents will help generate the desired modal shift in the area.

4. Upgrade all crossings to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists

Measures to optimise pedestrian and bicycle level of service must be incorporated in the design of traffic signals and intersections. The following features should be considered:

- a. Instant green on demand for pedestrians and bicycles at mid-block crossings, with induction loop detectors for bicycles/wheelchairs/mobility scooters and fully accessible push buttons.
- b. Longer crossing times so that pedestrians of all ages and abilities have time to cross safely and without stress.
- c. Automatic green for pedestrians/bicycles at all signalised intersections so there is no need to press a 'beg button'.
- d. A scramble crossing at Sydney Park Road/Mitchell Road intersection, so that people making a diagonal movement through the intersection do not have to wait for two successive signals on two arms of the intersection.

- e. Eliminate the proposed traffic signals at the Barwon Park Rd/King St intersection and instead create a left in/left out intersection with a priority pedestrian/cyclist raised crossing. Traffic lights at this junction will delay pedestrians which is inconsistent with project objectives to improve walking movement and connectivity.

Again, any reduction in effective road capacity will decrease the convenience of driving and help achieve the desired project outcomes.

5. Ensure that construction impacts are carefully mitigated

TfNSW must adhere to its commitment to establish work compounds away from the project site in more industrial areas, to reduce the presence of construction vehicles on local roads, and should commit to the heavy vehicle safety standards used on the Sydney Metro project as a minimum. Bicycle NSW supports the community's advocacy for all construction to occur during standard daytime construction hours. Although night work is promised to be limited to 2 nights a week in each of 3 specific noise catchments, any night construction disturbs the sleep of nearby residents, affecting physical and mental health. Additional daytime traffic restrictions would reduce effective traffic capacity, resulting in a temporary reduction in traffic and associated impacts along the corridor. This outcome would be consistent with the project objectives, and state and local government priorities and strategies. It is also far easier to communicate to impacted residents as a benefit of the project.

It is essential to maintain safe walking and cycling through the area during construction. The pop-up lane on Sydney Park Road has become an important part of many journeys and removing it from the network, even temporarily, would be a backward step for the mode shift to cycling. Please refer to Austroads Guide to Temporary Traffic Management^{ix} and adhere to the principles of coherence, equivalence, directness and safety during construction.

6. Don't lose sight of the all-important details.

Great paving, high-quality, mature landscaping, attractive street furniture, drinking fountains and bike racks all need to be considered carefully to ensure a place is created where people will want to linger. The design speed of the roads and intersections needs to match the posted speed limits, and discourage travelling and turning too fast. Appropriate traffic calming with visual and physical cues are required to slow drivers down. Street art, murals and sculptures should be incorporated to emphasise the sense of place and reflect the character of the locality. Secure bike parking and spaces for share bikes are needed at St Peters Station to facilitate multi-modal journeys. The DCP may need to be reviewed to ensure that bike storage and end-of-trip facilities are provided in all new buildings.

7. Keep an eye on the future.

The transformation of Sydney Park Junction will have a ripple effect on the streets beyond the immediate area. Calls for more place and less vehicle dominance on Sydney's high streets will get louder and more vocal. The proposals need to consider longer-term possibilities such as King Street emerging as a public and active transport corridor all the way to Broadway, further speed reductions in line with the global 30Please^x movement, and the implementation of the full Principal Bike Network with fully segregated routes, increasingly delivered as uni-directional pairs on both sides of the street, crossing the city and providing the benefits of active travel to everyone in the community.

Conclusion:

This project sets an exciting precedent for better place outcomes throughout Sydney. Changing the dial on how we measure the success of a movement corridor will have huge implications for the reimagining of our arterial roads. The changes at Sydney Park Junction are being delivered as a condition of the hugely destructive and expensive Westconnex. But we are fast learning that we do not need new motorways to shift cars from the roads. There is a huge appetite for public and active mobility and if the correct infrastructure is provided, people will happily drive less. Projects to reallocate road space, calm traffic, add tree canopy and vegetation and create spaces for people and community life need to happen in every corner of the New South Wales.

We look forward to contributing to the detailed design of the cycling infrastructure and eagerly await the renovation of Sydney Park Junction into a place valued by both local residents and the wider community.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW

ⁱ Transport for NSW, Sydney Park Junction Review of Environmental Factors, Walking, cycling and public Domain improvements [online as at 8/9/2021] <https://caportal.com.au/tfnsw/sydney-park-junction/download-ref?hview=media-ad1514-sydney-park-junction-review-of-environmental-factors-ref>

ⁱⁱ Transport for NSW, Sydney Park Junction Review of Environmental Factors, Walking, cycling and public Domain improvements [online as at 8/9/2021] <https://caportal.com.au/tfnsw/sydney-park-junction/download-ref?hview=media-ad1514-sydney-park-junction-review-of-environmental-factors-ref> 2.4 Proposal objectives and development criteria Page 29

ⁱⁱⁱ GANSW and TfNSW. 2020, March. A Practitioner's Guide to Movement and Place.

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/manuals-and-guides/practitioners-guide-to-movement-and-place-2020-06-04.pdf?la=en>

^{iv} 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

^v 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

^{vi} Greater Sydney Commission, Eastern City District Plan, 2018. <https://www.greater.sydney/eastern-city-district-plan>

^{vii} Sydney Green Grid, Central District. Tyrrell Studio, 2017.

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/plans/sydney-green-grid-plan-4-central-district-2017.pdf>

^{viii} Transport for NSW, Sydney Park Junction Review of Environmental Factors, Walking, cycling and public Domain improvements [online as at 8/9/2021] <https://caportal.com.au/tfnsw/sydney-park-junction/download-ref?hview=media-ad1514-sydney-park-junction-review-of-environmental-factors-ref> 2.4 Proposal objectives and development criteria Page 30

^{ix} Austroads Guide to Temporary Traffic Management (2019) [Online 1/4/2020]

<https://austroads.com.au/publications/temporary-traffic-management/agttm-set>

^x 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>