

The Sydney Gateway Team
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15th October 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Sydney Gateway Place, Design and Landscape Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Place, Design and Landscape Plan (PDLP) for the Sydney Gateway project. 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, quiet, low-carbon form of travel that is efficient and attractive for all ages with the correct infrastructure design.

Opportunities:

It has been a pleasure to review the plans for the urban design and landscaping at Sydney Gateway. We commend Transport for NSW and JHSWJV for the well-conceived proposal for the Active Transport Link (ATL). The ATL is the focus of this submission.

The ATL will dramatically enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity to Sydney Airport, allowing local travellers and 40,000 staff who live in neighboring suburbs¹ to reach the airport in a healthy, sustainable way. This will reduce pressure on roads, parking and public transport infrastructure and leave capacity on the networks for those needing to travel from further afield.

The ATL will provide enormous benefit to the wider community, contributing to the Principal Bicycle Network by providing high-quality new sections of cycleway and shared user path (SUP) at the nexus of major existing or proposed routes between the Inner West, the Cook River, Wolli Creek, the Eastern Suburbs and Sydney's CBD.

We are delighted that the project team has listened to feedback from active transport planners at Inner West, Bayside and City of Sydney Councils, Bicycle NSW and the Bicycle User Groups (BUGS) and included the critical link from the Alexandra Canal to the Domestic Terminal.

We congratulate Transport for NSW for showing real intent to create and strengthen green links between southern Sydney and the CBD. Sydney's parks, reserves and waterways are integral to the city's lifestyle and character. Preserving and enhancing green and blue infrastructure is essential to ensure liveability as population density increases.

The ATL meets the conditions outlined in the:

– Commonwealth Conditions of Ministerial Approval (CoMA) to ensure that, by the time construction is substantially complete, an active transport link has been constructed to connect International Terminal T1 and Domestic Terminals T2/T3 (Clause 1)

– State Conditions of Approval (CoA) for the Sydney Gateway Project SSI – 9737 to deliver a north-south green link corridor linking Cooks River, Tempe Wetlands, Tempe, St Peters and Sydney Park and include site-specific public art and interpretation incorporating Aboriginal designs, patterns and motifs (Clauses E76, E77).

The plans for active transport in the Sydney Airport area are supported by a several other important strategies:

Future Transport 2056 Planⁱⁱ 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)ⁱⁱⁱ 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^{iv}, 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 project opportunities for the Airport area are shown in the extract from the Green Grid in Figure 1. The ATL will contribute to projects 38, 21 and 9.

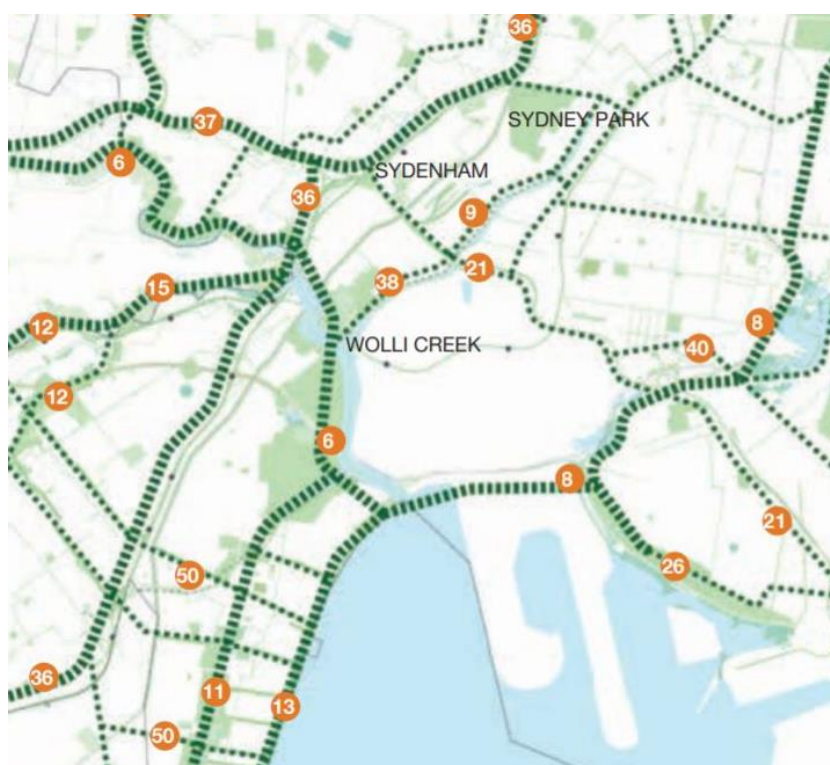


Figure 1:
Extract from the Green Grid showing project opportunities in the Sydney Airport area
(Source: Tyrrell Studio / NSW Government Architect)

Priority project opportunities:

6. The Cooks River Open Space Corridor
8. Mill Stream and Botany Open Space Corridor
9. Alexandra Canal
21. Freight Rail Lines Chullora to Port Botany
26. Joseph Banks Reserve and Foreshore Drive
38. Airport to Bourke Street Active Travel Link
40. East-West Coastal Green Links: Mascot to Maroubra

Sydney Airport Master Plan 2039^v was published in 2019 to set a robust planning framework for the fast-changing Airport precinct. The delivery of active transport infrastructure will contribute to the 10 of the 11 objectives established to drive the future visions (Figure 2)



Figure 2:
Extract from the Sydney Airport Master Plan 2039 showing the 11 objectives for all future planning.
(Source: Sydney Airport Corporation)

The PDLP is based on themes of Connection to Country, Connectivity, Context, Sustainability, Placemaking and Safety which form an excellent starting point to create good outcomes for active transport. We are excited by the restoration of the Alexandra Canal, the integration of art and Indigenous stories and the opportunity that will be provided for the community to engage with the airport operations and the history of the site.

Several elements of the urban design and landscaping proposals are to be commended:

- The rest areas are well-conceived and attractive. It is expected that they will draw local recreational visitors to the Airport precinct, expanding the use of the ATL to a wider section of the community.
- The ATL bridge is elegant and celebrates walking and cycling as a mode of transport.
- The underpasses are well-resolved to provide a seamless transition under major roads. Underpasses are easier to traverse than bridges, particularly for the less mobile.
- The design for the handrails is very thoughtful (Figure 3) and reflects a deep engagement with stakeholders as the project developed.
- Good lighting along the entire length of the ATL is essential for safety and usability at night. The solution devised to install lighting in the handrails along the Alexandra Canal is excellent, removing the need for light poles, reducing visual clutter and providing smoother journeys. Feature lighting at the rest areas appears well-conceived.
- The final treatment of the water pipe is a great outcome – we did not want to see a fence that would reduce the sense of space along the SUP.

- The signage will be attractive and we look forward to further details to ensure that wayfinding is legible and directs users to the wider network.

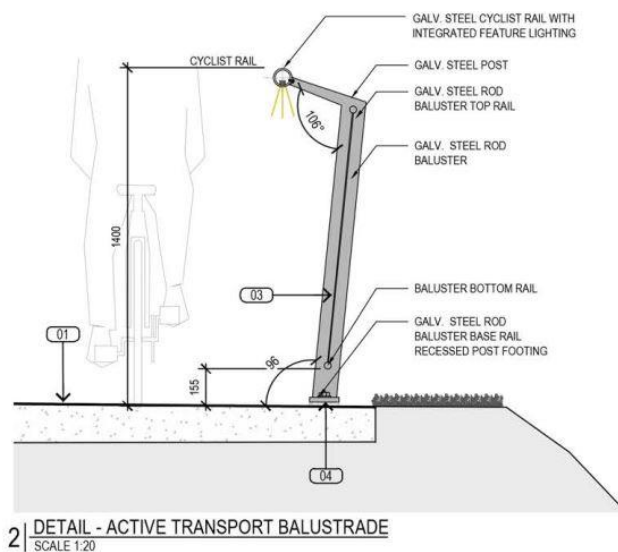


Figure 3:
Detail of the proposed balustrade with integral lighting.
(Source: JHSWJV / Conybeare Morrison International)

Finally, Bicycle NSW wholeheartedly supports Transport for NSW’s plan to complete the SUP along the north side of the Alexandra Canal at the **outset** of the Gateway project. Early delivery of the ATL will keep cyclists safe during construction and minimise future changes. The ATL will support transport resilience for both airport workers and travellers, who will be able to reach the terminals regardless of shock to the transport systems and the inevitable disruptions of construction.

Concerns:

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

- There is no detail in the PDLP to show how the ATL connects with the Domestic Terminals or the Tempe Reserve. We are particularly concerned about the link to the Domestic Terminal and its end-of-trip facilities. The maps in Figure 4 highlight where significant gaps exist in the plans. To continue progressing the detailed design for the roads without keeping the ATL front and centre may lead to a compromised outcome for access to the terminal by both local residents, workers and travellers.

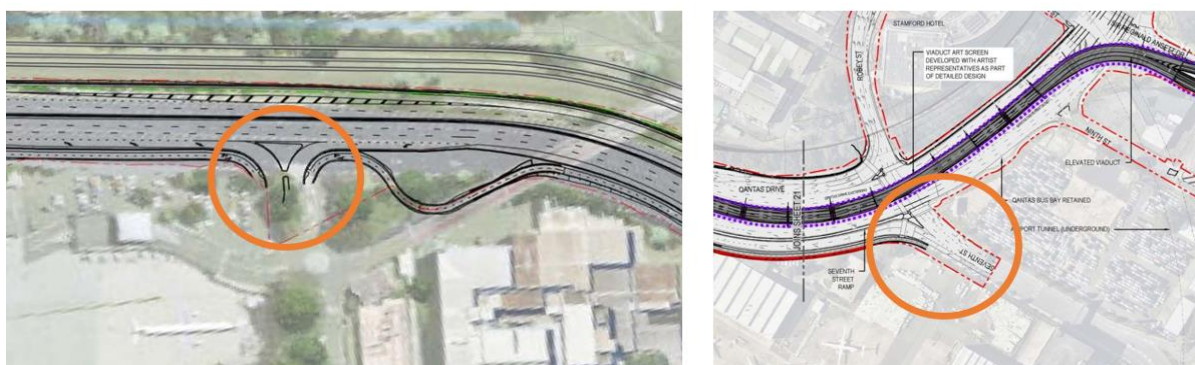


Figure 4: Undefined sections of the ATL in the vicinity of the Domestic Terminals (Source: Source: JHSWJV / Conybeare Morrison International)

- The current plans do not allow for seamless connections to the wider cycling network. The ATL will not form a key part of the regional network without links to existing and planned cycle infrastructure. As can be seen in Figure 5, there are major missing links, particularly heading north-west towards Sydenham, north-east towards Sydney Park and south-east towards Randwick and its significant health and education precinct.

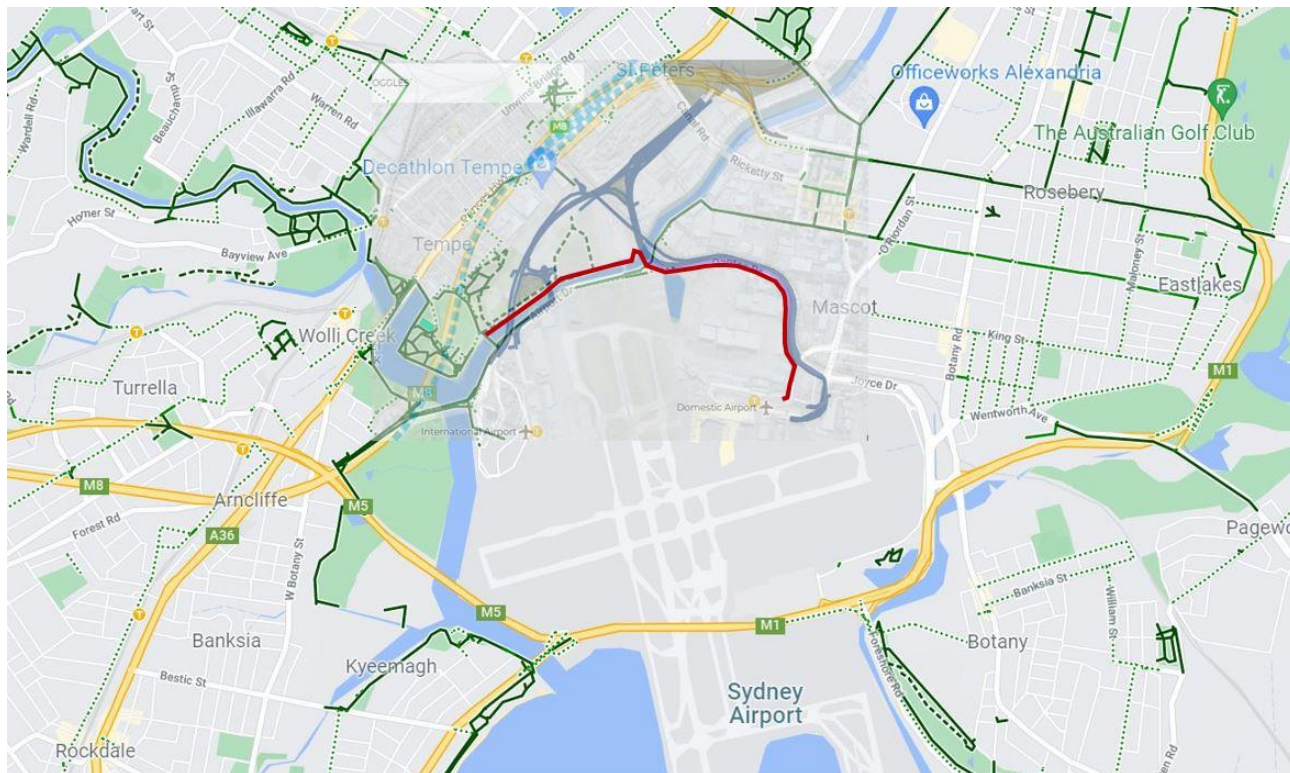


Figure 5: An map showing of the Sydney Gateway project and the ATL (in red) in relation to the existing cycle network. (Source: Google Maps / JHSWJV / Conybeare Morrison International)

- Transport for NSW has drawn a line 1.5km from the terminals to determine where its influence should. For a project of the scale and impact of the Sydney Gateway, this is not sufficient to ensure good outcomes for integrating the new motorway into the delicate fabric of Inner Sydney.
- The SUP along Qantas Drive (Figure 6) appears to be rather narrow and may not accommodate future demand for walking and cycling in the area.



Figure 6: Artist's impression of the SUP alongside Qantas Drive. (Source: JHSWJV / Conybeare Morrison International)

- There is still no clarity on how safe and attractive access for people walking and cycling from Mascot town centre to Domestic Terminal can be provided. The terminal building could become an important services and retail centre for the local community with a stylish and convenient grade-separated landscaped bridge. This would reduce the pressure on Mascot as the residential density continues to intensify and provide economic benefit to Sydney Airport and its tenants.
- The drawings indicate limited and insufficient new trees for shade, visual amenity, urban cooling and air filtering.

Recommendations:

1. Future-proof the active transport infrastructure

The status quo of walking and cycling activity in the Sydney Airport 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-19, 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:

- The Shared User Paths should be wide, with a minimum width of 3m plus a 0.5m buffer to each side.
- The ATL corridor must allow for future separation of cyclists from pedestrians
- The rest areas should be spacious with plenty of seating and additional bike racks. The current plans show the second rest area to be very constrained by the curve of the ATL, and both areas only have a single bike rack.

Providing significant extra space for active travel could be achieved by very small changes to the enormous area of asphalt dedicated to vehicles. NSW Government has recently published two important policies to support the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure:

- [Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{vi}](#) establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last.
- [Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001^{vii}](#) requires every transport project funded by Transport for NSW to include provision for walking and cycling, which must be delivered from the outset of the project. The policy applies to anyone planning, designing, delivering, building or managing a transport project or asset for, or on behalf of, Transport for NSW.

Final detailed design for the Gateway project must be undertaken with these policies in mind. Multiple environmental and health benefits will flow from increased walking, cycling and public transport use. Mobility will be more equitable for Sydney-siders of all ages, incomes and abilities.

2. Extend the delivery of active transport infrastructure beyond the project boundary

We suggest that new cycleways and SUPs are delivered up to 2km away from the footprint of the Sydney Gateway, with improvements to integrate the paths into the existing network extending to a 5km radius. The project offers a once in a generation opportunity for significant investment in mode shift and behaviour change and its influence must be far-reaching.

3. Provide detailed proposals for the connections of the ATL to Tempe and the Domestic Terminal as soon as possible

The construction of safe, comfortable, attractive and convenient links must be planned very carefully. We urge the project team to share proposals for each end of the ATL with relevant stakeholders early in the process to ensure that feedback can be taken on board and the best outcomes for local residents, commuters, travellers and airport staff achieved.

4. Ensure connections to the regional cycling network are accommodated in the design of the ATL

The project team is currently exploring opportunities (Figure 7) to connect the ATL with existing and future active transport infrastructure to ensure the ATL forms a central role in the regional network. Bicycle NSW supports this work and looks forward to continual stakeholder engagement to develop designs and shape the forthcoming Active Transport Network Strategy. It is essential that design and consultation work is not left too late so the ATL will include the critical junctions that allow linkages to the wider network.



- 1 Cooks River crossing
- 2 Coward St
- 3 Sydenham Connector
- 4 South-Eastern Suburbs
- 5 North - South link

Figure 7: Active transport opportunities under consideration (Source: TfNSW / SAC/ Civile)

Our colleagues have suggested important elements to consider at this stage:



- Bayside Council advocates for a bridge over General Holmes Drive to Wentworth Avenue to help complete routes into the Eastern Suburbs.
- BUG Bike Marrickville has suggested a link running from the airport start car park to Swamp Road to help provide a route toward Sydenham Station (Figure 8).

Bicycle NSW will continue to recommend routes, links and bridges as the design work progresses.

5. Mitigate construction impacts and maintain access to safe active travel

It is essential to maintain safe walking and cycling through the area during construction. The ATL will quickly 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^{viii} and adhere to the principles of coherence, equivalence, directness and safety during construction. Bicycle NSW asks to be kept informed of all diversions and given the opportunity to provide feedback on behalf of our members.

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.

- Prioritise the planting of trees to enhance visual amenity, shade, urban cooling and air quality.
- Paint treatments, when applied to the surface of Shared User Paths, must meet friction standards to prevent crashes
- Provide identifying codes at regular intervals on balustrades or walls to enable emergency services staff to find people if they have a medical incident. This has been done very successfully on the M7 cycleway.

The urban design proposals in the PDLP are admirable but only dedicated effort from all members of the project team will ensure the final outcome meets the vision sold to the community. The cheap fencing and dismal landscaping at St Peters Interchange are a salient lesson in what can go wrong.

Conclusion:

The ATL, if delivered as promised, will be a fantastic addition to Sydney's slowly-developing cycle network. Bicycle NSW is delighted that many years of advocacy has resulted in a good outcome for bike riders in and around Sydney Airport and we thank the project team for its engagement in reaching this stage. There is a huge appetite for public and active mobility and if the correct infrastructure is provided, many people will happily drive less, benefiting the entire community with less pollution and congestion.

We look forward to reviewing the Active Transport Strategy and contributing to the detailed design of the connections to Tempe, Mascot, the Domestic Terminals and the regional cycle network.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW

ⁱ Sydney Airport Annual Report [Online]
https://assets.ctfassets.net/v228i5y5k0x4/6nKbfG2HrgWPKFg7cvmr7B/b590dcb9ac7f438cc1537fa7da34ae18/Sydney_Airport_Annual_Report_April.pdf

ⁱⁱ 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

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

^{iv} 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>

^v Sydney Airport Corporation, Sydney Airport Masterplan 2039, 2019, April.

<https://www.sydneyairport.com.au/corporate/planning-and-projects/master-plan/master-plan-2039-downloads>

^{vi} 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} NSW Government, Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001, <https://s23705.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf>

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

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