

Northern Beaches Council  
PO Box 82 Manly  
NSW 1655

17<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Northern Beaches Council,

**RE: Curl Curl to Freshwater shared path**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Curl Curl to Freshwater shared path. 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. 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.

We applaud Northern Beaches Council's efforts to roll-out the cycling network developed for the Northern Beaches Bike Plan 2020<sup>i</sup>. The proposed Safe Cycling Network includes a three-tier route hierarchy that matches the Transport for NSW cycling network hierarchy and aligns with the Principle Bicycle Network routes. The three levels consist of regional, district and local routes. The Oliver Street / Bennett St route linking Freshwater and Curl Curl is identified as a Tier 2 District route between Manly and Dee Why (Figure 1).

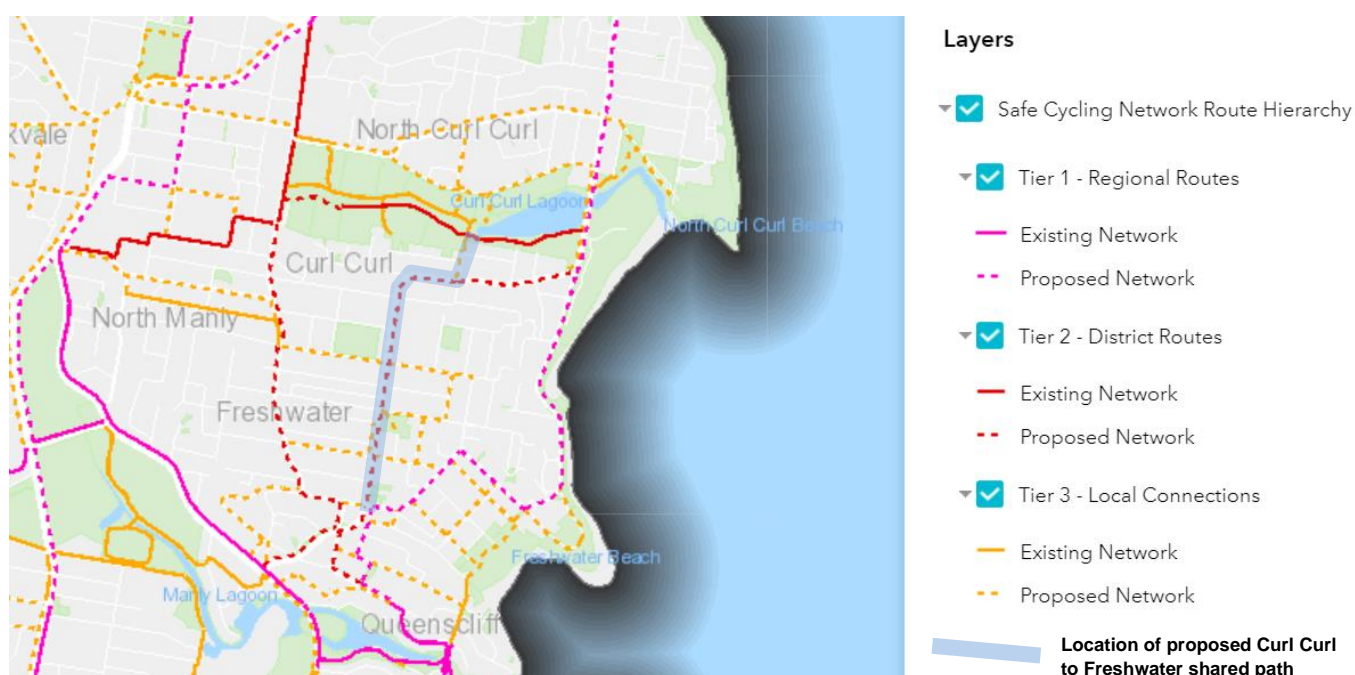


Figure 1: Extract from the Safe Cycling Network showing routes in the Freshwater area  
(Source: Northern Beaches Council)

The Northern Beaches Bike Plan 2020 sets out the directions and actions required to help the community choose cycling as a transport option, create a safer cycling environment and meet the targets established in [Move 2038 - Northern Beaches Transport Strategy](#)<sup>ii</sup> to double the active travel trips and strive for a 30% reduction in journeys by cars. Cycling is already popular on the Northern Beaches - 40% of residents used a bicycle in the past 12 months compared to the state average of 25% - and the Council now showing its **commitment to growing cycling**.

The Curl Curl to Freshwater route is a key component of the Safe Cycling Network. A cycle path along Oliver Street will make it much easier for local residents to access services, parks and Freshwater Village on foot or by bicycle. There are two primary schools on the route with 2 high schools and another primary school close to the Curl Curl Lagoon end. The path offers significant recreational benefits to the community and completes a missing link for longer journeys between Manly and Dee Why.

## Concerns:

**However, a shared path is not recommended for such an important section of the bike network.**

Bicycle NSW is concerned that shared paths continue to be Northern Beaches Council's preferred option for integrating new cycle infrastructure into the road environment. There are many issues with shared paths:

- Shared paths are not suitable for areas with high pedestrian and cycling activity. Conflict often occurs between different users and there is not an acceptable level of amenity and safety for either walkers or riders. The surge in residents enjoying the beautiful open spaces of the Northern Beaches on foot and bicycle during the ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns has revealed increasing issues with the capacity of shared paths in places such as Narrabeen Lakes and Dee Why Lagoon. The proposed Oliver Street path passes 2 primary schools where footpaths are busy with vulnerable pedestrians.
- Shared paths are not a future-proof solution to creating a bike network. The status quo of walking and cycling activity in the Freshwater area is likely to change rapidly. Factors beyond COVID are causing an upswing in travel by bikes across Sydney, such as individual reactions to climate change, a surge in local delivery services, more high-density housing 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 modal share for walking and cycling. It is essential to future proof the cycle network and allow for increased demand at the outset by creating wide bicycle paths that are separated from pedestrians where possible.
- Shared paths through green spaces or in locations with low pedestrian activity, such as the excellent new path linking Addiscombe Road with Campbell Parade in Manly Vale, are a pleasure to use. However, when shared paths are created by widening footpaths, as on Pittwater Road or Allambie Road, there are numerous uncomfortable pinch points caused by bus stops, trees and power poles and constant interruptions when crossing side streets where vehicles effectively have priority. Safe crossing points, if they exist, are located away from the line of desire.
- Widening footpaths requires the loss of verges, vegetation and, in some instances, mature street trees. Where trees are protected, the shared path is often constricted, creating a hazard for pedestrians and cyclists. As set out by Priority 5 of [Towards 2040 - Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement](#)<sup>iii</sup>, tree coverage and greenery in the Northern Beaches contribute to the area's streetscape, character and standard of living and help manage heatwaves, urban heat island (UHI) effect and UV radiation. Council should be striving at all times to increase the green cover and the tree canopy and not increase the asphalt on residential streets.

- No attempt is made to change the dial on car use when bicycles are squeezed into pedestrian spaces. By leaving the road between the kerbs as the unchallenged domain of private cars, with wide vehicle lanes and ample parking, car travel is encouraged, unsafe speeds are common and the modal shift needed to meet climate, health and liveability imperatives may not occur.

## Recommendations:

Bicycle NSW would like to see a **fully separated bicycle path** on Oliver Street and Bennett Street. As discussed below, this can be created between the existing kerbs by narrowing the vehicle travel lanes and parking lanes.

There has never been a better time to build infrastructure for bike riding and active transport. Transport for NSW published two policies in early 2021 that require State projects to prioritise road space for active transport:

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

The policies establish a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last, as shown in Figure 2.

### Order of Road User Space Considerations



Figure 2:  
Diagram expressing Transport for NSW's  
road user priority.  
(Source: Transport for NSW)

**The reallocation of road space is clearly supported by Northern Beaches Councils strategies.** Priority 21 of *Towards 2040 - Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement*<sup>vi</sup> aims to redesign existing streets to be more efficient, accommodating more people, goods and services in a limited space and creating safer and more attractive public realm. Reallocating road space to create separated cycleways will reduce conflict and make it easier to walk and cycle. *Move 2038 – Northern Beaches Transport Strategy* recognises that pedestrians and cyclists should be separated. The *Northern Beaches Bike Plan 2020* strives for separated cycleways on regional and district routes.

Northern Beaches Council must initiate brave discussions with Transport for NSW and the community about reallocating road space from private cars to reflect the priorities set out in the Road User Space Allocation Policy and Council's own transport policies. Any 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 Council seek, benefitting local residents with quieter streets, and less pollution, noise and through-traffic.

On its Have Your Say page, Northern Beaches Council agrees that a separated cycleway is considered the 'highest standard in cycling infrastructure' but claims it would require the removal of either on street parking or a vehicle travel lane to fit within the road corridor.

However, as the new Transport for NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox<sup>vii</sup> sets out, it is possible to fit a 2.4m bi-directional bicycle path into a standard 12.8m road like Oliver Street without loss of vehicle lanes or parking. A typical section is shown in Figure 3.

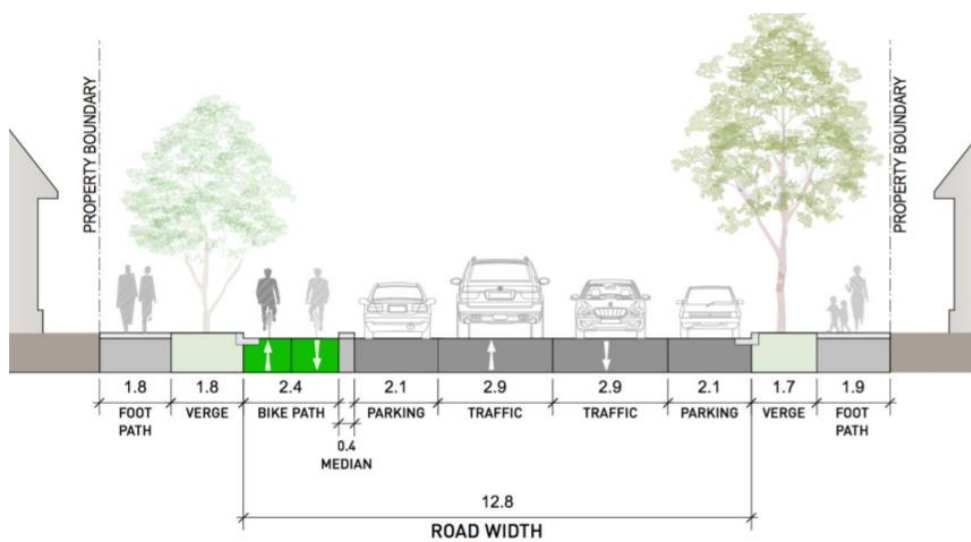


Figure 3: Section showing a 2.4m bi-directional cycle lane in a typical residential street with parking on both sides and two travel lanes. (Source: North Sydney Council)

Several Sydney councils are rolling out such infrastructure on similar key routes through residential areas. Parramatta Council created a separated bicycle path along Queens Road in Westmead (Figure 4). The lane is formed with simple concrete separators, avoiding modifications to the road surface and stormwater drainage. This is a time- and cost-effective solution that allows limited budgets to be concentrated on creating safer intersections. Parking was retained on both sides of the street.

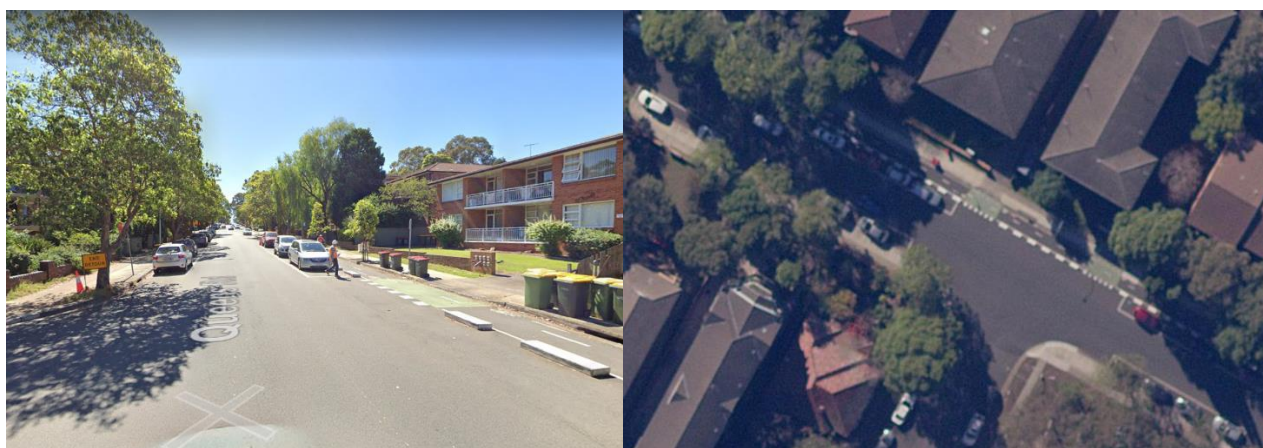


Figure 4: The separated on-road cycleway on Queens Road, Westmead (Source: GoogleMaps / SixMaps)

North Sydney Council is planning to extend the Young Street cycle path using 'tintam' concrete separators. <https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/young-walk-cycle> and Randwick Council is constructing a similar path along Doncaster Ave in Kensington. Images showing the proposed paths are in Figure 5. Please visit the relevant documents online to see detailed plans. <https://www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au/36387/widgets/203143/documents/78463>



Figure 5: New bi-directional bicycle paths within the existing road – Young Street, Neutral Bay (left) and Doncaster Avenue, Kensington (Source: North Sydney Council / Randwick Council)

Such segregated bi-directional paths have many benefits over shared paths:

- People riding bike are separated from pedestrians and vehicles, reducing conflict.
- Street trees and green verges are not impacted.
- The narrower vehicle lanes will slow traffic, reducing noise and improving safety for all road users.
- No additional asphalt is required, reducing issues with urban heat and stormwater.
- Sufficient space is created to enable a significant modal shift to active transport.
- Landscaping and pedestrian safety features such as kerb extensions can be incorporated into the parking lanes.
- The cycle paths can be prioritised over driveways and minor road intersections.
- Motorists exiting driveways have a better sightline to approaching cyclists, improving safety.

For the section of the Freshwater to Curl Curl path south of Wyndora Avenue, this treatment is ideal. Buses do not use the southern stretch of Oliver Street and the on-street parking is particularly valuable close to the shopping village, the weekend markets, the community centre and St John's Primary School.

North of Wyndora Avenue, it may be necessary to maintain a wider carriageway in places to allow buses travelling in opposite directions to pass (although we note that buses pass on Dowling Street which is 9m wide with parking on both sides). At Alfred Street in Harris Park, Parramatta Council have taken two different approaches. For some blocks, the kerb has been moved and parking is retained on both sides of the road. In other locations, one side of on-street parking is removed, the existing kerbs and street trees are untouched, and generous 3.0m+ cycle lane is possible. The plans in Figure 6 show the innovative treatments developed for roundabouts and side street crossings. For more details, please visit <https://participate.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/alfred-street>

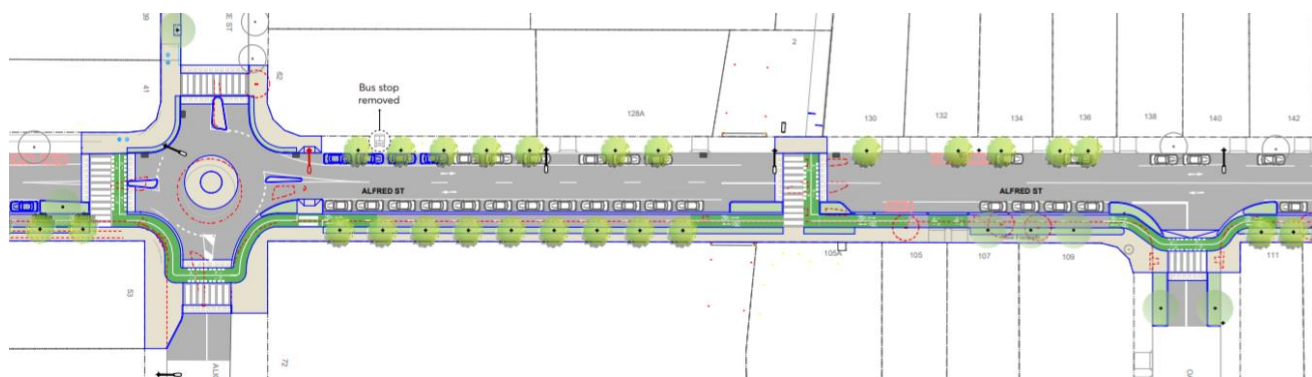


Figure 6: An extract from the plans for Alfred Street in Harris Park (Source: Parramatta Council)

Where a wider carriageway is needed north of Wyndora Avenue, Bicycle NSW supports removing the parking along one side of the corridor allowing for a 3.0m cycle path, retention of all trees and kerbs and a generous buffer that could incorporate landscaping. All homes along Oliver and Bennett Streets have off-street parking. On-street parking is fundamentally the storage of private property in the public domain. It makes driving easier and generates car trips. When on-street parking is prioritised over safe cycling, active transport for the whole community suffers.

The photograph in Figure 7 indicates that few cars use the parking lanes. A **parking survey** should be undertaken to determine accurate usage patterns for on-street parking and how necessary the spaces are for residents. Parramatta Council's study of parking on Ferndale Close in Constitution Hill, part of the re-aligned T-Way cycleway <https://participate.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/t-way-cycleway>, found that 40% of spaces are used on average, all houses have ample off-street parking and side streets have excess capacity. As a result, the community accepted the loss of parking on one side of the street.

Moving the kerbs to allow more on-street parking could be considered in the vicinity of Harbord Public School but it would be better to discourage car travel to school by prioritising safe cycling for students, parents and teachers and maintaining wide footpaths for pedestrians.



Figure 7: Aerial photograph of the Oliver Street and Bennett Street, showing very few cars parked on the street (Source: SixMaps)

We suggest that the design team explores placing the cycle path on the **eastern** side of Oliver Street.

- The laneway opposite the end of Dowling Street could form part of the route, simplifying access from the Queenscliff shared path to Oliver Street.
- There are 5 side streets to cross which is easier than negotiating 10 on the western side.
- There are approximately 45 driveways to cross compared to approximately 60 on the western side.
- The cycle path would run adjacent to Harbord Public School, creating very safe access for the 1000+ students.

In addition, Council should investigate calming traffic on Park Street to create a very slow-speed environment, eliminating the need for a shared path or cycle lane to connect with the Curl Curl Lagoon open space and sports facilities.

Bicycle NSW suggests that Northern Beaches Council use **pop-up methods to trial separated cycle paths**. It is exciting to see the pop-up lane in Dee Why and we hope Council will be emboldened to experiment more much widely with cutting edge bicycle infrastructure across the LGA. Moveable lane barriers can be used to quickly create stretches of protected bike lane (Figure 8), with counters to monitor use. If sufficient patronage is demonstrated and parking is not problematic, Council will have a mandate to retain the lanes. City of Sydney, City of Parramatta and Transport for NSW demonstrated the demand for safe cycling using the pop-up lanes established as a COVID-19 response. The lanes will now be made permanent.



Figure 8: Pop-up infrastructure in Sydney (Source: Bicycle NSW / Randwick Today)

It is important to refer to the Cycleway Design Toolbox<sup>viii</sup> to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice. A focus on the **detailed design** of cycle paths, end of trip facilities and wayfinding will encourage the uptake of cycling and reduce dependence on private vehicles.

Popular daily destinations such as shops, schools and bus stops should be easy to reach by bicycle for all residents of all ages and abilities. In particular, safe and continuous connections with education facilities must be incorporated to increase the mode share of cycling and reduce congestion associated with school journeys. Routes should enable safe access to bus stops by bike and foot. All public transport journeys start and finish with a walk or cycle. If safe cycling is facilitated, the catchment for the bus stop increases, breaking down the first/last mile barrier which can inhibit take-up of public transport.

## Conclusion:

Bicycle NSW supports a more inspirational vision for allocating road space and integrating transport modes based on desired future outcomes. Inserting a separated bicycle path within the existing road will demonstrate real intent by Northern Beaches to no longer prioritise the movement and storage of cars. A narrower, leafier, slower road will feel much less car-dominated and provide sustainable, equitable transport options for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. Safe cycling facilities decongest roads, public transport and parking, reduce noise and pollution, improve public health and benefit local businesses, as people who ride bikes can easily stop at local shops en-route.<sup>ix</sup>

We look forward to working with Northern Beaches Council to progress the delivery of bicycle infrastructure in the area.

Yours faithfully,

***Sarah Bickford***

Bike Planner  
Bicycle NSW

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<sup>i</sup> Northern Beaches Bike Plan. 2020, July. [https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/download\\_file/3194/2346](https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/download_file/3194/2346)

<sup>ii</sup> Move – Northern Beaches Transport Strategy 2038.

<https://files.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/policies-register/transport/transport-strategy/transportstrategy.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Northern Beaches LSPS - Towards 2040. 2020, April.

<https://files.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/policies-register/planning-strategies/local-strategic-planning-statement-lsps/lsp-s-towards-2040.pdf>

<sup>iv</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>v</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>vi</sup> Northern Beaches LSPS - Towards 2040. 2020, April.

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<sup>vii</sup> 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>

<sup>viii</sup> 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>

<sup>ix</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 \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/do-the-sums-bicycle-friendly-changes-are-good-for-business)