

Northern Beaches Council  
 PO Box 82 Manly  
 NSW 1655

8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Northern Beaches Council,

**RE: Curl Curl to Freshwater separated cycle path**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the different options for connecting Curl Curl to Freshwater. 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 NSW better for all bicycle riders’, 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. Bike riding 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>1</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 Principal 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).

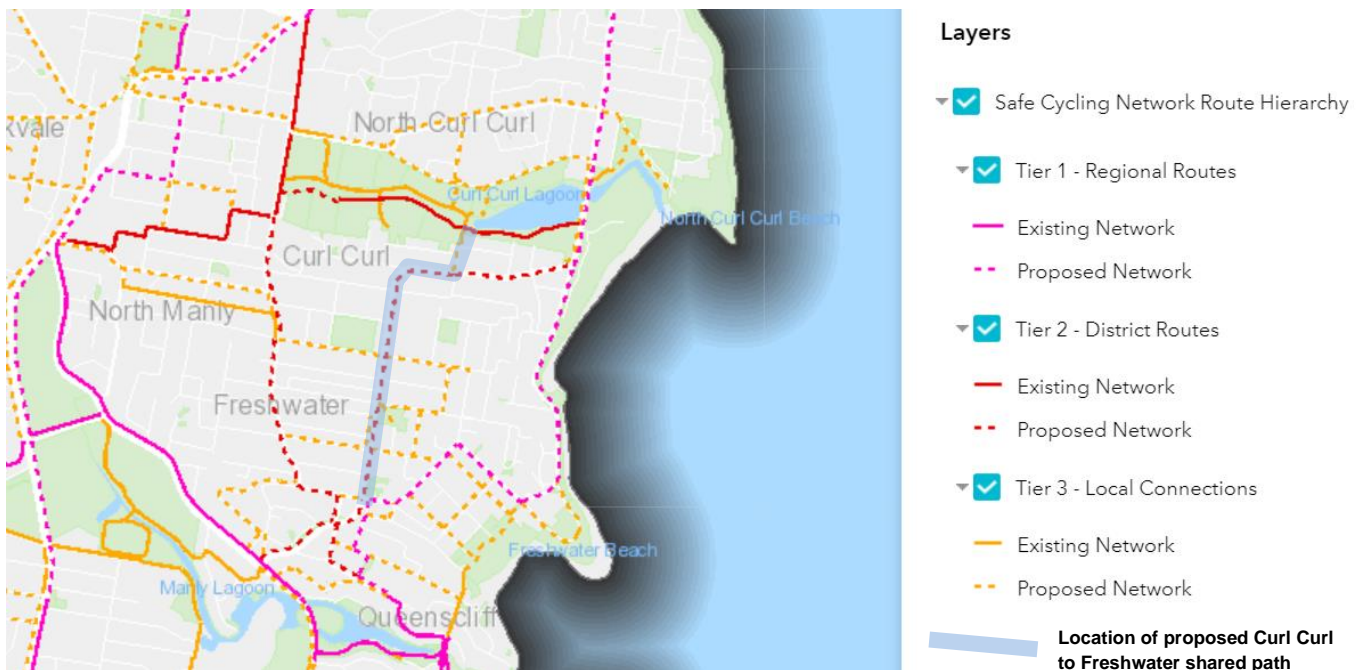


Figure 1: Extract from the Safe Cycling Network showing routes in the Freshwater area (Source: Northern Beaches Council)

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.

### Bicycle NSW prefers Option 1A for this route.

As set out in [our submission](#) of 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Bicycle NSW supports a **fully separated bicycle path** on Oliver Street and Bennett Street. We are very encouraged to learn that so many members of the community provided similar feedback to the community engagement<sup>iii</sup>, indicating increased understanding of the need for high quality cycling infrastructure. 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>iv</sup>, separated cycle paths will allow 70% of local residents to consider journeys by bike (Figure 2). 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 2:  
Four general categories of comfort levels for cycling as transportation.  
(Source: North Sydney Council)

The Bicycle NSW *Build it for Everyone* policy pillar<sup>v</sup> sets a standard that bicycle 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>vi</sup> of people who are 'interested but concerned', from making the switch to bike riding.

The Curl Curl to Freshwater link 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 two 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.

There has never been a better time to build infrastructure for bike riding and active transport. The new [Minister for Transport has recently confirmed](#) that the Principal Bike Network is a priority for Transport for NSW. In early 2021, Transport for NSW published two policies that require State projects to prioritise road space for active transport:

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

The policies establish a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last, as shown in Figure 3.

### Order of Road User Space Considerations



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

The reallocation of road space for active travel is clearly supported by Northern Beaches Councils strategies. Priority 21 of *Towards 2040 - Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement*<sup>x</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 bicycle paths 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 cycle paths on regional and district routes.

It is fantastic that Northern Beaches Council has initiated brave discussions with 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. In our recent meeting, the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP, stated his preference for properly separated walking and cycling infrastructure. He expressed his strong belief that **the road-related environment is a public asset** that must be shared equitably between all road users. Any 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.

Our [September submission](#) sets out the reasons why **a shared path** is not appropriate for such an important section of the cycling network. These include conflict between people walking and cycling, which will get worse as population and active travel increase; the loss of verges, vegetation and, in some instances, mature trees; the uncomfortable pinch points caused by bus stops, power poles and retained trees and constant interruptions when crossing side streets where vehicles effectively have priority. Importantly, 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.

Segregated bi-directional paths have many benefits over shared paths:

- People riding bikes 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.

- New landscaping and important pedestrian safety features such as kerb extensions can be incorporated into the buffers and 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.

The new Transport for NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox<sup>x</sup> and Austroads Cycling Guide recommend a minimum width of 3.0m for a bi-directional bicycle path. A 3.0m wide path will be comfortable for bike riders of all ages and abilities, allows for faster riders to overtake, accommodates innovative and emerging forms of micromobility such as cargo bikes and e-scooters, and caters for future growth in ridership.

As shown on the plans, the wider cycle path for **Option 1A** retains all trees and verge planting and includes a generous and safe buffer that could incorporate additional landscaping. Parking along one side of the corridor will be lost. However, all but one home 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.

**Option 1B** demonstrates that it is possible to fit a bi-directional bicycle path into a standard 12.8m road like Oliver Street without loss of vehicle lanes or parking. However, when buses need to pass, the resulting bicycle path is only 2.0m wide with a very minimal 20cm buffer. This is too narrow and does not meet the minimum standards set out in the Cycleway Design Toolbox<sup>xi</sup>. **Option 1B is a compromise** that will limit the potential of the cycle path to attract residents to bike riding. It will not feel as safe or comfortable as the Option 1A path so parents may be less inclined to let children travel independently. Those commuting by bike will find it difficult to overtake slower riders and may cycle on the road instead, frustrating drivers.

Bicycle NSW suggested locating a separated bike path on the **eastern side of Oliver Street** and we are delighted this is reflected in the revised plans. The eastern side has several advantages over the western side:

- 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.
- The laneway opposite the end of Dowling Street could be used by bike riders coming from Manly, simplifying access from the Queenscliff shared path to Oliver Street.

In addition, we advocated for traffic calming on Park Street to create a very slow speed environment for the connection to John Fisher Park so bikes can safely share the road with cars. This eliminates the need for a shared path or cycle lane to connect with the Curl Curl Lagoon open space and sports facilities. We are pleased that a shared-street treatment for Park Street has been incorporated into the proposals.

## Recommendations:

- **Option 1A is preferred, but with a 3.0m wide bicycle path.**

Option 1A will create a high-quality contribution to the Northern Beaches Safe Cycling Network. The wide bicycle path will encourage more bike riding and active travel, helping to meet Council's mode shift targets. However, we suggest adjusting the widths of the vehicle and parking lanes to create a best-practice 3.0m wide bike path with a 1.0m buffer. Figure 4 shows the configuration recommended by Transport for NSW for a 12.8m road. In Figure 5, these widths are applied to Oliver Street and presented alongside Council's proposal for Option 1A.

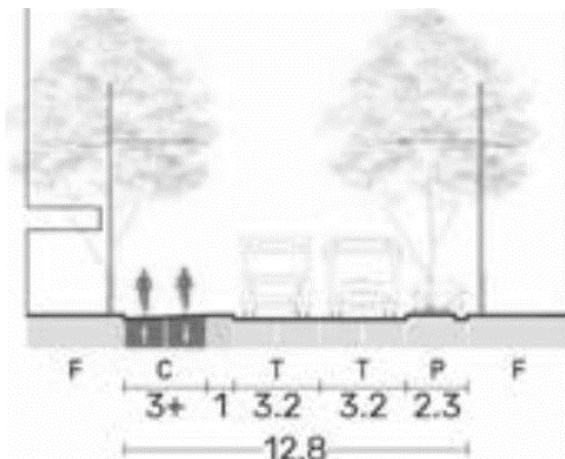
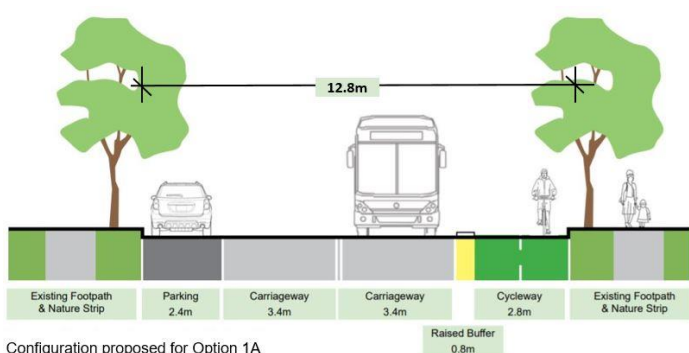
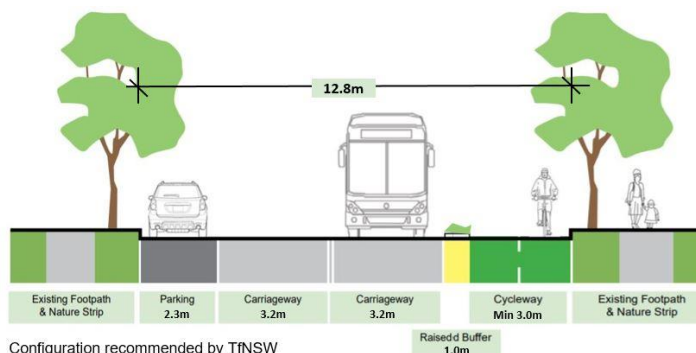


Figure 4:  
Optimal configuration for a 12.8m carriageway  
Source: TfNSW Cycleway Design Toolbox, p.32)

Figure 5:  
Configuration proposed for Option 1A, adjusted to meet TfNSW's recommended lane widths  
(Source: Northern Beaches Council)



Configuration proposed for Option 1A  
2.8m separated bicycle path, 0.8m buffer



Configuration recommended by TfNSW  
Min 3.0m separated bicycle path, 1.0m buffer

- **Option 1B could be considered for some sections, but with a 2.4m wide bicycle path.**

Where buses do not pass regularly, it may be possible to retain parking on both sides of the road and create an adequate bicycle path by narrowing the vehicle and parking lanes. The Cycleway Design Toolbox suggests the configuration shown in Figure 6 to achieve an acceptable 2.4m bicycle path with a 40cm buffer. Figure 7 demonstrates how Option 1B could be adjusted to create the recommended layout.

For the section of the Freshwater to Curl Curl route south of Wyndora Avenue, this treatment is worth exploring. 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.

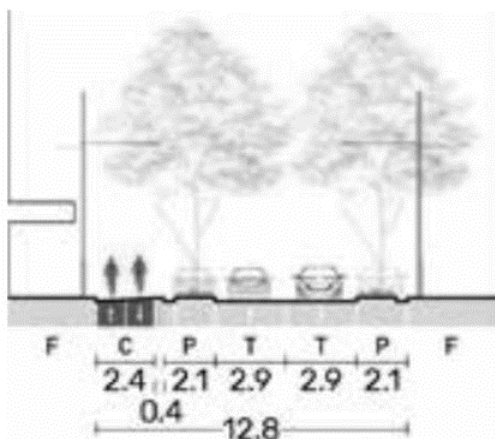


Figure 6:  
Constrained configuration for a 12.8m carriageway, retaining parking on both sides of the road.  
Source: TfNSW Cycleway Design Toolbox, p.32)

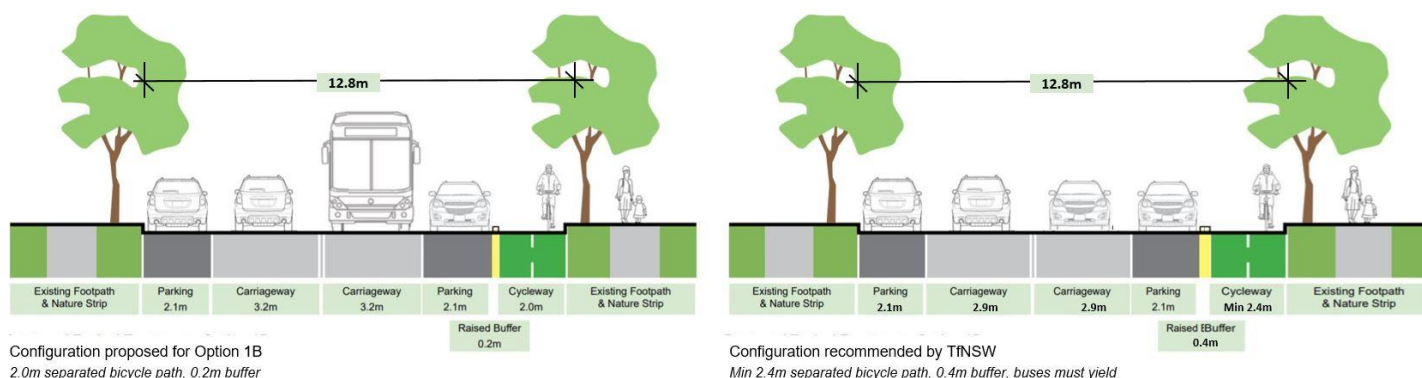


Figure 7: Configuration proposed for Option 1B, adjusted to meet TfNSW's recommended lane widths (Source: Northern Beaches Council)

There may be short sections of the corridor further north where a bus could be expected to yield to an oncoming traffic. A stretch of the Option 1B layout, with lanes adjusted to create the 2.4m wide bicycle path, could be introduced.

A hybrid solution may allay the residents' concerns about loss of parking. The narrower vehicle lanes and slight changes to lane alignment will help reduce vehicle speeds, improving safety and amenity.

- **Undertake a parking survey for the corridor**

A parking survey will determine precise usage patterns for on-street parking and reveal how necessary the spaces are for residents. Parking requirements should be studied at different times of the day and night, and during the holidays, school term and weekends. Local sides streets must be included in the survey. 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. With accurate data to reflect on, the community accepted the loss of parking on one side of the street to allow the installation of a best-practice bicycle path which benefits the wider community.

- **Consider a trial using temporary materials**

Bicycle NSW suggests that Northern Beaches Council uses pop-up methods to trial the separated cycle path. Moveable lane barriers can be installed quickly to create stretches of protected path (Figure 8) and demonstrate how unfamiliar cycle infrastructure fits into the street. Ridership can be observed over several months using electronic counters to monitor use, and any issues with parking and buses can be resolved before permanent infrastructure is constructed. If sufficient patronage is demonstrated and parking is not problematic, Council will have a mandate to retain the paths. City of Sydney, City of Parramatta and Transport for NSW demonstrated the demand for safe cycling using the pop-up bicycle paths established as a COVID-19 response. The paths will now be made permanent.



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

- **Ensure that new cycle infrastructure is inclusive**

All types of bikes should be accommodated by the cycling infrastructure, including cargo bikes and tricycles. Again, the width of the paths is critical and it is important to consider turning radii, dropped kerbs, ramps and the design of modal filters to ensure that non-standard bikes not excluded from the network. Cargo bikes will increasingly be used for deliveries and have huge potential to play a key role in a sustainable transport system. Non-standard bikes such as hand-cycles, recumbents and wheelchair bikes offer disabled people independent mobility but are a rare sight on urban streets due to barriers caused by poor urban design. Any measures enabling cycling by disabled people will support a growth in cycling by novice cyclists, children and older people, and improve conditions for those using mobility scooters<sup>xii</sup>.

- **Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists at all intersections**

Traffic light phasing and sensors must favour active modes to encourage more people to walk and cycle. In line with the Road User Space Allocation Policy and other State and local strategies, small delays to vehicle traffic should never prevent the delivery of safer, more efficient and more attractive active transport infrastructure. Raised crossings at unsignalised intersections will slow cars and improve safety. Bicycle paths must continue across the raised crossings so people riding bikes are not required to dismount.

## 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>xiii</sup>

We feel that the Curl Curl to Freshwater link is the perfect opportunity for Council to put policy into practice and not waste money on substandard infrastructure.

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

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

<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 Council, 2021. Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report - shared path. [https://hdp-au-prod-app-nthbch-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/9516/3607/7876/Curl\\_Curl\\_to\\_Freshwater\\_Shared\\_path\\_-\\_Community\\_Engagement\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-nthbch-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/9516/3607/7876/Curl_Curl_to_Freshwater_Shared_path_-_Community_Engagement_Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>xvi</sup> Roger Geller. (2009). Four types of cyclists. Portland Bureau of Transportation.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746>

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

<sup>vi</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>vii</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>viii</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>ix</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/lspstowards-2040.pdf>

<sup>x</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>xi</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>xii</sup> Wheel for Wellbeing. 2020. A Guide to inclusive cycling. [https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FC\\_WfW-Inclusive-Guide\\_FINAL\\_V03.pdf](https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FC_WfW-Inclusive-Guide_FINAL_V03.pdf)

<sup>xiii</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-business)