

Northern Beaches Council  
PO Box 82 Manly  
NSW 1655

14<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Northern Beaches Council,

**RE: TfNSW Active Transport Funding proposals**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure proposed for Council's application to Transport for NSW for funding under the 2022 Active Transport Grant.

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.

**Bicycle NSW supports all ten projects highlighted by Northern Beaches Council for inclusion in the application.** 8 of are currently open for community feedback and are described briefly overleaf. Two more, shared user paths along Rosebery Street in Balgowlah and Pittwater Road in Brookvale, have already been endorsed by the community.

As the new Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, set out in a recent speech<sup>i</sup>, smaller projects that stitch the suburbs together and enable people of all ages and abilities to get around without a car are much more sustainable than megaprojects. He stressed that the NSW Government will now focus on completing missing links in the active transport network. Such smaller projects have big benefits, and not only for reducing pollution and congestion. Active mobility improves public health, activates high streets, helps build social connections and addresses inequality.

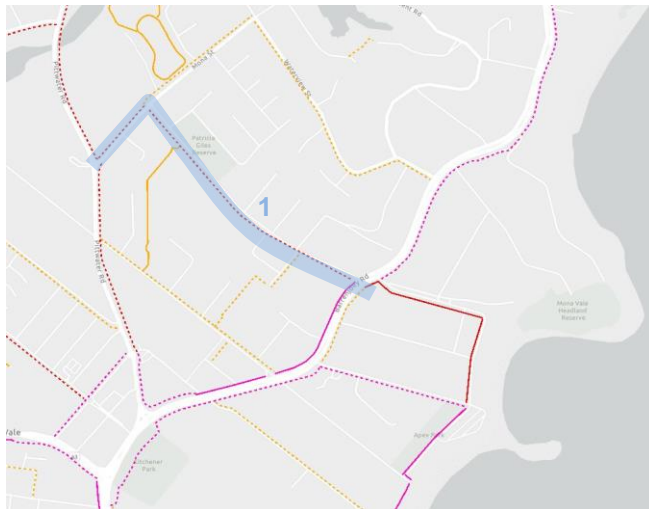
We applaud Northern Beaches Council's efforts to roll-out the cycling network developed for the Northern Beaches Bike Plan 2020<sup>ii</sup>. The proposed Safe Cycling Network includes a three-tier route hierarchy that matches the Transport for NSW cycling network hierarchy and aligns with the Principal Bicycle Network routes. The three levels consist of regional, district and local routes.

The 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>iii</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 **Council is showing its commitment to growing cycling.**

The 8 new projects to be included in the application:


### 1. Bassett Street, Mona Vale

An important Tier 2 District Route that will connect Pittwater High School, Winnererremy Bay and the local employment areas to the B-Line bus stop and the fantastic off-road cycle path that follows the coast south from Mona Vale.



#### Layers

- ✓ Safe Cycling Network Route Hierarchy
- ✓ Tier 1 - Regional Routes
  - Existing Network
  - Proposed Network
- ✓ Tier 2 - District Routes
  - Existing Network
  - Proposed Network
- ✓ Tier 3 - Local Connections
  - Existing Network
  - Proposed Network

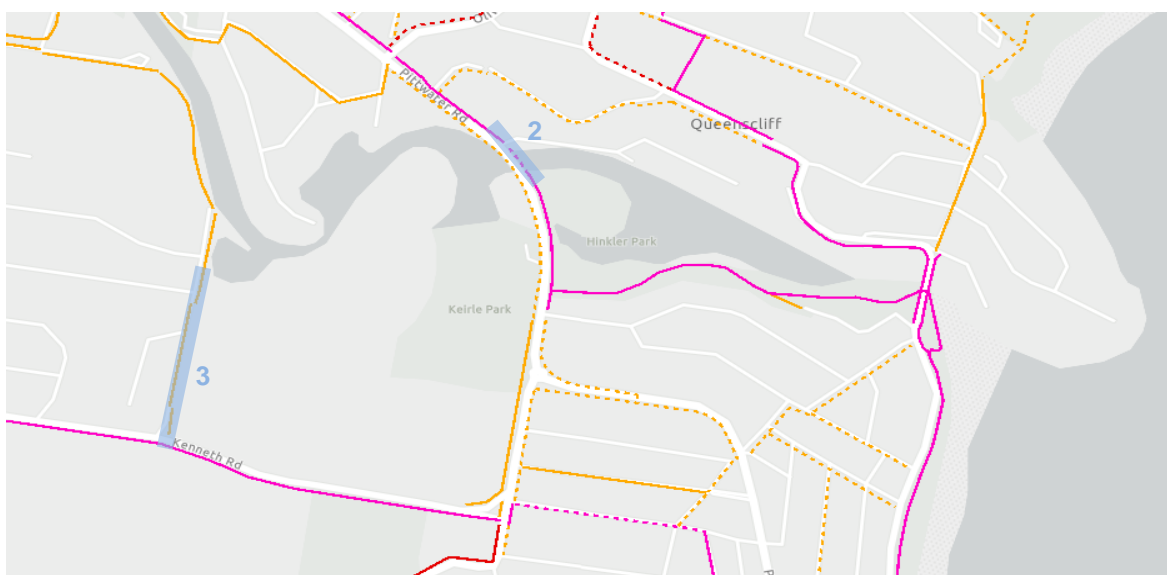
 Location of proposed shared user paths

### 2. Pittwater Road, Queenscliff

A new 3m wide pedestrian and cycle bridge will address the dangerous and uncomfortable conditions for people walking and riding on the existing bridge over Manly Lagoon. The narrow footpath is often crowded, pedestrians are very close to fast traffic and cyclists need to dismount. This can be a barrier to bike riding and is not appropriate for a Tier 1 Regional Route. There is very strong community support for improving access to Manly.

### 3. Addiscombe Road, Manly Vale

A new section of shared path in Addiscombe Road between the existing shared path along the lagoon with Kenneth Road. The project includes an upgrade of the existing pedestrian refuge in Kenneth Road to a combined raised pedestrian and bicycle rider crossing.

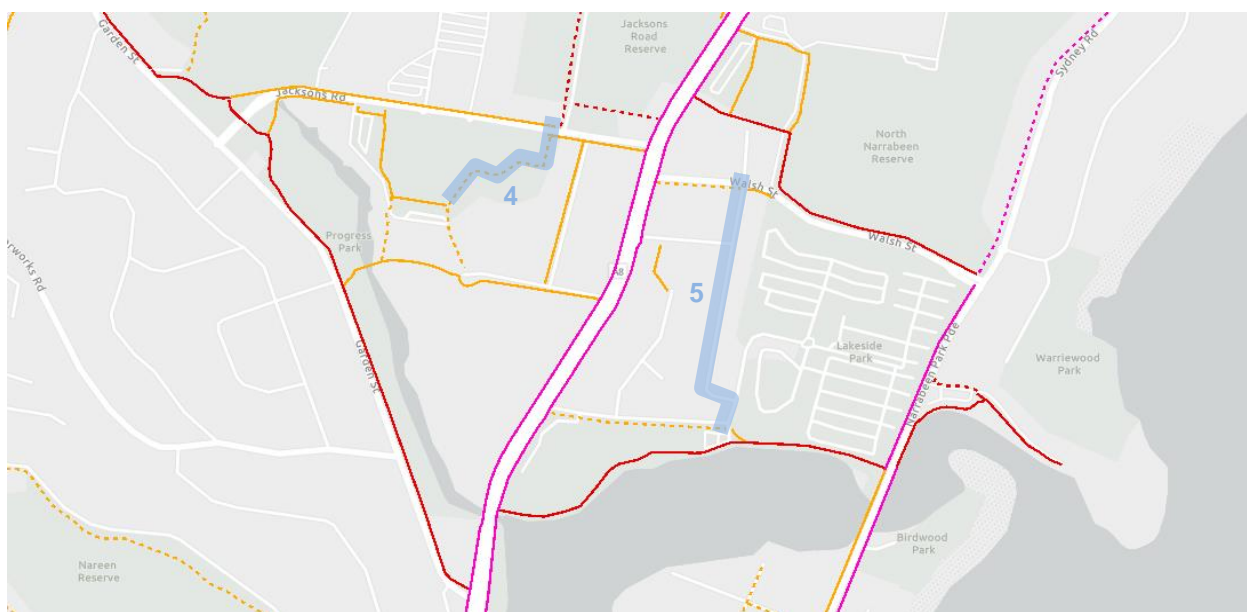


#### 4. Jacksons Road, Warriewood

A shared path for pedestrians and bicycle riders through Warriewood Valley Sportsground which will provide active travel connections to the Narrabeen Education Precinct, sporting facilities, Warriewood B-Line, Warriewood Square and other key destinations.

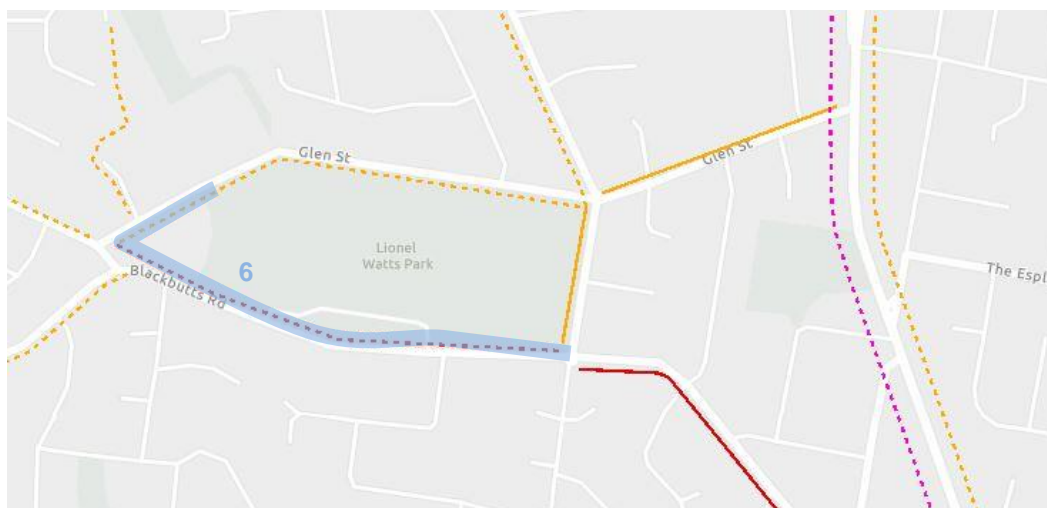
#### 5. Collins Street, North Narrabeen

A missing link to join the existing shared paths along Walsh Street and Narrabeen Lagoon and provide a valuable connection to facilities such as Pittwater Rugby Park, Warriewood B-Line and recreational facilities around Narrabeen Lagoon.



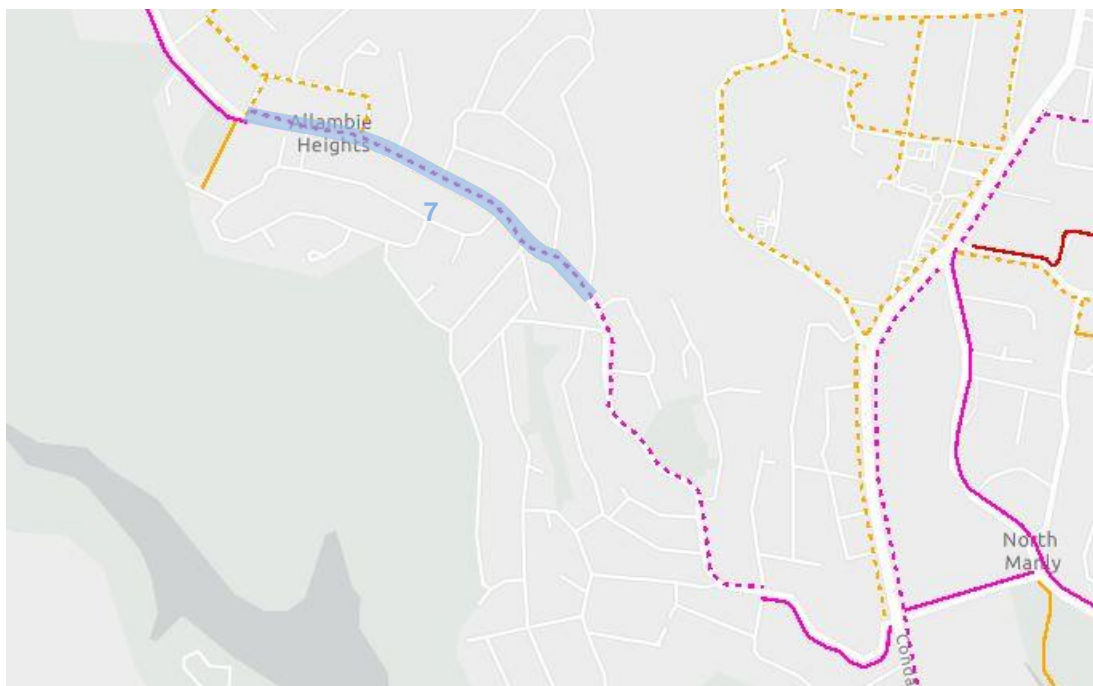
#### 6. Blackbutts Road, Frenchs Forest

A new shared path on the northern side of Blackbutts Road between the existing raised pedestrian crossings at Pringle Avenue and Glen Street to enable easier walking and cycling to local shopping, community and commercial facilities, sport grounds and schools, and complete an important Tier 2 District Route that connect to the major employment hubs at the hospital and nearby industrial areas.



## 7. Allambie Road, Allambie Heights

A new shared path on the northern side of Allambie Road between Flers Street and Allenby Park Parade with intersection upgrades to include bike crossing facilities. The path will create a valuable active travel connection between the local shopping, community and commercial facilities, the oval and Allambie Heights Public School. It will be a positive step in the delivery of a continuous safe route along the full length of Allambie Road between North Manly and Frenchs Forest, a Tier 1 Regional Route.



## 8. Highview Avenue, Manly Vale

A new footpath (note this is not intended to be a shared user path) and a much-needed upgrade to public stairs to provide better access to Manly Vale B-Line, local retail and many other local facilities and destinations.

## Recommendations:

We recognise that these projects have not yet been designed in detail and we look forward to commenting on the plans as they evolve in the near future. At this stage, we have some general recommendations for council staff and elected councilors to consider:

- **Propose on-road separated bi-directional cycle paths where appropriate**

Shared paths are no longer considered adequate for important sections of the cycling network. Problems with shared paths 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.
- Narrowed 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.

Bicycle NSW was very encouraged to learn that so many members of the community provided similar feedback to the community engagement<sup>iv</sup> for the Oliver Street route in Freshwater, 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>v</sup>, separated cycle paths will allow 70% of local residents to consider journeys by bike (Figure 1). 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 1:  
Four general categories of comfort levels for cycling as transportation.  
(Source: North Sydney Council)

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

There has never been a better time to build infrastructure for bike riding and active transport. The Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport recently confirmed that the Principal Bike Network is a priority for the NSW Government. 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>viii</sup>
- Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000<sup>ix</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



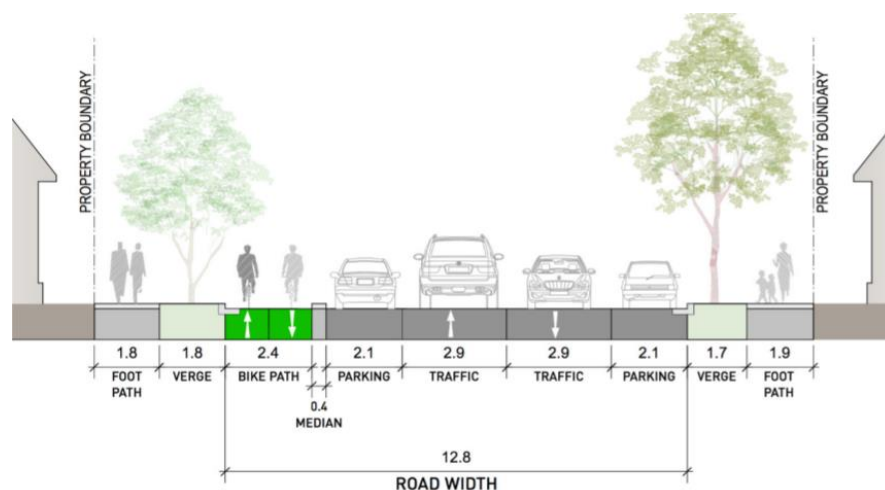
Figure 2:  
Diagram expressing Transport for NSW's  
road user priority.  
(Source: Transport for NSW)

The reallocation of road space 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.

We urge Northern Beaches Council to continue 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 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. On-street parking is fundamentally the storage of private property in the public domain. It makes driving easier and generates car trips. 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.

Please note that on-street parking does not always need to be removed to create a separated cycle path. As the new Transport for NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox<sup>xi</sup> sets out, it is possible to fit a 2.4m bi-directional cycle path into a standard 12.8m road like Bassett Street, Allambie Road or Blackbutts Road 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.

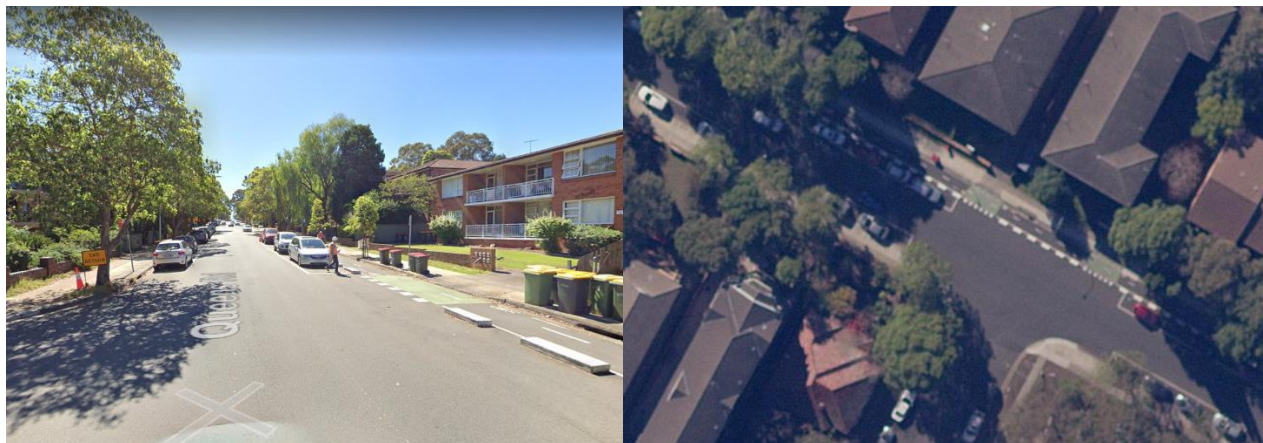


Figure 4: The separated on-road cycleway on Queens Road, Westmead (Source: GoogleMaps / SixMaps)

North Sydney Council is planning to extend the Young Street cycle path using 'timtam' concrete separators and Randwick Council is constructing a similar path along Doncaster Ave in Kensington. Images showing the proposed paths are in Figure 5.



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)

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 6) 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 6: Pop-up infrastructure in Sydney (Source: Bicycle NSW / Randwick Today)

- **Ensure shared paths have adequate width for future needs**

Walking and cycling on the Northern Beaches continues to grow in popularity. 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 responses, the expansion of the active travel network, individual reactions to climate change, a surge in online 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 modal share for walking and cycling.

It is important to **future-proof the cycle network** by allowing for increased demand at the outset. Shared paths should be wide enough for overtaking and must accommodate a range of mobility options such as cargo bikes and disability scooters. **A minimum width of 3m** should be achieved at all times with extra width considered where volumes of people walking and cycling may be high<sup>xii</sup> (see Figure 7). It is important that faster cyclists can overtake and that pedestrian comfort is never compromised. In busy areas, or on steeper sections, paths should be wide enough to provide separate space for pedestrians.

Bicycle NSW recommends referring to the new Cycleway Design Toolbox<sup>xiii</sup> and the 2017 Austroads Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17) to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice.

Figure 7: Suggested shared user path widths (Source: Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling AGRD06A-17)

	Suggested path width (m)		
	Local access path	Regional path <sup>(3)</sup>	Recreational path
Desirable minimum width	2.5	3.0	3.5
Minimum width – typical maximum	2.0 <sup>(1)</sup> – 3.0 <sup>(2)</sup>	2.5 <sup>(1)</sup> – 4.0 <sup>(2)</sup>	3.0 <sup>(1)</sup> – 4.0 <sup>(2)</sup>

1. A lesser width should only be adopted where cyclist volumes and operational speeds will remain low.
2. A greater width may be required where the numbers of cyclists and pedestrians are very high or there is a high probability of conflict between users (e.g. people walking dogs, in-line skaters etc.).
3. May be part of a principal bicycle network in some jurisdictions.



- **Reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets**

Residential streets form a critical part of any active travel network, connecting homes to key shared paths and cycle paths. 30 km/h speed limit reduce the need for separate bicycle infrastructure on local residential roads. 30 km/h has been shown as an optimal speed limit to allow people driving and cycling to share the road safely<sup>xiv</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>xv</sup>.

The Western Australian Department of Transport has rolled out several 'bicycle boulevards' using residential streets as part of its Safe Active Streets programme<sup>xvi</sup>. In addition to a 30 km/h speed limit, a range of physical interventions support slower speeds and reduce traffic volumes and rat running. Parts of the Northern Beaches network would benefit from a similar treatment if separated or shared paths cannot be achieved.

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>.

- **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>xviii</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.

- **Maintain a focus on the important details of the cycle network**

The detailed design of cycle routes, adequate end of trip facilities, clear wayfinding and grass roots education are critical to encourage the uptake of cycling and reduce dependence on private vehicles.

It is essential to ensure that popular daily destinations such as town centres and schools 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. Without proper separation

from vehicles and safe intersections, parents will still feel driving their children to school and activities is the only way to keep them safe from being hit by cars.

Integration of the routes with bus stops is essential to ensure easy access by bike and foot. All public transport journeys start and finish with a walk or cycle. Providing high-quality, safe conditions for active travel to bus routes will break 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. Future iterations of the Northern Beaches DCP must ensure that sufficient cycling parking is provided in future developments, including facilities for charging e-bikes.

Wayfinding supports visitors by clearly articulating and communicating the most efficient and safest route. Signage style for wayfinding should be consistent throughout the LGA and reflect the diversity of the community. Figure 8 shows a great example from the UK!



Figure 8: Fabulous graphics by advocacy group Walk Ride Bath that celebrate the diversity of people cycling (Source: Wheel for Wellbeing)

Finally, education, information and events to promote walking and bike riding as a form of transport are an important part of any plan to increase participation in active travel.

## Conclusion:

Bicycle NSW is excited to know that Northern Beaches Council has so many important active transport projects in the pipeline. The pop-up lane in Dee Why is fantastic and we hope Council will be emboldened to experiment more much widely with cutting-edge bicycle infrastructure across the LGA. Safe infrastructure to support walking and cycling will benefit everyone in the community, reducing congestion, noise and pollution while improving public health and providing more equitable access to employment, businesses, services and public transport.

We look forward to working with Council to progress the delivery of the routes discussed in this submission. Please reach out to Bicycle NSW with any questions or help needed. If requested, we would be delighted to assist with advocating for new cycle paths through our connections with politicians, Transport for NSW and neighbouring metropolitan councils.

Yours faithfully,

*Sarah Bickford*

Sarah Bickford

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Bicycle NSW

*P. McLean*

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Bicycle NSW

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- <sup>i</sup> Stokes, Rob. 2022, Feb 10. Footpaths and cycleways are an act of democracy – ask Steph. Fifth Estate. <https://thefifthestate.com.au/urbanism/planning/footpaths-and-cycleways-are-an-act-of-democracy-ask-steph/>
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- <sup>iii</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>iv</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>vi</sup> Bicycle NSW (2018) Our Policy, [online as at 24/2/2021] <https://bicyclensw.org.au/our-policy/>
- <sup>vii</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>viii</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)
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- <sup>x</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>
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