

Spring Farm Parkway team
Transport for NSW
PO Box 973
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

18th February 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Spring Farm Parkway Stage 2

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Stage 2 of the Spring Farm Parkway 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 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. 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.

It has been a pleasure to review the documents describing the new Parkway, which will connect the Camden Bypass with the Hume Motorway and Menangle Road, providing an alternative east-west route to Narellan Road for residents of the emerging estates at Spring Farm, Elderslie, Mount Gilead and Menangle Park.

Bicycle NSW supports the inclusion of a shared user path (SUP) on **both** sides of the new 4-lane divided road. We congratulate Transport for NSW for showing real intent to create new active transport corridors as a foundation for future development of the Western Parkland City. High-quality cycling and walking infrastructure will provide enormous benefit to the residents and workers attracted to Greater Macarthur over the coming decades, allowing access to school, homes and workplaces using a healthy, sustainable mode of transport. 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.

As the new Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, set out in a recent speechⁱ, 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 to create a regional 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.

Recommendations:

Details of the intersections, shared user paths (SUPs), bridges, underpasses and landscaping have not yet been published. When these detailed plans are available, we request the opportunity to provide further feedback which will be a much more meaningful contribution. At this stage, Bicycle NSW has some **general recommendations** for Transport for NSW to consider:

- **Future-proof the active transport infrastructure**

The status quo of walking and cycling activity in Western Sydney is likely to change rapidly. The density of walkers will increase when new housing, educational precincts and technology parks are 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. 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 highⁱⁱ (see Figure 1). It is important that faster cyclists can overtake and 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 Toolboxⁱⁱⁱ and the 2017 Austroads Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17) to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice.

Figure 1: 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 ⁽³⁾	Recreational path
Desirable minimum width	2.5	3.0	3.5
Minimum width – typical maximum	2.0 ⁽¹⁾ – 3.0 ⁽²⁾	2.5 ⁽¹⁾ – 4.0 ⁽²⁾	3.0 ⁽¹⁾ – 4.0 ⁽²⁾

1. A lesser width should only to 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.

- **Prioritise the comfort and convenience of pedestrians and bicycle riders**

NSW Government has recently published two very important policies to support the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure:

- [Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000](#)^{iv} establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last.
- [Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001](#)^v requires every transport project funded by Transport for NSW to include provision for walking and cycling, which must 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 Spring Farm Parkway must be undertaken with these policies in mind. Providing significant extra space for active travel could be achieved by very small changes to the enormous area of asphalt dedicated to vehicles. 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.

The project team confirmed that the twin SUPs will be set back from the kerb by a 2m verge to enhance the sense of safety and allow space for tree planting. It is essential that this ambition is not lost during the delivery of the new road. Bicycle NSW notes that the 2.4m SUP along Liz Kernohan Drive at the northern end of Spring Farm Parkway is separated from the kerb by an inadequate strip of grass less than a metre wide (Figure 2). In addition to the lack of separation from fast moving traffic, this verge does not support trees to create visual amenity and protect people walking and cycling from the intense sun. Residents will not choose active travel if it is not safe, attractive and comfortable.

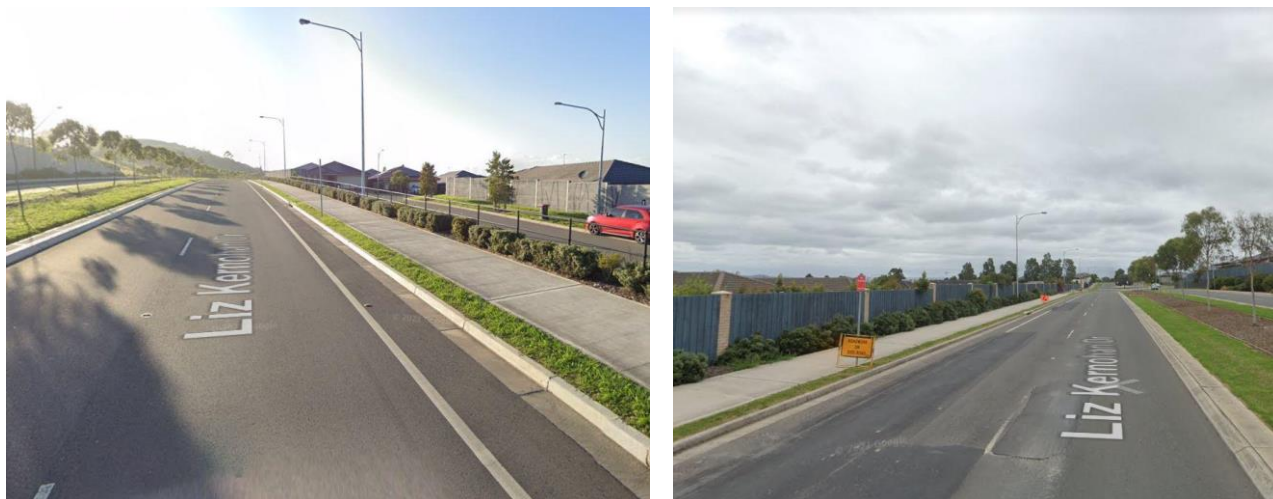


Figure 2: The shared user path (SUP) along the west side of Liz Kernohan Drive, Spring Farm. (Source: Google Maps)

- **Create connections to the regional cycling network from the outset**

It is essential that the SUPs form a central role in the regional network, contributing to the Principal Bicycle Network and Sydney's Green Grid. There are many exciting Green Grid project opportunities outlined for the South West District^{vi}, including new or enhanced open space corridors along South Creek, the Upper Canal and the Nepean River. The Spring Farm Parkway active transport infrastructure must enable access to local and regional recreation routes.

Careful design and consultation work is required at all intersections to maximise possible future links to the wider network. Bicycle NSW will support this work, and looks forward to regular stakeholder engagement. The project offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for significant mode shift and behaviour change, and its influence must reach far into the Western Parkland City.

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

The cycling infrastructure should accommodate all types of bikes, 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 SUP. 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 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^{vii}.

- **Maximise tree canopy cover over the shared paths**

It is well-documented that climate change is causing an increase in the number of days above 35 degrees Celsius in Western Sydney. A dense tree canopy over the SUP will help ensure that the facility is comfortable to use in the warmer months, allowing opportunities for exercise and mitigating the health impacts of inactivity, such as diabetes and heart disease. Of course, it is essential to select the correct trees for the climate, soil and topography. Excellent research into heat resilient trees is underway at Western Sydney University through the [Which Plant Where?](#) project. We suggest that Transport for NSW keeps a close eye on this research and incorporates the recommendations into the detailed landscape design plans for the Spring Farm Parkway. Camden Council's [Tree Management Policy 2019](#) (to be reviewed 11/2022) sets out a preferred species list and should be considered when selecting vegetation species.

- **Design intersections that put the safety of pedestrian and cyclists first**

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.

- **Mitigate construction impacts and maintain access to safe active travel**

It is essential to maintain safe walking and cycling along the Spring Farm Parkway corridor during future construction work. The SUP 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.

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

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 and generous bike parking will break down the first/last mile barrier which can inhibit take-up of public transport.

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.

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.

The SUPs, if delivered as promised, will be a fantastic addition to Sydney's slowly-developing cycle network. 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 working with Transport for NSW to develop active travel infrastructure that connects every corner of the Western Parkland City.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW



Cr. Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

Councillor
Camden Council

ⁱ 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/>

ⁱⁱ Austroads, 2021. Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling AGRD06A-17. <https://austrroads.com.au/publications/road-design/agrd06a/design-criteria/width-of-paths/shared-paths>

ⁱⁱⁱ 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>

^{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, 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>

^{vi} Sydney Green Grid, South West District. Tyrrell Studio, 2017. <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/plans/sydney-green-grid-plan-3-south-west-district-2017.pdf>

^{vii} 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

^{viii} Austroads Guide to Temporary Traffic Management (2019) [Online 1/4/2020] <https://austrroads.com.au/publications/temporary-traffic-management/agttm-set>