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Dear Ms Barone,

**RE: Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft vision and strategic plan for delivering a Sustainable Sydney over the next three decades.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for over forty-five years, and has more than 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to *'create a better environment 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 congratulates City of Sydney for developing a bold and engaging vision for the development of Sydney into a green, resilient, equitable and connected city. We fully support the 10 directions, 10 targets and the list of 10 very exciting projects ideas.**

The directions, targets and projects are tightly interconnected and will be underpinned by a fundamental action – the **reallocation of road space** away from private cars. Streets provide around 80% of public spaces in any city<sup>i</sup> but they are dominated by the movement and storage of cars. It is only by rebalancing the use of our streets that space can be created for people, culture, greenery and sustainable mobility.

Reallocating road space to active modes begins to address the unsustainable and inequitable nature of the current transport system. The road between the kerbs can no longer be the unchallenged domain of private cars, with wide vehicle lanes and ample parking that encourage car travel and unsafe speeds. A modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport is essential to achieve climate, health and liveability goals as Sydney's population grows.

As Lord Mayor Clover Moore set out in her keynote presentation at the launch of Sustainable Sydney 2030—2050: Continuing the Vision<sup>ii</sup>, the reconfiguration of streets does not only achieve transport objectives. The transformed George Street, and the proposals for Park Street, Oxford Street and Broadway are significant urban design projects with a vision to deliver quieter, calmer, leafier streets that benefit every resident and visitor in the city's heart. There will be more public space for community and culture, and Sydney will become more equitable, inclusive and resilient.

Returning street space to people will help meet the **ten strategic directions** of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050<sup>iii</sup> including Direction 2: *a leading environmental performer*; Direction 3: *Public spaces for all*; Direction 4: *Design excellence and sustainable development*; Direction 5: *A city of walking, cycling and public transport*; Direction 6: *An equitable and inclusive city*; Direction 7: *Resilient and diverse communities*; Direction 8: *A thriving cultural and creative life* and Direction 10: *Housing for all*<sup>v</sup>.

It is essential to provide very high quality walking and cycling environments to maintain global competitiveness and reputation. A target has been set for 90% of trips to work in central Sydney to be by walking, cycling or public transport. Sydney is at a tipping point: there has never been a better time to build infrastructure for bike riding and active transport. As the new Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, set out in a recent speech<sup>v</sup>, active travel projects that stitch the suburbs together and enable people to get around without a car will be a major focus for the NSW Government. This mission is supported by **Transport for NSW's Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000**<sup>vi</sup>, which establishes a hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last. Multiple environmental and health benefits will flow from increased walking, cycling and public transport use. The streets will be more equitable for Sydney-siders of all ages, incomes and abilities.

**Please continue to be brave in negotiations with the State Government and the community about changes to the road-related environment that prioritise people over vehicles.**

## Four recommendations:

- **Develop targets for the reallocation of road space and parking**

It is necessary to clarify intentions and put targets around the removal of vehicle lanes and surface car parking at the centre of the new strategies. The draft community strategic plan promises to measure the annual increase in public space following road space conversions in sq.m (p. 59) but there is no concrete figure to work towards.

In Paris, Mayor Anne Hidalgo was re-elected in 2020 on a platform to reduce space for cars on city streets, including the removal of 70,000, or 50%, of on-street parking spaces<sup>vii</sup>. This shows that the community will support change once the outcomes are explained and demonstrated. Paris policymakers are also imagining interesting futures for half-a-million off-street parking spots which are expected to be in less demand as car usage falls. Ideas include car sharing hubs, bicycle parking, logistics space, urban farming, short-term housing and sports infrastructure<sup>viii</sup>. Sydney currently has an oversupply of parking in the city centre which encourages too much driving. The City of Sydney should develop some targets and attractive scenarios for repurposing parking garages.

- **Always prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists**

In addition to generous, comfortable footpaths and cycleways, 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. Pedestrian and bicycle level of service could be optimised with the following features:

- Detection loops located well in advance of intersections so that lights can change for approaching cyclists, reducing the number of stops needed on a trip through the city.
- Instant green on demand for pedestrians and bicycles at mid-block crossings, with induction loop detectors.

- Longer crossing times so that pedestrians of all ages and abilities have time to cross safely and without stress.
- Automatic green for pedestrians/bicycles at all signalised intersections so there is no need to press a 'beg button'
- Raised crossings at unsignalised intersections to slow cars and improve safety.

- **Ensure that transport infrastructure is inclusive**

All types of bikes and mobility devices should be accommodated by the cycling and walking infrastructure, including cargo bikes and tricycles. 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 inner-city deliveries and have huge potential to play a key role in a sustainable transport system. Devices such as hand-cycles, recumbents and wheelchair bikes offer disabled people independent mobility but are a rare sight on city 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>ix</sup>.

In addition, we support City of Sydney's intention to maintain priority access to the kerb for people with disabilities who need to use private cars<sup>x</sup> as measures are rolled out to reduce overall reliance on cars.

Finally, we would like City of Sydney to consider a project which has not been included in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision:

- **Repurpose the Cahill Expressway**

Although the removal of the Cahill Expressway and the elevated railway at Circular Quay to create the Water Square is a fantastic long-term ambition, we urge the City of Sydney to advocate for TfNSW to immediately re-purpose the existing Cahill into a 'high line' style linear park that connects the Botanic Gardens with Circular Quay (Figure 1). This section of motorway could be taken out of the network with few impacts, supporting policies to reduce car use, and the most incredible public asset delivered for the people of Sydney.



Figure 1: Visualisations of the Cahill Expressway re-purposed into a landscaped elevated linear park (Source: Aspect Studios)

## Conclusion

Bicycle NSW is delighted by recent and proposed projects to create a more sustainable, equitable, green and vibrant Sydney. We will continue to support City of Sydney to reallocate road space to create new public spaces and high-quality walking and cycling facilities. Please reach out to Bicycle NSW with any questions or help needed. We would be happy to amplify advocacy for active transport through our connections with politicians, Transport for NSW and neighbouring metropolitan councils.

We look forward to your inspiring visions for Sydney coming to fruition.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner  
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer  
Bicycle NSW

<sup>i</sup> Arup. ND. Streets: the best use of public space? <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/streets-the-best-use-of-public-space>

<sup>ii</sup> Moore, C. 2022, April 5. CityTalks. Sustainable Sydney 2030—2050 Continuing the Vision.

<https://cityofsydney.wistia.com/medias/4c8lzkq435>

<sup>iii</sup> City of Sydney. 2022. Sustainable Sydney 2030—2050 Continuing the Vision. [https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/-/media/corporate/files/projects/vision-setting/your-say-our-plan-sustainable-sydney-2030-2050/ss2030-2050\\_vision\\_draft-1.pdf?download=true](https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/-/media/corporate/files/projects/vision-setting/your-say-our-plan-sustainable-sydney-2030-2050/ss2030-2050_vision_draft-1.pdf?download=true)

<sup>iv</sup> City of Sydney. 2022. Sustainable Sydney 2030—2050 Continuing the Vision. [https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/-/media/corporate/files/projects/vision-setting/your-say-our-plan-sustainable-sydney-2030-2050/ss2030-2050\\_vision\\_draft-1.pdf?download=true](https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/-/media/corporate/files/projects/vision-setting/your-say-our-plan-sustainable-sydney-2030-2050/ss2030-2050_vision_draft-1.pdf?download=true)

<sup>v</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/>

<sup>vi</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>vii</sup> Marchant, N. 2020, Dec 07. World Economic Forum. Paris halves parking spaces and asks residents what they want to do with the space. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/12/paris-parking-spaces-greenery-cities/>

<sup>viii</sup> Park4Sump, 2020. Why Paris is eliminating 72% of on-street parking spaces. <https://park4sump.eu/news-events/news/why-paris-eliminating-72-its-street-parking-spaces>

<sup>ix</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>x</sup> City of Sydney. 2022. Draft community strategic plan: delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050.

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/-/media/corporate/files/projects/vision-setting/your-say-our-plan-sustainable-sydney-2030-2050/draft-community-strategic-plan-2030-2050-may-2022.pdf?download=true>