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15th June 2022

Dear Waverley Council,

RE: Curlewis Street upgrades

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the plans to upgrade Curlewis Street in Bondi with new landscaping, wider footpaths, safer crossings and a bi-directional separated bicycle path.

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.

We are very excited to see Waverley Council making such progress to deliver high-quality active transport infrastructure. The newly completed cycleway through Bondi Junction is a fantastic facility in a key strategic location. Ridership will undoubtedly grow as more connections to the surrounding residential areas are created.

Curlewis Street is now the major missing link in the regional route from the CBD to Bondi Beach and we fully support the proposed bicycle path. We have made a few recommendations to consider during the detailed design stage later in this submission.

There has never been a better time to build infrastructure for bike riding and active transport. The new Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, set out in a recent speechⁱ that walking and cycling projects to stitch the suburbs together and enable people of all ages and abilities to get around without a car can be more sustainable than megaprojects. He stressed that the NSW Government will 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.

As Lord Mayor Clover Moore explains in **Sustainable Sydney 2030—2050 Continuing the Vision**ⁱⁱ, the reconfiguration of streets to provide more space for walking and cycling does not only achieve transport objectives. Projects such as the Curlewis Street upgrades are significant urban design proposals with a vision to deliver quieter, calmer, leafier streets that benefit every resident and visitor.

In 2016, Waverley had 72,100 residents. The population is forecast to grow by around 8,000 people to 80,100 by 2031, an increase of 11%ⁱⁱⁱ. Although Waverley has a relatively low modal share for private car trips and modest car ownership compared to the rest of Sydney (Figure 1), it is essential to maintain

downward pressure on these figures to create space for active and public transport infrastructure and prevent worsening congestion as the population increases.

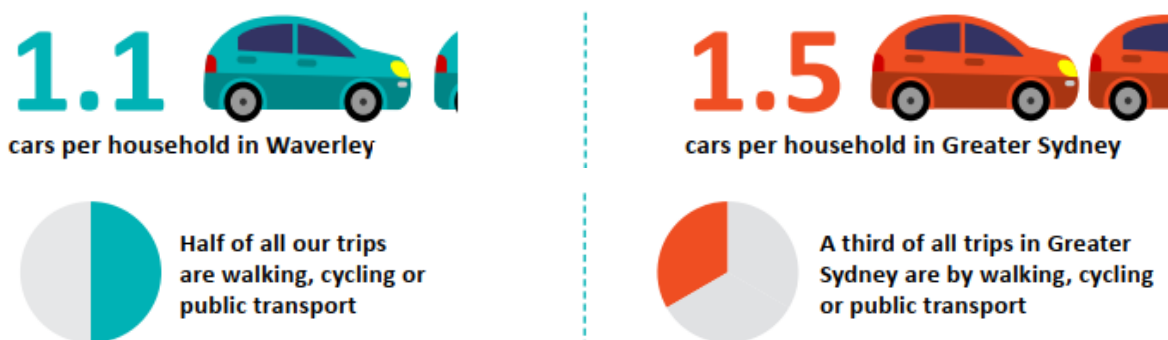


Figure 1: Extracts from the People, Movement and Places integrated transport strategy 2017. (Source: Waverley Council)

On a positive note, Waverley has the highest levels of bike riding in Australia accounting for nearly 5% of all trips, double the Sydney average^{iv}. The high-density urban form means that the average trip distance is short, at just 2.2 km per trip, and easy to cover on a bike. 3.1% of journeys to work in the Waverley LGA are by bicycle, with some suburbs having a higher mode share for work trips - for example Tamarama 5.9%, Bronte 4.8% and Bondi 3.7%. There is so much scope to further increase bicycle use and capitalise on the growing popularity of dockless share bikes, e-bikes and cargo bikes.

The strategic importance of the Curlew Street cycleway

Recent strategic planning for Waverley highlights the need for dedicated bicycle infrastructure on Curlew Street:

Transport for NSW Future Transport 2056 Plan^v, which commits to providing a regional cycle network in Greater Sydney, known as the Principal Bicycle Network (PBN). A coordinated delivery of bike lanes across Greater Sydney will ensure that routes across council boundaries align and create the most direct path of travel. The draft PBN for Waverley (Figure 2) highlights how critical Curlew Street is for the future network as part of two Tier One routes – CBD to Bondi Beach via Bondi Junction and Rose Bay to Bondi Beach.



Figure 2: Proposed Principal Bicycle Network (PBN) for Waverley compared with the 2013 Waverley priority network. (Source: Transport for NSW / Waverley Council)

Sydney Green Grid^{vi}, developed by the NSW Government Architect in 2017 and reflected in the district and region plans, proposes an interconnecting network of open spaces that support walking and cycling. The Principal Bicycle Network will integrate the Sydney Green Grid to create important links between activity centres and support active recreation. The Waverley area is covered by the Central District documents which highlight a key Green Grid opportunity to link Bondi Beach with Rose Bay (Figure 3).



Figure 3:
Extract from the Green Grid showing project opportunities
in the Waverley area
(Source: Tyrrell Studio / NSW Government Architect)

Priority project opportunities:

2. The Great Coast Walk, South Head to La Perouse
19. Eastern Beach Suburb Street Green Links
42. East West Coastal Green Links: Hyde Park to Bronte
- 45. Bondi Beach to Rose Bay Green Link**
46. Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach Green Link

Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029^{vii} sets out the community's vision for the future of the area under 11 themes. *Theme 6: Transport, Pedestrians and Parking* includes strategies to encourage people to walk, cycle, use public transport and reduce the reliance on privately-owned cars. Targets are established to increase the proportion of trips undertaken on foot, bike or public transport from 51% in 2016 to 63% in 2031. Very significantly, there is **a commitment to provide 15km of separated cycleways by 2029** (from a baseline of 0km in 2017) and to increase residents' satisfaction with the cycling network from a low 25% to a respectable 75%.

Waverley Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020-2036^{viii} has a vision that *"Waverley will contribute to the Eastern City District with vibrant and sustainable places that provide opportunities for a prosperous and diverse local economy, a protected and celebrated stunning natural environment and a rich cultural heritage"*. Planning Priority 1 is to "deliver public and active transport projects to achieve the 30-minute city". Key moves focus on improving transport connections from Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach, Rose Bay and the health and education precinct at Randwick. It is recognised that Bondi Road and Bronte Road, both 'Vibrant Streets' under the Movement and Place Framework, need a significant modal shift away from car use to create space for bus priority lanes and cycleways, while maintaining pedestrian amenity. In addition, a

40km/h speed limit will be applied throughout the LGA. Most importantly for people riding bikes, **a pledge is made to deliver the Principal Bicycle Network within the medium term (5-10 years)**. The map in Figure 4 shows the PBN routes and commits to several segregated cycleways including on Curlew Street.

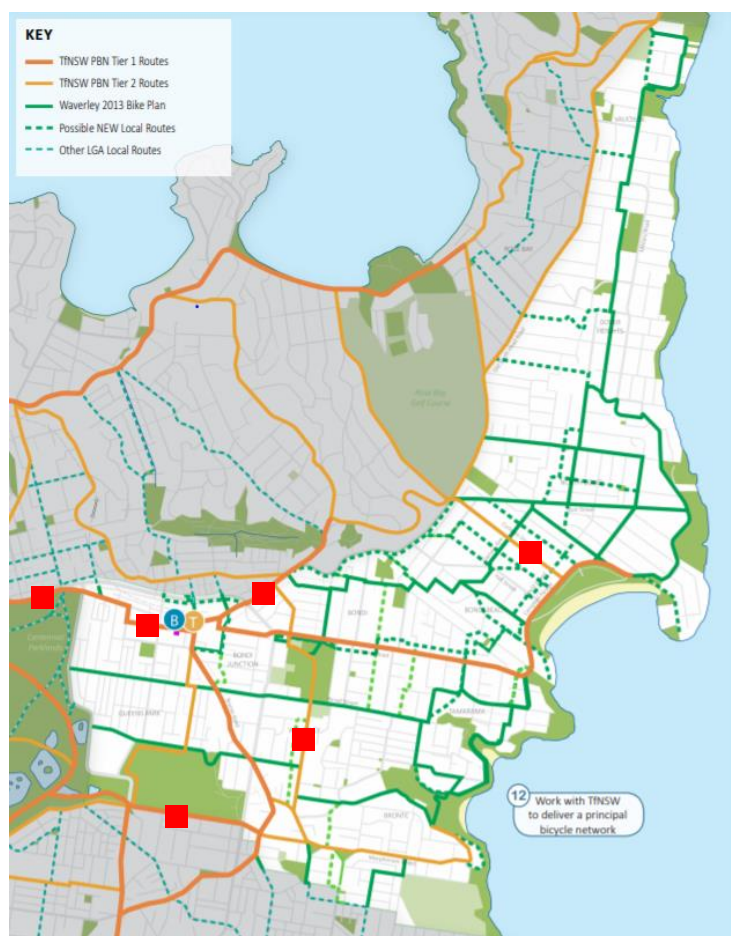


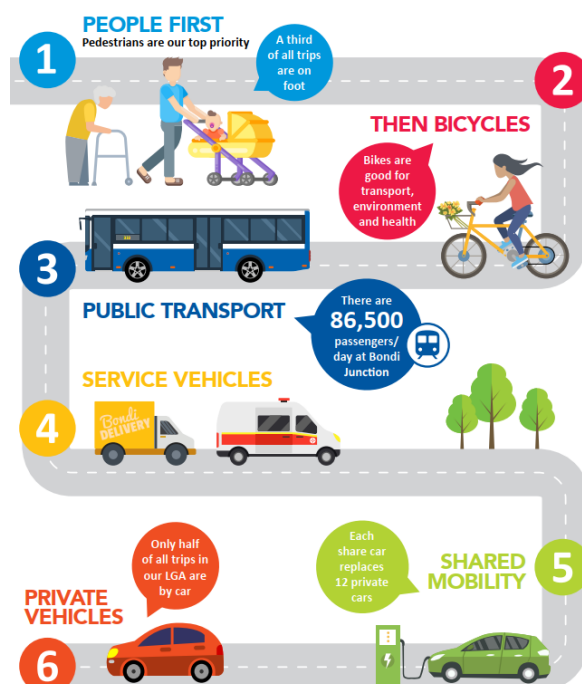
Figure 4: The potential Principal Bicycle Network as presented in the 2020 LSPPS (Source: Waverley Council)

Proposed locations of fully segregated cycleways:

- Bondi Junction
- Darley Road
- Curlew Street to Rose Bay
- Old South Head Road to Bondi Junction
- Henrietta Street
- Bondi Junction to Centennial Parklands

Waverley's People, Movement and Places (PMP) 2017^{ix}, the adopted integrated transport plan, establishes a clear transport hierarchy (Figure 5) that puts people first by prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, followed by public transport and shared mobility with private vehicles to be considered last. The plan encourages active and public transport, and supports better places and local planning. The PMP has already influenced Waverley's development controls with a zero minimum car parking rate, and a reduced maximum car parking rate.

Figure 5: Waverley's adopted transport hierarchy, developed for the People, Movement and Places integrated transport strategy 2017. (Source: Waverley Council)



The PMP outlines 12 Signature Projects where Council can focus funding, advocacy and delivery to create the 30-minute city for residents, workers and visitors. **When Waverley Council asked the community to nominate the highest priority transport projects, separated safe cycleways was selected by a large margin – nearly twice as much as any other initiative^x. As a result, a key Signature Project is the provision of safe cycling infrastructure.**

Waverley Bike Plan 2013^{xi} outlines an implementation plan for 6 priority routes (Figure 6) which include Curlew Street. Note that the proposed treatments were mostly mixed traffic and shoulder lane, which are not safe or comfortable for the majority of people who would like to cycle. New policies and priorities for separating cyclists from both vehicles and pedestrians will be reflected in Waverley's new Bicycle Strategy and Action Plan which is due for publication in 2022. Bicycle NSW submitted feedback during the consultation period in 2021.



Figure 6: The priority routes described in the Waverley Bike Plan 2013 (Source: Waverley Council)

It is also important to highlight two new policies published by Transport for NSW in 2021 that require State projects to prioritise road space for active transport:

- Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{xii} establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last (Figure 7).
- Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001^{xiii} requires every transport project funded by Transport for NSW to include provision for walking and cycling, which must be delivered from the outset of the project.

Order of Road User Space Considerations



Figure 7:
Diagram expressing Transport for NSW's
road user priority. (Source: Transport for NSW)

Although these policies do not apply to Council-owned roads, they have unleashed a new era of people-first thinking after decades of designing our streets primarily around the movement and storage of private cars.

Recommendations for Curlewis Street

- **Option One is much preferred for the for the western end of Curlewis Street**

Removing the slip road will improve pedestrian safety and amenity and allow much needed landscaping to be added to the streetscape. Slip roads are dangerous as they permit vehicles to turn without slowing down. When the fast movement of vehicles is facilitated, people are less likely to walk or cycle or allow their children to travel independently.

- **Allow for a safer crossing to Birriga Road and O'Sullivan Road**

The intersection of Blair and Curlewis Streets with O'Sullivan, Birriga and Old South Head Roads is complex and very difficult to negotiate on foot or bicycle. It important to plan now for a safer crossing of Old South Head Road to reach both Birriga Road, for the regional route to Bondi Junction, and O'Sullivan Road, where we hope that Woollahra Council will soon deliver a cycleway to complete the Bondi Beach to Rose Bay connection, improving access to the ferries and reducing pressure from residents and visitors on the Bondi Road buses.

- **Add a raised pedestrian/cycle crossing to Blair Street**

There should be a raised crossing where the shared path crosses Blair St as cars move very fast down here after turning from Old South Head Road.

- **Minimise the length of shared user path at the western end of Curlewis Street**

One of the three guiding policy themes at Bicycle NSW is 'Build it for Everyone'^{xiv} and we advocate for safe connected infrastructure that is suitable for riders from 8 to 80 years of age to use independently. Our preferred infrastructure is always completely separated paths. According to the best practice 'cycling segmentation' model, developed in Portland USA to identify the type and needs of existing and potential bike riders^{xv}, such cycle paths will allow 70% of local residents to consider journeys by bike (Figure 8).



Figure 8:
Four general categories of comfort levels for
cycling as transportation.
Source: North Sydney Council

Bicycle NSW does not generally support shared paths in the road-related environment. There are several reasons why shared paths are not appropriate for important and well-used sections of a 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.

It would be better to extend the separated bicycle path further west by reallocating additional road space to active transport. Waverley Council must continue brave discussions with Transport for NSW and the community about the need to reflect the priorities set out in the Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{xvi} and Council's own policies.

Cycling has the potential to solve so many of the city's problems with regard to congestion, health, equity, pollution and noise and it is very frustrating that the movement and parking of private cars is still prioritised over active transport. In our recent meeting, the Minister for Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, stated his preference for properly separated walking and cycling infrastructure^{xvii}. He expressed his strong belief that **the road-related environment is a public asset** that must be shared equitably between all road users. 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. This will benefit local residents with quieter streets, and less pollution, noise and through-traffic.

- **Retain the raised pedestrian/cycle crossing on Wellington Street**

The proposed raised crossing is crucial for to protect users of the shared path from fast, rat-running cars. It must not be omitted from the scope of works.

- **Create a gap to allow entry to the separated bicycle path from the road**

It is likely that experienced and confident bike riders will use the road rather than the shared path when entering Curlew Street from Birriga Road. Once east of the roundabout at the junction of Wellington and Curlew Streets, most riders will want to join the separated bicycle path. It is important that a gap is left in the kerb to allow direct access.

- **Option One is better for the eastern end of Curlewis Street**

It is safer and more direct to continue the separated bicycle path along the northern side of the road, reducing the conflict between cyclists, drivers and pedestrians that may occur with the crossing of Curlewis Street required for Option Two. There are many instances in the City of Sydney where a cycleway crosses a large commercial driveway. Signage and road markings clarify priority and encourage all roads users to slow down and interact safely.

However, Option Two would be acceptable if stakeholders remain unconvinced about the safety of the driveway crossing.

The cycleway is shown continuing over Campbell Parade to a shared path on the eastern side. Bicycle NSW looks forward to learning more about the future vision for reconfiguring Campbell Parade as tree-lined, low speed boulevard with reduced vehicle lanes and wide separated bicycle paths!

- **Add a raised pedestrian crossing of Gould Street to the south of Campbell Parade**

This is a busy junction and it would make sense to provide the safest possible pedestrian crossings. Under Option One, a raised crossing is provided on the northern side of Campbell Parade but not the south.

- **Be strong about removing on-street parking**

Removal of street parking will be necessary in places to create safe raised crossings, wide shared paths and separated bicycle paths. Council must be strong when faced with resident opposition. 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.

It is getting easier and easier to access a car for trips that are too awkward by public or active transport. Car sharing and ride hailing are slowly chipping away at the one-person, one-car mentality that Australians are accustomed to after 60 years of car-centric planning. In 2016, 25.7% of Bondi Beach households had no car and this figure can be expected to increase^{xviii}. In 2019, membership of local car share schemes grew by 20%, showing a huge appetite for new models of vehicle use.

Studies show that parking spaces in commercial areas are less significant for customers than many businesses expect, with owners overestimating the proportion of customers arriving by car by a factor of 3^{xix}. Visitors themselves overwhelmingly prefer widened footpaths, even if it means sacrificing some parking spaces. Cyclists and pedestrians are better customers, spending over twice as much time in the area and 40% more money per month than people driving. A report from London showed that improvements to the public realm to enable safer walking and cycling lead to a 30% increase in trade^{xx}.

A parking survey can be useful to determine precise usage patterns for on-street parking. With accurate data to reflect on, the community may find it easier to accept the loss of parking to allow the installation of a best-practice bicycle path which benefits the wider community.

The current proposals narrow the path at several pinch points to preserve the trees. This is not ideal as user comfort may be compromised and passing difficult. Bicycle NSW would be happy to see more parking removed to allow the bicycle path to bend out around the mature trees.

- **Ensure that the Curlewis Street bicycle path is inclusive**

All types of bikes should be accommodated by the cycling infrastructure, including cargo bikes and tricycles. The width of the paths is critical and it is important to consider turning radius, 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^{xxi}.

- **Refer to the new Cycleway Design Toolbox^{xxii} to ensure that the new cycleway is constructed to current best practice**

Conclusion:

Another great quote from the first Minister for Active Transport is 'don't let the perfect become the enemy of the good'. Yes, it would be optimal to remove more car parking spaces to avoid narrowing sections of the cycleway, and it may be better to avoid the awkward shared path at the western end. However, the most important task for local and state governments is to get cracking and build out a cycling network as quickly as possible within the constraints of the dense and contested urban fabric so that more people can enjoy the benefits of active transport.

Bicycle NSW looks forward to working with Waverley Council to progress the delivery of its integrated cycle network. Please reach out with any questions or help needed. If requested, we would be delighted to assist with advocating for new bicycle infrastructure through our connections with politicians, Transport for NSW and neighbouring metropolitan councils.

We can't wait to ride from the city centre to Bondi Beach via the completed safe cycleway on Curlewis Street!

Yours faithfully,



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Peter McLean

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Bicycle NSW

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/>

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