

North Sydney Council
PO Box 12
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

yoursay@northsydney.nsw.gov.au

13th December 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Draft NSDCP2013 Amendment - Car Parking Rates

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft amendment to North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013 which adjusts car parking rates for new high-density developments in areas with high public transport access.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-seven years, and has over 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 supports the amendments to update maximum car parking rates with the clearly-stated aim of reducing car use and car dependency in parts of North Sydney that are well-served by existing and planned public transport.

There are currently nearly 79,100 residents in the North Sydney local government area and the population is expected to grow by 14% to around 89,900 by 2041ⁱ, placing increasing demands on an already stressed transport network. The roads are jammed with cars and buses are overflowing.

North Sydney is a collection of vibrant '15-minute neighbourhoods' where all daily destinations could be accessed by an easy walk or bike ride. The built form is compact and population density is very high at 64.0 people/hectareⁱⁱ, compared to 3.9 people/hectare across Greater Sydneyⁱⁱⁱ. This is reflected in a higher-than-average proportion of trips by walking and cycling (12% of journeys to work, compared with 4.8% for metropolitan Sydney) and lower car ownership 1.2 per household (1.7 for Greater Sydney)^{iv}.

Despite this, far too much of road network is dedicated to the movement and storage of private vehicles, creating a hostile environment for people walking and cycling, with dangerous intersections, narrow footpaths, fast-moving noisy traffic and long distances between crossings. North Sydney remains a very difficult area to traverse safely by bicycle.

North Sydney Council, like many other neighbouring councils, has a long history of acknowledging the importance of sustainable transport in its policies and strategies but has struggled to deliver the desired outcomes of reduced traffic, congestion and pollution.

During the engagement process for the review of the 2018 CSP in late 2021, 64% of respondents felt that 'supporting sustainable transport' was of highest priority^v. Cycling and public transport demand is growing at a significantly higher rate than private vehicle travel demand^{vi} in North Sydney.

The new Community Strategic Plan – Towards 2040^{vii} contains 5 strategic directions, including *Direction Two: Our Built Infrastructure* which sets out that North Sydney's "infrastructure must follow sustainable design principles and meet the needs of our growing population. Our community prioritises walking, cycling and public transport and people of all ages are comfortable riding in the area." Strategies under *Direction Two* include:

- Incentivise use of sustainable and innovative public transport
- Provide infrastructure to support sustainable, innovative and active transport
- Provide a connected walking and cycling network for people of all ages and abilities

Bike North, a large and active Bicycle User Group, has worked hard over many years to advocate for better conditions for active travel. While some improvements have been made, the Council has failed to prioritise safe infrastructure for walking and cycling.

The changes to the DCP reflect a positive step in the painful process to reverse car-first thinking. Off-street parking makes driving easier and generates car trips. A reduction in parking will encourage mode shift, reduce driving and create more space for sustainable transport in North Sydney. As population grows, a substantial reduction in vehicle trips per person will be needed to ensure that North Sydney remains liveable. This aligns with the new Future Transport Strategy's ambition to stabilise Sydney's traffic^{viii}. It is not possible to continue with a business-as-usual approach to car dependent lifestyles.

With fewer cars driving on local streets, everyone benefits. There will be more room on the roads for people who really need to use private cars. Space can be reallocated for wider footpaths, trees and cycle paths. Place making can be prioritised to create high-value public realm in residential precincts that will be popular with residents and developers.

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, 17.3% of North Sydney households had no car and this figure is increasing^{ix}; by 2021 it stood at 18.3% for the LGA, climbing to 28.1% in North Sydney CBD and 24.4% in Crows Nest-St Leonards. In 2019, membership of local car share schemes grew by 20%, showing a huge appetite for new models of vehicle use. North Sydney Council is very supportive of the car share model, and reduced residential parking will nudge more people to ditch expensive car ownership.

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^x. 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^{xi}.

We support the provisions for bicycle parking in the DCP but suggest that some bicycle storage is located at ground level in new developments to ensure maximum convenience.

Bicycle NSW is happy to help North Sydney Council refine the details of the DCP amendments. Please reach out with any questions or help needed. Hopefully other councils will be inspired to follow the leadership of North Sydney! We look forward to data showing the impact of the changes on car ownership, car use and sustainable mode share over the coming years.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Active Transport Planner
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

ⁱ North Sydney Council. 2022. Draft Community Strategic Plan – North Sydney Vision 2040. <https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/72233/widgets/371601/documents/231175>

ⁱⁱ North Sydney Council. 2022. Draft Community Strategic Plan – North Sydney Vision 2040. <https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/72233/widgets/371601/documents/231175>

ⁱⁱⁱ City of Sydney. 2020, April 9. The city at a glance. <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/guides/city-at-a-glance>

^{iv} Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016. Quickstats for North Sydney LGA. <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2016/LGA15950>

^v North Sydney Council. 2022. Community Strategic Plan Review - Stage 1 Engagement Outcomes. <https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/72233/widgets/371601/documents/233876>

^{vi} North Sydney Council. 2017. Transport Strategy. https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/docs/7_transport_amp_parking/traffic/north_sydney_transport_strategy.pdf

^{vii} North Sydney Council. 2022. Community Strategic Plan – North Sydney Vision 2040. https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/docs/1_council_meetings/policies_plans/csp_review/community_strategic_plan_-_our_vision_2040.pdf

^{viii} Bicycle NSW. 2022, November. Future Transport Strategy 2061 is out! <https://bicyclensw.org.au/future-transport-strategy-2061-is-out/>

^{ix} Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016. Quickstats for North Sydney LGA. <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2016/LGA15950>

^x Sorrel, C. 2017, February. Why Local Businesses Shouldn't Worry About Eliminating On-Street Parking. *Fast Company*. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3067515/why-local-businesses-shouldnt-worry-about-eliminating-on-street-parking>

^{xi} Transport for London. Walking and Cycling: the Economic Benefits. <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/walking-cycling-economic-benefits-summary-pack.pdf>