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Dear Rachel,

Re: Oxford Street East Cycleway

Thank you for the opportunity to feedback on concept designs for a two-way separated cycleway on the south side of Oxford Street between Paddington Gates and Flinders Street.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-seven years, and has more than 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to 'create a better environment for all bicycle riders', be they 8 or 80. We support active transport in all its forms. Safe space for walking and cycling is an innate human right and a vital civilizing influence.

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the proposal to construct a high-quality separated facility on this section of Oxford Street. The Oxford Street East Cycleway is a very significant addition to Sydney's bike network.

We thank Transport for NSW and Minister Stokes' team in the Cities and Active Transport Division for progressing the project. The Bicycle User Groups appreciate the early engagement in November 2022 and we look forward to an opportunity to review more detailed plans very soon.

Bicycle NSW is delighted by the following features of the project:

- the full separation of bike riders from both pedestrians and vehicles
- the removal of two vehicle travel lanes to create space for a generous cycleway, widened footpaths and upgraded public realm.
- continuous footpath treatments at the junctions of Oxford Street and unsignalised side streets
- new turning restrictions from Oxford Street to prioritise cyclist movement

However certain aspects of the cycleway have not been adequately resolved, and important features of best-practice active transport infrastructure are not included in the concept design. We use this submission to outline a series of recommendations to inform the next stage of the design work.

We would like to thank members of BIKEast, an affiliated Bicycle User Group in the Eastern Suburbs, for their valuable efforts over many years to advocate for better conditions for active travel. We align with their [detailed feedback](#) on the preliminary design for the Oxford Street East Cycleway and amplify all their concerns and suggestions. As local bike riders who use the corridor every day, BIKEast members must be consulted very closely throughout the development of the detailed design for the cycleway.

The strategic need

Bicycle NSW has long advocated for a cycleway along Oxford Street to create a continuous and safe active transport corridor between Bondi Junction and Sydney's CBD. The Oxford Street East cycleway will fill the missing link between the Bondi Junction and Centennial Park facilities, both recently completed, and the Oxford Street West Cycleway, which will be under construction by City of Sydney very soon.

This route will pass shops, offices, schools and St. Vincent's Hospital, everyday destinations for thousands of residents. We appreciate that the Oxford St cycleway will replace the pop-up along Moore Park Road, but this offers increased opportunities to activate local shops and improve the urban amenity of Paddington. It will provide riders with a connection along a ridgeline instead of requiring them to ride up-hill to connect to city destinations.

Our [submission for the Oxford Street West](#) facility highlights how Oxford Street was identified as a priority route for the regional cycling network decades ago but has been left as a high-traffic on-road route, suitable only for 'strong and fearless' cyclists, for far too long. Transport for NSW publishes data on crashes and the severity of injuries. It is clear from the extracts from the Centre for Road Safety Crash Map (Figure 1), which locates crashes from 2017-2021, that Oxford Street has a high incidence of crashes resulting in serious injuries

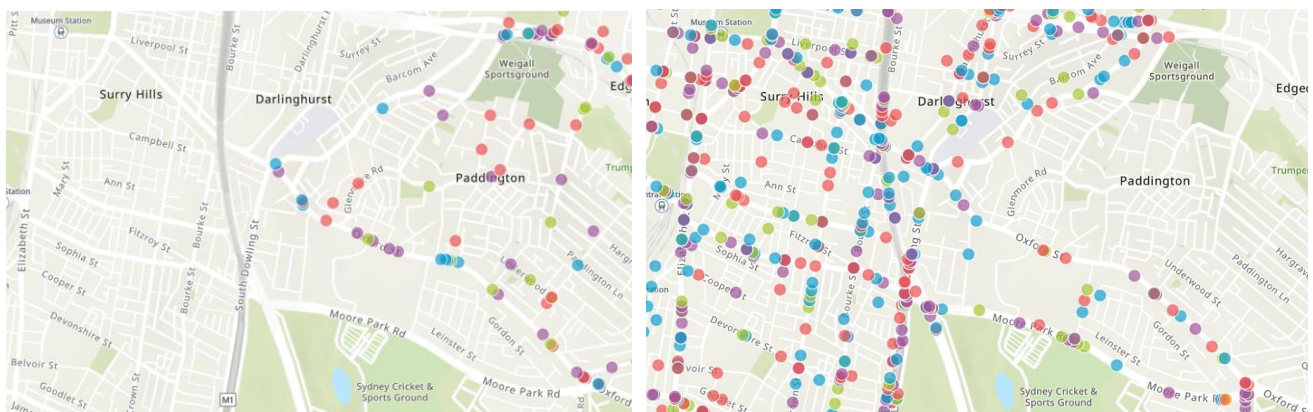


Figure 1: Data from City of Sydney and Woollahra showing serious crashes on Oxford St between Centennial Park and Hyde Park (Note that the boundary between the two LGAs lies on Oxford St so data must be combined) (Source: Transport for NSW)

The proposal for a dedicated separated cycleway on Oxford Street reflects a raft of recent state and local government policies and strategies that aim to rebalance our roads and reduce vehicle traffic in Sydney. These include the new Future Transport Strategyⁱ which deeply embeds movement-and-place thinking and promises to support car-free mobility and urban vitality. As the new Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, set out in a recent speechⁱⁱ, active travel projects that stitch the suburbs together and enable people to get around without a car are now a major focus for the NSW Government.

The best projects are underpinned by a fundamental action – the **reallocation of road space** away from private cars. Streets provide around 80% of public spaces in any cityⁱⁱⁱ but they are dominated by the movement and storage of cars. It is only by rethinking the use of our streets that space can be created for people, culture, greenery and sustainable mobility. This mission is supported by Transport for NSW's Road User Space Allocation Policy^{iv}, which establishes a hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last.

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.

It is essential to provide very high quality walking and cycling environments to maintain global competitiveness and reputation. We are encouraged that Transport for NSW is following City of Sydney's lead and delivering a separated bicycle path rather than the shared paths found in many LGAs. Shared paths are not suitable for areas with high pedestrian and cycling activity and will not lead to an acceptable level of amenity and safety for either walkers or riders, with conflict occurring between different users.

Removing two general travel lanes on Oxford Street to accommodate a full-width bicycle path with a safe buffer, new trees and generous footpaths will dramatically improve amenity and reduce noise and air pollution. As Lord Mayor Clover Moore sets out in **Sustainable Sydney 2030—2050 Continuing the Vision**⁴, the reconfiguration of streets does not only achieve transport objectives. Projects that reduce space for cars are significant urban design proposals with a vision to deliver quieter, calmer, leafier streets that benefit every resident and visitor in Paddington.

Recommendations for the development of detailed designs:

Maximise the safety of every intersection

Each intersection requires careful site-specific design solutions. This should include features such as tight turning radii, kerb extensions, well-located angled ramps, refuges for pedestrians and cyclists, continuous footpaths at unsignalised junctions and ramped raised tables at signalised intersections. These interventions will slow cars and improve safety. Bicycle paths must continue across all crossings so people riding bikes are not required to dismount.

Bicycle NSW is particularly keen to interrogate the designs for the diagonal crossing at the intersection with Flinders Street and looks forward to close consultation to ensure the best possible outcomes for bike riders and pedestrians.

Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists at signalised 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.

[Best practice guidance](#) recommends pedestrian wait times in urban activity areas should be no longer than 30 seconds. Crossing times must allow pedestrians of all ages and abilities to cross safely and without stress.

Signals should have induction loop detectors for bicycles/wheelchairs/mobility scooters and fully accessible push buttons on both sides of the crossing. Automatic green for pedestrians/bicycles should be standard at most signalised intersections so there is no need to press a 'beg button'

Include safe waiting areas for turning cyclists

The concept design does not indicate that any space will be allocated for bike riders waiting to cross over from the cycleway to link with a local street on the opposite side of Oxford Street. Waiting cyclists will potentially impede the movement of through-cyclists and conflict with pedestrians at crossings.

Cyclist turning bays, waiting platforms and by-pass facilities should be incorporated into busier intersections.

Construct bus stop ‘islands’ to separate pedestrians and cyclists

Floating bus stops allow people to board buses away from the cycleways reducing conflict and improving safety. We agree with Bike East that bus stops should be close to key intersections so islands can extend to form refuges for pedestrians and cyclists waiting to cross Oxford Street.

Reduce speed limits to 30km/h along Oxford Street and adjacent side streets

The Vision Zero goal of lowering speed limits to 30 km/h on residential streets and around schools and town centres is considered international best practice and is gaining momentum in Australian and New Zealand. This approach includes pedestrian zones, physical separation between bicycle and car traffic, data-based traffic enforcement and behaviour-change education^{vi}. The British Medical Journal^{vii} found that the use of 20mph (32kph) over a twenty-year period from 1986–2006 significantly improved road safety for users of all transport modes and ages.

The rate of children under 15 years old being killed and seriously injured dropped by 50% in areas where the speed limit is reduced to 20mph (32kph). Most Australians already support lowering speed limits in neighbourhoods^{viii}. Acceptance usually increases after implementation, as has been the case in countries like the UK and Germany. Several 30km/h trials run in Melbourne and New Zealand before 2020 have been successful. Popularity increased further after people experienced the benefits^{ix}. The UN resolution of August 2020^x urged all countries to adopt 30 km/h limits in areas where people are walking and playing.

It is noted in the [draft Woollahra Active Transport Plan](#) that councillors are reluctant to adopt any move to a lower speed zone without ‘trailing’ a single area for a period. However, staggered trials will delay the adoption of lower speed limits and Bicycle NSW agrees with BIKEast that phased introduction of 30 km/h zones is unnecessary. There is sufficient evidence from Australia and overseas that low speed environments improve safety and amenity.

Narrow lanes to further reinforce slow driving speeds

It is noted that the project team will ‘look at more closely’ at future lane widths as part of the detailed design phase. We do not support the widening of lanes as suggested – this will increase the speed at which vehicles feel comfortable moving through Oxford Street. Lanes must remain as narrow as possible to encourage safer, more cautious driving, reduce crossing distances and create much-needed space for public realm upgrades.

We recommend leaving vehicle lanes widths at 2.5m and not increasing bus lanes beyond 3m.

Remove slip lanes at junction of Queen Street

The Committee for Sydney has written [an excellent report](#) highlighting how slip lanes prevent Sydney’s high streets from thriving. They bring fast-moving traffic too close to pedestrians and prevent footpath widening. Slip lanes allows vehicles to turn unimpeded at speed – exactly what is not wanted in a low-speed, high-amenity environment.

Expand local links into the new cycleway

Short sections of shared path are required to provide local access to key destinations on sides streets and the opposite side of Oxford Street. BIKEast has drawn on intimate knowledge of desire lines and movement patterns in the area to make several recommendations for expanding the network of shared paths.

Ensure that new cycle and walking infrastructure is inclusive

The cycleway need to accommodate all types of bikes and mobility devices, including cargo bikes, tricycles, hand-cycles, recumbents and wheelchair scooters. 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^{xi}.

Ensure equitable access to the kerb

It is important that the bus platforms are generous enough to allow passengers in wheelchairs to safely negotiate the crossing of the bicycle path. The use of the platforms for taxis to pick-up and drop-off (PUDO) passengers and for vehicles making deliveries must also be considered. If the bicycle path hinders access to the kerb, then dedicated zones in the side streets must be allocated for taxis, ride share, disabled parking. Time-of-day variations to the availability of the kerb for different uses would further improve efficiency.

Conclusion

Sydney is at a tipping point. There has never been a better time to build infrastructure for bike riding and active transport. We are very excited by the prospect of an uninterrupted cycleway from Bondi Junction to the centre of Sydney and beyond, and we look forward to riding the route in the very near future!

We look forward to receiving detailed drawings for the project in due course so we can comment further on path widths, landscaping and intersection design.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Active Transport Planner
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

ⁱ Transport for NSW. 2022. Future Transport Strategy. <https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/documents/future-transport-strategy>

ⁱⁱ 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/>

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

^{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 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

^{vi} Vision Zero Network. (2015, April 13). European Cities Lead the Way Toward Vision Zero. <https://visionzeronetwork.org/european-cities-lead-the-way-toward-vision-zero/>

^{vii} The British Medical Journal, <https://www.bmj.com/content/339/bmj.b4469.full>

^{viii} What Australians want report, https://irp.cdn-website.com/541aa469/files/uploaded/What_Australia_Wants_Report_.pdf

^{ix} https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_choice

^x 20's Plenty. 2020, August. General Assembly of the United Nations says 20's plenty. http://www.20splenty.org/un_says_20splenty

^{xi} 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