

M6 Stage 1 Project Team Transport for NSW PO Box 7261 Alexandria NSW 2015

Info@M6Stage1.com.au Natalie.Gilchrist@m6stage1.com.au

1st March 2023

Dear Natalie and the project team,

Re: M6 Stage 1 draft Urban Design Landscape Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Urban Design Landscape Plan (UDLP) for the M6 Stage 1 motorway project.

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', 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.

The UDLP sets out detailed intentions for new parklands and active transport facilities that will be delivered as part of the M6 project. We recognise that much thought has gone into designing high-quality landscaping, bridges and boardwalks, recreational facilities and public amenities. **Bicycle NSW congratulates the project team for delivering an excellent document to inspire confidence that great outcomes will be achieved for walking and cycling within the project corridor.** It is very exciting that 3 stages of the 4-stage project will be underway in 2023.

This submission will focus on the active transport elements with a particular focus on Appendix B of the UDLP plan, the Pedestrian and Cycle Implementation Plan (PCIP).

We thank TfNSW for the comprehensive briefing to Bicycle NSW in September 2022. We appreciate the close collaboration with Bayside Council over the past 5 years which has significantly improved outcomes for walking and cycling in the M6 corridor. It is essential that TfNSW continues to consult with Bayside's experienced and dedicated planners at every step as the detailed design evolves.

Bicycle NSW would also like to acknowledge BIKEast, an affiliated Bicycle User Group in the Eastern Suburbs, and Walk Sydney for their contribution to our work. BIKEast members have worked hard over many years to advocate for better conditions for active travel. Walk Sydney has made excellent comments on pedestrian safety issues at the intersections and on the bridges. We align with the detailed feedback that both groups have submitted on the draft UDLP.

The highlights of the UDLP

The Active Transport Corridor (ATC) delivers approximately 4.1 km of new shared pathways that connect fragmented existing open spaces. The ATC stretches from Bestic Street, Kyeemagh to Chuter Avenue, Monterey and includes links to residential streets and local parks.

We commend TfNSW for responding the <u>Bicycle NSW's advocacy</u> in 2018/2019. In the preliminary project plans, the ATC terminated at President Avenue and included a 700m on-road section between Bruce Street and Kurnell St. The ATC has since been straightened and continues south to Robinson Avenue in Monterey.

The UDLP recognises the importance of creating uninterrupted protected space for walking and cycling. It is understood that safety, connectivity and comfort are essential to inspire more people to ride and walk.

Large sections of ATC will be constructed as generous wide separated paths (Figure 1). It is clear that the project aims to accommodate both recreational bike riders as well as commuters passing through at speed, and minimise conflict with people walking.

The paths will be future-proofed by incorporating wide 1m shoulders and medians, ensuring space for expansion as user volumes grow – as they undoubtedly will population and appetite for active transport surges.

The project team promises to refer to the new Cycleway Design Toolboxⁱ and the 2017 Austroads Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17) to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice.

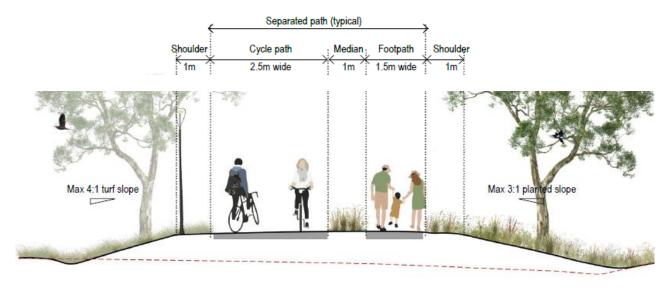


Figure 1: Typical cross section of the separated walking and cycling paths to be constructed for the ATC, showing the 1m median and shoulders (Source: TfNSW)

The walking and cycling routes aim to be delightful, lined with trees to provide shade, and peppered with benches, water fountains, and bike racks. Artworks and memories of indigenous and colonial heritage will be incorporated to emphasise the sense of place and reflect the character of the locality.

Four new bridges form part of the ATC – an elegant new active transport bridge over President Avenue and 3 lightweight, low bridges over waterways. Chapter 9 of the UDLP show clear intent to achieve exceptional

design quality for the bridges and boardwalks: "Bridges and boardwalks have been designed as a consistent family of forms, detailing, materials and finishes, and where appropriate, be individually distinctive to act as visual markers and reflect their location. The major structural elements, which include abutments, balusters, fences, anti-throw screens and road furniture, form an integrated suite of urban design elements that will remain timeless, contemporary and visually appealing in the landscape".

However, we urge TfNSW to maintain a close eye on the development of the construction drawings. The devil is in the detail. Please don't cut corners with elements that people come into contact with.

Signage, wayfinding and pavement treatments are appropriate and comply with Bayside standards. Wayfinding supports visitors by clearly articulating and communicating the most efficient and safest route. Signage style for wayfinding should be consistent throughout the project corridor and beyond, and reflect the diversity of the community. Figure 2 shows a great example from the UK!



Figure 2: Fabulous graphics by advocacy group Walk Ride Bath that celebrate the diversity of people cycling (Source: Wheel for Wellbeing)

Our concerns

Concerns relating to the regional network

The footprint of the M6 Stage 1 project extends to the junction with the M8 Motorway at Arncliffe (Figure 3). However, cycling facilities (shown in pink) are only provided south of Bestic Street.

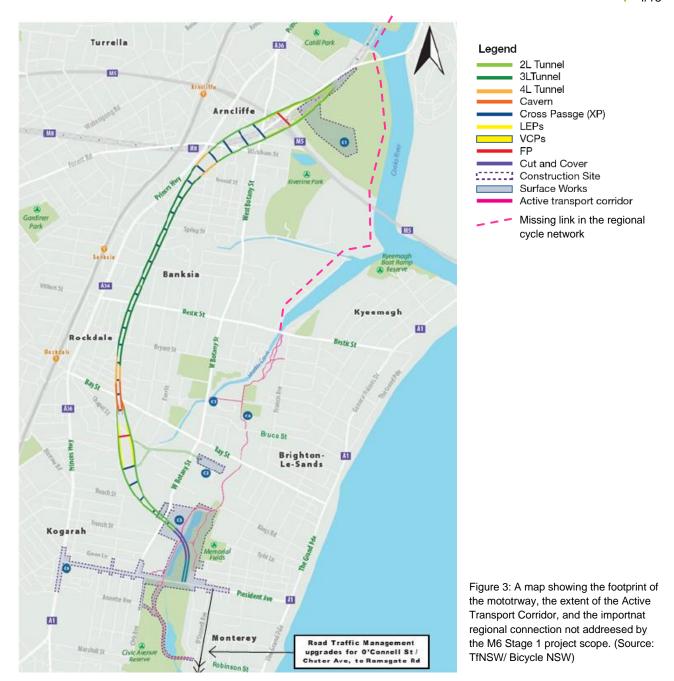
The ATC as proposed may meet the requirements of the Minister's Conditions of Consent but the facilities do not meet the aspirations of strategic planning documents and new NSW Government policies, in particular the <u>Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001</u> which requires every transport project funded by Transport for NSW to include provision for walking and cycling. The policy applies to anyone planning, designing, delivering, building or managing a transport project or asset for, or on behalf of, Transport for NSW.

A review of the of the contribution of the ATC to the regional bicycle network is missing from the UDLP. The ambition of the project to provide the highest-quality road connections should be applied to the cycling facilities. TfNSW wouldn't build a new road and not connect it to the network.

A critical connection to the new Active Transport Link delivered by the Sydney Gateway project has not been included. The NSW Government has so far ignored the opportunity for M6 Stage 1 to deliver a new bridge across the Cooks River to provide a safe alternative to the inadequate, sub-standard Giovanni Brunetti bridge.

Nor has any requirement been placed on the project to improve the indirect dogleg shared path that currently links Wolli Creek to Kyeemagh.

The disconnection to the greater emerging regional network undermines the economic benefits of the ATC delivered by M6.



Concerns specific to the ATC as proposed

- The generous separated paths are not planned for the full length of the ATC. 3.0m shared paths are proposed for several sections (marked in yellow on the plan in Figure 4). This is disappointing. There is likely to be conflict between faster and slower cyclists, and between cyclists and pedestrians, and this will worsen as population increases.
- Plans for the ATC do not currently incorporate a stub to ensure easy future connections to the south towards Captain Cook Bridge to complete an important Green Grid project. We assume that Stage 2 of the motorway will follow in the near future.

- Despite promise to "limit discontinuities" there are several road crossings where cyclists are expected to dismount. The ATC is broken at both Bay Steet and Bruce Street. This is not acceptable for an important regional cycling route.
- Traffic calming is planned for O'Connell Street/Chuter Avenue and Civic Avenue/Marshall Street.
 However, there is no wider ambition to lower speed limits and reduce traffic volumes on residential
 streets and village centres throughout the project footprint to create a network of local cycling facilities.
 The convenience of drivers is not being impacted.
- The new shared paths to either side of President Avenue only extend from Civic Avenue to O'Connell Street – not to the beach or town centres. The ATC doesn't maximise opportunities to feed into a local cycling network. This is despite the UDLP stating: "Our aim is to connect people and places across suburbs with new footpaths and cycleways".

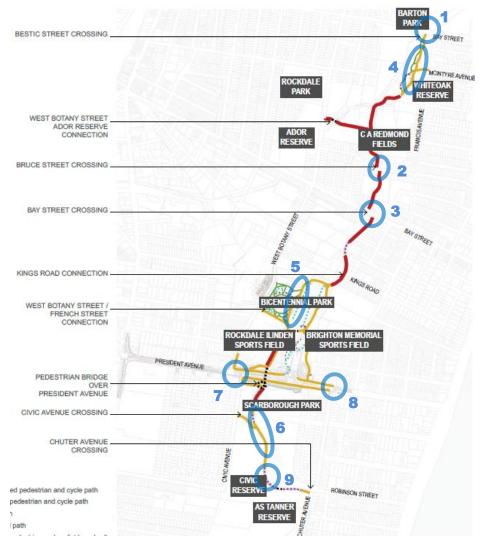


Figure 4: Plan of the proposed ATC showing areas of concern (Source: TfNSW/ Bicycle NSW)

- Separated pedestrian and cycle path
 Shared pedestrian and cycle path
 Footpath
 Informal path
 Shared pedestrian and cyclist boardwalk
 Shared pedestrian and cyclist bridge
 Maintenance path
- Areas of concern:
- 1, 2, 3 Road crossings that do not prioritise people riding bikes
- **4, 5, 6** Sections of the ATC where a 3.0m shared path is proposed rather than a best-practice 5m+ paths that separates people walking and cycling
- 7, 8 Limited lend new shared paths on Presidents Avenue do not link the ATC to the foreshore or Kogarah
- The design does not allow for the future extension of the ATC south through the green corridor to Captains Cook Bridge and Sutherland

Recommendations

• Leverage the investment in the M6 Stage 1 to deliver a safe, off-road active transport link from Kogarah to the new Alexandra Canal cycleway.

The need to develop a strong and continuous north-south route is highlighted in a suite of strategic plans. Of particular note:

The Eastern Harbour City Strategic Cycleway Corridors iii was released under the direction of Minister Stokes is in April 2022. 30 strategic corridors have been identified for eastern Sydney, making up approximately 250km of cycle network (Figure 5). The corridors will connect key centres and form the backbone of the Principal Bicycle Network. Exact routes will be subject to detailed design and collaboration with councils and the community. The M6 Stage 1 ATC is a crucial opportunity to complete the Brighton-le-Sands to Tempe corridor.

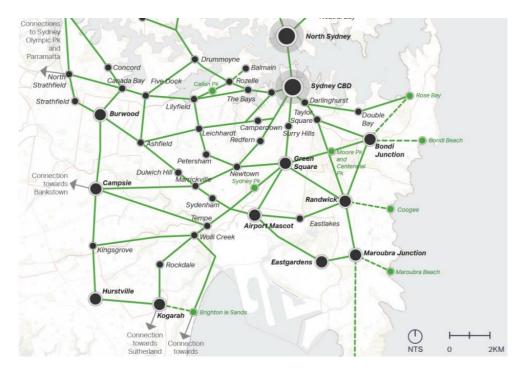


Figure 5: Extract from the new Strategic Cycleway Corridors network for the Eastern Harbour City (Source: TfNSW)

The <u>Sydney Green Grid</u>iv, 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 Green Grid creates important links between activity centres and support active recreation. The project opportunities for the Bayside area are shown in the extract from the Green Grid in Figure 6. The long-term vision of extending the Cooks River Open Space Corridor to Kyeemagh and developing the Rockdale Wetlands Open Space Corridor is established by the Green Grid.



Figure 6: Extract from the Green Grid showing project opportunities in the Bayside area (Source: Tyrrell Studio / NSW Government Architect)

Priority project opportunities:

- 6. The Cooks River Open Space Corridor
- 8. Mill Stream and Botany Open Space Corridor
- 9. Alexandra Canal
- 11. Rockdale Wetlands Open Space Corridor
- 12. Wolli Creek Regional Park and Bardwell Valley Parklands
- 26. Joseph Banks Reserve and Foreshore Drive
- 38. Airport to Bourke Street Active Travel Link

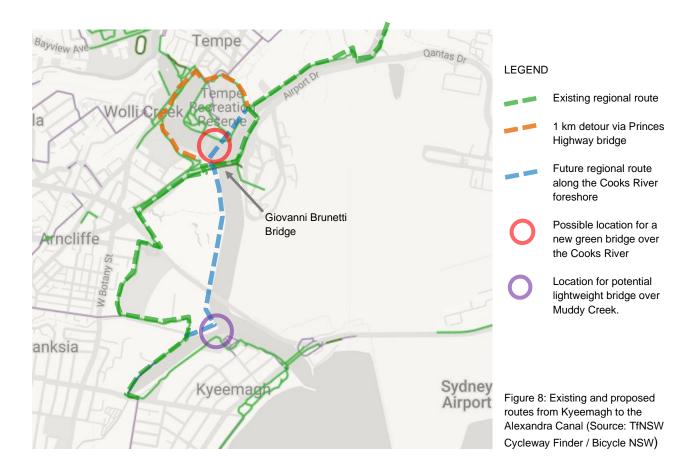
The <u>Sydney Gateway Active Transport Strategy</u> was finalised at the end of 2022. Several priority connections to the airport (Figure 7) are discussed and analysed. Two options are put forward for locating a new Cooks River bridge for pedestrians and bike riders.



Figure 7: Sydney Gateway active transport network opportunity map (Source: TfNSW)

We join with other advocates to call for the critical element of this regional connection, a new green walking and cycling bridge over the Cooks River, to be included in the scope of the project.

Currently, cyclists and pedestrians need to use the Giovanni Brunetti Bridge. The existing footpath across the bridge is very narrow and close to three lanes of often fast-moving traffic in each direction. It is unsafe and not suitable for a regional route. An alternative is to cross at the Princes Highway Bridge which has a reasonable shared path. However, this route involves a 1 km detour (Figure 8).



Further feasibility studies will be needed to determine exactly where the bridge should go. It could be located just north or south of Giovanni Brunetti Bridge, providing a direct connection to the International Airport terminal, or link straight to Tempe Reserve – noting that this would involve a detour reach the International Airport and may impact Cahill Park in Wolli Creek.

South of the Cooks River, there are two possible routes.

The Cooks Cove development of Kogarah Gold Club as a mixed-use business, recreation and residential precinct will be on exhibition soon. A 20m foreshore easement promises to deliver an amazing direct and scenic route for bike riders and walkers in the medium term. It is hoped that a new lightweight bridge will be constructed at the top of Muddy Creek to allow direct access to the scenic Muddy Creek and Kyeemagh foreshores.

In the short term, Bicycle NSW would like to see upgrades to the existing Marsh Street to Bestic St shared path. This path was provided as part of the M5 project in 1998 and needs resurfacing and other improvements. We understand that Bayside has initiated some projects but assistance from the M6 Stage 1 project would be much valued.

Provide separated paths for the full length of the ATC

The sections of shown in red on Figure 4 promise to deliver a world-class active facility. A wide path, with a landscaped buffer or clear delineation to separate people walking and cycling, should be extended through as much of the corridor as possible.

This includes the sections from Bestic Street through Whiteoak Reserve to the proposed separated facilities starting near the CA Redmond Fields, the western half of the path loop proposed in Bicentennial Park and the path between the southern end of the President Avenue bridge and intersection with the future path heading south. The locations are marked on the map as 4, 5, and 6 in Figure 4.

It is particularly important to widen shared path sections at points of interest or viewpoints, where people may stop and linger, and where the path curves.

A suitable connection must be provided in Civic Avenue Reserve (exact location to be determined) for the junction with a future southern extension of the ATC via parks, open space and paths to Sutherland Shire via the Captain Cook Bridge.

Note that Bayside Council is adopting a colour-coding standard to clarify how active transport paths should be used and reduce conflict between different users. We recommend using colour at the entrances to each path - green for cyclist only, yellow for pedestrians only and blue for shared paths.

Ensure that all roads can be crossed without dismounting

The PCIP has a table setting out the proposals for each crossing (Figure 9). Bicycle NSW understands that changes have since been made in consultation with Bayside Council. We support the following improvements to the proposed crossings:

Bestic Street – a raised pedestrian and cycle 'wombat' crossing in location agreed with Bayside Council to support access to the regional cycleway through Barton Park as a well as the Muddy Creek parklands. Kerb extensions will be constructed to narrow the crossing distance and further lower vehicle speeds.

Bruce Street - a raised pedestrian and cycle 'wombat' crossing. If necessary, parking spaces must be removed to provide an appropriate crossing for a regional cycle route.

Bay Steet – the signalised crossing is needed due to higher traffic volumes. Again, kerb extensions are recommended to narrow the crossing distance and reduce vehicle speeds.

- Grade separated crossing
 - President Ave
- At-grade controlled crossings signalised combined pedestrian / bicycle crossing
 - Bay St
 - West Botany St
- pedestrian crossings ('cyclists must dismount')
 - Bruce St constrained location
- Civic Ave (at Annette Ave)*
- O'Connell St Chuter Ave (at Robinson St)**
- At-grade uncontrolled crossings (2m pedestrian refuge)

Figure 9: a summary of Table B-5 from the PCIP setting out crossing treatments. This table should be updated to reflect changes agreed with Bayside Council (Source: TfNSW)

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 council strategies, small delays to vehicle traffic should never prevent the delivery of safer, more efficient and more attractive active transport infrastructure.

Additional features that will further prioritise pedestrians and cyclists at intersections include instant green on demand for pedestrians and bicycles at mid-block crossings, induction loop detectors for bicycles/wheelchairs/mobility scooters, fully-accessible push buttons, and longer crossing times so that pedestrians of all ages and abilities have time to cross safely and without stress.

Make every street a cycle street to create a dense network of local active transport routes

It is necessary to develop east-west links from the ATC to the beach, town centres and recreation facilities. Local traffic calming in being planned by Bayside and TfNSW for a handful of streets but it is important to extend this work to all streets.

In 2016 BIKEast prepared the case for *Safe-street Neighbourhoods*^{vi}. This strategic document has been endorsed by Bicycle NSW and outlines ideas to slow traffic on residential streets to provide a convenient network of cycling routes that complement and connect to the priority separated network on key corridors. It is an urban design-based approach to tame the behavior of motorists and make local streets safe for everyone to share and enjoy. The importance of consistently designing streets to prioritise people over cars in accordance with Movement and Place principles is highlighted.

Specific design initiatives include:

- Introduce 30km/h speed limits for residential streets and local high streets
- Implement initiatives to reduce traffic volumes such as street narrowing or closing off some streets (while retaining filtered permeability for people walking or riding bikes)
- Primarily serve residential needs while maintaining essential vehicular access
- Re-landscaping land currently covered in bitumen.

This approach aligns with the quietway or 'bicycle boulevard' treatment outlined in the Cycleway Design Toolbox^{vii} which suggests a range of traffic calming interventions applied to ensure very slow vehicle speeds and low traffic volumes.

An additional tool is allowing **contraflow cycling on one-way streets** to make it easier for people riding to avoid busy roads and use quiet, low-traffic streets. In August 2022 the City of Sydney exhibited <u>a proposal</u> to allow two-way bike traffic on 159 one-way streets. A recent study has shown that contraflow cycling does not increase cyclist crash or casualty rates and that all one-way streets should be evaluated to allow contraflow cycling to improve cycling network connectivity^{viii}.

Calming traffic, lowering speeds and putting people first is fully supported by the <u>Better Streets for New South Wales</u> campaign, launched in November 2022.

Reduce speed limits to 30km/h for all local streets and shopping areas

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^{ix}. The British Medical Journal^x 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^{xi}. 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^{xii}. The UN resolution of August 2020^{xiii} urged all countries to adopt 30 km/h limits in areas where people are walking and playing.

Bicycle NSW agrees with BIKEast that endless trials of 30 km/h zones are unnecessary. There is sufficient evidence from Sydney and overseas that low speed environments improve safety and amenity.

• Ensure that new cycle infrastructure is inclusive

All types of bikes should be accommodated by the cycling infrastructure, including cargo bikes and tricycles. Again, 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^{xiv}

Reimagine Princes Highway and Grand Parade as urban boulevards with separated bicycle paths

It is essential to capitalise on the opening of the M6 by rebalancing surface road space to prioritise active and public transport. A section of the Princes Highway, between Kogarah and Wolli Creek, and Grand Parade, between the Cooks River and President Avenue, must be put on a 'road diet' as soon as the new motorway tunnel is completed.

We urge NSW Government to undertake these projects in collaboration with Bayside Council and adhere to its excellent policies that aim to decarbonise the transport system and improve liveability, such as Future Transport Strategy 2061^{xv}, the Movement and Place framework, and the Road User Space Allocation^{xvi} policy.

The new Transport for NSW Future Transport Strategy^{xvii}, released in 2022, shows clear intent to reconsider road space under direction *E2: Optimise existing infrastructure*. Reconfiguring vehicle and parking lanes to prioritise more efficient vehicles gets more from existing assets. Bicycle and bus lanes will reduce the number of private vehicle trips and improve the liveability and vibrancy of our communities. Such transformations do not only achieve transport objectives – they are significant urban design proposals that deliver quieter, calmer, leafier streets that will benefit every resident and visitor to Bayside.

Similar work is being undertaken by Transport for NSW at Sydney Park Junction. The proposals will see driving lanes reduced from 6 to 4, speed limits lowered to 40km/h. new separated bicycle paths, widened pavements and new landscaping. This project provides exciting evidence that the city can move forward from decades of car domination and sets a precedent for better place outcomes throughout Sydney. Changing the dial on how we measure the success of a movement corridor will have huge implications for reimagining arterial roads.

Bicycle NSW wrote a detailed <u>submission</u> in October 2021 to support the upgrades at Sydney Park Junction. We are currently advocating for the major reconfiguration of Victoria Road and Parramatta Road in the Inner West to take advantage of the WestConnex project's promise to reduce surface traffic volumes.



Recent weekend closures of Bay Street at Brighton have demonstrated the benefits or removing vehicles from activity areas to the community.

Figure 10: Bay Street came alive during a recent Streets for People project run by Bayside Council (Source: Bayside Council)

Conclusion

The M6 Stage 1 project has enormous potential to address the poor active transport infrastructure in Bayside, marred by disjointed shared paths and few best-practice separated cycleways. The active transport mode share lags behind neighbouring LGAs despite Bayside's central location and flat, scenic topography^{xviii}.

Bayside is uniquely placed to connect the Inner West, Sydney Airport, City of Sydney, Randwick, Georges River and Sutherland, and facilitate access for the community to critical strategic centres and opportunities. Provision of a safe, separated, and legible cycling network with high-quality end of trip facilities will help to drive mode shift.

Bayside has a collection of vibrant '15-minute neighbourhoods' where all daily destinations could be accessed by an easy walk or bike ride. 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.

There is clear agreement from all sides of politics that active mobility id essential to enable a healthier, less car-dependent future as Sydney grows. NSW now has a Minister for Active Transport and new impetus to deliver projects for walking and cycling.

Bicycle NSW wishes to stress that this is **the best moment in recent years** for local and State governments to work together to create a truly transformational network for cycling, but there is no time to waste.

We look forward to working with TfNSW to deliver a high-quality regional route ALL the way from Sutherland to the Alexandra Canal and beyond. Please do not hesitate to contact Bicycle NSW for any further assistance required at this stage.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Bickford

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Active Transport Planner Bicycle NSW

P.M. Gean

Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer Bicycle NSW

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