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28th March 2023

Dear Randwick Council,

Re: Maroubra Junction Public Domain Masterplan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft masterplan for Maroubra Junction.

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 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.

Maroubra Junction (Figure 1) epitomises the poor urban design found in many Australian town centres. Incremental planning decisions over several decades to prioritise access by car have created a hostile environment for people walking and cycling. Far too much of road network is dedicated to the movement and storage of private vehicles. The intersections are dangerous, the footpaths are too narrow, the traffic is fast-moving and noisy, and the long distances between crossings encourage pedestrians to take risks.

Bicycle NSW fully supports the aspirations of Randwick City Council to overhaul the degraded public realm at Maroubra Junction. The draft Maroubra Junction Public Domain Masterplan sets out an impressive strategy to revitalise this important urban centre. We commend Council for working with excellent consultants who have developed many best-practice proposals.

The proposals are grounded on excellent analysis of the urban form in Maroubra. It is clear that Council understands how safe streets are at the heart of happy communities. The masterplan includes a clear explanation of the Movement and Place Framework and how the six street typologies provide parameters for determining streetscape enhancements within Maroubra Junction. The plan stresses the importance of providing a range of mobility options for everyone, and consistently designing streets to reprioritise people over cars, with uninterrupted space for walking and cycling.

The street design diagrams and sections demonstrate that Council has embraced the new Future Transport Strategy¹ and its ambition to maximise existing assets by **reallocating road space for walking and cycling**. Vehicle lanes will be removed from Anzac Parade and narrowed on Maroubra Road to allow for new cycleways and wider footpaths. Slip lanes will be closed to create pocket parks and plazas. Reconfiguring streets to reduce the dominance of parked and moving vehicles is essential to make room for human-scaled activity. But such transformations do not only achieve active transport objectives – they are significant urban design proposals that deliver quieter, calmer, leafier streets that benefit every resident and visitor to Maroubra.

Highlights of the masterplan include:

- New bi-directional separated cycleways on Maroubra Road and Anzac Parade. These routes have long been identified as key elements of a much-needed integrated bike network in south-east Sydney. Dedicated facilities are essential in high pedestrian activity areas and provide the safety, connectivity and comfort required to encourage more people to ride.
- High-quality intersection treatments with shared zones, extended kerbs, continuous footpaths
- New plazas at Robey St and Wild St created by the closure of slip lanes from Maroubra Road to Walsh St and Bunnerong Road.
- A new mid-block crossing to improve east-west access across Anzac Parade to Pacific Square.
- Extensive street tree planting to increase canopy cover, increase amenity and reduce urban heat island effect. A variety of hardy native species will be included.
- Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) interventions are integral to the urban design. Features such as new landscaped beds, rain gardens, permeable paving and passive tree watering will sustainably manage water flow and ensure that the town centre will remain resilient and responsive to future climatic conditions.
- Bus stops extended into the kerbside lane to enable 'in-lane' bus stopping. This design solution creates more space in the verge for landscaping, accommodates continuous bicycle paths, space for bike parking, reduces conflict and prioritises bus passengers in general traffic lanes.
- Upgraded urban realm. Artwork, quality paving, benches, bike racks and water fountains will add delight and amenity to daily trips. New trees and landscaping will support traffic calming, reduce urban heat and provide increased habitat.
- Three 'big ideas' for the long term future of Anzac Parade.



Figure 1: Anzac Parade, Maroubra Junction - a multi-lane road slices through the commercial centre, pedestrians are penned into narrow footpaths by fencing so cars can pass unimpeded at dangerous speeds, pedestrian realm is poor and unwelcoming, and there are limited opportunities to cross the road. (Source: Randwick City Council)

We would like to thank BIKEast, an affiliated Bicycle User Group in the Eastern Suburbs, for its contribution to our work. BIKEast members have worked hard over many years to advocate for better conditions for active travel in and around Maroubra. Bicycle NSW aligns with their detailed comments opposing the 2020 project to install fencing in front of Pacific Square. We support BIKEast's [feedback](#) provided to the initial consultation on the masterplan in 2021 which focused on improved placemaking, active transport connectivity, better pedestrian facilities and lower road speeds to improve safety for all road users and especially pedestrians and people riding bicycles.

Bicycle NSW is delighted that many of BIKEast's suggestions are reflected in the draft masterplan.

However, we would like to raise some **concerns**:

- It is not clear how much thought has been given to connecting the new cycleways to the wider network, and creating seamless routes to important destinations such as Maroubra Beach, Kingsford light rail stop and Eastgardens shopping centre.
- It is disappointing that lower speed limits are not front and centre of the plan. The opportunity to reduce lane widths and reduce speeds is mentioned only briefly on page 35. Amazingly, the speed limit was 60km/h through the junction until Dec 2020. It is now 50km/h but this is higher than recommended speed limits for high pedestrian activity area.
- Car parking areas will remain far too dominant on Anzac Parade. The masterplan is obviously very reticent to suggest large-scale changes. Free and abundant parking encourages car use for short local trips. Filling public space with car parking reduces opportunities for creating attractive places for people that are proven to have higher economic and social benefit.

This submission sets out a series of **recommendations** for the further development of the masterplan.

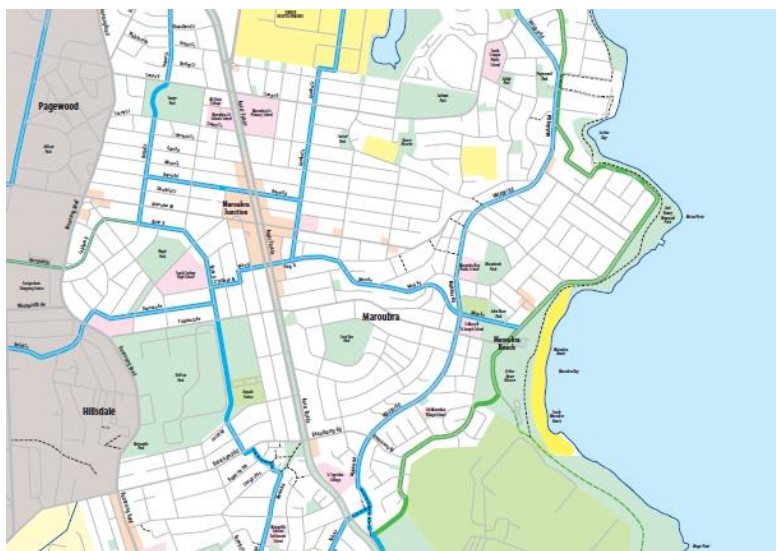
Recommendations

- **Ensure that new cycleways contribute effectively to the emerging regional network in south-east Sydney and connect to important local destinations**

Since 2018, the NSW Government has published a raft of policies and strategies that aim to achieve a much better balance of movement and place with vastly improved facilities for active transport. There is clear agreement from all sides of politics that walking and cycling are essential to enable a healthier, less car-dependent future as Sydney grows.

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.

Bicycle infrastructure has a low cost per km, offers better value than road projects and support Council's financial sustainability. Over 100km of bike paths can be delivered for the cost of 1km of new roadⁱⁱ. Cycleways relieve the intractable deadweight of traffic congestion. In 2019 congestion cost \$19 billion nationwide, estimated to grow to a staggering \$38.9 billion by 2031ⁱⁱⁱ. Whilst it has been known since the 1960s that motorways add to congestion through induced demand^{iv}, bicycle infrastructure can reduce driving. As a benefit-to-cost ratio, bike infrastructure returns between 5:1 \$AUD (Queensland Government study^v) and 13:1 £ (UK Government study^{vi}). Studies have shown that 70% of people in NSW either ride a bike now or would start to ride if they felt safer^{vii}.



The Randwick bike plan was published in 2006 and desperately needs updating. Neither Anzac Parade or Maroubra Road are included in the proposed network (Figure 2). However, a 2008 update located a central north-south route in Anzac Parade median south of Kingsford, establishing a long-term strategic plan for this corridor.

Figure 2: Extract from the 2006 Randwick Bicycle Plan (Source: Randwick City Council)



In 2015, Randwick City Council undertook community consultation to identify 11 routes for priority construction (Figure 3). The Kingsford to Centennial Park link is currently underway. The northern section of the Anzac Bikeway within the Anzac Parade median is the Number 2 priority.

Figure 3: The 11 priority routes identified by Randwick City Council in 2015 following community consultation (Source: Randwick City Council)



In 2022, Transport for NSW released the [Eastern Harbour City Strategic Cycleway Corridors](#)^{viii} (Figure 4). The 30 corridors aim to connect key centres and major points of interest and make up approximately 250 km of cycle network. Exact routes will be subject to detailed design and collaboration with councils and the community.

Figure 4: Extract from the new Strategic Cycleway Corridor network map (Source: TfNSW)

The separated cycleways proposed for Maroubra Road and Anzac Parade will clearly align with the corridors that intersect at Maroubra Junction, reinforcing the strategic need to deliver these routes.

It is essential to consider how these new cycleways will extend east to Maroubra Beach, north to Kingsford light rail, UNSW and Randwick and west to Eastgardens before finalising their design and location within the road corridor. BIKEast provided detailed route suggested to link either end of Maroubra Road with Eastgardens and Malabar Road as part of its December 2021 submission to the [Maroubra Road Corridor Study](#). The future connection south to La Perouse should also be accommodated at an early stage.

The 2006 Bicycle Plan's east-west route from Eastgardens to Maroubra Beach via Paine, Wise and Haig Streets could be reclassified as a local route to provide additional options for bike riders of all ages and abilities.

- **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 (32km/h) 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 (32km/h). 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.

There is sufficient evidence from Sydney and overseas that low speed environments improve safety and amenity. Randwick should follow hot on the heels of Transport for NSW trials in Manly and the Illawarra by reducing the speed limit to 30km/h and/or nominating Maroubra Junction as a High Pedestrian Activity Area with traffic calming.

Another huge benefit of lower speed limits is that vehicle lanes can be narrowed, allowing more road space to be reallocated to wider footpaths and landscaping.

- **Be strong about removing surface parking on Anzac Parade**

Removal of street parking will be necessary in places to create safe raised crossings, wide shared paths and the 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 parking is prioritised over space for people, the whole community suffers.

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^{xiv}. 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^{xv}.

The parking system in Maroubra Junction can cater to the needs of residents, freight delivery, visitors and workers without dominating the urban environment. The parking supply should be reduced in parallel with the development of sustainable access options such as the cycleways and better pedestrian infrastructure. Limited, appropriately-priced parking is a mechanism for discouraging the use of private cars. Parking for bicycles, scooters and car share vehicles must be prioritised over parking for private vehicles.

Remember that the best places always have a parking problem! Council should concentrate on making the best possible use of public space to create a town centre that people will flock to, even if they have to park off-street in a private facility or find a street space a little further away from the shops.

- **Ensure that new cycle infrastructure 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^{xvi}.

- **Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists at all 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 Council 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 should be optimised with the following features:

- Instant green on demand for pedestrians and bicycles at mid-block crossings, with induction loop detectors for bicycles/wheelchairs/mobility scooters and fully accessible push buttons.
- 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 will slow cars and improve safety.
- Bicycle paths must continue across the raised and signalised crossings so people riding bikes are not required to dismount.

- **Keep the pipeline of shovel-ready active transport projects stoked**

Cycleways and new footpath infrastructure represent a substantial investment. It is much easier to apply for funding and secure grants for projects if detailed design and community engagement is complete.

As discussed, projects to reconfigure streets are not just about cycling. Council must factor in health, wellbeing, reduced trauma, reduced noise and increased tree canopy when assessing business cases and applying for grants.

Note that strategic cycleway routes should get funding from TfNSW while local routes rely more on Council funding.

Some final recommendations to inform the revitalisation of Maroubra Junction:

- Bring forward the delivery of the new midblock crossing close to Pacific Square. This should be a short-term, not medium-term, project. The Oasis project to refurbish the adjacent Maroubra Junction Reserve is now underway. The reserve will need to be extended to create an additional plaza area that links the two new pedestrian crossings of Anzac Parade. It makes sense to do this at the same time at the Oasis works! In addition, please remove the fencing installed in 2020. The new crossings and a lower speed limit will be much more effective in keeping pedestrians safe.
- Communicate proposed changes to residents in terms of road safety, children's independence, traffic calming, noise reduction, business improvement and environmental amenity enhancements. Avoid focusing on what bike riders or pedestrians gain, or highlighting the number of car parking spaces lost.
- Establish a regular programme of proactive community initiatives. Randwick Council can mobilise its artistic capital to create inclusive, fun street activations that connect people and places whilst leaving out the cars. Not only does this stimulate street business and assist with post-COVID recovery through concentration of human-paced traffic; it also warms the community to the significant social and retail benefits of walkable, liveable streets.
- Provide additional bike parking and end-of-trip facilities, alongside an updated development control plan that sets minimum standards for cycle storage in new residential, community and commercial projects. Transport for NSW provides extensive guidelines regarding for bike parking provision and the benefits it

provides to businesses, improvements to the transport network, reduced reliance on commercial car parking and opportunities for placemaking.

- Ensure that cycleways integrate with bus stops and light rail stations, delivering a multi-modal transport network that unlocks car-free mobility across the entire city
- Construct all cycleways to current best practice in alignment with the new Cycleway Design Toolbox^{xvii} and the 2017 Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17).
- Develop a range of educational initiatives to help residents build cycling skills and confidence, understand the network as it is delivered, and share the road more safety, whether walking, rolling or driving.
- Support Council staff, local businesses, school children, women and families to ride and walk with e-bike and cargo bike trials, bike buses and community events that celebrate cycling.
- Install much-improved signage and wayfinding to clarify routes through the LGA with graphics that celebrate the diverse community of people who wheel and walk in Randwick.

Conclusion

The plans to revitalise the public domain at Maroubra Junction are ambitious but very necessary. The time to start is now. Randwick City Council must be very bold to turn around decades of inertia that have left Maroubra with poor pedestrian realm, traffic-dominated streets and no best-practice separated bicycle paths.

Bicycle NSW agrees that the focus should be on delivering the short- and medium-term initiatives. However, we look forward to more engagement on the bigger picture projects for Anzac Parade presented as the Big Ideas. Based on the concept sketches, the 'Promenade' is our preferred option. We don't support the 'Lid' as it facilitates increased vehicle movement along the corridor, unhindered by signals or pedestrians, at a time when urban planning and policy must urgently reduce vehicle use.

We look forward to working with Randwick City Council to progress the delivery of its integrated cycle network in conjunction with the public domain masterplan. 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.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

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Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

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- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/urban-transport-crowding-and-congestion>
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- ^v <https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Travel-and-transport/Cycling/Cycling-investment-in-Queensland>
- ^{vi} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509587/value-of-cycling.pdf
- ^{vii} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509587/value-of-cycling.pdf
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