

Frances Hamilton
Senior Landscape Architect
Cumberland City Council
PO Box 42
Merrylands NSW 2160

5th April 2023

Email: Frances.Hamilton@cumberland.nsw.gov.au

Dear Frances,

Re: Lidcombe Public Domain Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Cumberland City Council's plans to revitalise Lidcombe town centre.

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 works closely with CAMWEST, an affiliated Bicycle User Group in Western Sydney. CAMWEST members have worked hard over many years to advocate for better facilities for active travel in and around Cumberland. We are very grateful for their detailed knowledge of local conditions and their enormous contribution to bicycle advocacy.

Bicycle NSW fully aligns with CAMWEST's submission on the Lidcombe Public Domain Plan which is available to read [here](#).

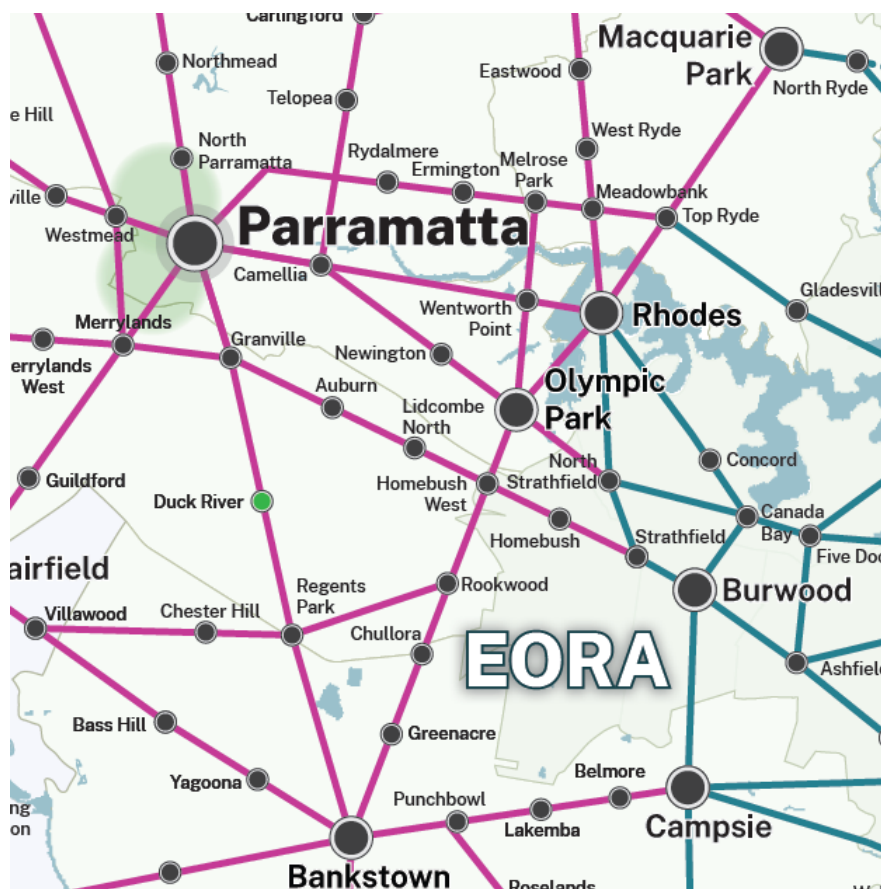
As demonstrated by CAMWEST, Lidcombe town centre is an important junction within the regional cycling network as it provides an opportunity to cross the rail corridor. However, the three options for traversing the tracks on foot or by bike are very poor, particularly for those who are not 'fit and fearless'. The rail corridor has long been a major barrier to movement in the area, dividing the community both physically and psychologically, and limiting any significant mode shift to walking and cycling in the community.

It is very important that future plans for the town centre include the widening or reconfiguration of the road bridge over the rail lines.

Safer walking and cycling facilities would support local journeys to work, school, shops and public transport, as well as longer trips for commuting and recreation.

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. 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.



New impetus to develop top-quality regional connections came with the recent release of the Central River City Strategic Cycleway Corridorsⁱ (Figure 1).

The importance of the east-west route aligned with the rail corridor is highlighted. The Pepita Trail will provide a route north to Olympic Park (shown via Homebush West). Making connections across the rail lines south to Rockwood and Chullora is clearly a priority going forward.

Figure 1: Extract from the new Strategic Cycleway Corridor network map (Source: TfNSW)

In addition, Bicycle NSW supports CAMWEST's advocacy regarding issues such as maintenance, poor path quality, and the need for new crossings and connections that would join up existing shared path infrastructure across the 4 precincts to create a much more useful walking and cycling network for residents of all ages and abilities.

Further recommendations:

- **Future proof the active transport network**

It is important to future proof shared paths and cycleways by allowing for increased demand at the outset. It is important that faster cyclists can overtake and that pedestrian comfort is never compromised. **A minimum width of 3m** should be achieved at all times with extra width considered where volumes of people walking and cycling may be highⁱⁱ. In busy areas, or on steeper sections, paths should be wide enough to provide separate space for pedestrians.

Bicycle NSW recommends referring to the new Cycleway Design Toolboxⁱⁱⁱ and the 2017 Austroads Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17) to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice.

- **Ensure that new cycle infrastructure is inclusive**

The Bicycle NSW *Build it for Everyone* policy pillar^{iv} sets a standard that bicycle infrastructure should be fit for eight-year-old children or elders to ride on.

The shared paths and cycleways must accommodate a range of mobility options such as cargo bikes and disability scooters. Cargo bikes will increasingly be used for deliveries and have potential to play a huge 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 to enable 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^v. Adequate path width is key, and it is important to consider turning radius, dropped kerbs and ramps and the design of modal filters to ensure that non-standard bikes not excluded from the network.

- **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^{vi}. The British Medical Journal^{vii} 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^{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.

There is sufficient evidence from Sydney and overseas that low speed environments improve safety and amenity. Cumberland 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 Lidcombe 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 in Lidcombe**

Removal of street parking will be necessary in places to create safe raised crossings, wide shared paths and new cycling infrastructure. Council must be strong when faced with local 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^{xi}. 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^{xii}.

The parking system in Lidcombe 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.

- **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.

Conclusion:

Safe infrastructure to support walking and cycling will benefit everyone in the community, reducing congestion, noise and pollution while improving public health and providing more equitable access to employment, businesses, services and public transport. Cycleways offer the greatest mode-shift potential when riders are able to connect their whole journey safely. The City of Parramatta and City of Sydney have demonstrated that safe, well-connected cycleways induce more people to travel actively^{xiii}.

Bicycle NSW looks forward to working with Cumberland Council and other stakeholders to progress important connections in Lidcombe. Please reach out to Bicycle NSW and CAMWEST with any questions or help needed. If requested, we would be delighted to assist with advocating for cycling infrastructure in the LGA through our connections with politicians, Transport for NSW and neighbouring metropolitan councils.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

-
- ⁱ Transport for NSW. 2023, February. Central River City Strategic Cycleway Corridors. <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/Strategic-cycleway-corridors-Central-River-City-overview.pdf>
- ⁱⁱ Austroads, 2021. Guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling AGRD06A-17. <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-design/agrd06a/design-criteria/width-of-paths/shared-paths>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Cycleway Design Toolbox: designing for cycling and micromobility. Transport for NSW. <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/Cycleway-Design-Toolbox-Web.pdf>
- ^{iv} Bicycle NSW (2018) Our Policy, [online as at 24/2/2021] <https://bicyclensw.org.au/our-policy/>
- ^v 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
- ^{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} Sorrel, C. 2017, February. *Why Local Businesses Shouldn't Worry About Eliminating On-Street Parking. Fast Company.*
- ^{xii} Transport for London. Walking and Cycling: the Economic Benefits. <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/walking-cycling-economic-benefits-summary-pack.pdf>
- ^{xiii} City of Sydney. Active Transport Survey 2021. <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/-/media/corporate/files/publications/surveys-case-studies-reports/city-of-sydney-active-transport-survey-2021-report.pdf?download=true>