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11th April 2023

Dear Mosman Council,

Re: Draft Mosman Walking and Cycling Strategy 2022-2027

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft version of the new Mosman Walking and Cycling Strategy (WCS).

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 draft Walking and Cycling Strategy provides a **useful first step** for the development of safe active transport facilities to achieve the vision of "*Healthy people, Connected village, Happy planet*"

The Strategy recognises that it is essential to prioritise active transport over driving. It focuses on some short-term, cost effective interventions that will benefit all user groups, including drivers. A key direction is to begin the process of reducing speed limits - a simple change that improves amenity, creates safer streets and encourages walking and cycling.

We are heartened by the attention given to walking infrastructure around schools, aged care facilities and village shopping centres. Every trip involves a walk! New pedestrian crossings, greater pedestrian priority at intersections, continuous raised footpaths across minor intersections, footpath upgrades with pram ramps, landscaping and seating, and new trees will help people of all ages and abilities navigate Mosman on foot.

It is good to learn that Mosman Council will strengthen the active transport elements of local and strategic plans. It is essential that development controls deliver bike parking, travel plans and through site links, and that developments contribute to a renewed public realm that improves walking and cycling facilities.

However, Bicycle NSW is concerned that the Mosman Walking and Cycling Strategy lacks ambition to supercharge the delivery of new and improved active transport facilities.

There are no specific goals for additional cycling infrastructure. There are no plans showing proposed improvements to the on-road network, or identifying gaps. It is almost comical that the only new bicycle facility infrastructure discussed in the Strategy is a bike rail added to stairs in Almora Street.

A connected off-road network is apparently a long-term goal for Mosman, but this Strategy only tentatively suggests commencing groundwork to establish a plan for a conceptual 'Easy Rider' network. Mosman is years behind other metropolitan councils in planning and delivering a separated walking and cycling network.

Although we recognise the difficulties of finding space for active transport infrastructure in a constrained and car-centric area, the Strategy does not attempt to reframe the conversation about use of the street space with the community. Mosman Council is obviously terrified about backlash from drivers. Promises to retain parking and access by vehicles are peppered throughout the document.

The Strategy does not consider recent NSW Government plans, strategies and policies that aim to quickly expand active transport infrastructure and rebalance road space. In particular, there is no mention of the **strategic cycleway corridor** that has been identified to connect the Spit Bridge with Neutral Bay via Mosman.

New 40 km/h speed limits are suggested for 8 streets only. This is very timid when other councils, such as Inner West and City of Sydney, are rolling out blanket 40 km/h limits. Global best practice is to move quickly toward 30 km/h limits for residential streets, school zones and town centres.

This submission sets out a series of recommendations for next iteration of Mosman's Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Opportunities:

Mosman Council can finally prioritise safe infrastructure for walking and cycling, emboldened by a raft of NSW Government 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.

The Walking and Cycling Strategy (WCS) 2022-2027 builds on the Mosman Bicycle Strategy, first prepared in 2005 and updated in 2014. The draft Strategy is supported by the Community Strategic Plan, Mosplan 2018-2028, and the Local Strategic Planning Statement, Enhancing Mosman. Both contain a clear commitment to people-first planning, sustainability, liveability and equity. These are significant planning documents that were developed in close consultation with the community and approved by elected councillors. **Thus Mosman Council has been endorsed to deliver a transport network that supports a healthy, sustainable and connected community and makes walking or cycling the most convenient option for short, everyday trips.**

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 roadⁱ. 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 2031ⁱⁱ. Whilst it has been known since the 1960s that motorways add to congestion through induced demandⁱⁱⁱ, bicycle infrastructure can reduce driving. As a benefit-to-cost ratio, bike infrastructure returns between 5:1 \$AUD (Queensland Government study^{iv}) and 13:1 £ (UK Government study^v). Studies have shown that 70% of people in NSW either ride a bike now or would start to ride if they felt safer^{vi}.

Mosman is a vibrant '15-minute neighbourhood' 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. The major corridors are crowded with cars, buses and trucks and there is little decent cycle or pedestrian infrastructure following years of car- and freight-centric planning. It is time to rebalance Mosman's roads.

In early 2021, Transport for NSW published a ground-breaking policy that requires State projects to prioritise road space for active transport. Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{vii} establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last. Multiple environmental and health benefits will flow from increased walking, cycling and public transport use. The streets will be more equitable for Sydney-siders of all ages, incomes and abilities.

The new Transport for NSW Future Transport Strategy^{viii}, released in 2022, shows clear intent to reconsider road space under direction *E2: Optimise existing infrastructure*. An excellent diagram (Figure 1) shows how 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.

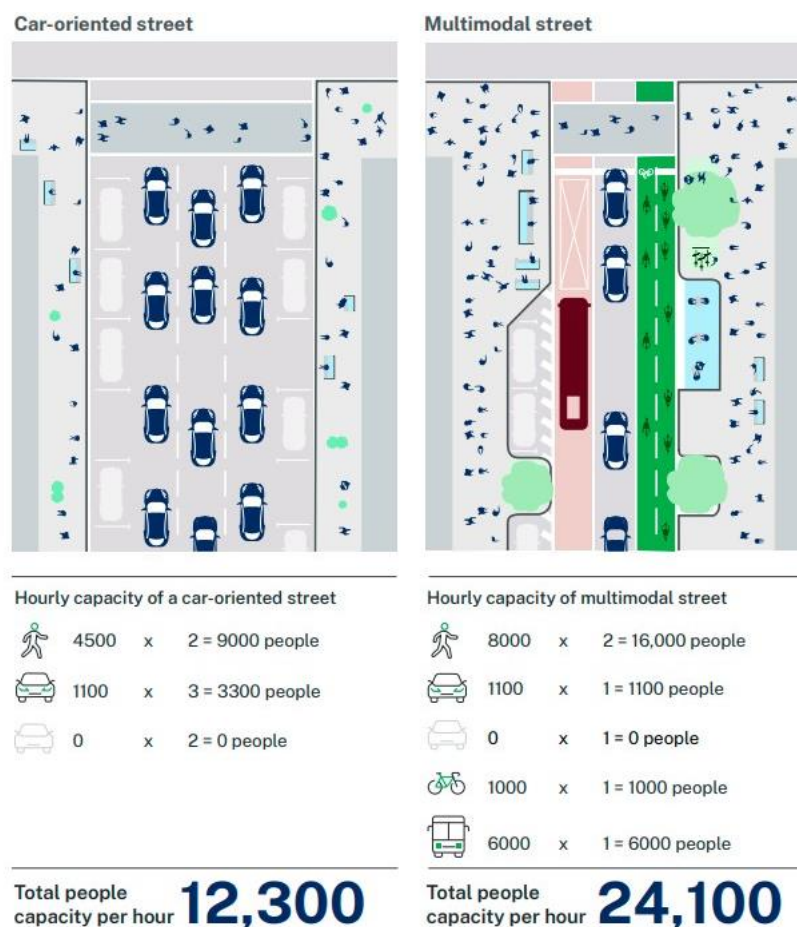


Figure 1: A key diagram from the new Future Transport Strategy that explicitly supports the reallocation of road space, comparing the total number of people moved per hour in the same amount of space on a car-oriented street and a multimodal street (Source: TfNSW)

Projects to reconfigure streets are not just about cycling. They are significant urban design proposals with a vision to deliver quieter, calmer, leafier streets that benefit everyone. Council can factor in health, wellbeing, reduced trauma, reduced noise and increased tree canopy when assessing business cases and applying for grants.

Another exciting document published by Transport for NSW under the direction of the former Minister for Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, is the Eastern Harbour City Strategic Cycleway Corridors^{ix}. 30 strategic corridors have been identified for eastern Sydney, making up approximately 250 km of cycle network (Figure 2). The Eastern Harbour City was the first of the 6 cities of the newly-defined sandstone megaregion to receive a cycleway corridors plan in April 2022.

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. However, the Minister's team has stated that the cycleways should be mostly planned on reallocated vehicle lanes on State roads to streamline and accelerate delivery^x.

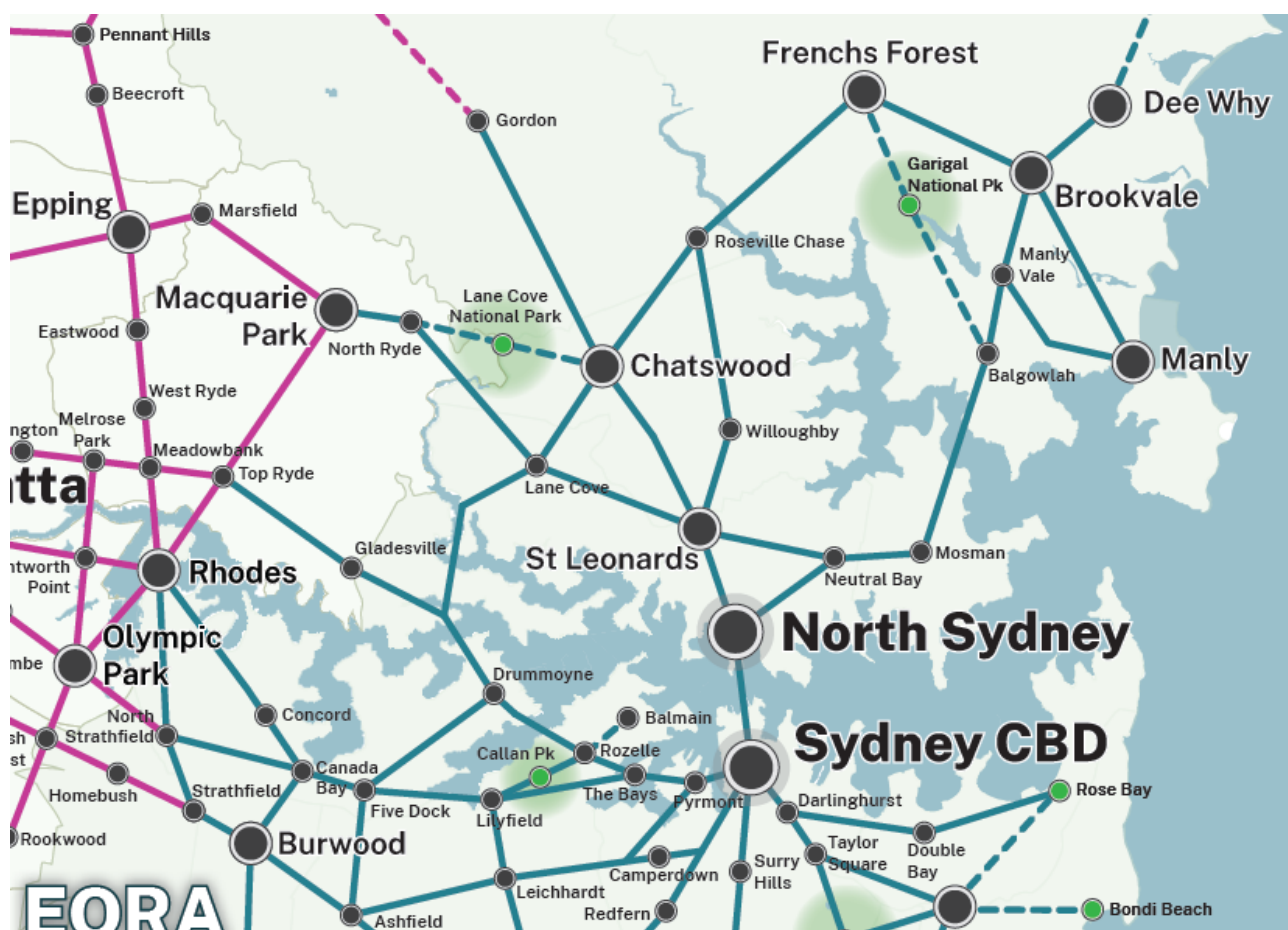


Figure 2: Extract from the new Strategic Cycleway Corridors network for the Eastern Harbour City highlighting the key corridor that needs to be delivered from Balgowlah to Neutral Bay via Mosman (Source: TfNSW)

Recommendations

- **Include targets for new infrastructure and cycling mode share**

A vague hope to increase active and public transport mode share is not enough. As population grows, a substantial reduction in vehicle trips per person will be needed to ensure that Sydney remains liveable. Please research best-practice mode shift ambitions from comparable urban area across Australia and overseas and set numerical targets to work towards. For example, Waverley has high levels of bike riding accounting for nearly 5% of all trips, double the Sydney average^{xi}. Mosman should aspire to similar levels.

The expansion of active transport infrastructure should also be set against a target for new kilometres delivered so that Council can work with a clear mandate from the community and report on progress. Build good infrastructure and people will quickly start to cycle more.

- **Develop a clear map for the proposed and existing active transport network**

The cycling network map in the draft Strategy shows the existing network and does not show future intentions to upgrade cycleways or implement new facilities. This does not create confidence that there is an agreed plan for Mosman to work towards.

We understand that it is best to avoid committing to routes in too much detail in a high-level guidance document that will form the basis of decision-making over several years. Instead, Mosman Council should investigate a dynamic [online mapping system](#) such as the one embedded in the Northern Beaches Bike Plan 2020^{xii}. The location and treatment of each element of a cycleway can be described and updated quickly as projects evolve.

- **Plan to deliver the Balgowlah – Mosman – Neutral Bay strategic cycleway corridor**

This important regional route must be embedded in the Walking and Cycling Strategy. The NSW Government has provided a mandate to deliver a wide, safe and comfortable bicycle path between the Spit Bridge and Neutral Bay. There are several options to achieve a clear and legible cycleway and work must begin to determine the optimal route.

The existing back street routes to the north or south of Military Road could form the basis of cycleway corridor. To ensure that the route is suitable for bike riders of all ages and abilities, safety must be improved through intersection treatments, low speed limits and physical filtering to reduce traffic volumes. Sections of separated bicycle path would be needed on busier roads, and new signage would clearly indicate the route and its regional significance.

However, Military Road follows the ridge line and provides the most level and direct route. Reallocating road space for a protected bicycle path along Military Road, as well as wider footpaths and more trees, would not only provide the optimal cycling route connecting shops, services, bus stops and schools; it would also deliver a vastly better urban environment that will allow Mosman to thrive in the future.

Planning Priority 10 of Enhancing Mosman, the 2018 LSPS, highlights the need to re-imagine Military Road to improve amenity and access. Although the Beaches Link tunnel was expected to reduce traffic and facilitate changes to the corridor, its cancellation must not prevent the formulation of plans to reconfigure the road. As discussed, Transport for NSW clearly sets out in the new Future Transport Strategy that reorganising vehicle and parking lanes to prioritise more efficient modes can increase the capacity of the corridor (refer again to Figure 1) and free up space for a best-practice cycleway.

Similar work is being undertaken by Transport for NSW at Sydney Park Junction. The proposals will see driving lanes reduces 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 [submission](#) to support the upgrades at Sydney Park Junction.



Figure 3: A 2020 vision for a revitalised Military Road, with widened footpaths, new trees and cycleways along both sides (Source: Mosman Council / [Mosman Daily](#))

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

Bicycle NSW supports the Strategy's direction to investigate the feasibility of speed reduction on Mosman local roads. However, council should be looking to 30 km/h limits not 40 km/h and ramping up implementation in the short term. There is sufficient evidence from Sydney and overseas that low speed environments improve both safety and amenity, and encourage more people to walk and cycle.

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

- **Aim to separate bike riders from vehicles and pedestrians on most streets**

The Strategy acknowledges that cycling on roads is a major barrier for a large proportion of would-be cyclists due to both real and perceived safety risks. The future 'Easy Rider' network would primarily consist of separated cycleways and shared paths that enable less confident riders to reach important local destinations such as shops, schools and bus stops.

Bicycle NSW does not generally support shared paths in the road-related environment. There are several reasons why shared paths are not appropriate for important and well-used sections of a cycling network. These include conflict between people walking and cycling, which will get worse as population and active travel increase; the loss of verges, vegetation and, in some instances, mature trees; the uncomfortable pinch points caused by bus stops, power poles and retained trees; and constant interruptions when crossing side streets where vehicles effectively have priority.

Importantly, no attempt is made to change the dial on car use when bicycles are squeezed into pedestrian spaces. By leaving the road between the kerbs as the unchallenged domain of private cars, with wide vehicle lanes and ample parking, car travel is encouraged, unsafe speeds are common and the modal shift needed to meet climate, health and liveability imperatives may not occur.

Segregated bicycle paths are proven to entice new riders of all ages and abilities and have many benefits over shared paths. The narrower vehicle lanes will slow traffic, reducing noise and improving safety for all road users. There is less conflict with pedestrians, verges and street trees can be preserved, and there is less additional asphalt.

Mosman Council must initiate brave discussions with Transport for NSW and the community about reallocating road space from private cars to reflect the priorities set out in the Road User Space Allocation Policy and Council's own policies.

In a recent meeting, the former Minister for Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, stated his preference for properly separated walking and cycling infrastructure^{xviii}. He expressed his strong belief that **the road-related environment is a public asset** that must be shared equitably between all road users. Any increase in inconvenience to car drivers, created by reducing road space for driving and parking private vehicles, will incentivise the mode-shift that Transport for NSW and Council seek. This will benefit local residents with quieter streets, and less pollution, noise and through-traffic.

An alternative to separated bicycle paths, only suitable for quiet residential streets with low traffic volumes, is a shared space 'quietway' treatment where traffic calming interventions ensure very slow vehicle speeds. Most bike riders will feel safe using the vehicle lanes if traffic speeds and volumes are low. This treatment is discussed further in the next section.

It is also recognised that a small percentage of 'strong and fearless' bike riders prefer the direct routes offered by busier roads and are comfortable in traffic. Cycling can be made safer on these roads with reduced speed limits, forward stop lines at intersections, head start green lights, and regular maintenance to ensure smooth surfaces.

Bicycle NSW recommends referring to the Transport for NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox^{xix} and the 2017 Austroads Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17) to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice.

- **Make every street a cycle street**

In 2016 BIKEast prepared the case for *Safe-street Neighbourhoods*^{xx}. 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 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. 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' treatments outlined in the Cycleway Design Toolbox^{xxi} 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 [a proposal](#) 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^{xxii}.

Calming traffic, lowering speeds and putting people first is fully supported by the [Better Streets for New South Wales](#) campaign, launched in November 2022.

- **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^{xxiii}.

- **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.

- **Be strong about removing on-street parking**

Removal of street parking will be necessary in places to create safe raised crossings, landscaped kerb extensions, wide shared paths and separated bicycle paths. Council must be strong when faced with

resident and business opposition. On-street parking is fundamentally the storage of private property in the public domain. It makes driving easier and generates car trips. When on-street parking is prioritised over safe cycling, active transport for the whole community suffers.

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. Membership of car share schemes grows every year, showing a huge appetite for new models of vehicle use^{xxiv}.

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^{xxv}. 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^{xxvi}.

A parking survey can be useful to determine precise usage patterns for on-street parking. With accurate data to reflect on, the community may find it easier to accept the loss of parking to allow the installation of a best-practice bicycle path which benefits the wider community.

- **Use temporary materials to demonstrate best-practice infrastructure**

Bicycle NSW suggests that Mosman Council uses pop-up methods to trial separated cycle paths. Moveable lane barriers can be installed quickly to create stretches of protected path (Figure 9) to show how unfamiliar cycle infrastructure can fit into the street. Ridership can be observed over several months using electronic counters to monitor use, and issues with parking and buses can be resolved before permanent infrastructure is constructed. Once Council has demonstrated demand for safe cycling, permanent changes to kerbs, parking and landscaping can be made when funding allows.



Figure 9: Pop-up infrastructure in Sydney (Source: Bicycle NSW / Randwick Today)

- **Develop Council's storytelling and communications strategies**

Communicate proposed changes to residents in terms of road safety, children's independence, traffic calming, noise reduction, business improvement, environmental amenity improvements. Avoid focusing on what bike riders or pedestrians gain, or highlighting the number of car parking spaces lost. The [Better Streets](#) alliance has resources to help frame projects in a way that will bring everyone on board.

Conclusion

Although the draft Mosman Walking and Cycling Strategy sets out useful directions for the next 5 years, it is too tentative and exposes a great reluctance to disrupt the status quo of car-dominated local transport.

A much more ambitious plan for delivering infrastructure is needed. The time to start is now. Council must be very bold to turn around decades of inaction. Mosman has minimal off-road cycle paths that are safe for riders of all ages and abilities. Provision of a safe, separated, and legible cycling network with high-quality end of trip facilities will help to drive mode shift and ensure that the streets of Mosman do not seize up with congestion as population increases.

As the former Minister for Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, explained in a celebrated speech^{xxvii}, walking and cycling projects that stitch the suburbs together and enable people of all ages and abilities to get around without a car are more sustainable than megaprojects. He stressed that the NSW Government will focus on completing missing links in the active transport network. Such smaller projects have big benefits, and not only for reducing pollution and congestion. Active mobility improves public health, activates high streets, helps build social connections and addresses inequality.

The final Mosman Walking and Cycling Strategy should take a more confident stance about the urgent need to reduce car use. Bring the community on board with a clear explanation of how reducing space for driving and parking will enable much better public spaces, best-practice walking and cycling infrastructure, and many more trees. More images and infographics would contribute to an accessible document that stakeholders will enjoy reading and councillors can proudly refer to. We recommend that Mosman Council takes inspiration from the bike plans or active transport strategies developed by councils such as Northern Beaches, Ryde and Inner West.

Transport for NSW grants programs encourage councils to plan ahead, develop a program of works and consider different funding options for proposed projects. It is clear that Mosman Council understands the need to have 'shovel-ready' projects in the pipeline for when funding becomes available. It is hoped that Mosman will maintain a skilled and well-educated team of planners and engineers to develop a steady stream of projects, endorsed by stakeholders and aligned to an overarching vision. With the support of a new generation of councillors who understand how active travel can decarbonise transport, improve public health and ensure future liveability, the roll-out of a safe, protected active transport network can begin at pace.

We look forward to working with Mosman Council to progress the delivery of walking and cycling facilities. 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

Active Transport Planner
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

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