

Jared Ingham
Oxford Street East Project Team
Integrated Precincts
Transport for NSW

Jared.Ingham2@transport.nsw.gov.au
osecycleway@transport.nsw.gov.au

3rd August 2023

Dear Jared,

Re: Oxford Street East urban renewal plan and cycleway

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further feedback on plans for the urban renewal of Oxford Street East which include a two-way separated cycleway on the south side between Paddington Gates and Flinders Street.

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

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the proposal to construct a high-quality cycleway along this section of Oxford Street as part of the project to renew the public domain.

The Oxford Street East cycleway will complete a vital missing link in Sydney's bike network, connecting the completed Bondi Junction-Centennial Park route with the Oxford St West project that City of Sydney is about to build. Together, these bike lanes will create a continuous separated cycle corridor between Bondi and Sydney CBD.

Removing two traffic lanes on Oxford Street to accommodate a full-width bicycle path with a safe buffer, new trees and generous footpaths will reduce noise and air pollution, and dramatically improve amenity. This will deliver a quieter, calmer, leafier street that benefits every resident, business and visitor in Paddington. Oxford Street could become a 'green gateway' to the city centre and support the culture economy. The revitalisation of Oxford Street is a 'Transformative Project Idea' for the Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 vision of a healthy, inclusive and prosperous cityⁱ.

The proposals also align with Action 3 of the City of Sydney's updated Access Strategy and Action Plan which highlights how "there is too much street space allocated to private vehicles. Oxford Street is up to seven lanes wide.... Crossing opportunities for people walking are infrequent and wait times can be too high.... There is not enough space for people walking or riding bikes, and the street environment is not conducive to cultural activity."ⁱⁱ

This submission extends the feedback Bicycle NSW wrote on the concept designs in February 2023ⁱⁱⁱ.

We thank Transport for NSW, City of Sydney, the NSW Transport Minister Jo Haylen and Alex Greenwich MP for their commitment to this project. We are especially grateful to our affiliated Bicycle User Group (BUG) BIKEast for advice and expertise. Members of BIKEast have made great strides to maintain momentum for this much-needed plan, often in the face of intense opposition.



Figure 1: Let's bring back the Golden Mile! Transport Minister Haylen and Bicycle NSW reimagining a healthier, people-friendly Oxford St (Credit: Jack Begbie)

The Plan

Transport for NSW will undertake the following improvements along Oxford Street East^{iv}:

- Reallocation of two vehicle lanes to create widened footpaths and a two-way cycleway on south side of Oxford Street from Paddington Gates to Taylor Square.
- Three new pedestrian crossings at intersections along Oxford Street (east of Barcom Avenue, east of Greens Road, and Paddington Gates)
- Continuous footpath treatments at the junctions of Oxford Street and unsignalized side streets to prioritise pedestrians.
- Consolidation of eight bus stops to five and creation of island bus stops with at-grade crossings
- Right-hand turn restrictions at South Dowling Street, Greens Road, Oatley Road, Jersey Road and Lang Road to prioritise buses and bike riders.

The strategic need

Bicycle NSW has long advocated for improved walking and cycling amenity along Oxford Street to create a continuous and safe active transport corridor from Bondi Junction to the CBD. The proposed upgrades will support:

Increased rider demand: More than 2000 bikes already use this key regional corridor every day, according to the City of Sydney bike count^v. Oxford Street was identified as a priority route for the regional cycling network decades ago but has been left as a high-traffic on-road route, suitable only for 'strong and fearless' cyclists, for far too long.

Cyclist safety: Our concept stage [submission](#) showed the Centre for Road Safety crash data, highlighting the critical safety need for a cycleway separated from traffic. Only fearless cyclists ride down Oxford Street in open traffic because it is too dangerous. 70% of people say they would ride more with safe infrastructure separated from cars.

Pedestrian safety: Similarly, pedestrians need separation from bikes and the only way to achieve this along Oxford Street is for a continuous separated cycleway on reallocated road space.

Improved air quality and reduced traffic noise: In their letter of support, Doctors for the Environment Australia note the deadly effects of vehicular emissions and the opportunity to improve the urban environment^{vi}.

Improved traffic flow: The reallocation of road space from cars to other modes has been repeatedly proven to reduce traffic congestion. This is because people are offered better, more efficient, cheaper and healthier alternatives^{vii}. When, for example, George Street was pedestrianised, traffic volumes throughout the CBD reduced by 9%^{viii}.

Improved amenity: The current state of Oxford Street with 6-7 noisy traffic lanes renders it a traffic sewer to be avoided. There is no space for outdoor dining. Nor is there an inclination to linger. Also, very importantly, increased urban tree canopy will reduce temperatures at street-level due to hotter weather.

Completion of the network: The Oxford Street East cycleway will fill the missing link between the Bondi Junction and Centennial Park facilities, and the Oxford Street West cycleway (Figure 2).

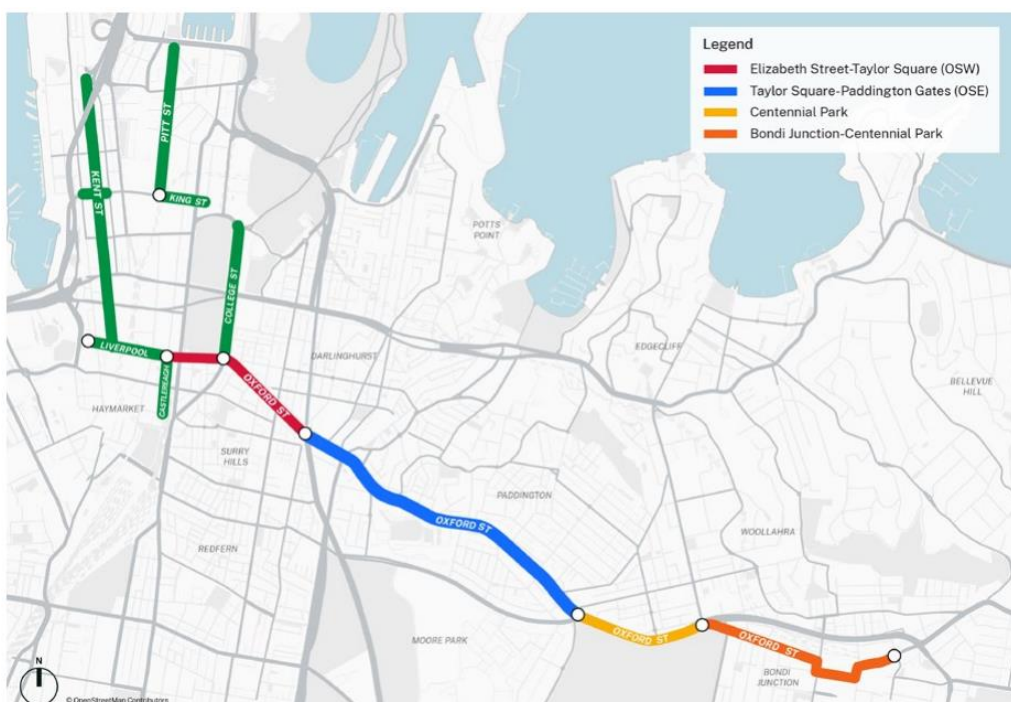


Figure 2:
The blue line: the
Oxford Street East
project from Taylor
Square to Paddington
Gates (TfNSW)

Everyday active trips: This route will service shops, offices, schools and St. Vincent's Hospital - daily destinations for thousands of residents. It will encourage mode shift to active travel at a time when Australian children rank 140th out of 146 nations when assessing the least active children in the world. In addition, 25% of children and 67% of adults are now considered overweight/obese^{ix}.

An inclusive community: A continuous east-west bicycle corridor will encourage potential riders of all ages and abilities, 70% of whom will only ride on safe infrastructure, separated from the road. The Oxford Street cycleway therefore includes bicycle riders of all ages and abilities. Not just athletic, predominantly male commuter cyclists.

A decarbonised transport network: Every state and local government transport strategy prioritises walking and cycling to reduce CO₂ emissions. Reducing road space for cars and increasing active transport infrastructure supports Net Zero goals by encouraging mode shift. Bicycle NSW and stakeholders expect that a renewed Oxford Street East will see a strong uptake in bike riding and a reduction in car travel along Oxford Street.



Figure 4: The artist's impression of the Oxford Street East cycleway, released in June 2023 (Source: TfNSW)



Figure 5: City of Sydney images showing a future vision for Oxford Street (left) and Broadway (right) (Source: City of Sydney)

Bicycle NSW and BIKEast have worked with the community to nurture positive sentiment about the plans. A [petition for a better Oxford Street](#) has attracted 1,500 signatures and hundreds of comments that demonstrate the depth and breadth of enthusiasm for the project. A sample of these comments is attached to the end of this letter.

We will continue to collaborate on engagement activities, and we welcome the project team's advice about how we can most effectively support Transport for NSW to deliver the Oxford Street East urban renewal plans.

Recommendations:

Bicycle NSW reiterates the following recommendations, as set out in our February 2023 submission^{xvi}, for the detailed design process:

- **Uphold the project goal of full separation** of bike riders from both pedestrians and vehicles. It is not best practice to move cyclists to a shared path at intersections. Maintaining level of service for vehicles must no longer justify compromising the amenity, comfort and safety of vulnerable road users.
- **Develop site-specific design solutions for each intersection that ensure the safety of bike riders and pedestrians:** tight turning radii; kerb extensions; well-located angled ramps; refuges for pedestrians and cyclists; continuous footpaths at unsignalised junctions and ramped raised tables at signalised intersections; bicycle paths across all crossings so riders need not dismount.

- **Program light phasing to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists at signalised intersections.** As per previous submission, best practice guidelines recommend no more than a 30 second wait. Crossing times must be generous and push buttons accessible to all users.
- **Include safe waiting areas for turning cyclists.** As previously discussed, cyclist turning bays, waiting platforms and by-pass facilities should be incorporated into busier intersections.
- **Use bus stop ‘islands’** to separate bus passengers from cyclists and allow in-lane stopping which prioritises bus travel. Locate bus stops close to key intersections so the islands can extend to form refuges for pedestrian and cyclists crossing Oxford Street.
- **Reduce speed limits to 30km/h along Oxford Street and adjacent side streets.** This is line with the Vision Zero goals. Please refer to our previous submission discussing 30 km/h implementation and behaviour change strategies. Note that lower speeds will help achieve *Action 13: Reducing the impact of buses* in the City of Sydney’s draft Access Strategy and Action Plan.
- **Retain narrow lanes to reinforce slow driving speeds,** reduce crossing distances and provide additional space for footpaths and public realm upgrades. We do not support widening lanes as this will increase the speed at which vehicles feel comfortable moving through Oxford Street.
- **Widen footpaths on the north side of the street.** The proposal currently allocates the space from two removed vehicle lanes to the cycleway, a wide median and increasing the width of the 4 remaining vehicle lanes. The pedestrian realm on the south side will benefit, separated from traffic by the cycleway and median. However, there is little change for the north side. As discussed, we recommend retaining narrow vehicle lanes to reduce driving speeds. Around 1.2 m can then be allocated to additional footpath space on the north side of the street. This would not necessarily involve rebuilding the kerbs. It could be a demarked zone in different materials that accommodates trees, as well as bins, bike racks, planters and benches, helping to declutter the footpath.
- **Remove slip lanes at junction of Queen Street.** As stated in the Committee for Sydney’s report, *Reclaiming Highstreets^{xvii}*, slip lanes prevent Sydney’s high streets from thriving. They are relics of car-first thinking that take valuable space from the public realm and enable cars to turn at speed, endangering pedestrians.
- **Expand local bike links to the new cycleway** to maximise access from local streets and important destinations. Please consult BIKEast who have detailed knowledge of desire lines and movement patterns in Paddington.
- **Ensure that new cycle and walking infrastructure is totally inclusive** and accommodates all types of bikes and mobility devices, including cargo bikes, tricycles, hand-cycles, recumbents and wheelchair scooters. Consider the width of turning radii, dropped kerbs, ramps and modal filters to ensure that non-standard bikes are not excluded. A comprehensive disability access audit of the detailed plans is required.
- **Create equitable access to the kerb** to allow wheelchairs and delivery trolleys to safely access all destinations. This will include accessible bus platforms, Pick up and Drop Off (PUDO) spaces for passengers and goods, raised sections of the bicycle path in front of key destinations to facilitate crossing of the cycleway, and time-of-day variations to manage kerb space use.

Conclusion

Bicycle NSW wholeheartedly supports the Oxford Street East urban renewal plan and cycleway. It will complete the crucial active transport corridor from Bondi Junction to the CBD, one of Australia’s busiest bike

routes. The project's focus on safety, reduced pollution, improved traffic flow and equity aligns with our mission to create a better environment for all bicycle riders. It also aligns with City of Sydney's vision for a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous city, as well as Transport for NSW's Future Transport Strategy that preferences walking, cycling and public transport. This cycleway will enhance the area's amenity, boost the local economy, and encourage active travel, benefiting residents, businesses, and visitors.

We look forward to opportunities to provide **early feedback on the detailed design**, with a particular focus on key intersections such as the connection across Flinders Street to the Oxford Street West cycleway and the crossing of Moore Park Road by Paddington Gates.

We eagerly anticipate the positive transformation this project will bring to the community.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Francis O'Neill".

Francis O'Neill

Head of Advocacy
Bicycle NSW

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. McLean".

Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

ⁱ<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/sustainable-sydney-2030-2050>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision-setting/your-feedback-updated-access-strategy-action-plan>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://bicyclensw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/230228-Oxford-Street-East-Cycleway-submission.pdf>

^{iv} <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/Oxford%20Street%20East%20Cycleway%20Early%20Feedback%20Report%20-%20June%202023.pdf>

^v <https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/articles/a-new-cycleway-for-oxford-and-liverpool-streets>

^{vi} <https://bicyclensw.org.au/doctors-call-for-oxford-street-renewal/>

^{vii} <https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/the-detail/story/2018897370/why-city-centres-are-going-car-free>

^{viii} <https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/articles/new-plan-advances-the-city-of-sydneys-transport-vision>

^{ix} <https://bicyclensw.org.au/the-time-to-invest-in-walking-and-cycling-is-now/>

^x <https://bicyclensw.org.au/the-rise-and-fall-of-oxford-street/>

^{xi} <https://bicyclensw.org.au/bicycle-infrastructure-is-great-for-business/>

^{xii} <https://www.linkedin.com/company/transformational-urban-mobility-initiative/>

^{xiii} <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/Oxford%20Street%20East%20Cycleway%20Early%20Feedback%20Report%20-%20June%202023.pdf>

^{xiv} <http://landlab.co.nz/k-road>

^{xv} <https://www.metromag.co.nz/city-life/city-life-transport/cycleway-saboteurs>

^{xvi} <https://bicyclensw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/230228-Oxford-Street-East-Cycleway-submission.pdf>

^{xvii} https://sydney.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2020-02-Reclaiming-Sydneys-High-Streets_compressed-1.pdf

Sample comments from <https://www.change.org/p/build-the-oxford-street-east-cycleway>



James Edwards

7 days ago

I avoid riding on Oxford Street because it is currently a hostile environment. This project would change that and make riding from the eastern suburbs far more safe and attractive



Shaun QUIGLEY

16 hours ago

We clearly need to make it safer for people to cycle otherwise we will never reduce congestion. Safe cycleways will allow children and non-traditional cyclists to safely make short trips, reducing the number of vehicles.



Lucie Benz

4 days ago

Oxford Street looks worn and dated and is currently unsafe for cyclists. I'm so excited to see it become more like a European city and to be able to safely commute on my bike to Bondi Junction.



Sandra Orme

1 month ago

More bikes will lessen the parking of cars problem. Cycles & cyclists bring an energy & vibrancy to a place. Please make sure the bikeway is included.



Vivienne Skinner

Jun 26, 2023

I believe a safe, separated cycleway will finally make it possible for everyday people like me to reach the city by bike. I wouldn't dream of it right now.



Dean Ormston

Jun 21, 2023

We absolutely need to move with world's great cities...multi-faceted transport options ...which means direct, logical, safe bike lanes



Michael Mitchell

Jun 21, 2023

We need to make our environment and communities more accessible and enjoyable to the general population, not simply dedicate increasing amounts of space to accommodate more cars.



Luke Poland

Jun 20, 2023

I want to ride safely to visit my Grandfather when I'm in Sydney.



Janne Seletto

Jun 20, 2023

More space for pedestrians & a safe cycle way for bikes will bring joy back to Oxford St. It will focus on humans rather than cars.



phillip balding

Jun 5, 2023

One time I was riding along Oxford st and was nearly killed by a taxi.



Sam Reich

Jun 3, 2023

This is precisely the kind of streetscape transformation we require to begin to improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, enhance safety and increase commercial activity and vibrancy.



Stuart Ecob
Jun 15, 2023

I am just writing to let you know that the proposed Oxford st separated cycleway is a great project that needs to go ahead. I strongly support this separated cycleway.

I have ridden to the eastern suburbs via Oxford st many times over the years and it is quite frankly scary and dangerous at times.

Cycling infrastructure in NSW is terrible. We need good cross city infrastructure to allow us to safely cycle without risk of being hit by cars. I would definitely use this cycleway for trips to Bondi junction on bicycle rather than driving if it was in place.

regards

Stuart Ecob



Chloe Mason
Jun 5, 2023

It's a great opportunity to modernise the public roadway for people riding and walking - and strengthen the network to enable more people to ride more often, more safely. Reducing air pollution, noise. Great for health, safety, and sociability across all generations



Stella McGinn
Jun 2, 2023

I live in Paddington and loved during COVID show safe it was for the family to cycle around the suburb and on Oxford Street. I have stopped cycling on Oxford street because it feels unsafe



Jason Millett
Jun 2, 2023

We need to have a better Oxford St and allow this amazing strip to come back to life!



Clint Yabuka
Jun 2, 2023

this is the logical location for a bike connection from the recently completed Bondi Junction Cycleway. Retailers in Bondi Junction have benefitted from the project with shops on the route performing better than those away from the route.

Vacancy rates for shops on the Bondi Junction Cycleway are lower than the adjacent streets, street upgrades are good for business.

Oxford St has been struggling since the Bondi Junction Westfield and even more with the City Westfield, it is not the mecca that it was in the 1990's however a safe bike connection provides access to local shops that cannot be served by cars where there is already constrained parking.

I support this project and look forward to its opening.



Graham Hall
Jun 2, 2023

I want to see Oxford street returned to the people who live, work and play there. Cars dominate our cities with their noise, pollution and danger, it's time people came first.



Stuart Veitch
May 30, 2023

If we are making Oxford Street a place primarily for people to be in and not for cars to go through, then I would like a safe way to get there by bike. Already I tend to stop at places along Bourke Street because it is so pleasant to ride along, would be great to open up Oxford Street to more business opportunities in the same way. The connection to College Street makes for an obvious way to ride from the CBD also.



Sarah Lucas
May 26, 2023

It high time we made more space on our shopping streets for walking, cycling and hanging out. The car has been king for far too long and its impacts on amenity, health and climate cannot continue!



Krystyna Warton
May 30, 2023

I'd love to be able to cycle down Oxford Street safely.