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Dear Peter,

Re: Draft Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City of Sydney's draft Access Strategy and Action Plan.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-eight 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. 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 strongly supports the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan. The City of Sydney must be congratulated for its commitment to making Sydney a city that prioritises walking, cycling, and public transport. The ten strategies and 17 actions align with the community's strong desire for a walkable city centre, a connected network of safe cycleways, a reduced role for private cars and a well-functioning public transport system.

It is farsighted and welcome to break away from planning for endlessly increasing movement and mobility. In order to reach Net Zero and retain liveability as population grows, the City recognises that transport and land use planning must minimise distances travelled, and instead concentrate on providing residents and visitors of all ages and abilities with excellent access to goods, services, and daily destinations. We hope that every LGA will be inspired to develop an *access strategy*, rather than a traditional transport strategy.

We are delighted to see the City of Sydney taking the lead on reallocating street space for people and developing bold plans for key corridors. The City has already demonstrated leadership in transforming urban spaces and streets, notably with the successful revitalization of George Street. Of course, continuing this vision is all about inclusion and fairness. The creation of a low-carbon city that prioritises walking, wheeling, rolling and public transport over cars is a vital for enabling economic inclusion. Consultation has amplified community support for streets with green spaces, ample room for walking, children's play and social interactions.

Please consider this short submission as confirmation that Bicycle NSW upholds each element of the 10 strategies and 17 actions. In addition, we have recently commented in detail on the draft electrification strategy, the Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 strategy and several cycleway proposals. These submissions can be accessed [here](#).

We would like to make **four recommendations** to further strengthen the resolve of the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan to transform Sydney's streets and transport system:

- **Reduce speed limits to 30km/h.**

We align with [WalkSydney](#) in urging the City to be more ambitious with vehicle speeds and adopt a 30km/h default speed limit instead of 40km/h. Although the lowering of speed limits on most City of Sydney streets to 40km/h in recent years marks significant progress, the strategy recognises that this is not low enough for local streets and busy areas. However, only tentative steps towards requesting more 30km/h streets are mooted in the draft document.

A speed limit of 30km/h on all shopping streets, residential streets and high pedestrian activity areas is in line with global best practice and the UN resolution of August 2020.ⁱ The Vision Zero goal of lowering speed limits to 30 km/h is gaining momentum in Australian and New Zealand. The British Medical Journalⁱⁱ 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 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 neighbourhoodsⁱⁱⁱ. 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^{iv}.

A lower speed limit will help achieve the *Strategy 1: Save lives and reduce injuries*, and *Principle 11: a vision of zero fatal and serious injuries suffered on the streets no later than 2050*. Furthermore, 30km/h streets would bolster other areas of the plan such as improving place, prioritising walking and cycling, expanding pedestrianised zones, invigorating highstreets, reducing noise and pollution, and reducing the impact of buses.

It is unfortunate that Transport for NSW, responsible for managing speed limits across the state, has shown little enthusiasm for implementing a widespread 30 km/hr speed limit. This lukewarm approach is a barrier to reducing road trauma and improving streets for people, walking and riding bikes. The [NSW speed limit guidelines](#) have recently received a much-needed update and now include official recommendations for 30km/h speed zones. Previously, there wasn't even a mention of 30km/h in the guidelines. It is now easier to implement changes to speed limits in local streets.

The City of Sydney should aim to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and a reluctance to rock the boat. It is time to push harder for ambitious change that prioritizes safety, liveability and the community's aspirations for a largely car-free city with connected green corridors and ample public space.

- **Ensure that future light rail does not impede cycle access.**

Additional light rail on key corridors such as Broadway and Oxford Street would turbo-charge the accessibility of central Sydney. It is an exciting prospect for all residents and visitors. However, we are very concerned that bikes may be sidelined by light rail.

Bikes cannot now use George Street, and cyclists are banned from key sections of central Newcastle where vehicle lanes have been removed. [Parramatta Light Rail Stage One](#) has excluded bicycles from large parts of the Parramatta CBD. This undermines the great good that can be achieved by the transformation of traffic sewers into multi-modal transport corridors.

People need to use the streets with light rail tracks to reach their final destinations. Businesses and restaurants require access for bike couriers and food delivery workers. Directing bike riders to dismount can be dangerous in traffic or when manoeuvring heavy cargo bikes. Walking a bike can be impossible for those with disabilities or limited mobility. Inconvenient and disconnected journeys discourage cycling, limiting the mode shift that recent NSW Government strategies and policies aim to achieve.

There are translatable technologies that have been developed in different parts of the world to make tram tracks safer for vulnerable road users. For example, track inserts can be deployed in locations where the angle of the tracks creates a risk of wheel entrapment for bikes and wheelchairs. It is important to design the infrastructure to avoid any need to cross tracks at an angle less than the recommended 60 degrees.

- **Advocate for Transport for NSW to accelerate its cycleway projects.**

Many sections of the City of Sydney Bike Network rely on Transport for NSW to deliver separated cycleways on state roads. These include Bridge Road in Glebe, Oxford Street East in Paddington and Sydney Park Road. Transport *should* be able to roll these out rapidly, distanced from the political tensions faced by local councils, but projects are languishing.

The 3-block missing link on King Street from Pitt Streets to Clarence Street is particularly urgent, but progress seems to have stalled. It would be simpler if Transport applied its excellent Road User Space Allocation Policy and reconfigured the road to reduce vehicle lanes. Instead, attempts to maintain vehicle capacity will eat into pedestrian space and necessitate expensive kerb realignment.

Bicycle NSW will continue to ask the Transport and Roads ministers to deliver projects that contribute to the mode shift and net zero targets set out in the Future Transport and Active Transport strategies. It is essential to upend the status quo of prioritising access by car and initiate a true paradigm shift.

In addition, we urge the City of Sydney to fight to retain the [Moore Park Road cycleway](#) after the Oxford Street East project is complete. The Moore Park Road facility provides a direct connection to Central Station and the Inner West, and it should not be sacrificed to suit Sydney Stadium's anachronistic model of an urban stadium for cars rather than people.

- **Develop a kerbside strategy to make better use of parking space and declutter footpaths.**

Lambeth Council in London has unveiled one of the most ambitious strategies of its kind to make the kerb more accessible, fairer and more climate resilient.

Lambeth's [Kerbside Strategy](#) outlines four priorities that will be applied to every street in the borough to enable accessible and active travel, create social spaces, increase climate resilience, and reduce traffic and emissions. The aim is to transfer 25% of kerbside to sustainable uses by 2030. These uses would include new shared scooter and bike bays, electric vehicle charging points, cycle hangers, space for businesses using cargo bikes and electric delivery vehicles, car share spaces, parklets and landscaped areas to provide shade and reduce stormwater run-off.

In 2020, WSP Australia published a report, [Future Ready Kerbside](#), with numerous inspiring ideas for reassessing our relationship with the kerb to prioritise people and sustainable transport.

In Victoria, advocacy group Streets Alive Yarra suggests that inner city councils establish a [Mobility and Access Zone](#) within 150 metres of every household. Each zone would occupy the space of five car parking bays on residential streets, and include:

- a disabled car parking bay,
- a 15-minute loading bay,
- a car sharing bay,
- a covered hangar for bike parking
- a corral for shared e-scooters and e-bikes.

A similar approach in Sydney would only remove a small percentage of parking spaces from the residents' permit scheme but would really shift the dial in ensuring that everyone has easy access to bike storage, share cars, deliveries, taxis and share bikes. The need to reallocate street space for share bikes is particularly pressing in Sydney, where the public appetite for rental schemes wanes as the number of bikes left carelessly in congested public spaces increases.

In conclusion, we again congratulate City of Sydney for setting out a bold vision for Sydney's transport network. We can't wait to cycle along a leafy, tree-lined Broadway, Oxford Street and Park Street very soon!

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Bicycle NSW for assistance with advocating to NSW Government to progress actions in the strategy.

Yours faithfully,



Francis O'Neill

Head of Advocacy
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

ⁱ 20's Plenty. 2020, August. General Assembly of the United Nations says 20's plenty.

http://www.20splenty.org/un_says_20splenty

ⁱⁱ The British Medical Journal, <https://www.bmj.com/content/339/bmj.b4469.full>

ⁱⁱⁱ What Australians want report, https://irp.cdn-website.com/541aa469/files/uploaded/What_Australia_Wants_Report_.pdf

^{iv} https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_choice