

North Sydney Council
PO Box 12
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

14th August 2023

yoursay@northsydney.nsw.gov.au

Dear North Sydney Council,

Re: Young Street and Grosvenor Street Intersection - Cycling and Walking Upgrades

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plans to reconfigure the intersection of Young and Grosvenor Streets.

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.

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the proposal to extend the Young Street cycleway and reconfigure the intersection of Young and Grosvenor Streets to enhance amenity and safety for pedestrians and bike riders.

The extension of the Young Street protected bicycle path to Neutral Bay Village (Figure 1) will improve accessibility for people using active modes to visit the shops. The changes to the intersection prioritise walking and cycling and make it easier to leave the car at home (Figure 2).

The project addresses the main concern raised by Bicycle NSW in its 2021 [submission](#) to the Young Street Walking, Cycling and Streetscape Upgrades – the lack of a safe crossing of Grosvenor Street roundabout for users of the Young Street cycleway.

This new raised 'wombat' crossing is a gold-standard design that prioritises the safety of people outside cars and assists motorists to self-enforce their speed to an appropriate level in a shopping area.

The removal of the roundabout reduces the footprint of the intersection and frees up valuable street space for new public space and landscaping. The kerb extensions and landscaped beds will improve visual amenity and capture stormwater.

We commend North Sydney Council for continuing to prioritise pedestrians in the face of enormous road projects in the LGA that have removed pedestrian infrastructure without remorse to ensure that cars are put first. Despite the depressing outcomes from these projects, it is essential to press ahead with small upgrades to pedestrian infrastructure that will make a huge difference in accessibility and community adhesion.

We would like to thank members of Bike North, a large and active Bicycle User Group in the area, who have worked hard over many years to advocate for better conditions for active travel.

Although the proposal for the intersection will greatly improve access on foot or bike, we agree with Bike North that the design could be further refined. This submission highlights **some concerns** with the current plans and makes a **series of recommendations** to inform the final design of the project.

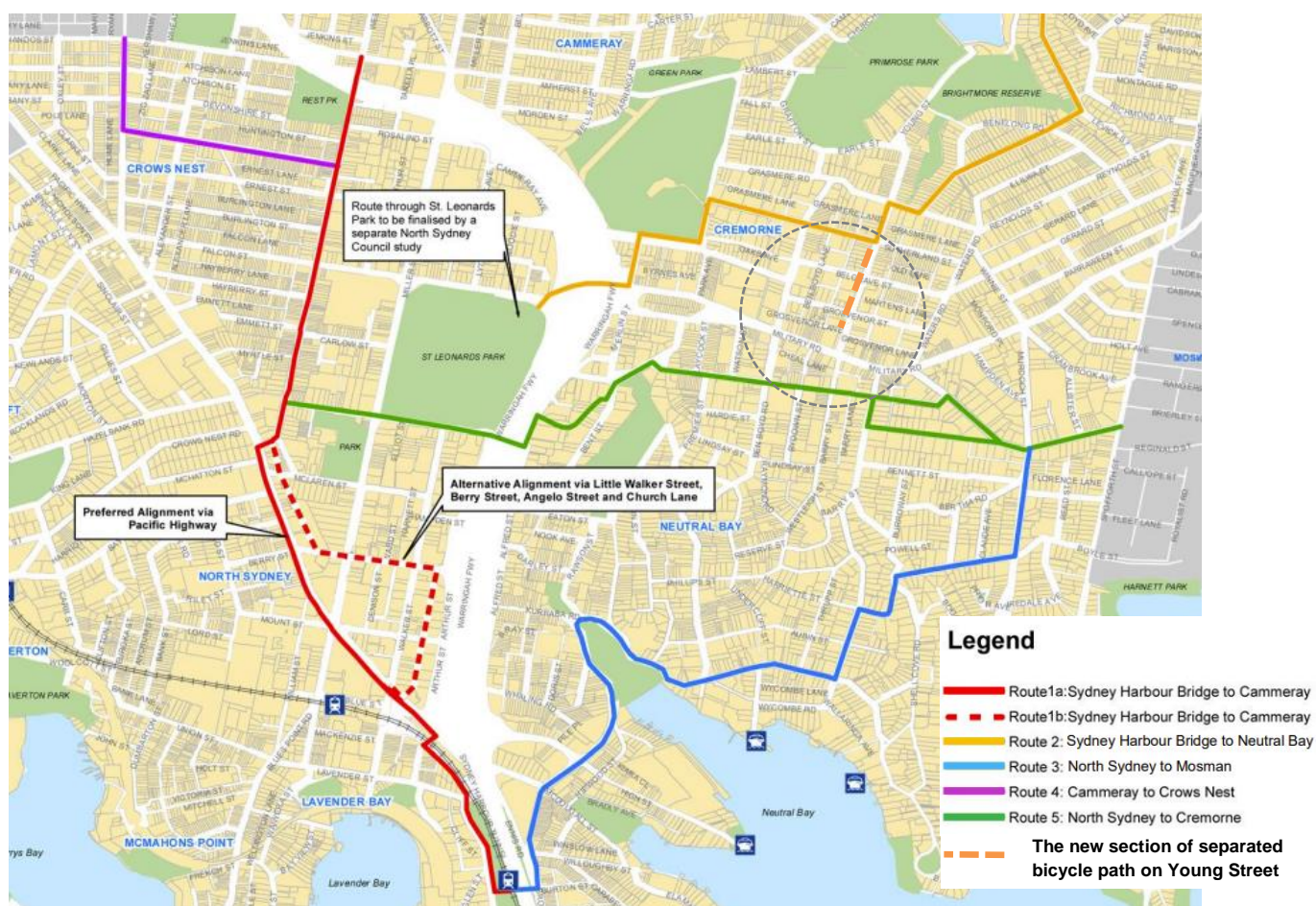


Figure 1: Extract from North Sydney Integrated Cycling Strategy, 2014 showing priority routes. The area affected by the proposal is indicated with the grey circle; the extension to the Young Street cycleway is in dashed orange (Source: North Sydney Council / GTA Consultants)

Concerns

- The new kerb extensions will narrow the width of the crossing for pedestrians on all 4 legs of the intersections. However, without a refuge or a pedestrian crossing on the north, east and south sides, it will still be difficult to cross the road, especially if the Young Street Plaza is removed and through traffic to Military Road once again funnelled through Young Street.
- Accessing and exiting the cycleway at the south end will not be as safe as is optimal.
 - Heading south, bike riders trying to reach the shops are left to navigate the unprotected crossing of Young Street on the south side of the intersection. This is busy with cars headed for the Grosvenor Lane car park. Traffic volumes would further increase without the Young Street Plaza.
 - From the south, there is no legal way to access the northbound entrance to the cycleway from either Military Road (as the Young Street Plaza is off-limits to bikes) or the shopping village (as Grosvenor Lane is one-way eastbound for all traffic)
- Bike riders reaching the southern end of the Young Street cycleway need a way to make a safe and legal north-south crossing of Military Road and connect with Route 5 at Yeo Street. There is no indication in the plans that a route south has been considered.

Recommendations

1. Include raised pedestrian crossings on all four sides of the intersection with a combined cycle-pedestrian crossing on the south side of Young Street as well as the west side of Grosvenor Street. This would make access in and around the shopping village really safe and convenient on foot or bike.
2. Retain the Young Street Plaza and make the section of Young Street between Grosvenor Street and Grosvenor Lane a shared zone with a 10km/h speed limit. Bicycle NSW does not support the re-opening of Young Street to Military Road. Local traffic is now accustomed to the current configuration and the community, so impacted by Military Road and its high-speed clearways, enjoys the extra public space. It would be a regressive step to returned reclaimed road space to cars.

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

3. Allow westbound bike riders to use Grosvenor Lane. Contraflow cycling on one-way streets makes it easier for people riding to avoid busy roads and use quiet, low-traffic streets. In February 2023, the City of Sydney approved [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 connectivityⁱ.

Bidirectional cycling on Grosvenor Lane would help bike riders reach the Young Street cycleway from the shopping area, and support the use of the lights at Ben Boyd Road to cross Military Road.

4. It is important to clarify how the Young St cycleway integrates into a north-south crossing of Military Rd. Although a connection across Military Road is not part of the 2014 Cycling Strategy (Figure 1), a link to Yeo Street from the extended Young Street cycleway would be very desirable.

Will bike riders be permitted to ride through the Young Street Plaza, if and when a permanent public space is constructed? Sections of shared path on Military Road and a cycle lantern at the signalised pedestrian crossing would then support access to May Gibbs Lane and the quiet lanes beyond without dismounting. Alternatively, riders could be directed along Grosvenor Lane, with contraflow cycling allowed, to use the lights at Ben Boyd Road. However, Ben Boyd Road is busy so a separated bicycle path or a section of shared path is advised to enable less confident riders to reach Yeo Street safely.

5. Reduce speed limits to 30km/h on Grosvenor Street and Young Street north of Grosvenor. The Vision Zero goal of lowering speed limits to 30 km/h on residential streets and around schools and town centres aligns with global best practice and the UN resolution of August 2020.ⁱⁱ The implementation of 30km/h limits is gaining momentum in Australian and New Zealand. 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 neighbourhoodsⁱⁱⁱ. Several 30km/h trials run in Melbourne and New Zealand before 2020 have been successful. Popularity increased further after people experienced the benefits^{iv}.

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. However, 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.

North Sydney Council must aim to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and push harder for ambitious change that prioritizes safety, liveability and the community's aspirations for a green, connected suburbs with ample public space.

6. Ensure that the intersection's pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is inclusive and accommodates all types of bikes and mobility devices, including cargo bikes, tricycles, hand-cycles, recumbents and wheelchair scooters.
7. Refer to the new Cycleway Design Toolbox^v and the 2017 Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17) to ensure that upgrades to the cycleway are constructed to current best practice.

Concluding thoughts

This is an exciting project that aligns closely with the raft of Council and NSW Government strategies and policies that aim to reduce car use and prioritise active transport.

The North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028^{vi} identified that improved walking and cycling connections are a key priority for the community. Feedback from the community consistently indicates that many more people would walk and cycle when safer, more convenient and more attractive routes are available. During the engagement process for the review of the 2018 CSP in late 2021, 64% of respondents felt that 'supporting sustainable transport' was of highest importance^{vii}. Cycling and public transport demand is growing at a significantly higher rate than private vehicle travel demand^{viii} in North Sydney and the provision of associated infrastructure must remain a priority for North Sydney Council.

Please reach out with any questions or help needed. Of course, Bicycle NSW will continue to advocate for new active transport infrastructure in the North Sydney area during our regular meetings with Transport for NSW and key ministers in the NSW Labor Government.

We look forward to riding the extended Young Street cycleway very soon!

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW



Francis O'Neill

Head of Advocacy
Bicycle NSW



Figure 2: The plans for reconfiguring the intersection of Young Street with Grosvenor Street (Source: North Sydney Council)

ⁱ Tait, C et al. 2022, November. Contraflows and cycling safety: Evidence from 22 years of data involving 508 one-way streets. Accident Analysis & Prevention.

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S000145752200330X?ref=cra_js_challenge&fr=RR-1&fbclid=IwAR31R7j-buvhrne52riMqd2GUWyj19aitRMnSYvqQyCZUE-aqbF0Ohv1LA0

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

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

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

^v 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>

^{vi} North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/docs/1_council_meetings/policies_plans/strategic_plans/communitystrategicplan_2018-2028_final_lr.pdf

^{vii} North Sydney Council. 2022. Community Strategic Plan Review - Stage 1 Engagement Outcomes.

<https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/72233/widgets/371601/documents/233876>

^{viii} North Sydney Council. 2017. Transport Strategy.

https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/docs/7_transport_amp_parking/traffic/north_sydney_transport_strategy.pdf