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Sydney Infrastructure Development | Infrastructure & Place
Transport for NSW

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Submitted via email: Mostafa.Emad@transport.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mostafa,

Re: New Richmond Bridge and Traffic improvements

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the New Richmond Bridge and Traffic improvements. The Richmond Bridge will provide a vital link between 2 major residential and commercial areas of the Hawkesbury - Richmond and North Richmond. It is also a key connector for The Hawkesbury region, Blacktown and the M7, as well as the Central West via Blacktown Rd.

Bicycle NSW supports the active travel linkages highlighted in this project and the commitment to resilience and connectivity. We also applaud the design thinking with its focus on future-proofing river communities of the Hawkesbury. To that end, we have additional recommendations for safe, convenient and direct active travel.

Bicycle NSW would like to thank Rob Kemp from our affiliated Bicycle User group CAMWEST for his knowledge and expertise of this area.

We support the Hybrid Option because: it will maximise active transport connections by providing direct desire line links between Richmond and North Richmond; it appears to be the most flood-resilient; and it minimises impacts from loss of passing trade in North Richmond by removing traffic from Richmond to provide place-making opportunities for revitalisation.

The project includes:

- A new two lane bridge 30 -70 metres down-stream of the existing bridge for eastbound traffic with a shared path that connects the Richmond and North Richmond town centres.
- Flood resilience (estimated 1-20 chance PA) has been built into the plan. The existing Richmond Bridge would be converted to two lanes for westbound traffic only but will allow 2-way traffic during flood times.
- A new signalised intersection at the intersection of Kurrajong Road / Old Kurrajong Road and the bypass. The bypass of the Richmond town centre includes two floodplain bridges.
- A roundabout to replace the priority intersection of Castlereagh Road / Southee Road / Inalls Lane.
- A new road parallel to Southee Road.
- Traffic signals to replace the priority intersections of Londonderry Road with Southee Road and Vines Drive
- A roundabout to replace the priority intersection of Londonderry Road / The Driftway
- Realignment of the eastern end of The Driftway to create a four leg roundabout to replace the priority intersections of Blacktown Road with The Driftway and Racecourse Road.



Figure1: The North Richmond northern Bypass Route selected as the preferred option after community consultation (Revised Preferred Option Report 2022).

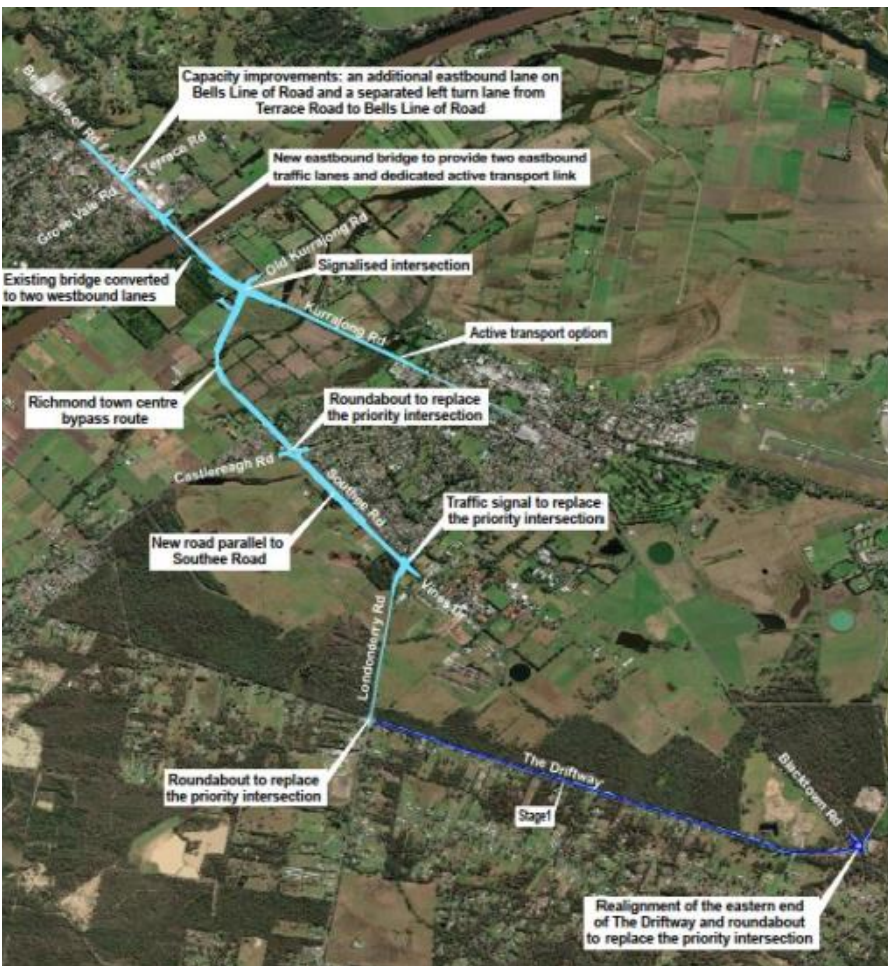


Fig 2: The 'Hybrid Option' with better active transport opportunities and an estimated 1 in 20 chance per year flood resilience. (Revised Preferred Option Report 2022, P. 65)



Figure 3: Open Space connectivity opportunities in the Richmond town centre (Revised Preferred Option Report 2022, P. 56)

Discussion and questions:

Improving safety, directness and convenience for active travel

- CAMWEST notes that crossing Richmond Bridge (along the section of Old Kurrajong Rd which is south of but parallel to Bells Line of Rd), then via a short track onto the bridge, is neither direct nor safe. Also, getting from the bridge to the existing shared path on the North Richmond side is neither accessible nor attractive. Therefore, the new proposed path along the northern side of Bells Line of Road through North Richmond commercial area and across the bridge would alleviate these issues.
- The crossing of Kurrajong Rd at the Old Kurrajong Rd/Yarramundi Lane intersection is currently problematic. The proposal to make that a signalised intersection will improve the crossing.
- An upgrade of the other intersections mentioned would be welcome.
- We agree with 'Increased Activation Opportunities' (Revised Preferred Option Report 2022, P48) such as the Eat Street precinct, and urban housing ideas including shop-top housing. This would help create a vibrant urban culture and support local businesses. To that end, we recommend pedestrianisation of the high street supported by 30km/h speed limit zones and traffic calming measures.

Question 1: What is the future plan for Yarramundi Lane and how it will improve direct, convenient and safe walking and cycling connections?

Question 2: The plan seems to indicate that a new road be created from the current intersection of Kurrajong Rd across to Inalls Lane. Is this correct? How will it improve the experience of walking, wheeling and rolling?

Question 3: What will the walking and cycling light signal phasing intervals be like at the proposed/ upgraded intersections? Will they be automatic and enable pedestrians to cross without having to wait multiple traffic cycles? Or will they be long and therefore encourage risk-taking?

Question 4: What wayfinding signage, street lighting and water facilities have been made for walking and cycling connections throughout the project?

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Bicycle NSW and CAMWEST recommend active travel links built alongside the new Richmond Bypass roads. This will improve connectivity and support the desired outcomes of reduced car dependence for short local trips.

Recommendation 2: The share path width on the Richmond Bridge should be between 2.5 to 3 metres to allow path users to safely pass.

Recommendation 3: The Driftway has been a popular cycling route in the past - mainly because it was a reasonably quiet road. It will become busier again under this proposal. We would therefore like to see an upgrade between Londonderry Rd and Blacktown Rd with separation for bike riders.

Recommendation 4: Roundabouts are not preferred intersection treatments for active travel. Like slipways, roundabouts are extremely dangerous for people walking, wheeling and rolling, especially the less mobile. Because they encourage a 'smooth traffic flow' without reducing speed. Also, roundabouts increase the footprint of intersections and occupy valuable street space that could otherwise be used for public space and landscaping. Bicycle NSW recommends signalised intersections instead of roundabouts that preference walking and cycling. If roundabouts are used, we recommend raised 'wombat' crossings at each leg. Raised wombats are a gold-standard design that prioritises the safety of people outside cars. Wombats assist motorists to self-enforce their speed to an appropriate level in a busy area.

Recommendation 5: 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 un-signalised junctions and ramped raised tables at signalised intersections; bicycle paths across all crossings so riders need not dismount.

Recommendation 6: Future-proof the shared path sections by allowing for increased demand at the outset. Extra width should be considered wherever possible. It is important to avert conflict as population increases and use of the corridor grows.

Recommendation 8: Ensure that intersections are inclusive and accommodate all types of bikes and mobility devices, including cargo bikes, tricycles, hand-cycles, recumbents and wheelchair scooters.

Recommendation 9: Further to our support of the increased activation opportunities afforded by the bypass, we ask that the project team consider the creation of a pedestrianised high street in North Richmond Town Centre. This would include kerb extensions, tree shade and landscaped beds to improve visual amenity and capture stormwater. It would also benefit from a narrowing of the space between the curbs. Furthermore, a change of surface treatment signals that this is a place for pedestrians and bike riders rather than just a corridor for traffic. This necessitates speed reduction measures within the Eat Street precinct and laneways.

Recommendation 10: Reduce speed limits to 30km/h on all residential streets, particularly streets that form part of the on-street cycling network. 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. 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 neighbourhoods.

Several 30km/h trials run in Melbourne and New Zealand before 2020 have been successful. Popularity increased further after people experienced the benefits.

Recommendation 11: Removal of street parking will be necessary in places to create safe raised crossings, wide footpaths and shared paths, and separated bicycle paths. On-street parking is fundamentally the storage of private property in the public domain. Free and abundant parking encourages car use for short local trips. Filling public space with car parking reduces opportunities for creating attractive places for people that are proven to have higher economic and social benefit.

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. 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. Parking supply should be reduced in parallel with the development of sustainable access options such as the cycleways and better pedestrian infrastructure.

Recommendation 12: Include bike parking facilities and e bike charging ports in the town centre and at key hubs. This plans for increased uptake and encourages active travel over driving short distances.

Bicycle NSW appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on this critical project. We are impressed with the value given to active travel within the plan that addresses environmental sustainability and the future proofing needs of the Richmond and North Richmond Hawkesbury River communities. We look forward to reengaging with the project team on issues and recommendations about active travel and place making needs within the project.

Yours faithfully,



Francis O'Neill

Head of Advocacy
Bicycle NSW

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. 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.