

Olive Diaz
Strategic Planner
Inner West Council
PO Box 14
Petersham NSW 2049

olive.diaz@innerwest.nsw.gov.au

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Dear Olive,

Re: Draft Inner West Blue-Green Grid Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft version of the Inner West Blue-Green Grid Strategy.

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the development of a Blue-Green Grid in the Inner West that envisions a healthy, sustainable integration of people with the built and natural environments.

The Inner West Blue-Green Grid Strategy is a long-term conceptual framework seeking to build resilience and sustainability into all future planning for the Inner West.

The documents acknowledge the relationship between how we move around and the quality of place. Fundamentally, the short distances covered by the majority of Inner West trips are improved through [greenways](#) that include active travel connections. Conversely, livability and walkability are degraded by the dominance of cars. Both may coexist, but currently the balance overwhelmingly supports cars at enormous cost to street space, human mobility and the environment.

For this to change, it is essential that the Blue-Green Grid, which places active travel, urban forests and healthy waterways at the forefront, is quickly elevated from the pages of a strategic document and delivered on the ground in Inner West neighbourhoods.

The quality of the Inner West as a thriving place requires a renaissance of safe, direct, coherent, attractive and comfortable blue-green active travel networks. It also requires Inner West Council to be strategic through communication strategies and activations that nudge mode shift towards walking and cycling. And brave when good planning and transport equity are challenged by misinformation.

Resident feedback showed that “separated cycleways, roadways and footpaths were the number one priority captured across the entire engagement. Participants recognised that the speed of cars was the number one barrier to more people adopting active transport, while pedestrians recognised that the fastest user on any active transport route was the greatest barrier for new users and pedestrians.” (Page 20)

It is clearly time to move the dial and progress projects that have languished for too long.

The goal of reducing car-dependence has cascading benefits beyond the reduction of congestion and deadly traffic pollution. People are happier, healthier, more productive and safer when they can use high-quality pathways to access school, work, shops and other daily destinations. Businesses also prosper [much more](#) from human-paced traffic than private car storage on public streets.

Critical Blue-Green Grid links

The Draft Blue-Green Grid Strategy has 84 links. They use local streets, major roads, public transport corridors, parks and waterways. We will not comment on all of the links here but please know that Bicycle NSW supports all efforts to develop [Better Streets](#) and a safe network of cycling and walking routes.

Note that Bicycle NSW has made detailed submissions on several elements of the Blue-Green Grid in recent months. We refer Council to our feedback on the [GreenWay Missing Links](#), [Sydney Park Junction](#), [Iron Cove Creek](#), the [Rozelle Interchange](#) (which focused on the future of Lilyfield Road, City West Link and Victoria Road) and the Public Domain Masterplans for [Rozelle](#), [Enmore](#), [Dulwich Hill and Marrickville](#). We also wrote comprehensive suggestions at both stages of the development of the [Inner West Cycling Strategy](#).

We would like to highlight two significant and achievable place-making opportunities within the Draft Blue-Green Grid Strategy:

- **Link 12 - Parramatta Road, from Broadway to the Greenway**
- **Link 72 - Victoria Road, from Iron Cove Bridge to Anzac Bridge**

Decades of car-first planning have consigned [both places](#) to stinking traffic sewers festooned by For Let signs. Yet these iconic corridors have the [potential to be returned to their former glory](#) as vibrant places generating human activity and wealth.

As set out in recent [letters to the Roads Minister](#), the opening of WestConnex presents a golden opportunity for the Labor Government to embark on bold and legacy-building urban renewal. The time to do so is now, taking advantage of promised reductions in surface traffic, before traffic induced by the new tunnels backfills the road network.

Both Parramatta Road and Victoria Road are places as well as movement corridors, historic but no longer functional as actual places due to failed traffic planning. However, both roads could be reimagined to spark an Inner West urban renaissance as 15-minute (and 5-minute!) neighbourhoods that support active travel, new housing supply, economic activity and urban greening. Possibilities for placemaking were highlighted in the Westconnex business case, the Rozelle Public Domain Masterplan, the Transport for NSW Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy and Strategic Cycleway Corridors Program.

Both roads would provide a backbone and shoulders for a fabulous active transport network and deliver new permeability to existing and planned elements of the Blue-Green Grid. But at present these corridors present major barriers walking and cycling, truncating networks exactly where safe and equitable access is most needed to inspire mode shift.

Bicycle NSW once again urges Inner West Council to work with Transport for NSW to take advantage of this once-in-a-generation window for change and reallocate road space for active and public transport as outlined in Transport for NSW's Road User Space Allocation Policy.

The Iron Cove Tunnel will be operational in a few weeks. We realise that funding is limited at the current time. However, the Rozelle Public Domain Masterplan outlines both the final vision and **an interim solution** for Victoria Road. The interim proposal involves installing low-cost concrete barriers and planters to reclaim road space and control traffic expansion while permanent fixes are planned and financed. This practical approach effectively reserves road space once the new toll-free tunnel opens, curbing traffic growth. The final Public Domain project can be executed in subsequent years as funding permits.

Parramatta Road is already filling up with induced traffic just 4 years after the M4 tunnel opened. But it is not too late to implement temporary measures that reallocate road space to reduce traffic volumes so a future vision can begin to be realised.

Building environmental and transport equity is essential and inevitable

Given the massive social, economic and environmental urgency to activate and green these neglected places, road space reallocation on Victoria Road and Parramatta Road is imperative. Inner West Council and NSW Government must commence the adventure of breathing life into these dead zones. Because it will transform the entire urban ecosystem and social economy. Trading a little road capacity will pay enormous dividends. There is no time to waste and we look forward to supporting Inner West Council on this exciting journey.

We thank the large and active Bicycle User Groups in the area (the Inner West Bicycle Coalition, comprising Ashfield BUG, Bike Leichhardt and Bike Marrickville, and BayBUG), Kobi Shetty MP and former Member for Balmain Jamie Parker for their continuous advocacy for a better Parramatta Road and Victoria Road.

Bicycle NSW is happy to consult with Inner West Council on any current and future Blue-Green Grid projects. We're very supportive of the proposal to [lower speed limits to 40km/h](#) and less across the LGA. We will advocate staunchly on your behalf for additional funding and the removal of State Government red tape that gets in the way of active transport projects. In particular, we will help ensure that great, innovative plans do not suffer [death by Traffic Committee](#) which prioritizes 'efficient' traffic flow above all else.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW



Francis O'Neill

Head of Advocacy
Bicycle NSW