

The Harbour Trust Team
Building 28
Best Avenue
Mosman NSW 2088

engagement@harbourtrust.gov.au

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Dear Harbour Trust,

Re: North Head Sanctuary Draft Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft version of the North Head Sanctuary Master Plan.

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 infrastructure that provides 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.

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the Master Plan and its ambition to further develop the North Head Sanctuary and create better opportunities for visitors to enjoy its cultural and military heritage and the beautiful natural environment.

There are many **positive and exciting initiatives** for developing the three precincts. This brief submission concentrates on those relating to walking and cycling.

North Head is currently confusing to navigate and the following measures will greatly enhance the cohesion of the complex:

- 'blur' the boundary of land management between the Harbour Trust and NPWS, seeing the headland as a singular entity and visitor experience;
- reconfigure the site entries to establish a welcoming sense of arrival with for people walking and cycling;
- revamp the central route as a clearly defined shared active transport spine;
- separate the pedestrian pathways from vehicular access where possible;
- and rationalise the car parking to the perimeter of the site

These proposals are all fully endorsed by Bicycle NSW. However, we have **concerns** about the strength of the provisions for active transport and wish to make some **recommendations** for the final North Head Sanctuary Master Plan:

- The draft Master Plan does not have a strong vision to make bikes the first transport choice for travel *to and around* North Head. It misses opportunities to brand North Head Sanctuary as a healthy, active and inclusive destination.
- Cycling has obvious benefits, reducing transport emissions and the need for expensive car parking and other vehicle infrastructure. Visitors to the site by bike have less impact on the fragile environment or North Head than people arriving by cars, and cause less congestion on the Eastern Hill approach roads.

- Proposals for improved active transport access to North Head from Manly CBD should be a key focus of the final Master Plan. This will require a multi-agency approach, including Northern Beaches Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Harbour Trust.
- It is important to differentiate people who live, work and study on the site from visitors when developing the transport strategy.
- Bikes should be counted so there is data about movements by bike as well as by car. Future mode share targets can be set and tracked.
- The Transport Strategy recognises how e-bikes could turbocharge access by cycling and proposes more bike parking. However, locations are not specified.
- We ask the project team to consult with active transport stakeholders, including Bicycle NSW and Better Streets Northern Beaches, when designing and locating bike parking facilities. Note that Bicycle NSW recently worked with NPWS to install 5 hoops at the entrance to Fairfax Walk. These were located on a reallocated parking space so as not to clutter the pedestrian entrance plaza.
- The site entry points and other strategic locations where cyclists and walkers are likely to pause, such as lookouts, need bike parking hoops as well as bubblers, benches and bike repair stations.
- Secure, under cover end-of-trip facilities are needed for the people who work and study on the site.
- It is better to oversupply bike parking and induce demand for cycling.
- Wayfinding is currently not adequate or clear, and there is little in the Master Plan about improving this. The final Master Plan should include a wayfinding strategy that builds upon current signage and clearly articulates possible routes around the site for all visitors, whether on foot, bike, bus or car.
- The draft Master Plan proposes no changes to the 'bike loop' shown in blue on the current [North Head Sanctuary Map](#) as a 'Shared bicycle/pedestrian path'
- This is a missed opportunity. With simple, low-cost improvements, the bike loop would be accessible for wide range of visitors. It could be a key attractor for North Head. Some suggestions:
 - a. improved signage (some signs face the wrong way)
 - b. the track is mainly located on a fire trail and therefore suitable only for gravel or mountain bike. Modest upgrades to the surface would cater for most bicycles
 - c. a ramp at the stairs just east of the Third Quarantine Cemetery would allow riders to comfortably walk their bikes up the slope
 - d. the current 'secondary walking route' from the northeast corner of the bike loop towards the current Barracks Precinct car park and Bluefish Point Road is well-used by mountain bikers but very sandy. A new surface would make it accessible on most bikes.
- The Transport Strategy fails to acknowledge that bicycles are 'vehicles' under traffic rules. Proposals to restrict 'vehicle' access to parts of the complex need to clearly express an exemption for bicycles.
- Any one-way vehicle system is inherently bicycle unfriendly, forcing riders to travel further to reach a destination. Future one-way roads should allow two-way, counterflow access for bicycles.

Bicycle NSW looks forward to working with the Harbour Trust on proposals to encourage, incentivise and accommodate bikes of all types at the North Head Sanctuary. It is essential to proactively manage traffic using Eastern Hill streets to access North Head and work towards clear mode share targets. 'Sticks' such as parking fees and limited parking spaces can work in tandem with 'carrots' – for example, an attractive walking and cycling trails, safe bike parking, clear information about public and active transport options, share bikes at the top and bottom of the hill - to ensure that the precinct is healthy, safe and equitable as visitor numbers grow.

Please get in touch if you would like help or advice for the next stage of the master planning process.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW



Francis O'Neill

Head of Advocacy
Bicycle NSW