

Strategic & Place Planning Team  
'My Place: Manly'  
Northern Beaches Council  
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24<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Dear Strategic & Place Planning Team,

**Re: My Place: Manly**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Northern Beaches Council's draft place plan for Manly.

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 supports the My Place ambition to strengthen Manly as a strategic centre at the gateway to the Northern Beaches and the vision for Manly** as "a thriving and welcoming coastal town centre, ..., with a vibrant local economy, attractive and functional public spaces and rich Aboriginal and European Heritage"

Place planning is about listening to the community to develop local solutions for local problems. It is clear that Council has worked closely with a diverse group of stakeholders to get to this point.

There is much to **commend** in the My Place document.

The proposals for the laneways, the Corso, Market Place and Pittwater Road are sound and will contribute to a better Manly in the future. We particularly like the plans to reconfigure circulation and activity zones on the Corso, correcting mistakes made during the 2006 renovations. Footpath widening, kerb build-outs, parklets and rain gardens will improve the pedestrian realm throughout the town centre. A new signalised pedestrian crossing at Carlton Street will provide important connectivity for the Pittwater Road neighbourhood.

However, Bicycle NSW has some issues with the scope of the My Place plan and the future outcomes for walking and cycling. We use this submission to highlight our **concerns** and make a series of **recommendations** for Northern Beaches Council.

**Concern 1:**

**The area covered by My Place omits some key places that should be reimagined to achieve the objectives for pedestrian amenity in Manly**

We understand that the study area (Figure 1) is set to encompass the commercial centre of Manly as identified in the North District Plan and the Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement, Towards 2040.

However, Bicycle NSW submits that this boundary misses critical essential opportunities to make changes to the street network that would greatly enhance the place outcomes for Manly and the safety and comfort of all road users.



Figure 1:  
The study area for My Place: Manly, outlined in red, is generally defined by land zoned B2 Local Centre under the Manly LEP  
(Source: Northern Beaches Council)

Two significant omissions must be highlighted:

The intersection in front of the wharf (Figure 2) is not part of the study area. The roads in this location are over-sized and dominated by traffic. It is not a welcoming gateway to Manly for visitors arriving by ferry.

Figure 2: The intersection of Belgrave Street and the Esplanade outside Manly Wharf has too much capacity for vehicles. A huge amount of space has been dedicated to cars in a high pedestrian activity area. Space that could be used for walking, hanging out, cycling and landscaping. Pedestrians must cross 5 lanes with inadequate signal phasing. Crowds build up at the crossings while the vehicle lanes are half empty (Source: Google Maps)



Belgrave Street is also excluded. The Pittwater Road streetscape upgrades are only proposed between Carlton and Raglan Streets. As a result, no opportunity has been identified to improve Belgrave Street beyond some kerb extensions at the intersections. Belgrave Street is wider than needed. Vehicles speed and the footpaths are blighted by noise and lack of shade, limiting opportunities for footpath dining. In addition, Belgrave Street is part of the future regional bike network (Figure 3) and safe bike riding facilities need to be accommodated by any streetscape changes.

There are some plans for Belgrave Street in the [Landscape Masterplan](#) and [Plan of Management](#) for Ivanhoe Park, adopted by Council in 2021. This masterplan suggests new paving to the footpaths on the west side of Belgrave Street fronting Ivanhoe Park, and a raised platform threshold across the junction with Sydney Road. However, there is no mention of a regional cycleway for Belgrave Street, and the bike lanes on Raglan Street are ignored, as is the need to create a safe crossing of Raglan Street to reach to Kangaroo Lane.

### Recommendations:

- Expand the study area to include both Belgrave Street and the Esplanade between Eustace Street and Victoria Parade.
- Develop plans to reallocate at least one lane from each leg of the intersection of Belgrave Street and the Esplanade to create widened footpaths and reduce crossing distances and the impact of traffic at the gateway to Manly. There is no need for two lanes for vehicles exiting the intersection onto Belgrave Street or East Esplanade. Temporary measures, such as planters and concrete separators, could be used to trial the changes before permanent kerb extensions are built.
- Propose changes to Belgrave Street that reallocate a south-bound vehicle lane for a dedicated bicycle path, wider footpaths and additional tree canopy. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Traffic will be calmer and slower, and amenity will improve for all road users, businesses and residents.

### Concern 2:

#### Improved cycling infrastructure is not part of My Place: Manly

Although the six principles, and in particular *Principle 3 - Natural beauty and resilience* and *Principle 6 - Connected and accessible for all*, have plenty to say about encouraging cycling, there is little in the document, beyond a possible bike hub, to create more facilities or safe routes.

In fact, when asked at the [webinar](#) why there is no bike infrastructure in the plans, the project team replied that no dedicated routes are planned for Manly town centre. Shared paths will be the main form of infrastructure. Instead of reconfiguring streets to create dedicated space for bike riders, increasingly needed as e-bike use accelerates, Council will advocate to State Government to make legislative changes to improve pedestrian safety.

This is **not good enough**. Forcing people walking and cycling to mingle on narrow shared paths will not encourage more bike and e-bike riding – with all the benefits that brings for community, health, noise, air quality, congestion, parking supply and the independence of the 40% of the community (NSW average) who don't drive.

It is really important to encourage more people to ride, with a focus on easy access to daily destinations. There are huge social and economic benefits. People on bikes find it easier to pop into shops or grab a coffee. They engage with the community. They don't circle the streets looking for parking and adding to noise and air pollution. A [report from London](#) showed that cyclists and pedestrians are better customers, spending over twice as much time in the area and 40% more money per month than people driving. Improvements to the public realm to enable safer walking and cycling lead to a 30% increase in trade.

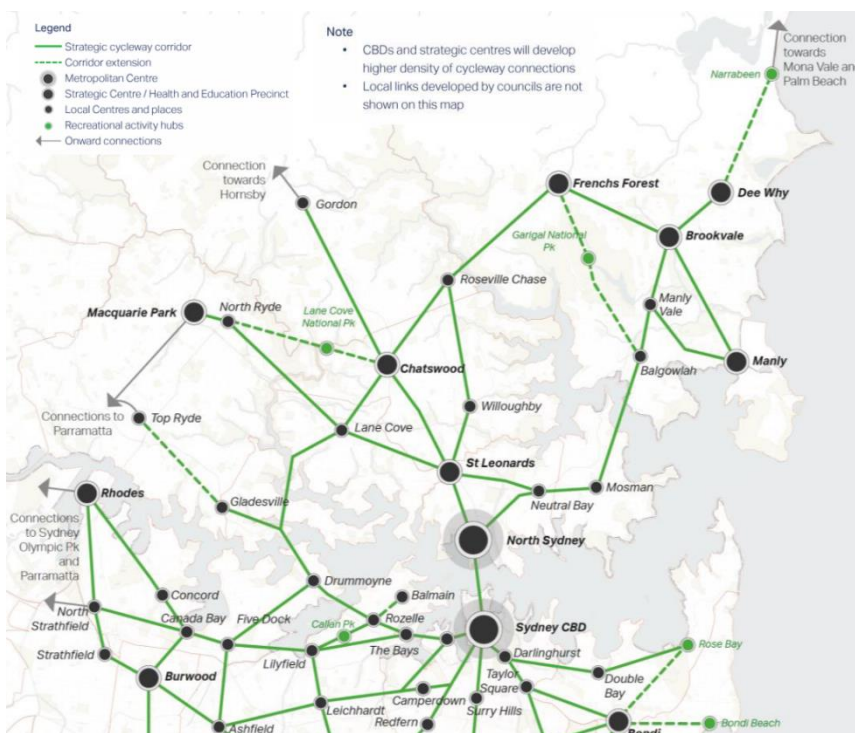
The Safe Cycling Network proposed by the 2020 Northern Beaches Bike Plan (Figure 3) identifies the important regional route from the wharf to North Manly and Brookvale via Belgrave Street, Raglan Street, Kangaroo Lane, Smith Street, Alexander Street, Balgowlah Road and Pittwater Road. Sections of this route currently offer reasonable cycling facilities, either on very low-traffic back streets or shared paths (although some upgrades are required to improve safety and comfort at intersections).





Figure 3: Extract from the Northern Beaches Bike Plan [Safe Cycling Network](#) showing Regional and district route in Manly (Source: Northern Beaches Council)

However, the section of Belgrave Street from the wharf to Raglan Street has no facilities at all. Children under 16 can use the footpaths but everyone else needs to ride on the road. This is unsafe and unpleasant, particularly for riders heading north who must interact with buses at the bus interchange.



It is particularly important to strengthen this route in view of the [Strategic Cycleway Corridors program](#) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Extract from the network plan for the [Eastern Harbour City Strategic Cycleway Corridors program](#). 30 strategic corridors have been identified for eastern Sydney, making up approximately 250 km of cycle network. The Eastern Harbour City was the first of the 6 cities of the sandstone megaregion to receive a cycleway corridors plan in April 2022 (Image: Transport for NSW)

Transport for NSW is investigating possible routes to connect the strategic centres of Manly and Brookvale. The shared paths along the beachfront and through Queenscliff Lagoon Park provide one option for reaching the Pittwater Road in North Manly. However, these are very popular walking routes where conflict between people walking and cycling is already an issue.

Bicycle NSW would prefer the Belgrave Street – Kangaroo Lane route to be identified for the strategic cycleway corridor. It is direct and avoids the congested shared paths of the beachfront, which are more suited to recreational riding.

Note that a separated cycleway on Belgrave Street between Raglan and Sydney Road was proposed for the Streets as Shared Spaces project in 2020 (Figure 5). The plan removed one southbound vehicle lane, recognising that there is excess vehicle capacity heading south. There would have been no loss of parking. However, the project was unnecessarily complex, taking the separated bicycle path through the busiest section of the town centre, and it was shelved.



Figure 5:  
The configuration of the cycleway proposed for Belgrave Street as part of the Streets as Shared Spaces project in 2020. (Source: Northern Beaches Council)

## Recommendations:

- Embed the important regional cycling route on Belgrave Street in My Place: Manly to ensure that its future delivery is accommodated by streetscape upgrades, kerb extensions, parking changes and land use planning. The bike lanes on Raglan Street and suitable bike crossings of the Raglan Street/Belgrave Street intersection must also be shown on all plans.
- Revive the separated cycleway concept for Belgrave Street, extending the protected bicycle path south of Sydney Road to create a safe connection to the wharf. Again, we ask Council to investigate the design and consult with Bicycle NSW.
- The road space reallocation could be tested with temporary materials. Moveable lane barriers, planters and paint can be installed quickly to create stretches of protected path (Figure 6), showing the community how unfamiliar cycle infrastructure can fit into the street. Ridership can be observed over several months using electronic counters to monitor use, and issues with parking and buses can be resolved before permanent infrastructure is constructed. Once Council has demonstrated demand for safe cycling, more expensive changes to kerbs, parking and landscaping can be made when funding allows.





Figure 6: Pop-up infrastructure in Sydney (Source: Bicycle NSW / Randwick Today)

- The cycleway could transition to a shared space on the extended kerbs proposed for the intersections with Raglan Street, Sydney Road and the Esplanade. This is a common approach used by City of Sydney cycleway planners (Figure 7).
- At Raglan Street the shared intersection would include a combined bike and pedestrian crossing of Belgrave Street on both sides, linking to the on-road bike lanes heading east on Raglan Street, and upgraded shared paths on both sides of Raglan Street heading west to Kangaroo Lane.
- A raised crossing, or a similar facility, at the bottom of Raglan Street is required for safe access to Kangaroo Lane.

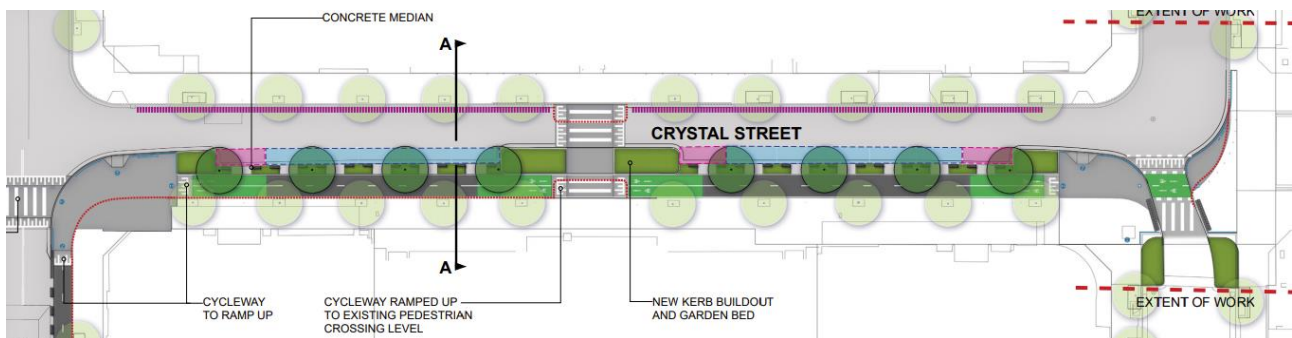


Figure 7: This cycleway on Crystal Street in Waterloo is now complete. The shared zones at the intersections create a slow speed environment which all road users navigate carefully. Kerb extensions ensure the crossing distance for both pedestrians and bike riders is as small as possible (Source: [City of Sydney](https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/))

### Concern 3:

#### No new bicycle parking facilities are proposed in My Place: Manly

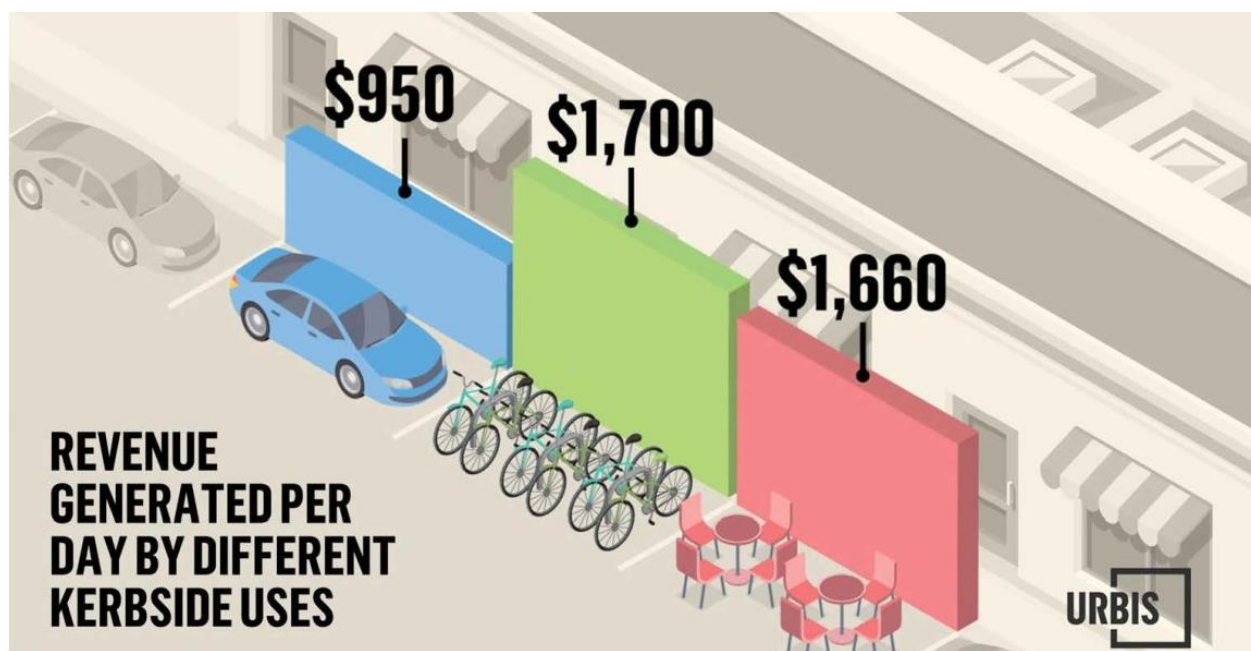
It is alarming that the lack of bike hoops in and around the town centre is not addressed in the place plan. 'Improve and increase bicycle parking spaces and associated facilities' is an objective under *Principle 6 - Connected and accessible for all*, but there are no locations proposed in the concept design ideas for the key places.

There is currently nowhere to leave a bike on the Corso. Bike owners end up locking up to benches which reduces amenity for people who want to sit! Outside Coles, it is common to see bikes on the memorial flag poles. The racks outside the library are always overflowing. As are those on the beach front. There are no

hoops on Darley Road. The bike rack outside Coles on Wentworth Street is usually full. This rack is also a poor design for bikes with front frames and baskets – that is, most of the cargo bikes and e-bikes that are increasingly used for everyday transport trips by a community keen to reduce car use.

### Recommendations:

- Provide multiple new bike hoops, located in convenient locations outside popular destinations. Simple Sheffield hoops are best as they accommodate the widest range of bikes and locks.
- Avoid taking public space from pedestrians for bike racks. Please consider reallocating some parking spaces. Bicycle NSW refers Council to some excellent [research by Urbis](#) (Figure 8) showing the value of different kerbside uses. A 3-hoop bike parking pod for 6 bikes can generate 80% more revenue for local businesses than a high-turnover car parking spot.
- Bike racks don't block sight lines so they can also be located close to intersections where cars can't park.
- Consider a secure bike storage facility at the beach, similar to the cage [proposed for Dee Why beach](#). Such a building could be part of the plans for the new Manly Surf Club. This will be useful for people with valuable bikes who want to surf or swim. The Whistler St bike cage is too far away.



Source: Urbis, 2021

Based on the following sources

- Dining Parklet occupancy, expenditure and duration of stay based on: Urbis, 2021, Extended Outdoor Dining Program Evaluation, for Cities of Melbourne, Yarra and Stonnington
- Bike parking occupancy, expenditure and duration of stay based on: Alison Lee & Alan March (2010) Recognising the economic role of bikes: sharing parking in Lygon Street, Carlton, Australian Planner, 47:2, 85-93, DOI: 10.1080/07293681003767785 (factored into 2021 Australian Dollars)

#### Assumptions and Notes

- Occupancy- bike parking 6 spaces, car parking 1.2 people per car, dining parklet 10 seats.
- No. of hours per day of occupancy- bike parking 8 hours, car parking 14 hours, dining parklet 8 hours.
- Bike Parking Occupancy 61%, Dining Parklet Occupancy 63%, Car Parking Occupancy 85%

Figure 8: A clear infographic and supporting sources for the 2021 Urbis study into the revenue generated by different kerbside uses (Source: [Urbis/Alison Lee](#))

**Concern 4:**

**My Place: Manly does not mention speed limit reductions. There is no ambition to reduce the 30km/h zone across a wider area. No new 30km/h zones have been proposed.**

Northern Beaches Council has shown great leadership with the 30km/h trial in the centre of Manly. The lower vehicle speeds have significantly improved safety for everyone in the community, particularly people walking and cycling, children going to school and other vulnerable road users outside a car.

The Vision Zero goal of lowering speed limits to 30 km/h on residential streets and around schools and town centres is considered an international best practice. [Research](#) from across the globe shows that a pedestrian has a 90% chance of survival when hit at 30km/h. This reduces to 10% at 50km/h.

Our roads are becoming less safe every year. The [road toll is rising](#). 1184 people were killed on Australian roads last year. This year, the number killed has surged to a staggering 1240. NSW had the second highest increase, with 340 deaths recorded, a 17.2% increase on the 290 recorded the year before. Cycling deaths rose 30.3%, and pedestrian deaths rose 11.3%. That is on top of the hidden road toll of 11,000 each year due to toxic dust and vehicle emissions.

Lower vehicle speeds make a difference to road safety. **There is no time to waste.**

Over short trips, a 30km/h speed limit makes virtually no difference in travel time. What's more important is prioritizing the safety of our children and the well-being of our communities. By lowering speed limits, we put people first.

In addition, noise pollution reduces. Slower traffic allows more children to walk and cycle safely to school, leading to long-term health and psychological benefits. Businesses benefit from increased foot traffic, as more people choose walking, cycling, and other sustainable modes of transportation over cars. Reduced speeds allow vehicle lanes to be narrowed, providing opportunities for improvements in the public domain streetscape and ultimately community development.

The [NSW speed limit guidelines](#) have recently received a much-needed update. We now have official recommendations for 30km/h speed zones and it is easier for councils to implement change.

**Recommendations:**

- Extend 30km/h zone across a much larger area to include the Eastern Hill, the entire Manly Flats area and the residential streets of Fairlight.
- Consistent, predictable and legible speed limits create a more uniform sense of awareness in drivers. A uniform 30km/h speed limit will maximise compliance for drivers.
- A consistent speed limit reduces the need for additional road signs and speed treatments, which chew through Council funds and create visually cluttered streetscapes

**Concern 5:**

**Although the road at South Steyne is included in the study area there is no discussion of the exciting possibilities for temporary or permanent street closures between Raglan Street and Wentworth Street.**

The endless stream of vehicles looking for parking interrupts pedestrian flow and separates the restaurants from the beach front promenade. There is no real reason to drive here. Closures happen regularly for events such as Manly Jazz Festival. It is clear that Manly keeps moving and drivers divert to another route.



Note that the shared space proposal for people riding and walking on the promenade is supported by Bicycle NSW.

#### Recommendation:

- Trial a longer-term closure, perhaps over the summer holidays, and consider regular temporary closures going forward.
- James Griffin, Member for Manly, has expressed a keen interest in more frequent closures of South Steyne between Raglan Street and Wentworth Street. He will support Council to deliver this initiative.

#### Concern 6:

**The place plan has no vision for the parking and loading area outside Whistler Street car park on Market Place.**

There is an action under Principle 1 to investigate ways of reconfiguring the Whistler Street ground level car park to optimise pedestrian safety and visual amenity. However, there is no suggestion to reduce the surface area of the parking, loading and circulation zones (Figure 8).

#### Recommendation:

Remove some of the parking spaces and rationalise the vehicle circulation to create a much wider public space on the southern side in front of the cafes and restaurants.

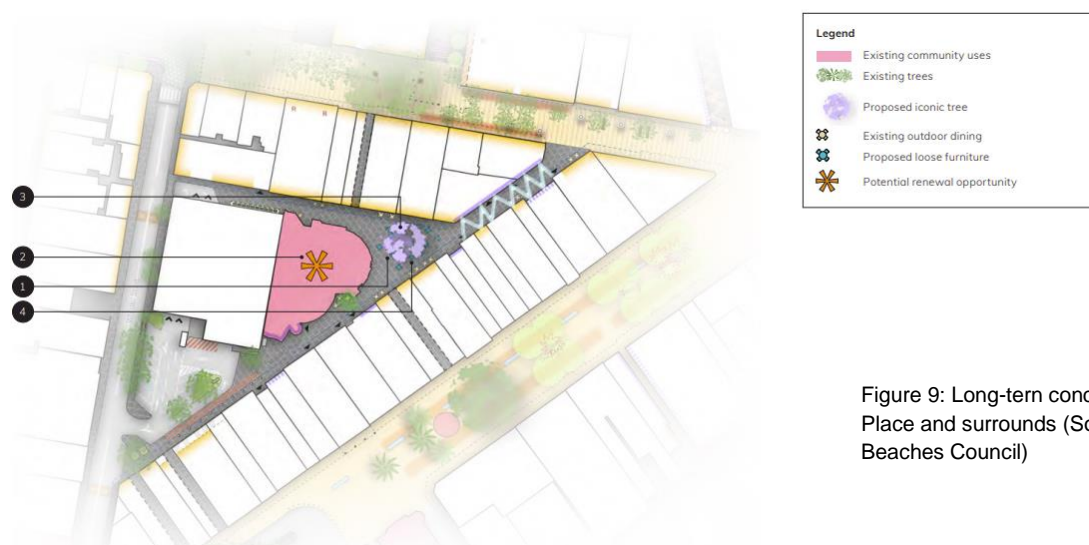


Figure 9: Long-term concept ideas for Market Place and surrounds (Source: Northern Beaches Council)

#### Concern 7:

**Plans for continuous footpaths, pedestrian priority crossings and parklets should be more extensive**

Some continuous footpaths (Figure 7) are proposed – such as at the entrance to the Whistler St and Wentworth Street carparks, and on Raglan Street at the entrances to Henrietta Lane and Central Avenue. This treatment is powerful in giving pedestrians of all ages and abilities a safe and comfortable route across minor side streets and should be applied across more of Manly.

It is sad that a 2021 trial of parklets on Darley Road failed. There is now little appetite to create more kerbside outdoor dining spaces except on Pittwater Road. However, the site at the eastern end of Wentworth Street that was slated for the next trial would make a great location and should be included as an initiative in My Place.

## Recommendations:

- Construct continuous footpaths at the junction of minor side streets along Pittwater Road. This would be an appropriate treatment at Denison Street and Steinton Street in the study area, and many more streets in central Manly.
- Prioritise pedestrians at all crossings. Traffic light phasing and sensors must favour active modes to encourage more people to walk and cycle. In line with the Road User Space Allocation Policy and other State and Council strategies, small delays to vehicle traffic should never prevent the delivery of safer, more efficient active transport infrastructure. Pedestrian and bicycle level of service should be optimised with the following features:
  - Instant green on demand for pedestrians and bicycles at mid-block crossings, with induction loop detectors for bicycles/wheelchairs/mobility scooters and fully accessible push buttons.
  - Longer crossing times so that pedestrians of all ages and abilities have time to cross safely and without stress.
  - Automatic green for pedestrians/bicycles at all signalised intersections so there is no need to press a 'beg button'
  - Raised crossings at unsignalised intersections will slow cars and improve safety.
  - Bicycle paths must continue across the raised and signalised crossings so people riding bikes are not required to dismount.
- Trial a parklet in place of three parking spaces at the eastern end of Wentworth Street. This will serve 5 food outlets, which face south-east and lose sun early in the day. A kerbside seating area will receive sun for longer and provide views of the ocean. As well as the placemaking opportunity, there are also well-proven economic benefits. [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. The Urbis research cited above (Figure 8) found that a 10-seat parklet can generate 75% more revenue for local businesses than a high-turnover car parking spot.



Figure 10: Continuous footpaths in inner Melbourne (Source: [Streets Alive Yarra](#)) and on Crown Street in Surry Hills, Sydney (Source: City of Sydney)

## In Conclusion

Although My Place: Manly contains many progressive and interesting ideas for Manly's future development, it is a serious oversight to ignore the needs of people riding bikes to and through the town centre.

As can be seen in the photos posted recently (Figure 11) on the Manly Living Facebook page, cycling is a popular way to get about and it must be further encouraged for to take advantage of a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits. There is no way Manly's beachfront could accommodate that many Nippers arriving by car

The town centre of Manly is a perfect location for showcasing the very best people-first streets. There are no arterial roads and limited through traffic. Walking and cycling already have a very high mode share. But too much of the road network is dominated by parked and moving vehicles.

**Bicycle NSW urges Northern Beaches Council to reallocate road space around the wharf and on Belgrave Street to pedestrians, bike riders and landscaping, extend the 30km/h zone over a much wider area and embed the future strategic cycleway corridor in the place planning process.**

Bicycle NSW would be delighted to advise further and looks forward to Northern Beaches Council taking further steps towards creating a safer, more vibrant, and more active Manly.

Yours faithfully,

*Sarah Bickford*

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Bicycle NSW

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Bicycle NSW



Figure 11: A recent Facebook post celebrating the array of bikes used to get to the beach on a sunny Sunday morning (Source: Steve Ballard)