

Frances Hamilton
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5th December 2023

Email: Frances.Hamilton@cumberland.nsw.gov.au

Dear Frances,

Re: Guildford Town Centre Public Domain Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Cumberland City Council's plans to revitalise Guildford town centre.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-seven years and has over 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 works closely with CAMWEST, an affiliated Bicycle User Group in Western Sydney. CAMWEST members have worked hard over many years to advocate for better facilities for active travel in and around Cumberland. We are very grateful for their detailed knowledge of local conditions and their enormous contribution to bicycle advocacy. Bicycle NSW aligns with CAMWEST's comments about the [Guildford Town Centre Public Domain Plan](#).

Bicycle NSW supports Cumberland's efforts to improve the urban environment for businesses, residents and visitors in its town centres.

However, we are **concerned** that once again Cumberland's consultants have drawn up a Public Domain Plan that does not account for the regional bicycle network or address the constrained crossing of the train tracks.

Cumberland's [draft Walking and Cycling Strategy](#) identifies 3 regional corridors that traverse Guildford at Regents Park (Figure 1). They are conceived to run through Guildford with minimal interruption.

Corridor 6 - Prospect Pipeline is a major Green Grid open space corridor and Council has developed [a masterplan](#) to extend the shared path from Guildford down to Regents Park and beyond. Although this bypasses the town centre, the town centre masterplan should acknowledge the need to access the pipeline path.

The [Strategic Cycleway Corridors](#) program incorporates Corridor 5 - Parramatta to Liverpool Rail Trail (Figure 2) and provides impetus to upgrade this route to provide a seamless and comfortable route through Guildford.

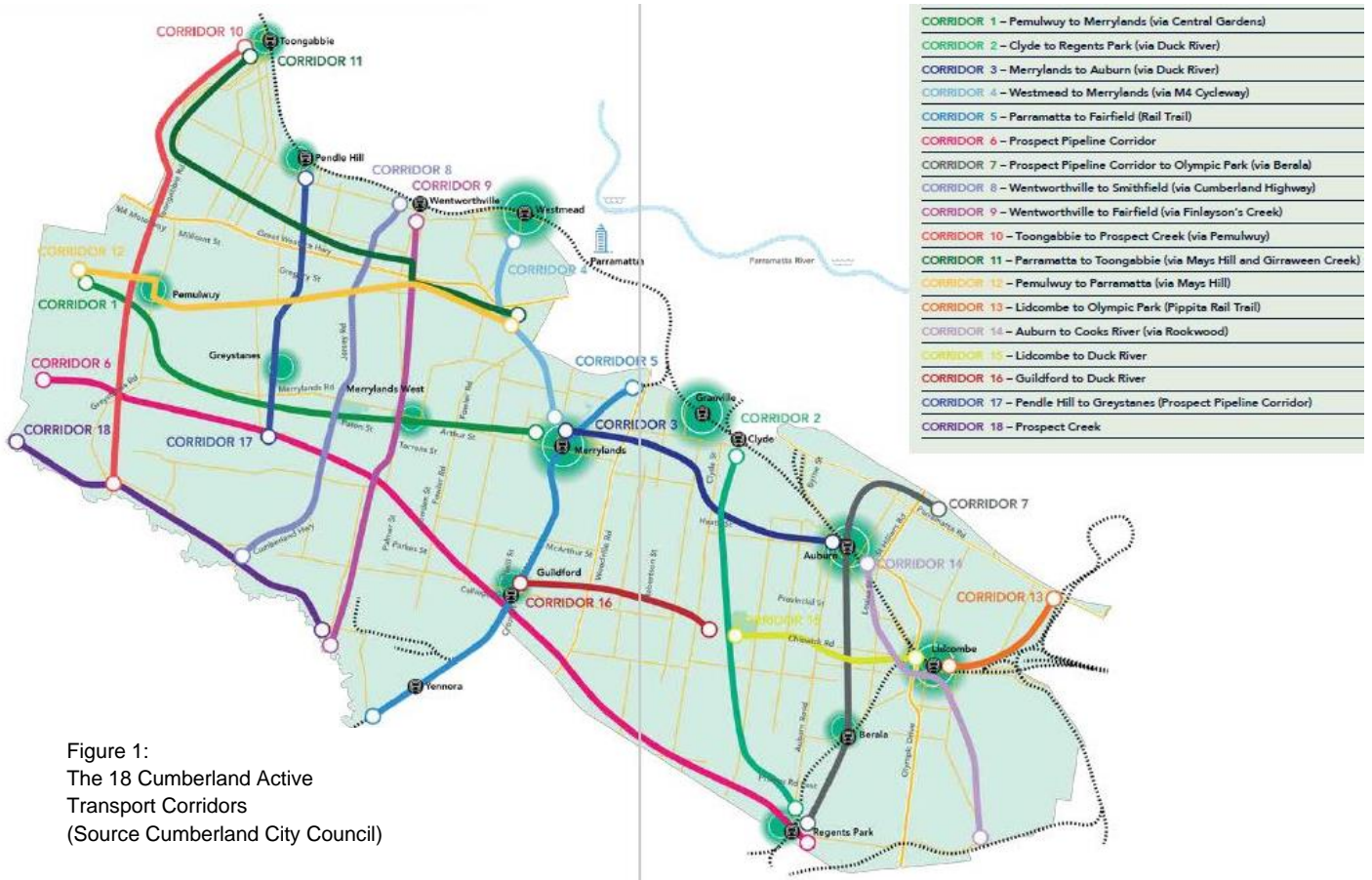


Figure 1:
The 18 Cumberland Active
Transport Corridors
(Source Cumberland City Council)

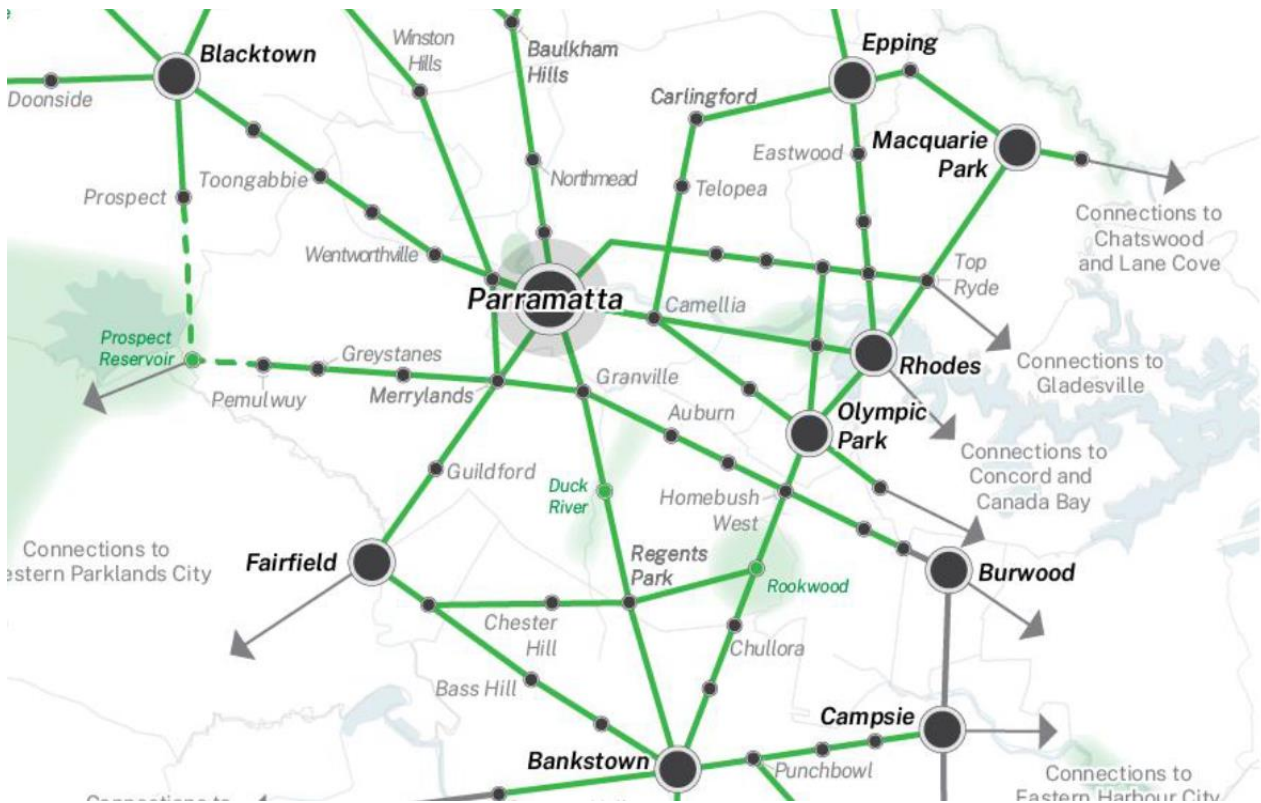


Figure 2: Extract from the new Strategic Cycleway Corridor network map for the Central River City (Source: TfNSW)

Currently, the route for riders using the rail trail is very unclear, as shown in the photos in Figure 3. The Public Domain Plan makes no attempt to address this, risking a major missed opportunity. How will the shared path interact the area in front of the station? Can they ride on the new raised crossings? How and where do bike riders move from the rail trail to the cycling facilities on Guildford Road? If on-road riding is proposed, very low speed limits and traffic calming are essential.



Figure 3: The very poor route past Guildford train station for users of the Parramatta to Liverpool Rail Trail, a **strategic cycleway corridor**. From the north (top row), the shared path runs behind the bus shelters. It then ends abruptly. There is a kerb cut blocked by the raised median. Or are bike riders meant to dismount, use the pedestrian crossing and then ride on the road to continue north? From the south, the shared path runs behind car parking from overbridge at the pipeline towards the station. Riders are sent onto the road just south of the station. But there is signage and no clear indication of where to turn right for riders heading north. (Images: Google Maps)

These regional routes are shown in the active transport connections diagram in Figure 4 as are some existing and proposed local cycleways. However, there is little mention of them on the more detailed plans.

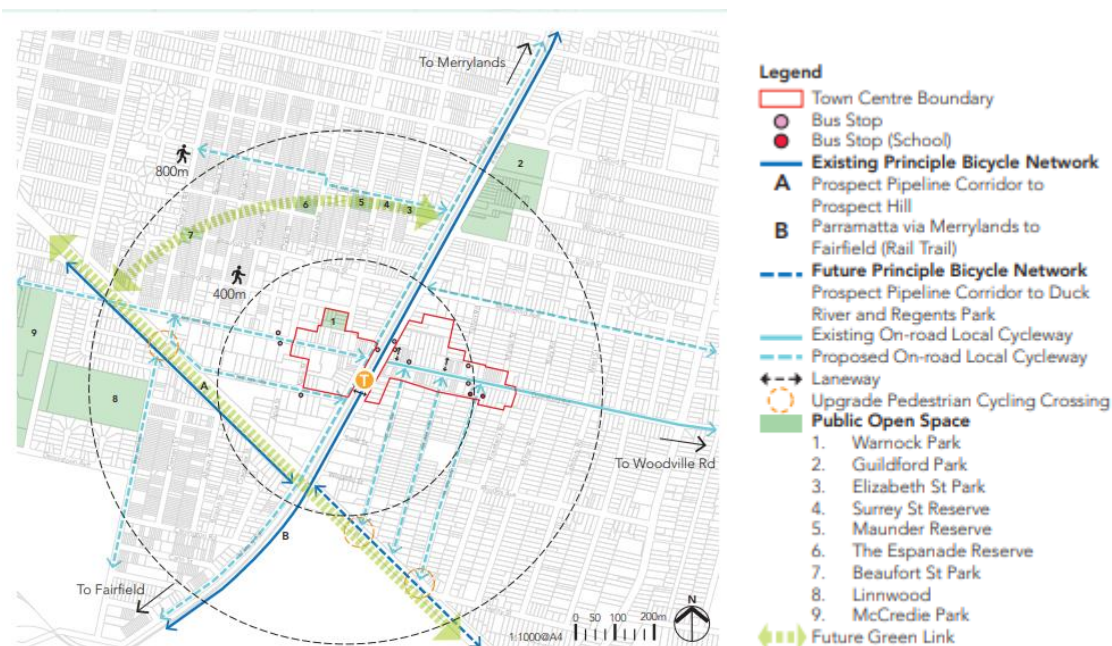


Figure 4: Guildford Town Centre active transport connections. Note that the **Parramatta to Liverpool Rail Trail is shown incorrectly** – it switches to the west of the rail line south of the Pipeline bridge crossing. (Source: Cumberland Council)

It is very unclear how these local routes might be integrated in the town centre. Some sections of shared path are indicated in the precinct plans, but these do not align with the Figure 4 diagram which shows on-road cycling routes in these locations.

It is important that Cumberland develops a clear and well-resolved solution to town centre cycling facilities before making changes to the public domain that may lock out future delivery. Kerb extensions, landscaping, kerb cuts, raised crossings and other streetscape interventions must be designed with the bike routes front of mind.

Shared paths are an option, but as discussed in CAMWEST's submission, the footpaths are not wide enough to be converted to shared paths if parking is to be retained and opportunities for on-street dining, street furniture and landscaping maximised. In addition, shared paths cause conflict between people walking and riding in busy shopping areas. A separated bi-directional bicycle path is another option, but this will be challenging to accommodate within the constrained space alongside all the other amenity upgrades.

A more appropriate solution may be a **30km/h town centre speed limit** with additional traffic calming. This would allow most bike riders to feel comfortable using the road and deliver a raft of amenity and safety improvements for all road users. Riders can then transition to the shared path on Guildford Road east of the high pedestrian activity area.

30 km/h speed limits are important for mixed traffic 'quietway' cycleways and must be part of Cumberland's toolbox. 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.

Another huge benefit of lower speed limits is that vehicle lanes can be narrowed, allowing more road space to be reallocated to wider footpaths and landscaping. A low speed limit will also allow the removal of the ugly fencing (Figure 5) that reinforces car dominance and limits pedestrian movements through the shopping area.



Figure 5: Fencing that should be removed as part of future town centre upgrades (Image: Google Maps)

In conclusion, it is very important that future aspirations cycleway corridors that intersect at Guildford are clearly articulated at every scale in the Public Domain Plan.

All stakeholders need to understand what is proposed so that projects can be delivered over time without unplanned obstacles. Council can maintain a clear vision of final outcomes when setting planning controls and applying for grants. Developers can be asked to contribute to public realm projects. Utilities companies, Sydney Trains, and Transport for NSW can plan and manage assets with future cycleways front of mind.

We have recently commented on proposals for [Regents Park](#) and [Lidcombe](#). All the issues were raised are very relevant for Guildford. We refer council to these submissions for detailed recommendations on the following topics:

- addressing the poor connectivity across the rail lines
- future-proofing the active transport network
- ensuring that new cycle infrastructure is inclusive
- reducing speed limits to 30km/h for local streets and shopping areas
- removing surface parking as necessary to improve place outcomes
- prioritising pedestrians and cyclists at all intersections

There is clear agreement from all sides of politics that walking and cycling are essential to enable a healthier, less car-dependent future as Sydney grows. Bicycle NSW wishes to stress that this is the best moment in recent years for local and State governments to work together to create a truly transformational network for cycling, but there is no time to waste.

Bicycle NSW looks forward to working with Cumberland Council and other stakeholders to progress important connections in Guildford. Please reach out to Bicycle NSW and CAMWEST with any questions or help needed. If requested, we would be delighted to assist with advocating for cycling infrastructure in the LGA through our connections with politicians, Transport for NSW and neighbouring metropolitan councils.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW