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Bicycle NSW feedback - M4 Bridge Pedestrian Ramps upgrade

1 message

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To: M4Penrithpedramps@transport.nsw.gov.au

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Dear Transport for NSW,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposal to upgrade the ramps to the M4 Bridge over the Nepean River at Penrith.

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 routes to provide 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 with the correct infrastructure design.

The paths on both side of the M4 bridge are increasingly popular due to the recent upgrades to the River Loop and the growing population in the area.

Bicycle NSW strongly supports improvements to the gradient, safety and accessibility of the four ramps that are used to reach the bridge.

However, minimal detail has been shared by Transport for NSW at this stage about the design, landscaping, tree loss, lighting, handrails, and path width, length and gradients. We are only able to make high-level comments.

An important point to raise. Although the project is entitled 'pedestrian ramps upgrade', the stated aim is 'to improve safety for all who walk, use wheelchairs and cycle along these pedestrian ramps'. The ramps will be shared used and rideable. The project should be delivering upgraded **M4 Bridge Active Transport Ramps**. We suggest the project name is changed to ensure that the engineers don't neglect to design for bike riders.

We align with the feedback from local Bicycle User Groups CAMWEST and Ride Blue Mountains. Their submissions are attached.

In particular, we reiterate the following recommendations:

- The ramps should comply with the [NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox](#). A minimum width of 4m width is recommended for shared paths. A 4m wide path will allow safe space for passing, reduce conflict, future proof the structure for growth in users, and provide more comfort for people walking, especially with prams, wheelchairs, young kids, when bikes pass them at speed. There is limited width of only 1.75m on the bridge itself, so it will be important to provide space for passing on the ramps.
- The ramp switchbacks need to be as gentle as possible, both at the mid-point of the ramps and at the connection points to paths at the base.
- Shade from tree canopy or shade structures must be incorporated where possible. It is really hot in this area and the exposed nature of the bridge is a major barrier to active transport in summer.
- Somewhere to sit in a shaded spot at the top, middle or base of each ramp would be a valuable addition to the amenity.
- Consider separating walkers and riders, as is done on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The southern ramps and bridge path could be for bikes, and the northern side for pedestrians. The majority of pedestrians are completing the River Loop and use the northern side. Separation could be clarified with signage but it is unlikely that any enforcement would be necessary.
- If separation is not supported by the community and Transport for NSW, then it is important the reinforce the one-way use and clarify the correct direction to all users. Painted arrows may work better than signs.
- Stairs should be included. Stairs would allow a large proportion people who are walking and running to take a much more direct route to the bridge level, and reduce the potential for conflict on the ramps. If stairs can not be included in the scope at this stage, the design should allow for retrofitting of stairs later. If the ramps and bridge path on the northern side of the bridge are designated for bikes, stairs would only be required to bypass the southern ramps.
- Improved connections with nearby shared path network are important. In particular, the rough tracks from Cross Road to the southeast ramp, and from Nepean Street to the northwest ramp should be formalised.

Bicycle NSW hopes that the new ramps are merely the first stage of improvements to the active transport network in the area. Although outside of the current scope, we would like to make three further suggestions for investigation and future investment:

- The active transport paths on the bridge need to be much wider. Please investigate the feasibility of adding a cantilevered path off the existing structure to create the high-quality connections that the community deserves.
- We support Ride Blue's advocacy for a shared path connection to Leonay Parade and Leonay Oval from the base of the southwest ramp, using the TfNSW-owned road reserve along the southern edge of the M4 motorway. A shared path in this green corridor would provide a valuable connection to the River Walk for Leonay residents and form part of the future link to the Knapsack Viaduct and to Glenbrook via Lapstone Hill and the Glenbrook Tunnel.
- Finally, we urge Penrith Council to implement a 40 km/h or even 30 km/h speed limit, with associated traffic calming, on River Road in Emu Plains. This road is increasingly busy with vulnerable pedestrians, and it should be made as safe and attractive as possible. 50 km/h is too fast.

Please do not hesitate to contact Bicycle NSW if we can assist any further at this stage.

Many thanks and kind regards,



Sarah Bickford
Bike Planner

Bicycle NSW

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2 attachments

240918 CAMWEST-M4-Bridge-Pedestrian-Ramps-Upgrade-Comments.pdf
585K

240916 Ride Blue - M4-Bridge-Pedestrian-Ramps-upgrade-Submission.pdf
2612K