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BIKESydney's submission to the Environmental Assessment of the
SYDNEY LIGHT RAIL INNER WEST EXTENSION

Application reference number: MP 10_0111
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1. Introduction

This is a submission to the Sydney Light Rail Inner West Extension by BIKESydney.

2. Who we Are

BIKESydney is an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation that advocates on behalf of people who ride bicycles living and working in the City of Sydney local government area. We are affiliated with Bicycle NSW.

We seek to develop a city:

- in which riding a bicycle is part of everyday life;
- that is vibrant, healthy, productive, creative and robust;
- that values community, mobility, health, wellbeing, social equity and sustainability, and
- where people of all ages can make easy choices to ride a bicycle, walk and take public transport.

3. BIKESydney supports The Greenway

BIKESydney is in general, strongly supportive of the Greenway shared path scheme. The scheme will provide an excellent off-road, low-gradient and largely, grade-separated route for established and new cyclists.

BIKESydney endorses the proposed alignment of the Greenway from Dulwich Hill to the Taverners Hill Stop, but recommends an alternative alignment for that section of the Greenway north of the Taverners Hill Stop.

This submission proposes enhancements to the scheme with a view to further increasing the utility and financial return of the Greenway.

The two primary improvements BIKESydney is advocating for are:

- A grade-separated crossing over Marion St, and
- That the Greenway provide for an off-road connection to the City's CBD via the existing Lilyfield Tunnel.

This submission also proposes other improvements to the scheme.

4. Marion St - Grade-Separated Crossing

BIKESydney strongly recommends the design of the Greenway be amended to incorporate a grade-separated (rather than an at-grade) crossing over Marion St. This would be most simply achieved by having the shared path retain its elevation at rail-level north of Taverners Hill Stop. The cost of such a grade-separated crossing would not be prohibitive in the scheme of the budget (the Greenway costing already includes five tunnels and two bridges). This strategy would return significant benefits to pedestrian and cyclist safety, and would remove the significant barrier to prospective cyclists of having to negotiate motor vehicle traffic (which is most often quoted as the reason for not taking up cycling).

Conversely, the concern of local residents about the loss of privacy that would result from an elevated path over Marion St is ill-founded given the very generous tree-planting that is proposed for this area.

5. Greenway Connection to the CBD

From the outset, BIKESydney recognises that having the Greenway shared path extend to connect to the CBD via Anzac Bridge/Glebe Island Bridge Swing Bridge is beyond the Project's scope. However, we do not see this technicality either being insuperable or as cause for abandoning this very significant opportunity. The benefits of providing such a "CBD Link" would far outweigh the benefits of upgrading the path to Iron Cove, which in any case, is largely already adequate for recreational and casual cyclists.

So significant is the importance of this potential link, that the Greenway project must *facilitate* this connection even if it can't itself take carriage of delivering it. The *existing* on-road connection to the city via Lilyfield Rd presents significant obstacles for cyclists such as steep gradients (Lilyfield Rd, the Victoria Rd footbridge which is not designed for bicycles,

Anzac Bridge), high-speed traffic and car door zones. This is evidenced by the lack of children using the route.

A relatively flat, off-road connection between the northern end of the Greenway (Iron Cove) and the western approach to the CBD via either Anzac Bridge or the Glebe Island Swing Bridge would be *very* strongly supported by the cycling community and one which cycling advocates will be campaigning heavily for. (That Leichhardt Council is dedicating its own money to building a bridge over Hawthorne Canal is strong evidence that they recognise that the primary cycling desire line sits east and not west of the Hawthorne Canal at its northern end.) The existing Rozelle Goods Line rail corridor is near ideal for this purpose and presently sits unused and "shovel-ready".

The NSW State Plan sets a target of five per cent travel by bike across Sydney by 2016 for all trips less than 10 kilometres (NSW State Plan, p64).

A targeted goal of the Metropolitan Transport Plan is the "...completion of the highest priority missing links in the "Sydney Strategic Cycleway Network" (Transport Plan, p29).

Once connected, this "CBD Link" will serve as one of the most significant cycling trunk routes south of the Harbour, connecting suburban Sydney to the CBD less than 10km away. Currently, the city accommodates approximately 600,000 people per day, the vast majority of whom arrive to the city by motorised transport. This future trunk route will provide the potential for significant mode-shifting from motorised vehicle trips to active transport in volumes that will not be easily achieved by other routes or projects. The goal of achieving the State Government's Bike Plan's target of 5% of all trips of less than 10km being taken by bicycle by 2016 will be very well served by evolving such trunk routes.

BIKESydney understands that it was primarily because of the width restrictions of the Lilyfield rail tunnel that the city end of the Greenway shared user path was not extended to follow the alignment of the rail line toward the city. The Lilyfield tunnel is wide enough only to accommodate the two light rail tracks, and not also the shared path. The provision of a continuous Greenway through the Lilyfield Tunnel would require either significant excavation to widen the tunnel or the reduction of the light rail provision to a single-track line for a short section.

BIKESydney is strongly in favour of providing a short section of single-track light rail so as to accommodate the north-eastern continuation of the Greenway shared path from the Leichhardt North Stop to the Lilyfield Stop. This is common practice around the world and would result in very little impact to the level of service provided by the light rail. Tellingly, Transport NSW has not provided evidence that such a short single-track section would manifest in any meaningful decrease in its level of service.

Further, the safety of the shared path users of the Lilyfield tunnel would be easily managed by deploying appropriate lighting and security cameras. The tunnel provides full visibility from one end to the other.

It is vitally important that the Greenway proposal consider its impact and potential influence on this "CBD Link" corridor, which, soon after the opening of the Greenway will encourage a significant increase in cycling traffic.

6. Other Recommendations for Improvement to Design

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage indicative of how the Greenway path connects to local cycling networks should be provided in accordance with the NSW Bicycle Guidelines.

Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking facilities should be provided at each stop so as to encourage inter-modal travel. The provision of bike parking at Leichhardt North stop will be particularly relevant given the anticipated demand from some City-bound cyclists who will likely wish to avoid having to cycle up the steep gradients of Lilyfield Rd, the Victoria Road shared user bridge and the Anzac Bridge shared path.

Light Rail to Convey Bikes

The Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs) used for the light rail line should provide easy access to allow bicycle users to board and disembark with their bike. The light rail carriages should also be fitted with bike racks or hooks which will facilitate the carriage of bikes on the light rail system.

Minimising Conflict between Cyclists and Off-leash Dogs

The design of the scheme must include measures to minimise (ideally, prevent) conflict between cyclists and dogs from the off-leash area in Hawthorne Reserve.

Provision of Budget for Auxiliary infrastructure

The effectiveness of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure of this scale is often unnecessarily curtailed for the lack of properly designed supporting or auxiliary infrastructure. In executing this proposal, the State Government should provide a budget for incidental items required to develop existing adjoining paths and corridors to the appropriate standard, eg, kerb ramps or lighting required for connecting paths, additional refuges and crossings, or drainage required to remove the opportunity for ponding.

Conclusion

BIKESydney is a stakeholder of the proposed Sydney Light Rail Inner West Extension, and is generally strongly supportive of the proposed scheme.

BIKESydney endorses the proposed alignment of the Greenway from Dulwich Hill to the Taverners Hill Stop, but recommends the following two primary improvements for the section of the Greenway north of the Taverners Hill Stop:

- A grade-separated crossing over Marion St, and
- That the Greenway provide for, or at least facilitate, an off-road connection to the City's CBD via the existing Lilyfield Tunnel.

Yours sincerely

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