



PO Box M59 | Missenden Rd | Camperdown NSW 2050
www.bikesydney.org | ABN 95939852367
Tel +61 2 8213 2437

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To:

Roads and Maritime Service Project Manager
Sydney Harbour Bridge Southern Toll Plaza Precinct Upgrade
PO Box 609
Pyrmont NSW 2009

by email: sydney_harbour_bridge_projects@rta.nsw.gov.au

cc:	Minister for Transport,	office@bereklian.minister.nsw.gov.au
	Premier of NSW,	office@premier.nsw.gov.au
	Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney	cmoore@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Re: BIKESydney's submission to the Sydney Harbour Bridge Southern Toll Precinct Upgrade

This submission presents BIKESydney's request to the Sydney Harbour Bridge Southern Toll Precinct Upgrade Project ("the Project") to have the its scope amended to accommodate the proposed future upgrade of the Sydney Harbour Bridge's southern approach ("Upper Fort St") cycling corridor.

As you will be aware, the City of Sydney's *Observatory Hill Masterplan* (April 2012)¹ articulates the future intention to upgrade the upper Fort St cycling corridor to include a two-way, double-laned (four lanes in total) cycleway as illustrated in the Masterplan (see figure below).

The upgrade of the path will be critical given both:

- the projected organic growth in the number of trips by bike in and around the CBD (presently reported by the City of Sydney to be 82% per annum, and recognised at p125 of the NSW Government's Transport Masterplan², as a doubling of bicycle traffic between 2005 and 2010) and importantly,
- the very appreciable increase expected from the introduction of 56,000 workers at Barangaroo, many of whom will seek residence on the lower north shore and will choose to cycle to work.

As shown by the RMS' own bicycle trip counts, the Upper Fort St corridor already accommodates very many more cycling trips than motor vehicle trips per day such that its primary transport function should be re-prioritised for active rather than motorised

transport.

As proposed, the Project does not communicate with this intention nor recognise the role that it plays in facilitating the growth in cycling. The Project provides only a cursory upgrade of cycling infrastructure, and at that, away from where it is most needed - at the western motorway wall and at the crossing of the Cahill Expressway corkscrew ramp. Indeed, the definition of the Project's western boundary may serve to exclude the possibility of the cycleway upgrade if the future intention is to retain Upper Fort Street.



Artists impression of the future upgrade of the Upper Fort St cycling corridor¹

As recognised by the Transport Masterplan, there is an obligation of major roadway upgrades to necessarily improve the sustainable transport options in that corridor. We request that the Project be revised to also upgrade the cycling provision on this regionally-significant route.

While the Upper Fort St roadway itself is controlled by the City of Sydney, the RMS controls the existing Harbour Bridge southern approach path, and critically, the footbridge over the Cahill Expressway corkscrew ramp and the motorway wall - the subjects of this submission. This motorway wall - presently demarcating the western boundary of the Project's Incident Response Operations Area - is to be retained in its current alignment, thereby potentially impinging on the space required for the upgraded cycleway.

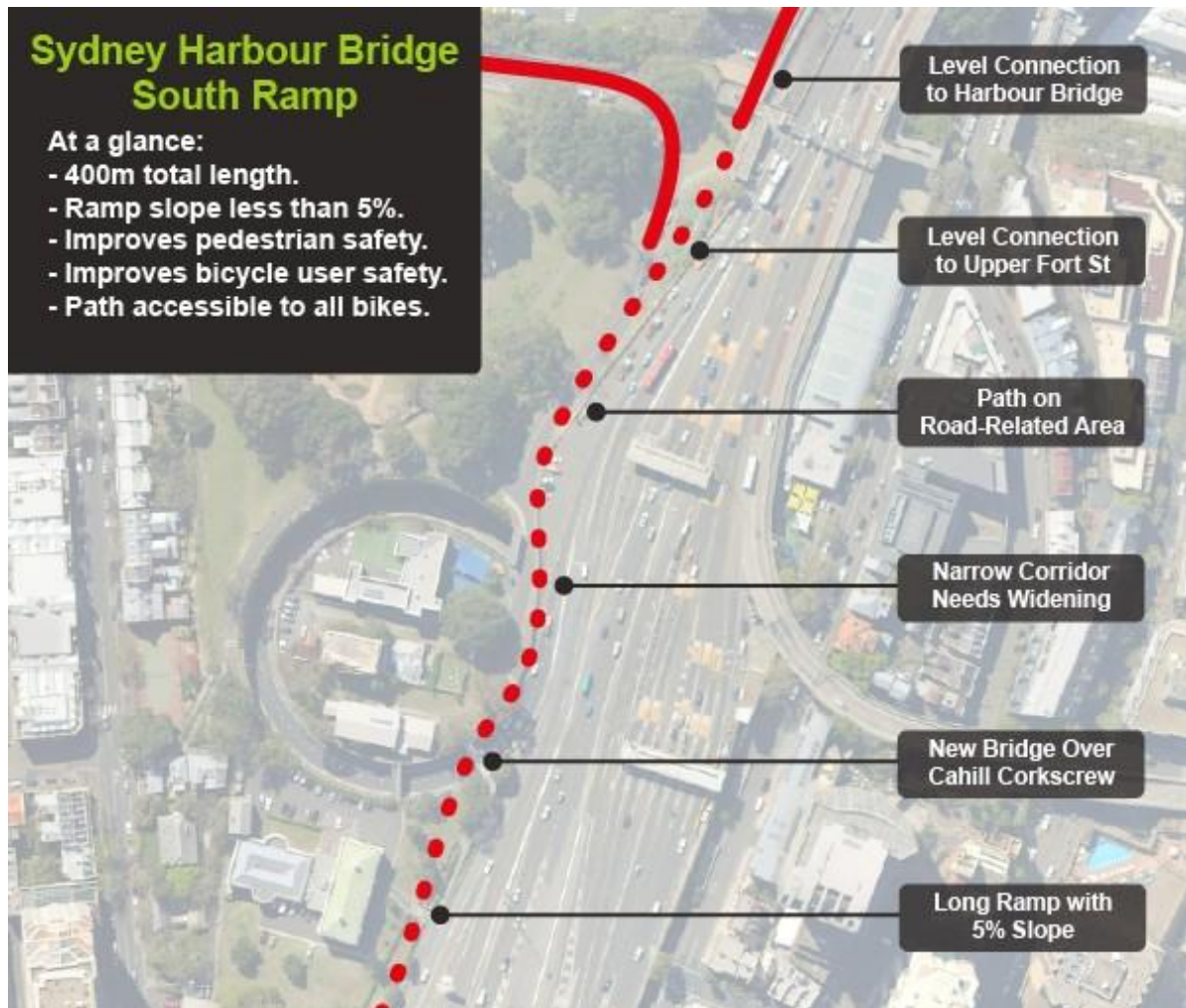
BIKESydney requests that the Project re-align the western wall of the Incident Response Operations Area to make provision for the future cycleway path. The space request is very modest requiring only a minor relocation eastward of the most westerly point of the wall. Presently, this southern region of the existing Incident Response Operations Area is under-utilised and is often devoted to staff car parking. Even the cover page of the Project's own Review of Environmental Factors (REF) report indicates that there would not be a significant imposition on resuming a small amount of this space.



Cover page of Project REF indicating existing under-utilisation of southern end of Incident Response Operations Area. Rationalising the space would for the realignment of area's western boundary wall, which would create provision for the future cycleway.

Further, the existing footbridge (not cycleway) over the Cahill Expressway corkscrew ramp is inadequate and hazardous (excessive grades, too narrow, inappropriate alignment and blind corners) and will not be able to cope with the expected increase in cyclists in the near future. **BIKESydney urges the RMS to amend the scope of the Project to include an upgrade of the cycleway crossing of the Cahill Expressway corkscrew ramp as there appears no other future opportunity for this to occur.**

The future viability of the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycling corridor will necessarily depend on clarifying the existing corridor of the identified existing constraints and constriction points. BIKESydney believes that clarifying the corridor would be relatively easily achieved, with little cost and with no impact on the Project's function and uses. The figure below summarises the easily-won precinct works that we believe would markedly improve amenity for cyclists.



Proposed precinct works required to improve cycling provision in the Upper Fort Street corridor

We urge the RMS to consider modifying the Project as required to ensure that the Upper Fort Street cycling corridor is improved as required to accommodate the cycling demand which is expected to increase significantly. The “do nothing” case will materially constrain the development of cycling on this regionally-significant route. The Project presents as the obvious strategic, financial and political opportunity to achieve the aforementioned easily-won gains that will greatly assist the the Government’s achieving its cycling targets.

Finally, if not as part of this project then when else might the Government attend to these critical upgrades?

Please don’t hesitate to contact us should you require further information.

Yours sincerely

David Borella
BIKESydney
President

david.borella@bikesydney.org

BIKESydney is an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation affiliated with Bicycle NSW that advocates on behalf of people who ride bicycles living and working in the central Sydney area. BIKESydney sits on several bicycle planning committees including the City of Sydney's Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee and Leichhardt Municipal Council's Bicycle Advisory Committee.

References:

1 - Observatory Hill Masterplan, City of Sydney (January 2012) http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Development/documents/CityImprovements/HarbourVillageNthPublicDomainStudy/AppendixB_ObservatoryHillMasterplanReview_Part1.pdf

2. Excerpt from p125 of NSW Long Term Transport Masterplan:

"An emerging exception [to suppressed rates of growth of cycling in other areas] is the Sydney CBD and central Sydney, where cycling is starting to grow at a higher rate than the Greater Metropolitan Area. The number of cyclists crossing the Harbour Bridge and Anzac Bridge during a typical weekday has nearly doubled between 2005 and 2010 based on the Roads and Maritime Services' regular counts...

"Further work is required to create a connected network of cycleways. Despite ongoing investment in cycle paths and routes in Sydney there are still many gaps in the network. These gaps can create unpleasant travel experiences and deter people from cycling. Further development of the cycle network will provide the opportunity to further increase participation in cycling."