



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

To:
Kirstin Gabriel
Community Engagement Coordinator
City of Sydney

23 May 2013

BIKESYDNEY'S RESPONSE TO THE JOHNSTONS CREEK PARKLANDS DRAFT MASTERPLAN

Introduction

BIKESydney is an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation.

We want to live in a city:

- Where 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
- Where people of all ages can make easy choices to ride a bicycle, walk and take public transport.

We advocate on behalf of our members and people who ride bicycles who live and work in the inner Sydney area. We are affiliated with Bicycle NSW.

Documentation Reference

We present the following recommendations in response to the Johnstons Creek Parklands Draft Master Plan - Issue F (April 2013).

Cycling Plan for the Parklands

Given its location in relation to the regional cycling network, the growth of cycling in the city, the impending Harold Park residential development (housing approximately 2,500 residents) and its own attractiveness as a destination, the Parklands will generate a significant number of cycling trips. The Master Plan should necessarily include a Cycling (or Active Transport) Plan. The plan should be predicated on (at least) the following principles:

- a) the Parkland's role in addressing the wider regional bicycle network, and in particular, its relationship to "green corridor" bike routes;
- b) Cycling desire lines through the park;
- c) Optimising segregation of cycling and pedestrian flows (note: this does not preclude co-occupation within the same path corridor);
- d) Optimising the attractiveness of the park as a cycling trip-generator (cycling presents as a significant opportunity to populate the Parklands).

Better Definition of Cycling Routes within the Parklands

Articulation of a North-South Through-Route

The redevelopment of the Parklands presents a critical opportunity to provide vital north-south cycling connections through and around the Parklands. Of particular importance is that a viable alternative to having to cycle as mixed traffic on The Crescent is provided as the prospect of having to do so is a barrier to a significant number of would-be cyclists.

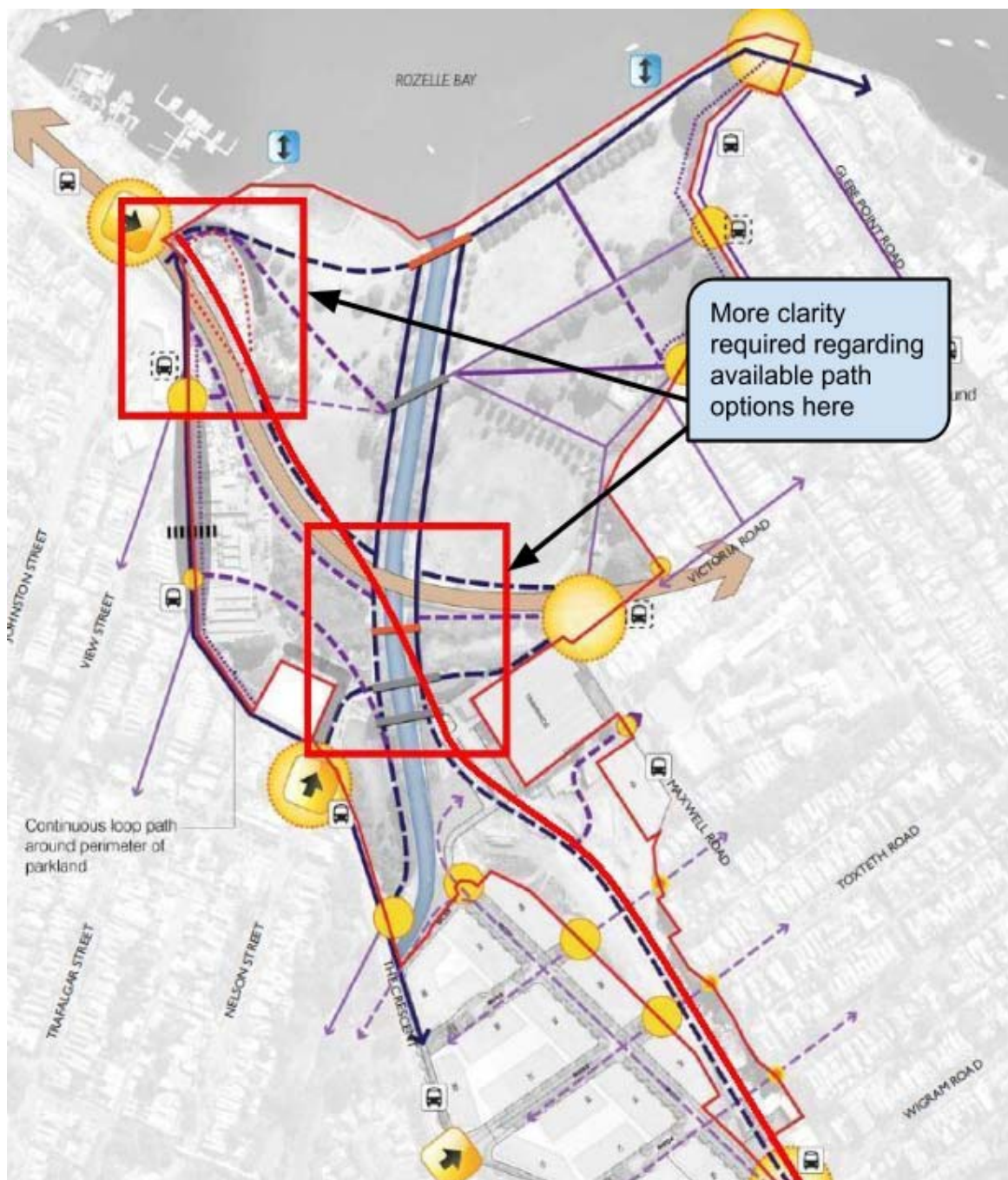
A formal cycleway along The Crescent would alleviate the internal paths of the Parklands of a significant volume of bike commuter traffic.

Aside, the Master Plan needs to more cohesively articulate an internal north-south cycling route from the intersection of Chapman Rd/The Crescent to Ross St (see figure below) in keeping with the Section 3, Objective (k) of the Harold Park DCP which requires provision of *"...a high quality south to north separated pedestrian and cycle connection from Ross Street to Jubilee Park"*.

We also draw to your attention other relevant sections of the Harold Park DCP:

- Section 2.2 - Clause 5
- Section 3.2 (1) I,
- Section 3 (1)-(6) and (17), and in particular
- Figure 10, which articulates a separated pedestrian and cycle path

Articulating this internal north-south route would inform the positioning and alignment of the new southern canal bridge and whether the access paths adjacent to the viaduct may be designated as mode-segregated or one-way flows, which would much improve circulation within the Parklands and minimise conflicts.



Re-Instating Path to Eglinton St/Northcote Rd Intersection

The Master Plan's Transport/Access Map appears to suggest the withdrawal of the existing path connecting to the intersection of Northcote Rd/Eglinton St. This path should be retained as it's a safer and much better provisioned route that also better represents the cycling desire line than the proposed route which connects to Eglinton St near Edward Lane. We note that the proposed alternative "Edward Lane" path connection will pass directly in front to the Hilda Booler kindergarten and ends in a steep, sharply-curved path.

We would request also that the existing kerb ramp and invert at the Eglinton/Northcote Rd entrance to the park be made flush with the road surface, as it presents as a cycling hazard. A simply-constructed drain-bridge would likely resolve this issue.



Construction of Proposed Canal Bridges

The Master Plan's indicates the City's intention to provide two new canal crossings (although it refers to the them as "pedestrian bridges" possibly intimating the exclusion of cyclists, which we would work against the design principles of the Parklands). The alignment of these bridges should better recognise cycling and pedestrian desire lines. The alignment of bridges away from natural traffic flow lines will increase, not decrease the potential for conflicts. The potential for conflicts will be reduced by offering clear sight lines and sufficiently wide bridges which allow different users (pedestrians, joggers, dog walkers, cyclists) to clearly determine and signal their passing intentions.

Further, paths and bridges should be designed to encourage a riding style that is predictable and easily interpreted by other park users. Management of riding style by mechanisms such as obstructions, blind corners and sharp bends or rises which require riders to focus their attention away from people and animals will be counter-productive and should be avoided.

The new canal bridges must be made wide enough to accommodate mixed flows (comprising walkers, joggers, dog walkers and cyclists). It is also important that the bridge fencing be visually pervious so that the movement of kids and dogs on the bridge can be anticipated.

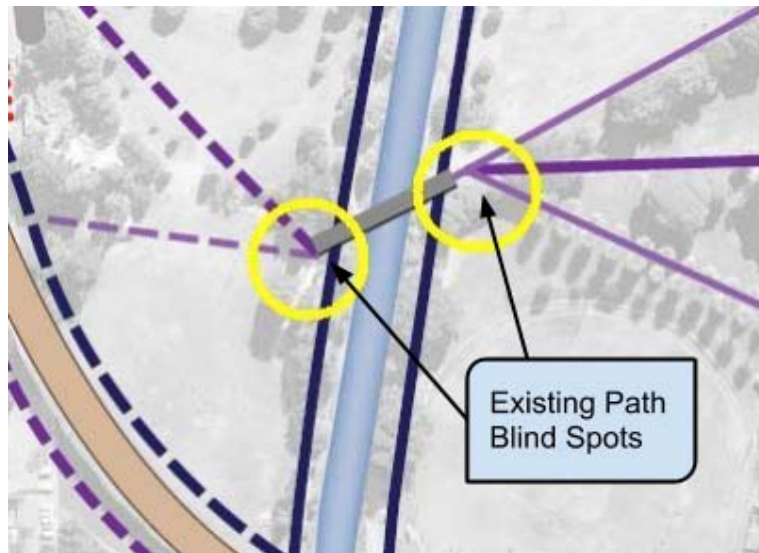
Cycle-able Paths to be Made Smooth

The surface of the existing Rozelle Bay foreshore path requires smoothing - at least to part of its width - as the present surfacing corrals users to its edges: cyclists because the central section of the path is too rough and appreciably diminishes their ride comfort, and pedestrians because they (fairly) assume to “keep left” on their walk. Even the Master Plan’s own depiction of this path bears this out. The aesthetic central pavers of the existing path diminish the utility of the path. All bicycle-accessible paths of the re-developed Parklands should be made smooth.



Improving Path Sight Lines

The design of the park should provide good sight lines for and to cyclists, particularly at path junctions, bridges and other potential conflict points. Presently, there are several blind spots on cycling routes through the park eg, the roundabout junctions on both sides of the existing northern canal bridge and at viaduct archway exits (Chapman Rd south). We recommend that the planting scheme give regard for sight line requirements at path junctions and that paths be positioned away from obstructions such as the viaduct foundations/footings.



Parklands Entrance at Johnston Street Requires Clarification

The Master Plan is ambiguous in its representation of the proposed entrance to the Parklands at Johnston St/Chapman Rd. The Master Plan should indicate definitively whether access to the park via the existing Chapman Road timber yard - lands not owned by Council - will be possible. This detail informs other significant elements of the park's path network such as:

- a) which internal paths are identified as the primary cycling access to Ross St;
- b) whether designating the paths either side of the rail viaduct as, respectively, pedestrian-only and cycling-only routes will be possible;
- c) whether the designation of those paths as one-way flows (whether as shared- or mode-segregated paths) may be preferred;
- d) the alignment of the new canal bridges.

The design of the parklands should seek to maximise the segregation of pedestrian and cyclist flows.

Measures to keep Internal Paths clear

The potential for conflict between cyclists and pedestrians using the internal paths of the park should be minimised. To this end, the design of the Parklands should encourage park users to keep paths clear. Path clarity should be maximised by:

- a) path pavement signage that encourages cyclists and pedestrians to keep left and to respectfully share the path;
- b) encouraging dog walkers to refrain from allowing their dog's leash to span the path;
- c) providing new, small paved areas or hardstands for "boot-camp" fitness schools who presently occupy internal paths, and to position gourmet food trucks such that patrons do not block paths. (Note: City of Sydney Development Application D/2012/112/A presently seeks to introduce food trucks into Bicentennial Park that would result in queueing patrons blocking the Chapman Rd shared path);
- d) positioning park furniture well away from paths. Park benches in particular should be located away from paths such that even a person standing to chat to someone seated is safely away from the path.

Improving Safety of Paths Adjacent to Viaduct Archways

The access paths either side of the rail viaduct should be positioned away from the archways to remove the potential for conflict between path users and those exiting the archways (see figure below). A similar hazard already exists in the park where cyclists turn blind out of the viaduct archway leading to the Chapman Rd carpark. BIKESydney has come to learn of several near-misses here.



Master Plan must Address Impacts of the Commercial Redevelopment of Tram Sheds

The commercial re-development of the Tram Sheds will itself materially influence the design and operation of the parklands, eg, where will the parking of several hundreds of vehicles be located? Will the parking interfere with the “primary access route” connecting to the Harold Park development? To this end, it is critical that the Master Plan presents actual, or at least likely, impacts expected from the re-development of the Tram Sheds.

Legible Connections to Public Transport

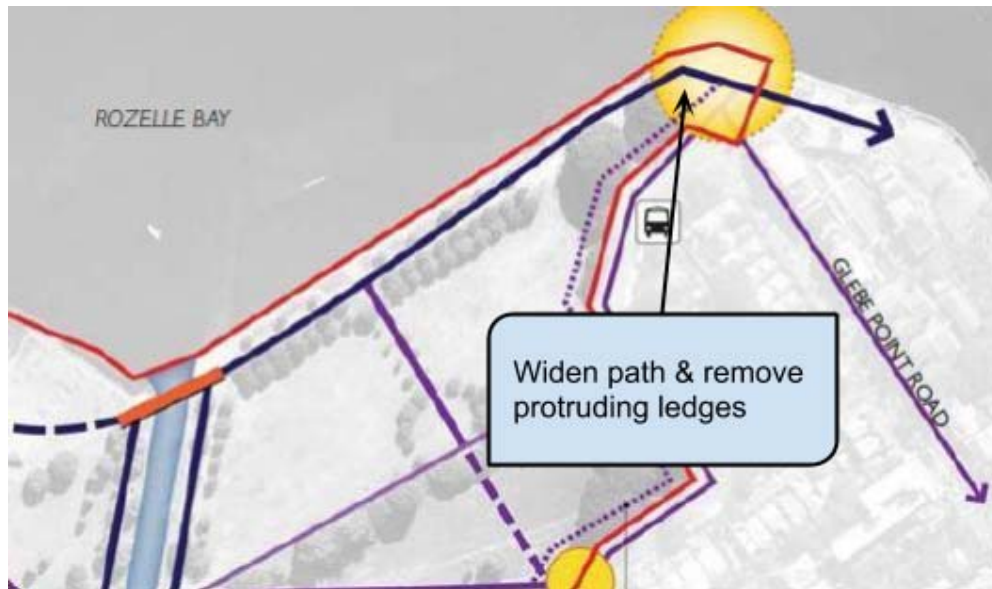
Public transport (buses and trams) stops within the Parklands must be serviced by highly-legible and well-signed cycleable paths. The Master Plan’s Transport/Access guide should be updated to feature these aspects, and the Master Plan should champion inter-modal (eg, bike+tram and bike+bus) travel.

Bike Parking

The Master Plan should explicitly articulate the extent and location of bike parking to be provided in the Parklands. Bike parking should be included at all trip generators including child care centres, sporting fields, public transport stops, picnic areas and at the buildings earmarked for adaptive re-use.

Clarification of North-Eastern Entrance to Parklands

Presently, the foreshore path at the north-eastern entrance to the Parklands is unnecessarily complex in that it is narrow, winding and includes protruding blockwork. This (eastern) arrival path and entrance to the Parklands should be widened and clarified.



Other Big Ideas

An urban redevelopment of the scale should countenance the big ideas and “bold interventions” encouraged by the City’s vision. Some that might be considered by the Master Plan include:

1. A cycleway or “High Line”-style shared path cantilevered at the upper level of light rail viaduct. Such a “High Line” would add high value and character to the Parkland and Rozelle Bay and would serve as a means of re-connecting Rozelle, Lilyfield (Easton Park) and Glebe over the City West Link (motorway) and potentially connecting to the City West Cycle Link (www.cwcl.org.au). The elevated cycleway would provide a safe, uninterrupted, off-road regional connector between Lilyfield Rd and/or the Whites Creek Path corridor and Victoria St, Glebe, and thus the CBD via Ferry Rd and (the soon-to-be developed) Bridge Rd shared path. This connection would allow commuter cyclists to by-pass the Glebe Foreshore;

2. A velodrome located in the open grounds south of the Tram Sheds as a symbolic and modern interpretation of the Harold Park harness racing track and a historic connection to the now demolished Camperdown Velodrome (shown below - image by Vanessa Berry <http://mirrorsydney.wordpress.com/tag/camperdown-velodrome/>). The internal area could be adapted as a kiddie's cycling track, skate park or playground.



3. A childrens' cycling track. BIKESydney has for many years championed the Parklands as a nursery for cycling where people of all ages could learn to ride at their own leisure away from cars. The Parklands presents as one of the best cycling "incubating" spaces given its:
- calm, attractive surroundings;
 - family-friendliness;
 - proximity to residences (easy to ride to).
4. Bike hire scheme. The Parklands could be presented as a highly attractive recreational and tourist cycling precinct given the introduction of a local bike hire scheme. The bike hire scheme would be leveraged with further development of the foreshore paths indicated in the Bays Precinct Taskforce Report (August 2012), and referred to at page 5 of the Master Plan. Notably, the Callan Park Master Plan also includes a bike hire scheme. Rideable connections could also be devised to Easton Park and Wentworth Park and the Fish Markets.

Please feel free to contact us should you require any clarification or wish to discuss other matters. We would be keen to meet with the City prior to the release of the final Master Plan to contribute to achieving good outcomes for cycling within the Parklands.

Yours sincerely

David Borella

BIKESydney

President

david.borella@bikesydney.org