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To:

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BIKESydney's Submission to Sydney Park Plan of Management

This is BIKESydney's submission to the City of Sydney's Sydney Park draft Plan of Management public consultation. We are very supportive of the direction of the draft Plan. We seek to have the Plan reach further in respect of cycling provisioning, and include the following ideas for your consideration.

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.

Principles on which our Submission is Based

Thanks to the City of Sydney's management over recent years, Sydney Park ("the Park") is already established as a high quality attraction and place of leisure. Further, we recognise the City's role in improving access to the Park. BIKESydney has a long, valued association with the Park through events (eg, Bike Valet Parking, Cargo Bike Picnic) and social rides we've hosted.

BIKESydney's interest in the Park's Plan of Management (PoM) is founded on the ambitions to:

- **Encourage Healthy Lifestyle** - by optimising the Park's attractiveness as a place of leisure;
- **Develop Community** - by having the Park incorporate land uses (including bike and walking paths, the Sydney Cycling Centre, community farms and public events) that will not only draw people to the Park, but give them cause to spend more time there and thereby increase interactions;
- **Develop Sustainable Transport** - by designing the Park to favour sustainable transport modes;
- **Encourage Local Living** - by encouraging more bike trips by underscoring the attractiveness, value and facility of the Park to local residents and workers.

In respect of transport particularly, the Park presents the City one of its best opportunities to shift transport choices away from personal car use and toward sustainable modes: trains, buses, walking and cycling. This is because Sydney Park is:

- situated in a consolidated residential region;
- well serviced by bus and train lines;
- itself, a major trip generator..

Documentation Reference

Our submission is based on the concept documentation presented (as at Feb 2014) at:

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/on-exhibition/current-exhibitions/details/sydney-park-draft-plan-of-management-2014>

Our Take on the Draft Plan of Management (“Draft Plan”)

We see the principles and intentions of the Draft Plan as very positive and we are strongly supportive of its future vision of the Park.

We note that cycling well serves the objectives of the Draft Plan (Section 2.3), namely, the themes of cultural heritage, recreation, environmental sustainability, and particularly the opportunity to “...increase community and cultural activity”.

We congratulate the City on including the following elements in the Draft Plan in particular:

- The re-categorisation of the existing Sydney Park Rd carpark;
- Improvements to the existing Cycling Centre and cycling amenities;
- Introduction of a centre for showcasing sustainable living;
- A City Farm including occasional Farmers Markets;
- Its focus for improving the heritage, water and ecology features of the Park, and
- Its recognition that *“...Not only does Sydney Park provide a regional destination park but also could potentially be connected to the open space corridor along Cooks River, Botany Bay and Alexandra Canal bike pathway to the south as well as also to Moore Park and Centennial Park to the north-east.”*

BIKESydney’s Recommendations for the Final Plan of Management

We encourage the City to include the following elements in the final Plan of Management:

- Maps indicating the Park’s **walking and cycling catchments, regional links and its internal cycling and walking networks**. Doing so will lead to better provisioning, and therefore increased patronage of the Park. Enunciating these catchments and links will also encourage surrounding councils to invest in those feeder routes;
- Explicit articulation of how the Park will **connect to existing and future regionally-significant cycling routes**, including but not limited to the “...Cooks River, Botany Bay and Alexandra Canal bike pathway to the south as well as also to Moore Park and Centennial Park to the north-east”;

- A major barrier to riding to the Park is the concern of having to ride on roads with industrial traffic. As a measure to increase patronage of the Park, the Plan of Management should **include strategies for traffic calming on roads used to access the Park**;
- The entrances to the Park, including arrival corridors, should be transformed as “**green arrival gateways**” (eg, the Federation Way arrival to Centennial Park) that better invite people to the Park and strongly message safe access. The existing Mitchell Rd access to the Park should be traffic-calmed and re-designed to improve safety for young pedestrians and cyclists in particular;
- The region around Sydney Park should be signed with **sustainable transport logos and directional signage** to the Park.
- Articulation of **strategies to integrate cycling into transport, ecology, wildlife and water corridors**. Doing so greatly increases the attraction of taking trips by bicycle rather than motorised transport. The green, ecological city cycling corridors developed in Canberra and the Yarra (Melbourne) local government area for example, bear evidence to the bulk shift in transport behaviour and much improved leisure outcomes that result from such integrated land-use planning;
- **Improved Park access that removes the requirement for cyclists and walkers to interact with regional roads, major intersections and the industrial traffic conveyed on them.** The Plan of Management should address opportunities for bridges, underpasses and “green corridor” cycling and walking links to the Park;
- Re-configuring access to public transport stops so that they connect directly with the Park. Specifically, the Plan of Management should address the potential for **an underpass connection to St Peters Station**;
- Address of **how road easements may be adapted** to include cycling corridors. Where this is not possible, then...;
- Inclusion of a **uninterrupted cycling path to the full perimeter of the Park**. A cycleable perimeter path would alleviate the Park’s internal shared paths of commuting cyclists and therefore greatly minimise the potential for conflicts with people jogging, walking their dog or pushing prams over the narrow paths of the Park;
- Having **all uses of the Park include adequate, highly visible, secure, convenient and well-illuminated bike parking**. Bicycle parking within the Park should be plentiful and well-distributed and should afford bike owners visual access to their bike at all times while they undertake their activity (ie. not placed such that bike are hidden from view while bike owners play sport for example). We note that future intended uses of the park include a city farm, urban ecology activities, and a new childcare centre - all of which can be well served by trips by bikes;

- Inclusion of a **high-quality bike parking station at or near St Peters rail station** so as to encourage the shift to ride and “bike-and-ride” modalities;
- An internal network of **segregated cycling paths that separate cyclists from pedestrians (including dog-walkers and joggers) and (in parking areas) motor vehicle traffic**. Where this is not feasible, any shared paths (cycling and pedestrians on the same path) should be widened to remove the potential for conflict (eg, wide enough to accommodate safe passing clearances for two prams and a bike). Many of the existing shared paths are too narrow to adequately accommodate existing - let alone future - weekend pedestrian+bike traffic volumes;
- A **Bicycle Library** (similar to the one at the Green Living Centre) that includes load-carrying (or “cargo”) bikes for hire;
- **Provision of general storage for not-for-profit cycling groups** to develop their capacity to foster cycling communities, events and culture. BIKESydney is one of several of the local Bicycle User Groups (BUG's) that has long sought communal storage space in order to develop its outreach programs;
- Sydney Park should include **cultural and historical walking and cycling trails**. Trails could be developed in the context of a treasure hunt for children educational tours where children seek out information on topics such as environment history or heritage;
- Sydney Park should include an internal aesthetically-sensitive **wayfinding system**. Pavement arrows - possibly colour-coded and creatively themed to also appeal to children - could be used in lieu of “signs on poles”, for example;
- **Include more “Sticky Uses”** - Sydney Park should include more uses and facilities that encourage locals to *remain* in (and not merely pass through) the Park - e.g. seats, bbq's, shade structures, events, skate bowls, context-sensitive car-free retail uses (cafes);
- Given the size of the Park, there are many opportunities to have it **include BMX and/or a mountain bike trails** which can utilise slopes that may otherwise remain un-activated. We include as an attachment Bike Marrickville's proposal for a Mountain Bike/BMX Track and BMX/Skate Bowl for Sydney Park which BIKESydney supports;
- Achieving the City's 2030 cycling mode share goals will require facilitating and **expanding Sydney Park's role as a nursery for cyclists**. The final Plan of Management should include strategies to **increase adult and child cycling training in the Park and establish safe cycling connections to the Park**. We should not lose sight of the fact that presently, almost all children who ride in the park are driven to the Park;
- **Careful consideration of the placement of the child care centre** so that it doesn't restrict the growth of the Cycling Centre or create unnecessary car trips into the Park.

Please feel free to contact us should you require any clarification or wish to discuss other matters.

Yours sincerely

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President

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Attached: Bike Marrickville's Proposal for a Mountain Bike/BMX Track and BMX/Skate Bowl



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Proposal to Develop a Mountain / BMX Track and BMX/Skate Bowl at Sydney Park

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Need for Accessible Facilities

In a city with plenty of entertainment for adults and playgrounds for young children, there are less play facilities for tweens, teens, and the more adventurous energetic adults. These groups also need facilities for recreation and physical exercise. Bike tracks and skate bowls can be used by them free of charge and provide a lot of fun in a relatively small area.

This need was identified in the City of Sydney Open Space and Recreational Needs Study 2006. In Particular the latter study recommends the City of Sydney "Investigate a suitable site for the provision of a BMX facility, such as Sydney Park". It also notes the need to provide range of skate facilities that include both street skate and bowl formats.

The City of Sydney Skate Strategy 2006 recommends establishing a regional facility for children and beginners near the CARES facility.

A Mountain/BM X track and a combined BMX /skate bowl constructed at Sydney park would be the only such facility in City of Sydney. The nearest such facilities are

- skate/BMX bowls at Dulwich Hill
- skate/BMX bowls at Five Dock,
- a street style skate park at Waterloo,
- a small half pipe at Summer Hill (Skaters only)
- and a BMX track at Canturbury.

All these facilities except the heavily used Waterloo park are too far away for most teenagers in South Sydney to easily access them.

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group (MASSBUG)

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group is a local bicycle user group, established in 1991, affiliated with Bicycle New South Wales. We work with Marrickville Council and state government bodies (e.g. RTA & Area Health Services) for the improvement of cycling infrastructure, urban amenity, community health and safety. We also provide information, advice and rides for members of the local community and schools.

Our vision is for a safe, healthy, vibrant community whose planning and infrastructure provide for greater share of transport by walking and cycling, in order that the personal, community & environmental benefits of more sustainable transport can be realised. We also regard public transport services as essential.

Popularity

Riding skateboards, BMX bikes and mountain bikes on interesting surfaces are physical activities which many children and teenagers enjoy - just go out and visit any good local BMX/Skate facility. You'll also see quite a few adults making use of these facilities. All the above facilities are well used. Build the right facilities and they will also be well used!

The first Olympic BMX Gold medal will be given out at the Beijing Olympics. This is sure to stimulate increased interest in BMX riding. The Beijing Olympic venue is shown below. However the Sydney Park facility would not necessarily need to be suitable for holding racing events.



Figure 1 Laoshan BMX venue

Further evidence of the increasing popularity of BMX riding and skating in the area is the opening of a shop specialising in these sport on King St Newtown.

Possible Locations

Area noted in Masterplan

The May 2006 Master Plan identifies an area shown as 4 on the following extract of the map from the Master Plan (page 7).



Figure 2 – extract from May 2006 Masterplan

The text on that page describes this area as:

"A PLAYFUL MOUNDED LANDSCAPE -4

To provide a playful and invigorating environment in association with the 'hilltop' picnic area, a series of sculpted grassy mounds provide an 'up and over' experience or a 'weaving' experience for children.

Designated areas of the mounds could provide for bike-riders, skateboarders and roller bladders."

We encourage council to develop a mountain bike trail in this area with interesting grades and lines without having jumps etc. This type of track would have minimal visual impact on the appearance of this area when viewed from the rest of the park. And would provide an alternative to riding on the paved paths.

Additional Area

An inspection of the site shows there is also an area south of the Council Nursery which cannot be seen from the rest of the park. This area is more suitable for developing a Mountain/BMX track and BMX/skate bowl. The suggested areas are shown below.



Figure 3 – Proposed area for Mountain/BMX track and BMX/Skate Bowl (image from 2003 Masterplan)

The area indicated in figure 3 for the mountain/BMX track is shown in the aerial photo below



Figure 4 Aerial Photo

The same area photographed from the small clump of trees looking north towards the Nursery is shown below.



Figure 5

Both these areas could be developed with minimal impact on the visual amenity of the park and with little impact on other users of the park.

Structures

Mountain/BMX track

A mountainX track can be used by BMX bikes. The converse is not true. MountainX tracks have hills and jumps which are designed to accommodate the longer wheel base of mountain bikes. Therefore, a mountain/BMX track would be a more inclusive facility than a pure BMX track.

The mountain/BMX track would be comprised of a starting ramp leading to a track over a series of hills and jumps. Riders would have a choice between parallel lower and higher hills and jumps to ride over.

A photo of the mountainX track at Sydney Olympic Park is shown in Figure 6 below (photographed on a wet day). The mountain/BMX track would require on-going maintenance of steep un-grassed faces of banked turns and jumps as these surfaces may be prone to erosion.

At some facilities, this maintenance work is conducted by the local mountain bike club.



Figure 6 Mountain X track at Sydney Olympic Park in the wet showing erosion

The following photos of BMX tracks show how different abilities are catered for by providing parallel alternative routes in sections of the track.



Figure 7 BMX jumps with parallel high and low jumps



Figure 8 BMX track with parallel low and high jumps



Figure 9 BMX track in Seattle

The BMX / Skate Bowl

The BMX / Skate bowl would be a flowing group of concrete bowls integrated to the contours of the site. The design would include areas favourable to both BMX bikes and skateboards. Other users to consider are in-line skaters and scooters. The nearest BMX bowl is at Jack Shanahan Park (previously Hercules Reserve, Dulwich Hill). This facility was designed for BMX bikes but is also used by skaters. There is also a new skate and BMX bowl at Five Dock (shown below).



Figure 10 Skate Park at Five Dock (source: City of Canada Bay Website)



Figure 11 – Another skate/ BMX bowl

Graffiti

Inside surfaces of most skate bowls become painted with graffiti, and this should be considered by the Council when designing the facility. Possible approaches include anti-graffiti coatings, commissioned graffiti, and letting it be with careful checking of sight lines to ensure graffiti painted surfaces are not visible from the rest of the park. Inner City Sydney has some of the most interesting graffiti in the world.



Figure 12 Graffiti on BMX/skate bowl

Design

The design of the facilities is beyond the scope of this submission. Some analysis of the demand for such a facility is obviously needed to determine the style, but the results should be viewed in light of the fact that the current lack of any locally accessible facility has suppressed interest in these pursuits in the area.

The employment of the best designers in the field is also crucial to ensuring that the facility is as good as possible within the constraints of the site.

Conclusion

There are few facilities for local residents to pursue mountain biking, BMX riding and skating in the City of Sydney. A cluster of facilities could be provided in the south-western area of Sydney Park catering to the needs of mountain-bike rider, BMXers and skaters. These facilities would have little visual impact on the rest of the park and would provide opportunities, particularly for teenagers, to get recreation and exercise.

We urge the City of Sydney to develop these facilities in Sydney Park, and would be pleased to assist in any way possible.