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To:

Master Plan Feedback
Royal Botanic Gardens
and Domain Trust
Mrs Macquaries Road
Sydney NSW 2000

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4 May 2014

BIKESydney's submission to the Draft Master Plan for the Royal Botanic Garden and The Domain

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 people who ride bicycles who live, work and find their recreation in inner Sydney.

Principles on which our Response is Based

BIKESydney's response to the draft Master Plan is based on the ambitions to:

- Encourage people-centric design;
- Encourage Sustainable Transport by securing vital links and connections;
- Encourage a shift away from personal car trips, particularly in congested regions;
- Provide cycling infrastructure that allows people to ride away from roadways;
- Stimulate inclusive design that promotes equitable access;
- Encourage people into healthy, fun activity in attractive landscapes;
- Support and protect valuable parklands, a forever diminishing resource;
- Contain the impact of development to reasonable levels.

Our Recommendations to the Draft Master Plan

The draft Master Plan provides an significant opportunity to enhance the attractiveness of the precinct and increase patronage of the parklands by ensuring that cycling is properly integrated into the scheme.

We request that the following recommendations be included in the final Master Plan:

- **Develop the Farm Cove foreshore path as a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists** consistent with state government policy of taking opportunities to provide cycling access along the harbour foreshore (eg, *Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Plan* (2003)). The proposed widening of the existing path will suitably manage the potential for conflicts;
- **Formalise an off-road cycling access path between the Mrs Macquarie's Chair and the Bourke St cycleway.** A major opportunity presented by the redevelopment of the parklands is to remove the requirement for inexperienced and less confident cyclists to mix with motorised traffic, in this case, along Mrs Macquarie's Road. As in the case of Centennial Park, cycling will significantly increase the patronage of the Royal Botanic Gardens and The Domain where safe and connected off-road routes to and through the parklands are provided. There is a very significant proportion of the population that won't ride to the parklands if even only a small section of their journey requires them to ride on roads. Linking internal, off-road cycling paths to the Bourke St cycleway and the wider cycleway network will dramatically increase the number of family, young and less-experienced riders to the parklands;

- **Provide cycling connectors and internal access paths** along the following desire lines:

1. Farm Cove foreshore path (as above);
2. Formalising an off-road path connecting Mrs Macquarie's Chair to Bourke St cycleway (as above), including formalising cycling links to the parklands at Lincoln Crescent and both its northern and southern ends, where presently only steps exist;
3. Developing the existing dirt path alongside the sports fields between Cathedral Street and the Art Gallery of New South Wales;
4. Establishing a path between Art Gallery Rd (north) and Macquarie Street along the northern edge of the Cahill Expressway;
5. Allowing two-way flow for cyclists for the full length of Hospital Road corridor (ideally, off-road), and
6. Formalising a continuous cycling link between the State Library of NSW and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.
7. Formalising a through-site access link between Hospital Road and Macquarie St;

While some of these paths exist informally, developing them into defined, high-quality cycling paths or shared paths (where widening of paths can be achieved) will ensure that the potential for pedestrian/cyclist conflicts is removed. Notably, the call for cycling provisioning is generally at the periphery of the precincts of the parklands where good sight lines can be provided and paths can easily be widened and is not being requested through protected or secluded areas such as the gardens.

In respect of cycling, best parkland management outcomes will be achieved by ensuring that internal cycling routes are properly integrated with the existing and future city cycling network (eg, Bourke St cycleway). Doing so will alleviate the the Farm Cove foreshore path of commuting cyclists (who in any case, will use paths at times different to tourists and daytime visitors to the parklands).

An internal path network can easily be provided so as to be in sympathy with the design, aesthetic and management goals of the parklands.

- Consider **revising the proposed design of Shakespeare Place to include provisioning for cycling, and to reduce access by car**. The proposed strategy to merely give pedestrians right of way over cars coming off the Cahill Expressway raises concerns about pedestrian safety. The Master Plan must not serve to encourage personal car use nor allow traffic noise to intrude into the ambience of the parklands;

- **Include a bike hire or bike share scheme.** A bike hire/share scheme within the park would increase visitation to the parklands (for being itself an attraction) and enhance the community's connection to the parklands by extending a visitor's reach into the parklands and its uses. Further, the presence of hired bicycles on internal paths (eg, the Farm Cove foreshore path) would present "flow friction" which would limit path speeds. The precinct will include an increased number of uses and attractions that would be well served by facilitating recreational and transport cycling;
- **Include highly-visible and secure bike parking at each of the parkland's points of attraction.** Permanent bike parking should be provided at all trip attractors within the parklands (eg, the proposed Domain Rail Station) and also at all access points (eg, the proposed Mrs Macquaries Road gateway). Providing bicycle parking immediately adjacent to uses within the parklands will significantly encourage out-of-hours visitors to the parklands (refer: 'In the Night Garden' section of the draft Master Plan) to arrive by bike. Permanent bike parking can be augmented by temporary parking (such as Bike Valet Parking - presently provided with) for precinct events within such as is presently provided in The Domain for the Sydney Festival events , St George OpenAir Cinema, and Carols in the Domain;
- **Install bike maintenance stations** that incorporate a bike pump and basic tools that are free to use. The image below indicates the bike maintenance stand located at the northern end of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Such maintenance stations could be included at various locations within the precinct (eg. at entrances to the parklands, the proposed Domain Rail Station, and the new gateway on Mrs Macquaries Road);



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

Yours sincerely

Jane Parker and David Borella
BIKESydney

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