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BIKESydney's response to the Liverpool St and Park St Cycleway Proposals

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 inner Sydney.

Overview of the Concept Designs

BIKESydney supports the NSW Government's commitment its NSW 2021 Goals:

- More than doubling the mode share of bicycle trips made in the Greater Sydney region, at a local and district level, by 2016 (NSW 2021 Goal 8);
- Promoting healthy lifestyles, including by increasing the mode share of bicycle trips and by reducing overweight and obesity rates (NSW 2021 Goals 8 and 11);
- Improving road safety, reducing fatalities and making NSW roads the safest in the country (NSW 2021 Goal 10).

We are supportive of the expansion of the CBD Cycleways network but concerned at the opportunities missed to connect to existing cycling routes, particularly where doing so would require little additional effort, eg, extending Liverpool St Cycleway 40m east so as to connect to Elizabeth St, or extending the proposed Park St Cycleway westward so as to connect to George St. A cycleway is as strong as its weakest link. Requiring inexperienced riders to ride with King St traffic for example is a deal-breaker. They will not ride at all. As recognised in the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy and Sydney's Cycling Future, the key is to provide **connected routes**, not merely stub tracks.

Overarching Themes

The ongoing practice of withholding from the public view the traffic modeling used to justify transport concept designs is unacceptable from a government agency that serves its public. There is a strong need for a **cross-agency and public scrutiny of the traffic and signal modelling** underpinning the concept designs. There are several instances where it appears that cars have been favoured over pedestrians and cyclists. It appears for example, that the Liverpool St Cycleway does not - as it should - continue east to Elizabeth St merely so that more westbound cars can be stored. Further, there appears no compelling traffic management reason that the Liverpool/Sussex intersection could not be designed to accommodate a single-stage (diagonal) rather than two-staged (dog-legged) crossing for bicycles.

Given the ramifications for the Castlereagh St and Liverpool St Cycleways, **the proposed removal of the College St Cycleway needs to be justified in terms of quantitative traffic and intersection capacity analyses**. There is no evidence available to indicate that the number of people moved in the College St corridor in peak hours will be greater with the removal of the College St Cycleway. Absent also is a quantification of the reduction in safety for cyclists that will result from the removal of the College St Cycleway. Both outcomes would run counter to the goals of the the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy.

There is cause to believe that the concept designs are based on predicted (car) traffic volumes for the *construction* period of the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy (notionally 2015-2019) rather than traffic volumes and patterns expected within the CBD during the *post-construction* period? Presumably, traffic congestion will reduce and significant road capacity will be re-introduced as the CBD works complete.

It would inappropriate that released road capacity is handed back to motor vehicles, as will likely be the default option. **The Project must explicitly clarify whether the concept designs are based on CBD construction period or post-construction period traffic volumes, and specify where future network capacity will appear and to which mode it will be later assigned.**

The on-road bicycle storage areas included concept design are often inadequate in respect of their placement, size, and/or safety. (The concept design for Castlereagh St Cycleway has cyclists being stored on the turning line of buses turning right into Hay St). Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is presently investigating on-road treatments for the safe storage of bicycles at intersections (eg, Bicycle Storage Boxes and Advanced Stop Lines). The finalisation of the concept design for each of the CBD Cycleways should be contingent on an analysis undertaken by TfNSW for the suitability of these treatments at cycleway intersections.

Following is our feedback on the concept designs of the Liverpool St cycleway and Park St cycleway.

Feedback on the Liverpool St Cycleway concept

We are supportive of the increase in the number of cycleways. However, such cycleways must connect to the existing network and otherwise support existing cycling routes and desire lines. Unacceptably, the proposed Castlereagh St Cycleway will not connect to the existing cycleway network at its northern end (King St) nor at its southern end, provide a connection to Oxford St which will remain a strong cycling desire line despite the presence of the Park St and Campbell St Cycleways. Further, the removal of the College St Cycleway will further corral such eastbound cyclists to approach Oxford St from the Liverpool St/Castlereagh St intersection. To this end, **the Liverpool St Cycleway must extend east to Wentworth Ave, or at the very least to Elizabeth St - merely another 40m - rather than stop at Castlereagh St.** The absence of a cycling facility on Liverpool St between Castlereagh and Elizabeth Sts, will undermine the safety of cyclists and pedestrians as they are brought into conflict with each other on the footpath on the northern side of Liverpool St.

The Liverpool St Cycleway west of Kent St, should be situated on the southern rather than northern side of Liverpool St with the Liverpool/Kent Sts intersection re-designed to allow bicycles to cross diagonally. This would remove the abstruse crossings of Kent St (Cyclists Dismount, mixed with pedestrians) and Sussex Sts (a two-stage, unprotected) proposed for cyclists in the concept designs. Notably, there is no formal north-to-south pedestrian crossing at the Liverpool/Kent Sts intersection and so introducing a diagonal crossing for cyclists would not introduce conflict with pedestrians. The presence of the stop line on the "straight through" lane for westbound cars on Liverpool St at the Kent St intersection also allows for a diagonal crossing for bicycles. A cross-agency analysis of the traffic modeling of this proposal should be undertaken which includes consideration of how the number of north/south-crossing pedestrians crossing at western side of George St will naturally filter the number of left-turning vehicles that can be received and stored into Liverpool St.

Aside from the above proposal, **the fact that both Sussex St and Liverpool St will convey one-way traffic flows allows for a crossing of the intersection for bicycles being provided as a single-stage diagonal crossing rather than the two-staged crossing proposed.** A diagonal crossing would bring better connectivity, network efficiency, compliance and critically, safety benefits for cyclists. The need for this alternative would of course be negated where the cycleway is relocated to the southern side of Liverpool St as described above.

Feedback on the Park St Cycleway concept

We welcome the introduction of the Park St Cycleway. We believe strongly that **the Park St cycleway should extend west to George St** to provide vital network connectivity and as potentially, this would be relatively easy to achieve by means of merely reallocating road space.

The connection made by the proposed Park St Cycleway to the existing College St Cycleway underlines the significance of the College St Cycleway and the importance of it being retained.

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

Yours sincerely
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