



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

To:

Project Manager
Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan
Roads and Maritime Services
PO Box 609 PYRMONT NSW 2009

Email: cbd_access@rms.nsw.gov.au

9 January 2015

**BIKESydney's response to the
Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan
Review of Environmental Factors (REF)**

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 central Sydney.

NSW Framework - Transport for NSW's Sydney's Cycling Future

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

- 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).

BIKESydney also supports Transport for NSW's (TfNSW) "**Sydney City Centre Access Strategy**" and its "**Sydney's Cycling Future**" transport blueprints.

It's a pity that the proposal ("The Proposal") outlined by the REF does not respond to these blueprints and that Sydney's transport systems will be degraded as a consequence. This Proposal calls into question the Government's ability to deliver modern transport outcomes.

The REF is Inadequate. BIKESydney rejects the REF.

BIKESydney, a key stakeholder, strongly rejects the Proposal.

The release of the REF for public comment over the Christmas and New Year holiday period is a cynical attempt by the RMS to stifle community feedback. The Proposal represents one of the biggest changes to transport in Sydney in several generations and so warrants wide-scale discussion and scrutiny. The consultation by the Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) of key stakeholders and the wider public has been extremely poor.

It is unclear why the RMS rather than TfNSW has stewardship of the Proposal. It has long been established that the RMS' role is to implement (to construct), not to design transport infrastructure. It is very clear that the Proposal has been designed by the RMS. This is untenable. Sydney's transport networks will quickly deteriorate where this circumstance is maintained due to the RMS insistence on prioritising motor vehicles.

The Proposal clearly prioritises car use over sustainable transport modes (walking and cycling in particular). The deletion of footpaths and cycleways in order to increase capacity for motor vehicles is indisputably a retrograde step in a precinct where more than 90% of trips are made by walking, riding and sustainable transport modes. The Proposal is largely an effort to increase capacity for cars.

The Proposal will significantly increase car traffic, reduce safety and reduce access for walking and cycling. These outcomes defy the objectives of the **Sydney City Centre Access Strategy**.

The RMS has no legal or community-endorsed mandate to increase capacity for motor vehicles in the CBD.

The need for, and the social and economic benefits of the Proposal have not been quantified.

The Proposal results in high social and economic costs such as significantly increased traffic, increased pollution, congestion imposts, reduced pedestrian amenity, reduced cycling amenity.

The justifications for the Proposal are subjective and uncorroborated. The Proposal fails to reveal critical traffic and signal plan modeling which determines modal priorities. This is unacceptable for a concept of this import. It is unclear whether the RMS modeling accounts for the reduced traffic numbers that can be expected as a result of light rail and improvements to the bicycle network.

The Proposal's stated objectives have no associated targets by which the success or failure of the strategy can be evaluated in future. Targets should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

It is unsupportable that the Proposal can seek "...to support the growing demand for [private motor vehicle] access into the Sydney city centre". This alone demonstrates that the RMS is failing to prosecute the directives of the **Sydney City Centre Access Strategy**. It is widely accepted that congestion cannot be reduced by increasing capacity for cars. There is a high level of latent demand from car drivers that would fill these new travel lanes in a relatively short period. Major cities around the world have understood this and are moving to reduce, not increase, capacity for motor vehicles. Particularly in light of the presence of the grossly under-utilised Cross-City Tunnel [twice gone into receivership], Sydney's CBD should be covered by an access charge for private motor vehicles.

BIKESydney cannot accept that reducing footpath widths (eg, Market St), removing kerb extensions within the already-crowded CBD (several CBD intersections), removing pedestrian crossings (eg, on the long mid-block sections on York St), and failing to provide pedestrian crossings to ALL legs of an intersection (eg, Ultimo Rd/Harris St) could be considered viable strategies by the State Government. (Indeed, the RMS has stated that its policy is to provide pedestrian crossings to all legs of newly-signalised intersections.) (If it needs to be said...) These treatments play a fundamental role in the safety of pedestrians. The CBD has experienced too many pedestrian injuries and deaths in recent years. It is unconscionable that the State Government is responding with measures that materially increase traffic volumes and speeds and reduce safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

All existing on-street car parking, loading bays and traffic lanes should be audited explicitly with view to having them re-purposed for uses that best serve the goals of the **Sydney City Centre Access Strategy**. This will generally result in those spaces being re-purposed as wider footpaths, dedicated bus lanes, segregated bicycle lanes, share cars, and vegetation.

We also outright reject the proposal to delete the College St Cycleway. The College St Cycleway should be retained. The Government is proposing unacceptable, sub-standard alternatives such as the “part-time” “cycleway” on Castlereagh St (which will house loading zones) and the Liverpool St Cycleway which will have missing links at its eastern and western ends (not even allowing connection to Darling Harbour).

The removal of the College St Cycleway will force riders onto the road, thereby reducing their safety and comfort. Their presence in each of a northbound and southbound car lane will cause traffic “friction” and frustration for drivers.

Adding another traffic lane to College St will not ease congestion in the long term. It will induce additional motor vehicle traffic until such time that congestion limits the capacity again. These phenomena are very well established. A modern transport agency would support this view.

The proposed removal of the College St Cycleway will materially reduce the opportunities of creating a “minimum grid” for cycling within the CBD, itself, a necessary requirement to achieve the State’s **NSW 2021** cycling goals.

We also do not support the removal of trees within the CBD, and in particular on Macquarie Street, a Federation street. The State Government has a responsibility to enhance the green canopy of the city.

All of the above matters should be corrected in the revised proposal.

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

We reject the Proposal. Fundamentally, it clearly seeks to intensify the road network at the expense of other transport users. Sydney deserves much better.

Yours sincerely

David Borella

BIKESydney

President

david.borella@bikesydney.org