



Making Cycling Better in Northern Sydney

M7 MOTORWAY WIDENING

Response to Modification Report

Bike North

23 August 2022



bikenorth.org.au

M7 MOTORWAY WIDENING

APPLICATION NUMBER SSI-663-MOD-6

Introduction

Bike North is concerned about the impact of the proposed works on the shared path beside the M7 on commuters, families, and recreational cyclists. This path is one of the most used and useful bicycle facilities in western Sydney.

It is imperative that the project team takes every step to minimise the impacts and takes the opportunity to rectify existing issues while the path is closed.

DETOUR DETAIL

Need for detours

Bike North has found, on other major projects, that the project teams give little time or attention to disrupted cycle routes. To avoid this outcome on the M7 project, Bike North requests a consultation with designers to have them brief us on why the detours are necessary. We understand that there are several works that will be undertaken close to the shared path and understand these would be more easily undertaken if the path were closed. As a start to this process, it would be useful to have a list of the works that will necessitate the closure of each section. Attached is a table in which begins this process. Can the project team please check and complete this table to confirm which works necessitate the path closure for each section. Bike North and other bike groups have access to engineers who are capable of conducting straightforward and efficient discussions about these closures with the project team. We look forward to the opportunity to understand the reason for the planned closures.

Disincentive to active transport

Bike North is concerned that the detours, through additional length and alignment, will be a substantial disincentive to active transport. In a period when this attractive route would be expected to see increases in usage, the detours will deter users and the opportunity to consolidate active transport and to increase it will be lost.

Standard of the detours

Bike North strongly recommends that the detours provided must be of equivalent safety standard to the shared path they replace. Further, it would be preferable if the detours were of the same “standard of service” as the route they replace. In most cases the routes chosen are major local active transport routes which will benefit from any improvements.

Detail of detour route and facility

Although the designers have already given thought to where the detour routes might be, these are lengthy routes (one over 7km). Bike groups can provide invaluable input to the detail of these routes. In particular, to allow the routes to meet the above requirement of being of the same safety standard as the shared path they replace. Bike North requests a ‘walk through’ meeting with the designers. Bike North recommends that the alternate routes proposed by CAMWEST in its submission be fully investigated, including attention to the phasing of traffic signals on detour routes.

Bike North seeks to be a part of any formal consultation on this topic, for example, the Construction Contractor’s Pedestrian and Cyclist Management Plan or community liaison groups.

Other impacts on the shared path during construction

Bike North recommends that the shared path NOT be used for construction traffic. There will be enough disruption to the shared path. The contractor should be able to find other forms of access.

Similarly, the project team, but particularly the contractor, must minimise the impact of the placement of ancillary facilities on or near the shared path. It will be attractive and simple to just place ancillary facilities on or near the path, but this must be avoided.

Opportunities for maintenance and remediation of shared path

If the shared path is to be detoured, this provides an opportunity to undertake maintenance and remediation of the shared path:

Flood prone section of the share path

A section of the path at the southern end, close to Prestons, is flood prone, which affects the value of the path as a commuter route as well as recreational route. Again, while the share path is closed would be an ideal opportunity to undertake the works necessary to overcome this significant deficiency in this tremendous facility.

Maintenance of the shared path

There are minor maintenance issues along the length of the shared path that will require attention in the near future. Undertaking those works while the path is closed is a great opportunity.

Other opportunities on this path

This would also be an opportunity to consider other minor upgrades on this path. For example, there are no toilet facilities on the 40km shared path. An obvious location for such a facility would be the “water bubbler” adjacent to the intersection of Wonderland and Wallgrove Rds.

No cyclists on the main carriageway

If cyclists are to be banned from the main carriageway, the shared path needs to be available at all times (this could perhaps be expressed as “the alternate route that these cyclists are forced to use must be as accessible as the route they are now banned from”). This necessitates that the path must be free of flooding, which the current path is not. We cannot force bikes off the main carriageway unless the alternative is always accessible.

OVERALL PROJECT

Public transport

The median was originally earmarked for public transport, and Bike North supports the Bicycle NSW submission that the new median lanes be used for public transport. (The project team’s attention is drawn to the submission of Bicycle NSW for more detail on this topic.)

Other submissions

Bike North wholeheartedly endorses the submissions of Bicycle NSW and CAMWEST.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bike North recommends that:

Detailed design

1. The designers meet with bicycle user groups including Bike North, to discuss the need for the proposed detours and allow suggestions for alternative strategies.
2. Any detour provided be of equivalent standard of safety and preferably equivalent "level of service" to the existing route. This should include phasing of traffic signals on these routes.
3. Transport for NSW undertake a series of site visits with bicycle user groups including Bike North to walk each of the detours and examine the detail of the routes to ensure adequate planning for the safety and efficiency of the routes.
4. Bike North recommends that the shared path NOT be used for construction traffic.
5. Ancillary facilities should be placed to not impact the shared path.
6. While the section of shared path from approximately Cowpasture Rd to Kurrajong Rd is closed, flood-proofing works be undertaken in parallel with widening works.
7. As each section of the shared path is closed, the opportunity is taken to undertake maintenance and related minor upgrade works.
8. Bike North be involved in formal consultation on active transport or more general community liaison for this project.

Project scope and purpose

1. Reduce traffic congestion by using the two additional lanes for an integrated public transport service within the central median as recommended by Future Transport Strategies 2056.

Attachment - M7 Motorway Widening – Detour works

	Detour	Widening works that necessitate detour	Comment
1	Kurrajong – Bernera	Maxwell's Ck (bridge widening)	
2	Ash – Bernera	Maxwell's Ck	
3	Bernera – Hoxton Park Rd	Cabramatta Ck	
4	Hoxton Park Rd – Cowpasture Rd	Hinchinbrook Ck	
5	Cowpasture – Elizabeth Drive	Hinchinbrook Ck, Elizabeth Dr	"travel distance impact 1.3km", but total detour is approx. 7km
6	Old Wallgrove – Wonderland	Reedy Ck	
7	Woodstock – Power	Not apparent (bridge at Woodstock will be widened??)	
8	Lamb – Florence	Bridge carrying path at Florence to be altered	
9	Florence – Simms	Bridge carrying path at Simms to be altered	
10	Florence/Woodley – Simms	Bridge carrying path at Simms to be altered	

Elsewhere in the papers project staff have mentioned noise wall works. As these are often close to the shared path this may also "necessitate" a detour.



RIDE WITH US.

Bike North
PO Box 719
GLADESVILLE NSW 1675
P. 02 8188 2084
E. info@bikenorth.org.au
bikenorth.org.au