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Ms Kiersten Fishburn  
Secretary,  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure,  
NSW Planning Portal  
30 August, 2024

**Mixed Use development including in-fill affordable housing – Five Ways, Crows Nest**

Dear Ms Kiersten Fishburn

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mixed-Use development including in-fill affordable housing at Five Ways, Crows Nest.

Bike North is a not for profit organisation, affiliated with Bicycle NSW, whose volunteers work with local council and state agencies such as Transport for NSW, for a safer cycling environment in Northern Sydney and enables cycling as a viable and effective mode of transport in our urban environment.

Bike North support the need for developments especially within Transit Oriented areas such as near Crows Nest Metro and St Leonards Railway Stations. This submission though does not focus especially on the appropriateness of the level and type of development proposed generally, as this is not our area of expertise. We focus on the transport impacts of the development, how this can be ameliorated as well as opportunities there are for the development to contribute to transport in the local area.

**Transport – Car versus Public and Active**

Transport for NSW states that up to 81% of the users of this development are anticipated to walk or cycle to and from the development, including as part of a public transport trip. Given the location of this site, in an area that has already become high density, with much more to come and supported by several major public transport service types, walking, cycling and public transport needs to be the primary transport modes of choice. There should be incentives for people to walk, cycle and use public at the highest rates, along with disincentive to the use of private vehicles.

**What we see in this development proposal is the opposite of disincentives to use private vehicles, through the provision of excessive parking and no, or tokenistic, attempt to make cycling an attractive mode of choice.**

### **Private re Shared Car Parking**

The most obvious area of concern is the level of car parking planned for this development which is in excess of that required under current planning provisions. We state that the requirements themselves are already in excess of what is suitable for a highly dense urban area which is in close proximity to a broad range of public transport.

Driveway access is proposed for this site on Alexander Street, a street that already has significant congestion issues and directs drivers into other narrow and congested streets. That simply strengthens the argument that it is more sensible to significantly reduce car use by reducing the provision of car parking.

As noted in the Traffic and Parking Assessment document, Crows Nest has *'a high proportion of people travelling to and from Crows Nest use public transport, accounting for close to half of all trips in the case of residents travelling to work'* and *'that the site has a very low car reliance on car'*. This was documented is before the launch of the new Metro, which has brought very popular high speed convenient travel even closer to this site. Why then is the development proposing excessive private car parking?

It is difficult to understand why this site should be allowed to encourage such a high level of car usage by providing so many private car spaces, and that the proposal suggests shared car facility only as a possibility in the future, if there is demand. That is backwards thinking; If the car spaces are there, people will use them and not appreciate there is cheaper and more flexible and sustainable alternative.

It is well recognised that each car share vehicle provided can replace residential private cars by a factor 10. Ideally the parking provision should be entirely replaced by shared car parking and thus the 190 proposed private residential parking spaces could be easily replaced by 19 share cars, with a range of different types to suit different reasons for use. That is the ideal provision for residential parking, but any compromise with a significant reduction of private car parking and replacement with car share would be a good start.

Commercial tenants should also be encouraged to participate in car share schemes by reducing their car parking in the same way.

**In summary, Bike North does not support this excessive level of private car parking and propose that, to service those occasional needs for car travel, groups of ten proposed car space be replaced by one car share. Ideally this would be**

- **19 residential share car spaces, to provide a variety of vehicle types but at a minimum there should be 10 residential car shares, replacing 100 private car spaces.**
- **13 commercial share car space , but at a minimum of 7, replacing 70 private car spaces.**

## **Public Transport**

This development is supported by a new Crows Nest Metro Station, which is already achieving strong demand, an existing St Leonards Railway Station and numerous bus services. All these provide excellent connections to the North Sydney and Chatswood strategic Centres and the City CBD plus the numerous connections beyond those lines. Public transport will service most medium to long distance services, with car share available for the remainder.

## **Active Transport**

**Safe, connecting and integrated active transport is an essential transport component to complement public transport and reduce car use for short to medium journeys.**

Walking itself is a very important activity for transport and enjoyment in this area. It is also the obvious mode of choice to access Crows Nest village and metro station, several schools including North Sydney Girls High and the Mater Hospital.

Walking though will only cater generally for short trips such as those up to 400m, or possibly 2km for the younger, fitter and keener. Walking will not provide access to the multitude of schools, sporting, recreational, local business, shopping, residential visits which could be up to 5-10 kilometres, but still more than a half hour walk. Cycling can support those trips, provided it is safe.

Provision of a safe and separated space for cycling is critical to enable short to medium term trips of up to 5 kilometres.

## **Cycling Routes**

The Traffic and Parking Assessment provides a map indicating many bicycle routes in the area surrounding the development. The problem is, there are no safe, separated bicycle routes shown in that area. There is nothing but on-road routes, popular routes (by experience riders only) and proposed routes.

Within a couple of kilometres to the north there is a great separated cycleway which connects through Naremburn, Artarmon and Lane Cove and further. But there are no safe routes to reach this wonderful cycleway.

About 500 metres to the north there is a shared path along the Pacific Highway which connects St Leonards to Chatswood. Not quite the same quality as the first cycleway, but still a relatively safe route. But there are no safe routes to reach that shared path.

Willoughby Council is in design and development stage with funding to start a great bike path between St Leonards and Chatswood ... but once again, no safe route to reach this from the development.

North Sydney Council has a design for a bike path along West Street, but that connects Cammeray to the Ridge Street in North Sydney. But a safe route is needed to connect to West Street and that itself is unfunded and remains to be connected to the south at the bridge.

Transport for NSW is developing strategic cycling routes to connect strategic centres. The most obvious routes for that important regional link is along the Pacific Highway, with potential alternative in Crows Nest along Nicholson Street. A major regional bike routes needs many and/or significant funding sources. Any new developments which are bringing more people as residents and workers, needs to make financial contribution to building these routes around Crows Nest.

**Bike North recommends that a contribution to funding a bike path along the Pacific Highway between Rocklands Road and Shirley Road should be made from this (and other) developments.**

### **Bike Parking**

The amount of bike parking provision is not adequate for a residential and commercial building of this size where active and public transport need to be the dominant transport modes. Provision for one bike only is quite insufficient for households with multiple bedrooms. Residential bike parking could be easily doubled and there needs to be provision for future increase for commercial development use.

The quality of this parking is unknown. Bike parking needs to cater for heavy e-bike and cargo bikes so vertical parking is not suitable and space is required for these larger bikes. Access to power for charging e-bikes in place is also needed.

The location of this parking within the development is also unknown. Location and how the parking is accessed is also very important. There are nine levels of basement and the ramp is far too steep for riding. Access needs to be provided at street level or lifts provided. Any lift needs to be of adequate size for a long cargo bike and access needs to be easy from the street with no complications with doors and no difficult angles.

**Bike North recommends increased, good quality and accessible bike parking provision as discussed above.**

Thank you for opportunity to comment on this important development proposal.

Carolyn New

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