Creating a better environment for cycling

23 October, 2017

Department Planning & Environment

GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 1 - EIS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 1, EIS. Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for over forty years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups, including the very active groups in the Parramatta area, ie CAMWest, Western Sydney Cycling Network, and Bike North.

The Parramatta Light Rail (PLR) provides a golden opportunity to increase both public transport and Active Transport (AT) usage in this critical growth area. We are pleased to see that AT has been included in the PLR proposal, but will elaborate below on some essential improvements required. The PLR must be completed to a high standard as we are planning for the future. Basing AT requirements on existing usage is very short sighted.

Bicycle NSW is firmly of the belief that a hierarchy of priorities should exist in all infrastructure projects, ie pedestrians first, then cycling, public transport, essential motor vehicles, then finally private motor vehicles. Too often this hierarchy is reversed to the future detriment of Sydney.

The link and area:

The PLR route is noted as a Strategic Corridor in "*Sydney's Cycling Future (TfNSW, Dec 2013"*. To quote Ministers Berejiklian and Gay in this report:

> *"A safe and connected network of bicycle paths is an important part of Sydney's integrated transport system"*
>
> *"Bicycle riding is already a popular form of transport: it costs nothing, improves health, generates zero carbon emissions and, for shorter journeys, can often be quicker than a car or public transport".*

Two of the main points in the Executive Summary of this report state:

- *"investing in separated cycleways and providing connected bicycle networks to major centres and transport interchanges,*
- *Promoting better use of existing networks"*

The NSW Government has the policy framework in place. We request that the NSW Government now live up to these commitments.

The AT facilities along the PLR will link Parramatta with Carlingford/Epping and onto Macquarie University/Park. These areas are major trip generators, ie three university campuses, two business districts, and major residential areas. This link is also noted as part of the Future Transport Principal Bicycle Network.

The PRL At link will link well with the existing Parramatta Valley Cycleway. Experience on this route shows dramatic increases in overall usage as extensions are added.

T (02) 9704 0800 F (02) 9746 2600 bicyclensw.org.au
Bicentennial Drive, Bicentennial Park, Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2138
PO Box 293 Concord West NSW 2138
ABN 26 511 801 801

The features required:

The PLR AT link should be designed and built now to cater for the future. Overall design principles should include:

- Separated walking and cycling paths over the full length. The anticipated future demand will necessitate that pedestrians and bike riders will need separation. Already the growing demand on the Parramatta Valley Cycleway is requiring City of Parramatta to plan separation in areas.

- Access to the AT link and crossing points of the PLR must be frequent. The PLR must provide and increase permeability in all areas and easy access.

- The AT link must be continuous and inside the PLR corridor. The AT link must cater for all age groups – from age 8 to 80, and beyond. We know that 70% of people would ride a bike more frequently if it were safer and more convenient. This can only be fulfilled if the AT link is continuous and inside the corridor.

- The rolling stock must provide adequate spaces for bicycle on-board. There are many great examples of this overseas which should be looked at. The PLR is only one link in a total public transport chain, and some commuters will wish to use their bikes at either end. Transport options must be provided for.

Specific items:

- The AT link must **NOT** exit the corridor at Adderton Rd, Telopea. Riding on the edge of a busy road will place an impenetrable barrier to riding for many people. Thus the AT link will be non-continuous, and of much lower amenity overall. We recognise the exiting Adderton Rd bridge over the railway is an issue – but this must be solved. Construction while there are no trains operating provides a great opportunity to solve this issue.

- At Kissing Point Rd, the AT link must be readily accessible from both sides of the road. This should be the case at all major road crossings. Public amenity must be increase.

- The At link on the bridge over the Parramatta River must be a **minimum of 4 metres wide.** The suggested 2.5 metre shared path width is totally inadequate, and will not be safe from inception. Experience from the 4 metre wide shared path on the ANZAC Bridge shows that even this width causes issues between walking and cycling. It is noted that the existing heavy rail bridge was only built in 1996, and although it only carries a single line now, can cater for two heavy rail lines. It has a 2m wide grid walkway on the western side. To plan for the future, the pedestrian and cycling crossings should be separated – say a 3m walkway on the eastern side, and a 3m cycleway on the western side.

- Bicycle riding must be maintained in all Parramatta CBD streets, including those with the PLR. A 30 km/h speed limit should apply to the Parramatta CBD core area.

- Church St in Parramatta should have a pair of uni-directional bicycle paths installed as part of the project.

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Considering the future:

The unused heavy rail corridor from Camellia to Clyde Station must be retained and developed in a AT link. This then forms the start of a major north-south AT link which travels along the Duck River as far as Sefton.

Should you wish to discuss these matters further, please contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Ray Rice

C.P.Eng. F.I.E.Aust.

Advocacy

Bicycle NSW

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