



...making cycling better in northern Sydney

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BNA/SUB1202001

Submission to the Northwestraillink Environmental Impact Statement 1

Application Number: SSI-51100

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects

Email: plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

Submission by:

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Advocacy Officer

Bike North Inc

Bike North Supports the Northwestraillink project

Bike North gives in principle support for the Northwestraillink project in its provision of heavy rail public transport infrastructure for the north-west community of Sydney. This should enable the removal of many buses and cars from the road, reducing pollution, noise, congestion and creating greatly improved amenity to the residents of these communities.

We are extremely supportive of a multi-mode approach to this project that encourages the use of active transport, walking and cycling, for the access of all railway stations. We do not support the creation of car parks with excessive spaces which can only encourage inappropriate usage of the car for short journeys, creating more pollution and local congestion. We do support the provision of world's best practice secure bike parking and other end of trip facilities in closest proximity to station entrances/exits. We also support the development and upgrading of cycling routes within at least a five kilometre radius of all railways stations to enable safe and efficient cycling access for local residences, commerce and businesses.

We support the realisation of extra cycling infrastructure opportunities that are available as a result of this project.

We support the continuance of safe and efficient cycling access throughout the construction period and request early consultation with your team members to avoid any threats to existing cycling routes as a result of the construction.

Bike North, Bicycle New South Wales, and our neighbouring bicycle user group, Camwest are united in this support for a multi-mode transport project and request creation of a special working group to ensure this project meet these objectives..

About Us

Bike North is a volunteer run bicycle user group, affiliated with Bicycle New South Wales, with a membership of over 600 members. We work with eight councils in northern Sydney, towards creating a bicycling friendly environment for all who want to use a bike for transport or recreation in northern Sydney. As well as actively working with those councils, Roads and Maritime Services / Transport NSW and other government authorities, we run a diverse, popular and quality program of social rides which is free and open to the public. More recently we have developed and offer an education program of cycling skills called '*Bike for Life*' to encourage more skilled and confident bike riders in Sydney.

Bike North has worked with many state government roads and transport authorities, consultants and road/rail builder on a number of transport projects including:

- M2 widening – phase 1 and 2
- Lane Cove Tunnel Project
- Chatswood to Epping Rail Line

Why Cycling?

Bike riding is widely recognised as a healthy activity and a sustainable and equitable form of transport. Riding a bike is an easy way for many people to gain the requisite amount of moderate physical activity to reduce the risk of obesity and many common modern diseases. Using a bike to ride to work or for other transport reasons is a very effective way for people to achieve necessary levels of physical activity as part of their everyday activities. In Sydney, increased use of the bike for shorter commutes has great potential to reduce congestion and ease the increasing demands that single occupancy cars place on the roads and the increased pressure on our trains and buses. Bikes are also sustainable transport which is clean, not dependent on dwindling non-renewal resources and contributes to reducing the impacts of climate change. Bikes are a cheap and economical form of transport and cycling is a highly social activity.

Cycling is a most efficient mode of transport for short transport journeys of up to 10 kilometres.

Cycling Policy

The encouragement of cycling for transport and recreation is policy at all levels of Australian government for many of the reasons already outlined previously.

The National Cycling Strategy, 2011-2016 is the latest of a number of five year strategies released by various federal governments. This Strategy's goal of '*Gearing up for active and sustainable communities*' is underpinned by six priorities and objectives including to '***create a comprehensive network of safe and attractive routes to cycle and end-of trip facilities***'.

NSW 2021, a plan to make NSW Number One' identifies the target to '***more than double the mode share of bicycle trips in the Greater Sydney Region, at a local and district level by 2016***'. To meet this target the plan identifies the priority action to '***increase walking and cycling to help ease transport congestion and build a healthier, more active community***'.

Many local governments, especially in northern Sydney, have policies to increase the use of the bikes for both transport and as recreation due to the benefits outlined previously. All eight

local governments in the Bike North area have bike plans and at least two councils, Willoughby and Ku-ring-gai are currently in the process of reviewing those plans. Many local governments annually extend and improve their network of cycleways in accordance with their adopted bike plans.

Demand for Cycling

There is a strong latent demand for cycling in Sydney communities that if fulfilled would enable these cycling policies to be easily met. There is recent evidence of this demand from the City of Sydney experiences and also north of the harbour with the cycling infrastructure built as part of the Lane Cove Tunnel project. This is a positive indication of the potential for the Greater Sydney area to meet the state targets for bicycle modal share.

Providing bicycle end of trip facilities and improving the access routes for bicycle to reach the railway station is an excellent way to also grow the bicycle modal share in the north-west.

North West Rail Link – EIS1

Bike North welcomes the opportunity to comment on this EIS. We have previously commented on the North West Rail Link Project Overview in September 2011 and attach that submission as the comments still stand. We look forward to EIS2 where we anticipate the opportunity to further develop our recommendations based on your proposed station configurations.

We are concerned at the process of environmental review with this project. It is our view that the review of the operational aspects of NWRL integration with other transport modes and community impact should be conducted prior to the assessment of construction impacts. We believe that conducting the review process in the current sequence compromises possible acceptance of significant engineering modifications which may be necessary to maximise benefits of the project.

Since the initial project announcement and community consultation the project has been revised to include an above ground Skytrain route from the proposed Bella Vista station to end of the route at Cudgegong Road and the Tallawong Road stabling. The above ground route provides the potential for incorporation of Cycle path infrastructure attached to the rail alignment. However p28 of the Overview summary appears to exclude the Skytrain viaduct for such purposes.

- No reasons are given for the declaration excluding cycleway provision attached to the Skyway viaduct. Explanation should be provided for this policy.
- The potential for alternate cycleway facilities in the alignment area below the viaduct should be examined and detailed at the earliest opportunity

We do have concerns as to how the construction may impact on existing cycling routes. We have already identified the following potential conflicts on existing cycling routes as well as to unmarked routes that are frequented by cyclists and need to be taken into consideration. Further impacts could arise as this project further develops:

1. The **Epping decline works site** is on the western side of the railway line and appears to be located at the original **bus tunnel exit from the M2**. This bus tunnel currently forms part of the M2 bicycle detour route created when cyclists were barred from the M2 bike shoulder lane due to widening construction works. This bus tunnel is

an essential part of the route and needs to continue to be accessible especially until the M2 bicycle lane/route is re-established. It is also normal practice for the RTA/RMS to subsequently return detour bicycle routes as a result of road works to the local bicycle network, and consequently we would expect this bus tunnel to continue to provide bicycle access in the future, most likely as a M2 bicycle exit.

2. **Cheltenham works site** - M2 on and off ramps are proposed as an option for access to this work site. The M2 has always been an important part of the bicycle network and Bike North and cyclists who live and work all over the north-west are eagerly waiting for its return. Additional on and off ramps, especially those which will involve many truck movements during construction and continue to be in permanent use for maintenance and emergency access will be detrimental for safe cycling. We request the alternative option be chosen for access.
3. **Hills Centre works site** - access to this site appears to impact on the local bike path that follows the creek. Construction should ensure that the Carrington Road cycle path and shoulder is maintained for cyclist use. Flood damage has currently destroyed the cycle path linking the showground to Fred Catersdon Reserve on the north side of Showground Road. The proposed haul road is adjacent to the affected path. For the duration of the construction it is requested that bicycle crossing provision be incorporated into traffic signals protecting the haul road access. Bicycle routes through the showground from the haul road intersection to Carrington Road must be defined and sign-posted appropriately.
4. **Bella Vista Station** - the western edge of the proposed truck layover area appears to infringe on the Old Windsor Road Cycle path. If this cannot be avoided possible mitigation may involve improved bicycle crossing provision of Old Windsor Road and the T-way enabling cyclists to reach the Cycle path on the western side of Old Windsor Road. Current traffic islands and light positioning and phasing are not adequate for cyclists travel needs.
5. **Balmoral Road** - T-way cycle path access will be totally cut by construction work in this area. Traffic signals at intersection of Old Windsor Road and Balmoral road should be modified for improved cyclist crossing provision from Balmoral road to the cycle path on the western side of Old Windsor Road. Embankment construction should include provision for cycleway access following construction
6. **Memorial Road** - it seems likely the T-way cycle path will be totally cut through this area during construction. Adequate provision must be made for cyclists crossing to the T-way station from Sunny Holt Road and Old Windsor Road cycle paths. Construction in this area should make provision for T-way cycle path restoration as part of the project.
7. **Kellyville Station** – a cycle path currently operates on the southern side of Samantha Riley drive. The construction compound should not infringe on this facility.
8. **Samantha Riley Drive** - the Windsor Road cycle path at the intersection with Old Windsor road must be maintained during construction.
9. **Old Windsor Road to White Hart Drive** - no cycling specific infrastructure exists in this location. Traffic management plans should consider the needs of cyclists during

construction.

10. **Rouse Hill Town Centre** - it does not appear that any Cycle paths will be directly affected by construction in this area. Traffic management plans should consider the needs of cyclists during construction.
11. **Windsor Road Viaduct (Site 15)** - care should be taken to ensure the Windsor road cyclepath and bicycle shoulder lanes are maintained throughout construction.
12. **Windsor Road Viaduct to Cudgegong Road** - no cycling specific infrastructure exists in this location. Traffic management plans should consider the needs of cyclists during construction.
13. **Tallawong Stabling Facility** - no cycling specific infrastructure exists in this location. Traffic management plans should consider the needs of cyclists during construction.
14. **Castle Hill Station** - no cycling specific infrastructure exists in this location. Traffic management plans should consider the needs of cyclists during construction. The recently renovated Castle Hill road currently provides the best cycling route through The Castle Hill shopping district. It appears this area will be blocked during construction. Acceptable alternate travel provision must be established
15. **Cherrybrook** - no cycling specific infrastructure exists in this location. Traffic management plans should consider the needs of cyclists during construction

We would appreciate the formation of a working group between the Northwestrailink and the bicycle stakeholders from Bicycle New South Wales, Bike North and Camwest to address issues related to access through construction as well as ensure best practice end of trip facilities, bicycle access from a catchment area of at least five kilometres and takeup of other cycling opportunities that are available.

Further information regarding this submission is available from:

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