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Att: Director - Key Sites Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
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WalkSydney is pleased to make a submission on the [Sydney Fish Market - Concept and Stage 1](#).

WalkSydney is a community group advocating for walking and better streets and walking networks. Streets provide places for important social and economic engagement as well as infrastructure for walking. WalkSydney wants to see bold coordinated action to make walking in Sydney safer, easier and more pleasant.

INTRODUCTION

The new Sydney Fish Market (SFM) Proposal for Blackwattle Bay submitted as a State Significant Development entails the replacement of an area of the existing waterway with a large building with a long frontage to Bridge Road that will have commercial functions serving businesses, tourists and residents. The proposal has included major upgrade works to Bridge Road as well as a new service access road into the western end of the development.

The new SFM is expected to attract large numbers of tourists and locals and result in a significant increase in walking within its immediate vicinity, primarily between the new SFM and other public places and transport stops nearby in each direction. All existing transport types including bus and light rail as well as a new ferry service will access it. Access for servicing and parking will be from the new entrance opposite Wentworth Park Road on Bridge Road.

Because walking to and from the site will significantly increase, we believe that the new SFM represents an opportunity to bring about improvements to the public infrastructure of an area of inner Sydney where walking amenity is currently defective and therefore generally we support the opportunities that this proposal would provide for improvements to the public domain.

CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING WALKING AMENITY AROUND BLACKWATTLE BAY

The present character of Bridge Road is predominantly that of a vehicular arterial route between the motorways surrounding the city centre and Parramatta Road. It isn't a pleasant walking street. Having a relatively easy grade, intrepid commuter cyclists often use it as a direct route to the inner west despite its exposure to dangerous speeding traffic and so it is also unpleasant for cycling.

However, this route is limited as a vehicle thoroughfare by its nature as a local high street in the denser residential areas of Glebe, Forest Lodge and Camperdown to the west of the proposed new SFM. The width of the carriageway is generally 14 metres with two 3.5 metre wide lanes of traffic that travels at



relatively high speed in each direction. Some retail and wholesale frontage is proposed for the new SFM. This will continue the ongoing conversion to retail and residential of many other former industrial sites along it and will reinforce the future character of Bridge Road as a local high street. The proposed traffic diversions away from Parramatta Road that Westconnex and its ancillary works (such as an inner west commuter cycle route) are expected to bring about will also support this transformation.

For walkers, Bridge Road along Blackwattle Bay is especially important, both as a commuter route connecting Central Sydney with the inner west and also as a link in the chain of harbourside recreational walking routes being established around Rozelle-Glebe Foreshore, Pyrmont Peninsula and Darling Harbour.

The northern footpath of Bridge Road along the edge of Blackwattle Bay is currently a narrow shared way with cyclists that is manifestly inadequate for its current purpose. Cyclists and commuters on foot have little option but to use it, as it is the only route available around Blackwattle Bay. It has no shade trees that provide a continuous canopy cover for walkers in summer and as a shared way, it discourages both faster commuter cycling and commuting on foot. The presence of bicycles, especially electric-powered bicycles, on the footpath makes it unpleasant for walking and represents a danger for elderly and disabled pedestrians.

The concrete batching plant, the last harbourside industry in that part of the bay on the site of the proposed new SFM, requires full-time traffic controllers to stop pedestrians crossing its driveway during its hours of operation.

The southern footpath has a reasonable width with a complete canopy of Moreton Bay Fig trees providing excellent shade through summer. Unfortunately, being away from the waterfront on the wrong side of a busy street, this footpath is isolated by the heavy traffic and by the lack of any safe pedestrian crossing points to it and therefore it is currently under-utilised.

IMPROVEMENTS SUPPORTED IN THE NEW SYDNEY FISH MARKET DEVELOPMENT

WalkSydney would like to support the following positive features of the design included in the proposal that will improve the amenity for walking and public transport users:

1. A widened footpath along the northern side of Bridge Road.
2. A wide median strip in the centre of Bridge Road - if designed for pedestrians;
3. A reduced intersection size where Wentworth Park Road meets Bridge Road;
4. The removal of the left-turn slip lanes and traffic islands at Wentworth Park Road, which are currently very dangerous for pedestrians crossing to and from Wentworth Park;
5. The addition of traffic lights at the new intersection of Wentworth Park Road and Bridge Road to make access to the Park easier for pedestrians;
6. Paving upgrades to all areas of the site and surrounds;
7. Improved Landscaping and pocket parks within and around the new SFM site;
8. Improved access options for walking around the waterfront in the proposal;
9. Tree planting as canopy cover over footpaths where it is proposed;



10. The addition of a drop-off zone for buses and taxis adjacent to the new street entrance to the proposal;
11. The inclusion of a new public wharf and regular ferry service within the site.
12. A continuous protective awning to the Bridge Road Commercial building frontage and any active commercial frontage to Bridge Road.

THE CHANGES PROPOSED TO BRIDGE ROAD

The new SFM proposes a very extensive re-construction of Bridge Road between Wentworth Park Road and Wattle Street. This involves widening the reservation by approximately 10 metres, keeping the alignment of the existing fig trees in the park but adding the width to the northern side where the proposed new SFM building will be located on the waterfront side of the street. This reconstruction includes: widening the total vehicular carriageway by 5 metres to 19.2 metres (including the bus lane); raising the roadway level by approximately one metre in the middle; re-building and paving the adjacent footpaths and relocating many associated services.

The new northern footpath is proposed to be a shared way with cyclists without any separation. A bus drop-off is added adjacent to the carriageway on the Northern side next to this shared way. A wide median strip is proposed for a section of the middle of the block, although it is not clear if this has landscaping that will encourage or prevent pedestrian access to it.

A new set of traffic lights is proposed at the intersection of Wentworth Park Road and Bridge Road where a new vehicle entrance is proposed for service and car parking access to the Fish Market creating a crossroads where previously there was a Tee-intersection. Additional lanes of traffic are proposed for left-turning vehicles on both sides around this new intersection.

The character of Bridge Road will be changed from its earlier harbourside industrial character to that of a high street with high volumes of pedestrian traffic. The presence of the new Fish Market retail areas fronting it will continue this transformation in the character of Bridge Road.

With the changing character and increasing numbers of pedestrians and the continuing attraction for recreation of Wentworth Park adjacent to it, Bridge Road will likely qualify for treatment as a high volume pedestrian precinct according to the criteria set out in the Austroads Manual. As such it will need speed reductions, traffic calming and lane width reductions. WalkSydney strongly advocates the following additional improvements to Bridge Road that this change demands.

ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS THAT ARE NEEDED FOR ACTIVE USERS

Walk Sydney would like to propose the following improvements to the detailed design of works associated with the new SFM proposal and Bridge Road as they will affect the amenity of walkers and cyclists passing through and accessing the proposal.



1. Introduce Traffic-calming measures to Bridge Road between Wentworth Park and the new Sydney Fish Market - Install raised threshold 'Wombat' crossings to all pedestrian crosswalks.

Each of the signalled pedestrian crossings over Bridge Road at Wentworth Park Road and Wattle Street should be raised Wombat crossings to prevent speeding through this anticipated new zone of high pedestrian activity. Crossing to Wentworth Park in the mid block should also be made easier by calming measures and, where feasible, additional marked crossings.

2. Reduce the width of carriageways on Bridge Road between Wentworth Park and the new Sydney Fish Market to conform to those required for a local street with high pedestrian activity.

The SFM proposal indicates the substantial widening of the Bridge Road carriageways towards the Northern (Blackwattle Bay) side. The widening of the carriageways to include four wide travel lanes of 3.0 and 3.5 metres and a long bus drop-off lane is unnecessary and would induce increased rather than reduced speeds. The carriageway lanes should be made narrower in accordance with the Sydney City Council and Austroads Guidelines for Local Streets with High Pedestrian Activity. For Local streets with high pedestrian activity carriageway widths are given as no more than 2.9m wide.

3. Introduce a speed limit of 40km/h along Bridge Road between Wentworth Park and the new Sydney Fish Market.

Bridge Road as a designated area of High Pedestrian Activity would require the introduction of a speed limit of 40 km/h with appropriate signage.

4. Tighten the design of the new intersection at Wentworth Park road by deleting left-turn lanes, minimising the turning radii, and building out the corners for shorter crossing times.

The proposed reconstruction of the intersection at Wentworth Park Road, while reduced from that existing, retains corners that have excessively large radii and so will permit left turning by vehicles at speed and create a danger to pedestrians. The corners should be made closer to the desire lines of pedestrians so that crossing times may be shorter with more frequent signal changes.

5. Delete the shared Pedestrian/cycleway on the northern side of Bridge Road in favour of a 6m wide footpath on the northern side and a fully separated and protected cycleway either on the southern side or in the centre of Bridge Road for the full length of Bridge Road and Pyrmont Bridge Road.

A shared pedestrian and cycleway on the Northern side of Bridge Road will create dangerous conditions for elderly and disabled pedestrians and so the cycle function of this should be deleted. A bus pull-in zone to a shared pedestrian/cycleway adjacent to the Proposed Development is also not best practice. WalkSydney advocates a Wide footpath of 7-9m (including a street furniture and planting zone of 3m) along the full street frontage of the new SFM and a fully protected separated cycleway that can serve as an arterial link in a future inner city cycle network. This cycleway should be designed and established as a part of an extensive network of commuter cycle routes and located in the carriageway portion of the street according to best international practice principles.



6. Add an extra pedestrian crossing to the intersection of Wattle Street and Bridge Road.

The proposal shows no change to the traffic Lights at Wattle Street. However, the closest light rail station to the new SFM will become Wentworth Park Station located only one block away on the eastern side of Wattle Street. There will consequently be a high volume of pedestrian traffic from this Light rail stop to the new SFM and the direct route for pedestrians will be along the eastern side of Wattle Street. Therefore, a third signalled crossing over Bridge Road will be required to make it safe for pedestrians to cross here.

7. Provide continuous tree canopy cover over all footpaths.

The tree planting along Bridge Road should produce a continuous shade canopy to make walking along Bridge Road a pleasant and comfortable experience in summer.

8. For all new signalled intersections, priority should be given to pedestrians and allow sufficient crossing times at Traffic Signals.

Walk Sydney advocates only best practice traffic signals. As beg-buttons are unknown in other countries they are especially unfair to tourists, they should be replaced with short-phase frequent-change signals so that pedestrians are permitted to cross at every phase. This enables maximum crossing times over minimum distances.

A state significant proposal such as that put forward for a New Sydney Fish Market has the potential to serve a broader public purpose within the City and metropolitan area of Sydney in providing demonstrable public benefits improving the public domain of its immediate location. WalkSydney would commend this proposal provided it produces the benefits outlined for walking and cycling.

Thank you for taking the time to read our feedback.

Yours sincerely,
WalkSydney

Attached Diagram - Summary of Recommendations

