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## Bernera Rd Upgrade, REF Feedback

### Project Reference: BER Ref-1/2024

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plan to upgrade Bernera Rd between Yarrawa St and Kurrajong Rd (*The Plan*).<sup>[1]</sup>

These comments have been prepared on behalf of CAMWEST, a Bicycle NSW affiliated Bicycle User Group with a focus on advocating for and encouraging cycling in Western Sydney. While our primary focus is normally a little further north, this proposal piqued our interest as we believe the proposed Shared User Path (SUP) along this section of road is of high strategic importance for Active Transport (AT) in Western Sydney.

### ➤ Context

Although through an industrial area and alongside a reasonably busy road, the 'missing' 850m of SUP alongside Bernera Rd will complete an important strategic AT route when built.

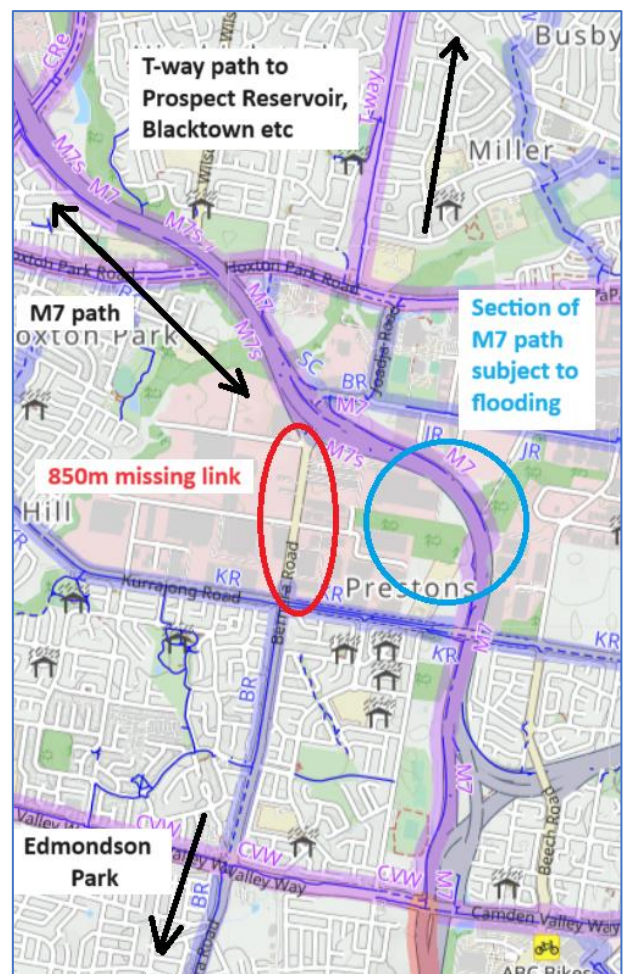
From the northern end of the missing link, AT users have SUP access to the M7 shared path and the Parramatta-Liverpool T-way path towards Prospect Reservoir and Blacktown.

From the southern end of the missing link there's a direct SUP route to Edmonson Park.

While the M7 path and Kurrajong Rd SUP do provide a detour around the missing link, they potentially add extra distance. The section of the M7 path used for this detour is prone to flooding around Maxwells Ck and is often closed. It would be nice to have the Bernera Rd path as an alternative for when this occurs.

(Note that we understand the current flooding issue is supposed to be addressed during the M7 widening works, so this may be less of an issue once the works are complete).

***There is no question in our minds that the Bernera Rd SUP link is needed.***



Marked up Cycling layer enabled Open Street Map image of the area.<sup>[2]</sup>

Our concerns centre around access to the northern end of the proposed Bernera Rd SUP at the Yarrawa St (southern) roundabout.

**We acknowledge that these concerns fall largely outside the immediate scope of The Plan area**, although our alternative Suggestion 4 would have an impact if implemented.

The northern end of *The Plan* links directly to the corridor we feel very uneasy about. Virtually all users that will use the proposed Bernera Rd SUP will use this corridor.

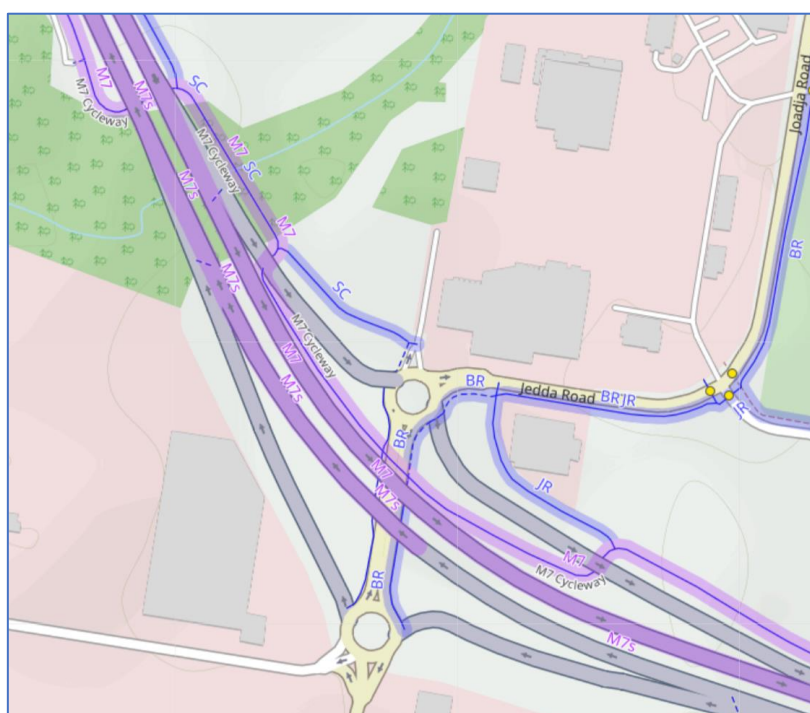
### ➤ Apparent Intended AT route through the M7 interchange

We are concerned about the apparent intended 300m AT route through the M7 interchange, which runs between the northern end of the proposed Bernera Rd SUP at Yarrawa St intersection and the Jedda Rd eastern M7 path access ramp. This is covered by the grey and blue lines on the map overlay to the right.

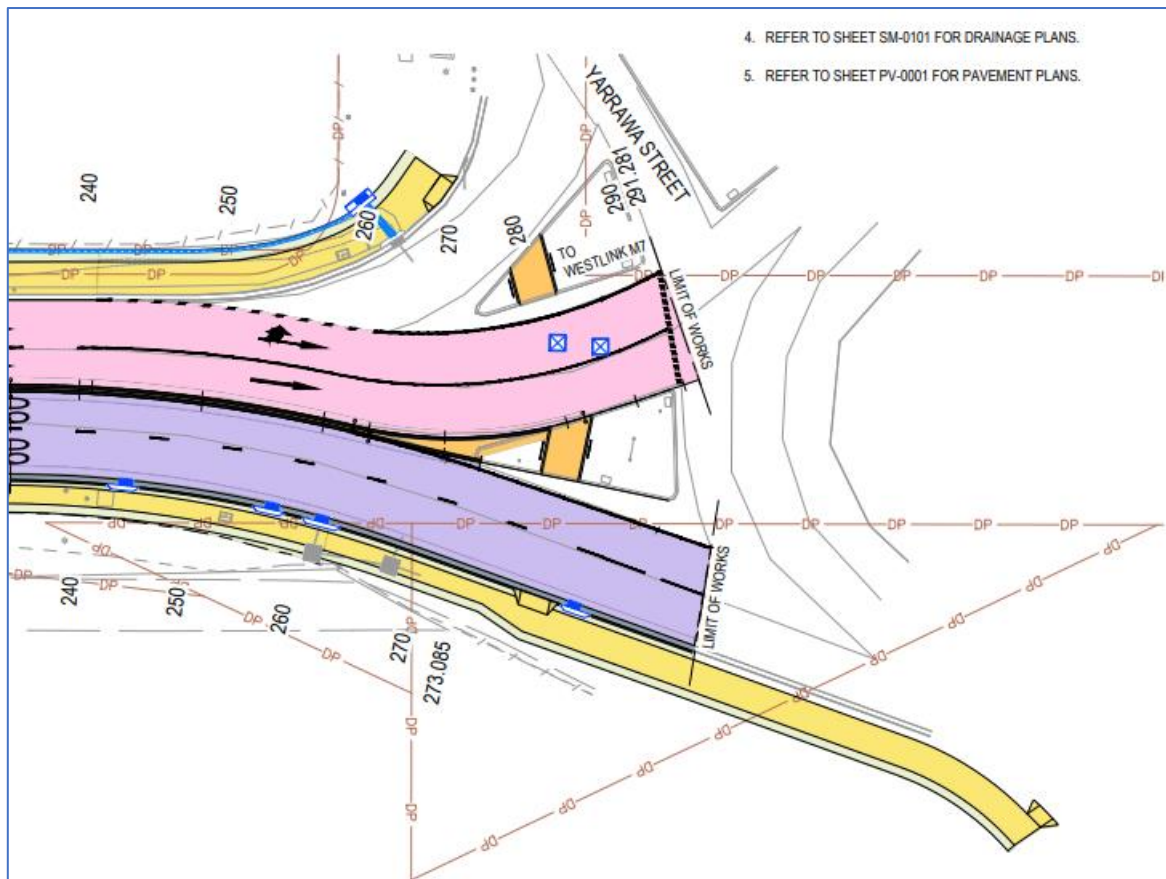
This route is through a major interchange between the M7 entrance and exit ramps and Bernera Rd, Jedda Rd and Yarrawa St. It consists of two roundabouts (referred to below as the northern and southern roundabouts), with existing SUPs on both sides of Bernera Rd between the northern roundabout and the M7 entrance and exit ramps on the southern roundabout. The diagram from *The Plan* on the following page indicates that the path on the eastern side of Bernera Rd is slated to be used. These existing paths attract very little use at present as they don't really lead anywhere. The proposed Bernera Rd SUP has the potential to change that.



Marked-up Google Satellite View image<sup>[3]</sup> of the apparent intended AT route across the M7 interchange.



Open Street Map image of current shared paths around the interchange.<sup>[2]</sup>



Part of Sheet RD-0101 Sheet 3<sup>[4]</sup> showing the proposed SUP on the western side of Bernera Rd, crossing of Bernera Rd just south of the southern roundabout, and path to the M7 northbound exit ramp. The image is rotated around 90 degrees to the right from the actual layout.

In the 'Our Focus' section of the 'Active Transport Strategy'<sup>[5]</sup> document, Transport for NSW make two references to SUPs being accessible to all.

In the 'Enable 15 minute neighbourhoods' section,<sup>[6]</sup> one of the action items is to:

*'Integrate safe and separate, first and last mile walking and cycling connections and trip facilities into plans and projects to promote active transport for all travel purposes for people of all ages and abilities.'*

1. In the 'Deliver continuous and connected cycling networks' section,<sup>[7]</sup> the first action item states:

*'Provide safe and connected cycleways for people of all ages and abilities that can be used by all current and future forms of micromobility devices.'*

Bicycle NSW reframes this concept in their policy document<sup>[8]</sup> under the heading 'Build it for everyone':

*'Build safe, connected infrastructure suitable for riders from 8 to 80 years of age to use independently.'*

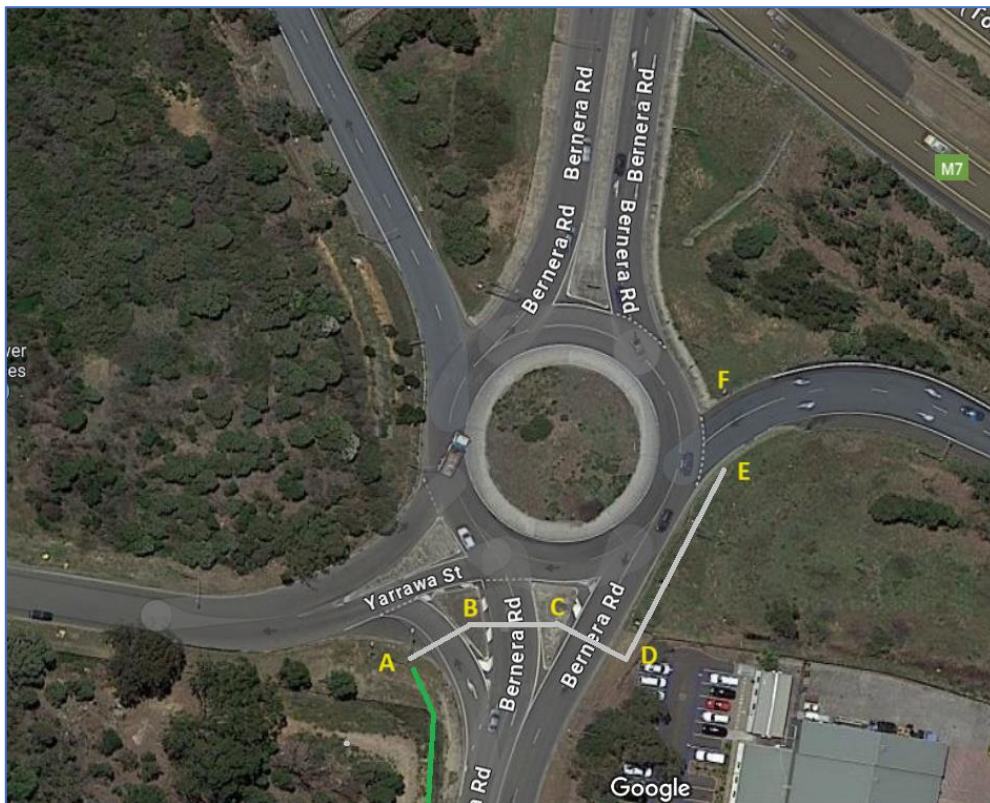
***We don't believe the apparent intended route fits these definitions.***

Our concerns centre around the multiple road/carriageway crossings that will be required for AT users traversing this route. Apart from being a safety concern, we believe it will act as disincentive for many AT users who would potentially use this route segment as part of their longer rides or commutes.



## ➤ Issues with the proposed and existing paths

The following descriptions reference the letters in yellow at road crossing points on the below image.



Marked-up Google Satellite View image<sup>[3]</sup> of the southern roundabout.

### **B-A crossing:**

It is difficult to determine if vehicles with left blinkers on are turning left from Bernera Rd into Yarrawa St or proceeding into the roundabout and turning left onto the M7 northbound entrance.

### **A-B crossing:**

Crossing A-B would likely be more challenging when there's moderate amounts of traffic around as users would need to turn around to look almost behind for approaching traffic.



Crossing left turn lane from Bernera Rd into Yarrawa St (Points B to A on above image).

### **B-C Crossing:**

Crossing dual lanes of traffic travelling north on Bernera Rd. As with the above point, vehicles with left indicators on could be turning left onto Yarrawa St before the crossing or coming through the crossing and turning left into the roundabout.



Crossing dual lanes of traffic on Bernera Rd heading north (Points B to C on above image)



**C-D crossing:**

Crossing dual lanes of traffic coming out of the roundabout and heading south on Bernera Rd. Some vehicles turning left out of the M7 exit are travelling at a reasonable speed.



*Crossing Bernera Rd southbound  
(Points C to D on above image).*

**D-C crossing:**

Difficult to see vehicles exiting from the M7.



*Crossing Bernera Rd southbound  
(Points D to C on above image).*

**E-F Crossing:**

Crossing dual exit lanes of the M7 northbound. AT users don't have a clear line of sight for oncoming vehicles (particularly those in the left lane) due to the curve in the exit road and the vegetation. Vehicles are slowing down from (up to) 100 to 60 kmph.



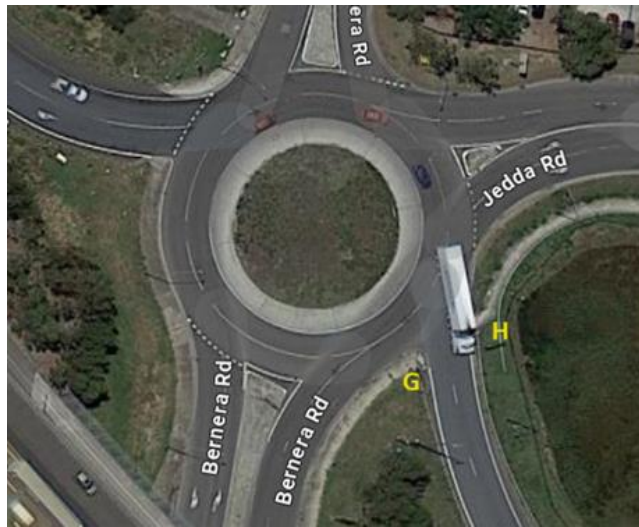
*Crossing M7 northbound exit ramp  
(Points E to F on above image).*

**F-E Crossing:**

A little easier to see oncoming traffic than if crossing in the other direction – but still not ideal.



*Crossing M7 northbound exit ramp  
(Points F to E on above image).*



Marked-up Google Satellite View image<sup>[3]</sup> of northern roundabout.

**G-H crossing:**

Vehicles leaving the roundabout to enter the M7 southbound dual-lane entrance. Cars turning left from Jedda Rd to the M7 entrance are travelling at a reasonable speed and are partially obscured at present by the vegetation.

**H-G Crossing:**

Crossing from H-G could be more challenging as you'd also need to look behind you to see if any vehicles were approaching to turn left from Jedda Rd into the M7 on-ramp.



Standing back from the M7 southbound entrance (Points G to H on above image).

Neither the **E-F** nor **G-H** crossings have the 12 metres setback from the roundabout for SUP crossings at multilane roundabouts recommended in Austroads Guide to Road Design – Part 4B – Roundabouts.

The setback for crossing **C-D** appears to be a little under 10m.

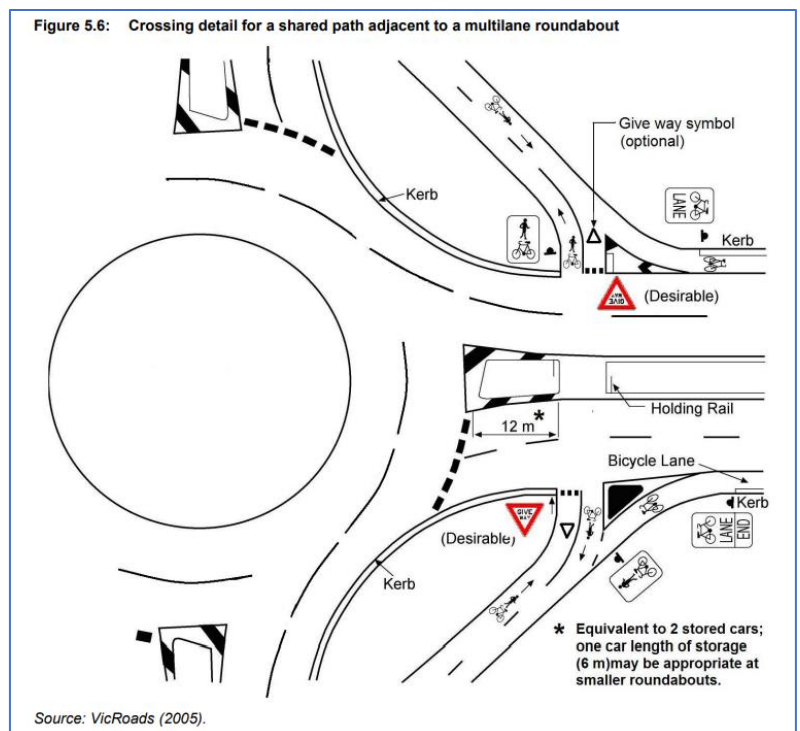


Figure 5.6 for multilane roundabouts from Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 4B – Roundabouts<sup>[9]</sup>



We believe these crossings don't meet the Transport for NSW Road User Space Considerations Hierarchy,<sup>[10]</sup> where road design should prioritise safety and accessibility for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, bike riders and those using mobility aids.

### Order of Road User Space Considerations



From the TfNSW Road User Space Allocation document<sup>[10]</sup>

### ➤ Improved Route/Segment Suggestions:



Marked-up Google Satellite View image<sup>[3]</sup> showing the current SUPs around the interchange, Proposed Bernera Rd path and road crossing, and 8 alternative suggestions.



**Suggestion 1** is by far the best from a safety perspective for AT users as it removes all the above hazardous crossings. The only road crossing is of Yarrawa St, which doesn't carry a huge amount of traffic. If achievable, it would be a great route for those transiting between the proposed section of the Bernera Rd SUP and the M7 path north of Bernera Rd. As shown below, we believe it would also provide workable solutions for those transiting in other directions.

Heading in a southerly direction, the route involves turning off the M7 path on the south side of Cabramatta Ck and passing under the M7 bridges. Ideally it could pass through a corridor which appears to be on Liverpool substation land, but which borders the new complex at 5 Yarrawa St (not shown on the above map but displayed on the ESRI image below). It would cross Yarrawa St at a safer location than the roundabout and follow along the southern side of Yarrawa St to the proposed Bernera Rd SUP. Suggestions 2 and 7 are possible alternatives if the corridor through the substation is not feasible.



*Coming from the north on the M7 path, Suggestion 1 would proceed more-or-less straight ahead where the current M7 path veers to the left to climb to the bridge over Bernera Rd.*

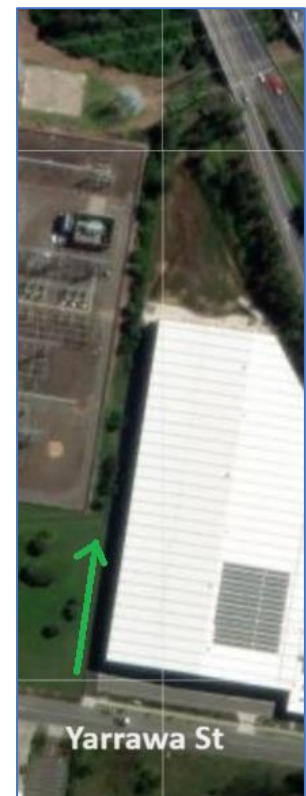


*View through the fence under the M7 Cabramatta Ck bridges looking west from the current M7 path. Cabramatta Ck is to the right.*



*Looking north from Yarrawa St into the proposed corridor on the substation land which borders the new complex at 5 Yarrawa St.*

Note that the roadway seen in the right of the photo appears to be a fire appliance access-way for reaching bushland alongside Cabramatta Ck. We're assuming that this must remain restricted access – although the path suggested here would run parallel to it.



*Marked-up ESRI Aerial image<sup>[11]</sup> of where photo to the left is looking.*



**Suggestion 2** replaces part of the Suggestion 1 route and would only be used if the above corridor through the substation land was not available. The route would consist of a shared path alongside Illaroo Rd and an extension to the Suggestion 1 path along Yarrowa St. This route would be longer and less desirable than the full Suggestion 1 route.

**Suggestion 3** is a way of avoiding the G-H crossing of the M7 south-bound entry. AT users would still need to use the E-F crossing and if Suggestion 4 is not implemented the A-B-C-D crossings as well.



*Looking from the existing M7 path to the potential route of Suggestion 3.*



*Looking from the existing Bernera Rd shared path towards the M7 path as it climbs up to the Bernera Rd bridge.*

**Suggestion 4** is constructing the shared path between Yarrowa St roundabout and Yato Rd/Yarrunga St intersection along the eastern side of Bernera Rd, then crossing to the western side with the lights. This would mean the crossing A-B-C-D is not required. There are currently more driveways (including a service station) on the eastern side which is not ideal. There may be other design reasons why the western side of Bernera Rd is preferable for the SUP.

**Suggestion 5** is to make the crossing of the M7 southbound entrance ramp a short distance along the ramp from the corner. The issue of going too far along is that vehicles will be traveling faster as they accelerate to join the motorway.

**Suggestion 6** is to take the crossing of the M7 northbound exit ramp up to the bend in the road so AT users have a clearer view of oncoming traffic. One disadvantage with this approach is that vehicles will be travelling faster as they decelerate coming off the motorway towards the roundabout.

**Suggestion 7** is another alternative to part of Suggestion 1 and runs between the complex at 5 Yarrowa St and the M7 northbound on-ramp. There is currently a reasonably sized drainage channel along at least part of this corridor which would likely need to be enclosed if this corridor were to be used. This route would be preferable to Suggestion 2.

**Suggestion 8** is along the northern side of Jemma Rd from the signalised intersection with Joadja Rd to Bernera Rd. It could be used for AT users coming from Joadja Rd and the T-way to access Suggestion 1 (via the M7 path on-ramp). There would still be the crossing of Bernera Rd north of the northern roundabout, but this section of road is a dead-end and doesn't carry a lot of traffic. Part of the northern verge of Jemma Rd is quite narrow, so we wouldn't be surprised if this suggestion is ruled out at least on those grounds.

Suggestions 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 are not complete solutions in and of themselves. A combination of several of them would be required to increase AT user safety – and then it would be debatable by how much.

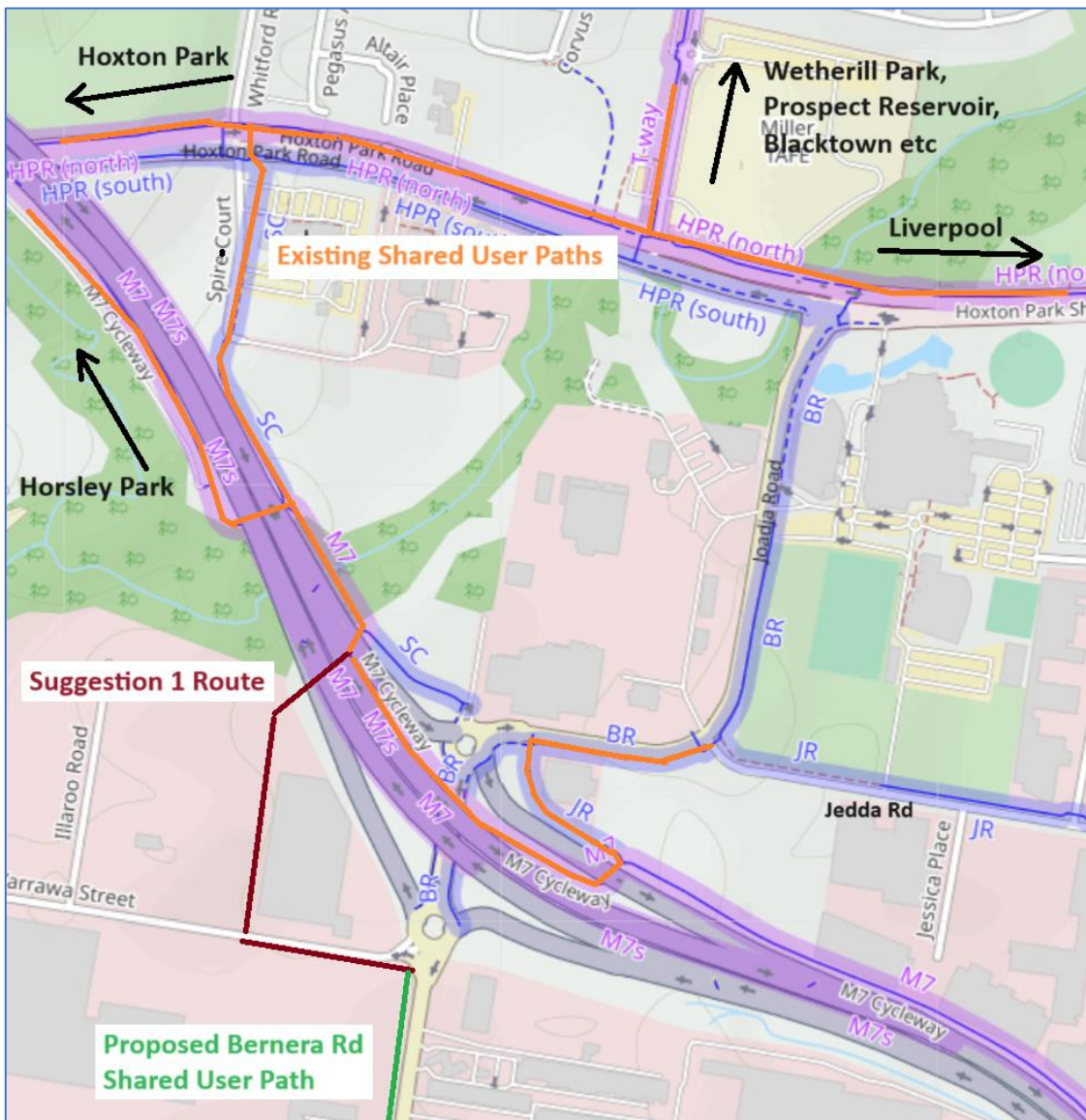
***By far the safest option is to keep AT users and vehicular traffic physically separated.***

➤ Recommendation:

If able to be built, Suggestion 1 (with possible Suggestion 2 or Suggestion 7 variations) is by far the best outcome for both AT users and vehicles using this interchange. We believe it is the only presented option that:

- Provides an adequate level of safety for vulnerable road users, and
- Ensures future proofing of the interchange for AT users as traffic volumes increase with population and development in adjoining areas.

The below map indicates anticipated routes to and from the proposed Bernera Rd path with Suggestion 1 in place. Although slightly longer, AT users coming from Hoxton Park Rd or the Parramatta-Liverpool T-way could use the shared path along Spire Court instead of Joadja Rd to access the Suggestion 1 route and proposed Bernera Rd SUP. For those wanting to use Jeddah Rd east of Joadja Rd the off-road route involving turning on to the M7 path just before the northern roundabout is a little more circuitous but preferable to dealing with the above road crossings.



Cycle layer enabled Open Street Map of the interchange with suggested AT routes mark-up. [2]

Clear wayfinding signage would be needed to try and steer AT users away from Joadja Rd and the roundabouts. Adequate lighting along the route for those using the path in low-light conditions would also be required.

**We urge Council to seek funding to investigate and potentially build a safer route for AT users along the lines of Suggestion 1. Preferably we'd like to see a solution in place by the time the full Bernera SUP is opened to users.**



## ➤ Closing Comments:

At the time of writing, we haven't seen the recommendations from the M7 Active Transport Network review. We were involved with the review process and know that during the workshop sessions Bernera Rd was identified as an important missing link in the SUP network. We're unsure whether the review will recommend safer options for connecting the M7 path to the proposed Bernera Rd SUP or not.

One of the activities that most Bicycle User Groups partake in is to organise group rides. These can act both as a social event and as a way of showing participants the safer and more enjoyable routes around an area.

CAMWEST try and avoid SUP crossings beside multilane roundabouts on our group rides as it can be difficult to judge the movement of vehicles exiting the roundabout. Some of us try and avoid them when riding alone as well.

The apparent proposed route through the M7 interchange is even riskier than normal as there are currently no setbacks on two of the three crossings. These setbacks at least provide a short window of opportunity for AT Users and drivers to react to try and avoid potential collisions.

While a few brave riders may attempt to navigate the apparent intended route, CAMWEST (and we suspect other riding groups) will likely be giving it a wide berth. For us it's too risky as currently planned.

There is the potential for the proposed Bernera Rd SUP to be an asset to the community. We fear that without safe connectivity to the existing SUPs in the area it will become a white elephant – or even worse that someone will misjudge the movement of the traffic at one of the roundabout crossings and become another fatality statistic.

We're happy to clarify any of the suggestions outlined in this document or assist in any way we can with developing and promoting Active Transport in the area.

This feedback was prepared by Rob Kemp with input from Stephen Males and Mark Robson for CAMWEST Bicycle User Group Inc.

## References:

- 1 Project Documentation: <https://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/ll/projects/2024/bernera-road-upgrade,-yarrawa-street-to-kurrajong-road,-prestons-review-of-environmental-factors2>
- 2 Cycling Layer enabled Open Street Map image of area: <https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=15/-33.9313/150.8719&layers=C>. Thin blue dashed and solid lines with and without blue or pink shading represent Shared User Paths (SUPs).
- 3 Google Satellite View imagery: <https://www.google.com/maps/@-33.9330261,150.8681354,533m/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=ttu>
- 4 Project Documentation Appendix 1: <https://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/trim/documents?RecordNumber=012071.2024> – Page 9 of PDF document.
- 5 Active Transport Strategy document: [https://www.future.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-12/Active\\_transport\\_strategy\\_0.pdf](https://www.future.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-12/Active_transport_strategy_0.pdf)
- 6 Numbered Page 14 of above Active Transport Strategy document.
- 7 Numbered Page 19 of above Active Transport Strategy document.
- 8 Bicycle NSW Policy page: <https://bicyclensw.org.au/our-policy/>
- 9 Numbered page 61 from [austroads.com.au/publications/road-design/agrd04b/media/AGRD04B-23\\_Guide\\_to\\_Road\\_Design\\_Part\\_4B\\_Roundabouts\\_Ed3.2.pdf](https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-design/agrd04b/media/AGRD04B-23_Guide_to_Road_Design_Part_4B_Roundabouts_Ed3.2.pdf)
- 10 Page 4 of <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2022/road-user-space-allocation-procedure.pdf#page=4>
- 11 Image Layer enabled on CAMWEST Map page: <https://camwest.org.au/map.html#map=17/-33.93385/150.86609&baseLayer=ESRI-Imagery>