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## Draft Homebush Movement and Place Connectivity and Streetscape Upgrade Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Homebush Movement and Place Connectivity and Streetscape Upgrade (*The Plan*).<sup>[1]</sup> These comments have been prepared on behalf of CAMWEST, a Bicycle NSW affiliated Bicycle User Group (BUG) with a focus on advocating for and encouraging cycling in Western Sydney.

### Executive Summary

Council is to be commended on *The Plan*, with its bold vision to replace existing kerb-side car parking spaces along several stretches of roadway with 'on road' separated cycleway. The shared paths and separated cycleways will form the backbone of an important Active Transport network in the Homebush West to Strathfield corridor for local residents as well as replacing some of the trickier 'on road' linkages between the Cooks River cycleway, Bicentennial Park (via Ismay Reserve) and several railway stations for riders from further abroad.

The main beneficiaries of this infrastructure are likely to be local residents, using segments of the route to ride between their homes and trip generators such as shops, schools and railway stations. With the increase in population expected over coming years around Homebush due to the Transport Orientated Development (TOD), offering community members viable and safe non-car-based travel alternatives makes a lot of sense. Trips of under several kms in length should be faster by bicycle than car as the population density of the area increases. *The Plan* is a good first step in that direction.

I'm very supportive of the project overall, although there are a few tweaks that could potentially make it even more attractive to riders.

I acknowledge that Council is trying to retrofit this infrastructure within existing confined restraints, which adds to the complexity and challenges of a project like this.

## My Perspective

Note that some of the comments made in this feedback are coloured by what I've seen and experienced of the reasonably recent Powell Ck Shared Path between Pomeroy St and Parramatta Rd/Underwood Rd.

As I don't live in the Strathfield Council area, I'm viewing the project primarily from the perspective of riding through the area and linking to existing infrastructure or stations. I acknowledge that this is likely to be a much smaller segment of the total ridership than that of local riders, but still an important one.

Riders from outside the immediate area are often looking for somewhere to stop and have a drink or bite to eat. Cafés close to popular riding routes with appropriate amenities (safe place to leave bikes, outdoor seating, restrooms etc) can often do a roaring trade, particularly on weekends. This can help bring additional people and cash into local economies.



*Example of a café near a popular cycling route - TNB Café in Rooty Hill at 8am on a Saturday morning, around 700m from the M7 Shared path. Several groups of riders pictured.*

A number of Bicycle User Groups (including CAMWEST) hold group rides. CAMWEST rides typically consist of less than 10 riders, and we ride at a slow to moderate pace and try to stick mainly to shared paths and cycleways. We normally start and finish our rides at railway stations, so participants can either catch a train or drive. Sometimes we start and finish at the same station, and at other times at different stations.

Although Strathfield station is a major railway interchange, it has been difficult to get there safely by bike, so we've traditionally given the area a wide berth. The completion of *The Plan* would break down some of these barriers for us.

When looking at route options and in particular road crossings, it is important to try and minimise the number of times that riders need to dismount and remount their bikes. Each time a rider is required to dismount is a disincentive 'mark' for riding that route. Most riders cope with a few of these, but there usually comes a point where alternative routes are sought. For a lot of riders dismounting is simply a time-consuming annoyance. However, for those carrying heavy loads on the bike or suffering from some forms of physical restriction it can amount to more than that. We have one lady that sometimes rides with us that needs to physical lay the bike on the ground to mount and dismount. This is even more time-consuming, and she feels quite self-conscious and embarrassed when having to do this. Several years ago before hip replacement surgery, I experienced moderate discomfort mounting and dismounting. I am now quite conscious of the effects this can have on riders.

One of our aims when on CAMWEST group rides is to model best practices, including obeying signage and road rules. As outlined in Attachment 1, the Powells Ck path between Pomeroy St and Parramatta Rd contains several Cyclist Dismount signs, one of which is for reasons that I cannot fathom. This is just 75m from another Cyclist Dismount sign. These signs need to be minimised as much as possible if we are serious about encouraging the uptake of cycling in the community. I raise this here for two reasons:

1. Part of *The Plan* directly links up with the Powell Ck path, which should carry a lot more riders once the linkages are complete. If this section is unattractive to riders, that will likely have an impact on the number of riders on the routes of *The Plan*.
2. Please consider the requirements for and placement of signage in the later development stages of *The Plan*.

**Note:** I understand that the nine 'pedestrian' crossing shown on the concept maps as part of the active transport routes are actually meant to be combined pedestrian/cyclist crossings. The assumptions made here is that this is the case.

## Location Specific Concerns and Comments:

- **No ramps to Bates St shown.**

These are currently no ramps to Bates St between the access to Airey Park and The Crescent. The plans as outlined don't show any either.

Please consider a ramp to Bates St roadway at or near Airey Park access path.



*From first map in concept design pack.*

- **No crossing of The Crescent at Bates St shown.**

The Crescent can be moderately busy, and it sometimes takes a little while to make a safe right turn from Bates St into The Crescent. It would be good to include a combined pedestrian and cyclist crossing here. Riders travelling west either along The Crescent or through Airey Park will also potentially need to cross the road under this configuration, resulting in more riders crossing than at present. Realistically though, I think a lot of riders travelling west from Bridge St along The Crescent will join the roadway down the hill at Bridge St to avoid the two crossings.

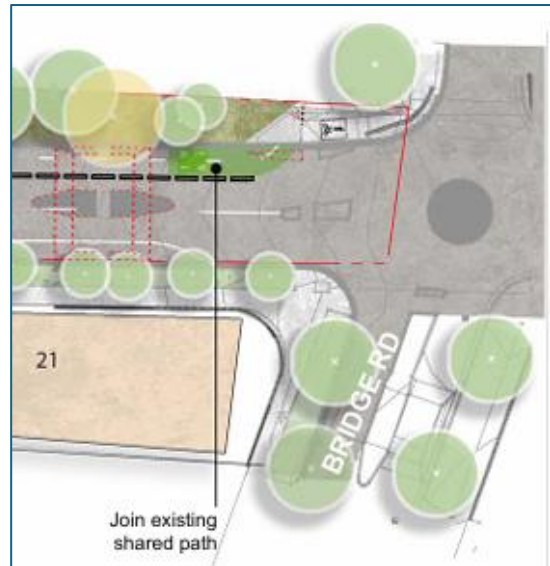


*Marked-up image from first map in concept design pack.*



- **Virtually non-existent shared path at the corner of The Crescent and Bridge Rd.**

The markings on the image to the right may be incorrect, as you couldn't realistically call the area indicated as an existing shared path. It is a pad of widened concrete leading to a narrow footpath (Around 1.2m at one point, widening to around 1.6m while crossing the Bridge St railway bridge), and has no shared path markings.



*From first map in concept design pack.*



*One 'pad' of wider concrete. Is this considered a 'shared path'?*



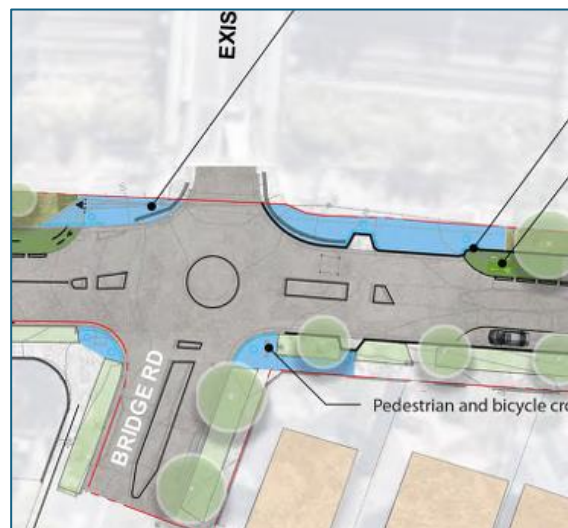
*Path around the corner into Bridge St and across the railway line.*

- **The Crescent / Bridge Rd roundabout.**

Riders appear to need to cross 3 legs of the crossing to go straight ahead along The Crescent. The refuge island on the western side of The Crescent is quite narrow, and probably not long enough to safely contain a bike.

Where possible, improved crossings would be welcomed. Refuge islands would ideally be wide enough to accommodate more than one bike at a time.

An option for more confident riders travelling east through the roundabout on-road would also be welcomed.



*From 'Sheet 3' in concept design pack.*

- To avoid the crossing of The Crescent at both Bates St and the western side of Bridge St, an alternative option may be to move the separated cycleway to the northern side of The Crescent between these two streets. This would place it in front of houses which is less than ideal, and require moving east-bound traffic into what is now the parking lane on the north side of The Crescent. It would also limit the scope for extending the separated cycle lane west of Bates St in the future.

- **Meridith St / The Crescent Intersection**

Meredith St is a reasonably connected on-road route. If possible, it would be good to have a combined Pedestrian/Cyclist crossing across The Crescent to link with the separated cycleway.



From 'Sheet 4' in concept design pack.

- **Subway Lane underpass**

I'm assuming the footpath needs to be built-out into the current roadway on The Crescent just west of Subway Lane, as currently the footpath is quite narrow.

Would at least one tree require removal on the corner of Subway Lane and Loftus Crescent to get the increased path width?



Looking west from Subway Lane along The Crescent.



Looking at Loftus Crescent from Subway Lane just outside the railway underpass.



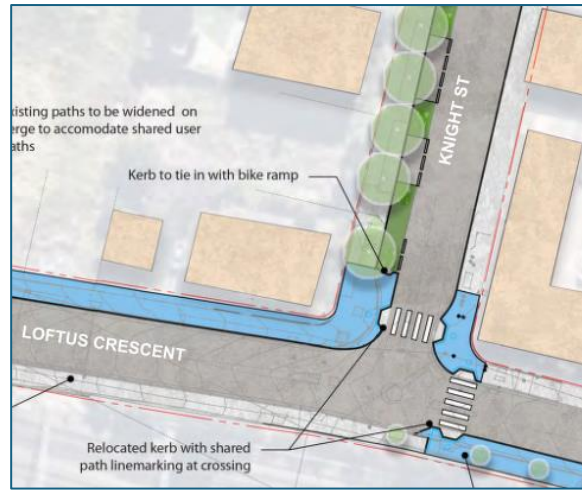
In the Street View Renders document, why show an adult and child cycling through the Loftus Crescent/ Subway Lane intersection (and heading the wrong way into a one-way section of Subway Lane) when the aim of the project is to get riders off the road and onto the separated infrastructure? I suspect that the riders should have been shown on the crossing.....



- **Loftus Crescent / Knight St intersection**

This intersection contains a small roundabout which is not marked on the concept drawings.

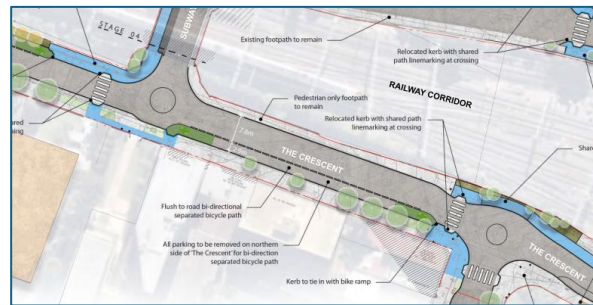
Would replacing the dual crossings here with a single crossing of Loftus Crescent west of Knight St be an option, or is there a particular reason why the dual crossings are preferred?



*From 'Sheet 4' in concept design pack*

- **Changing sides of The Crescent between Subway Lane and Rochester St**

Again riders need to cross The Crescent twice within a short distance. I can see that there aren't any obvious alternatives to doing this, but I can also see that it may annoy some riders. Again, please provide an option for those confident on-road riders heading east to join The Crescent roadway for this short section.

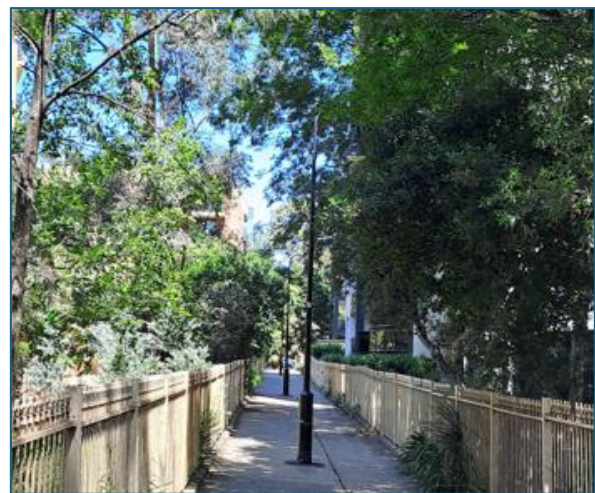


*From 'Sheet 4' in concept design pack*

- **Some sections of shared path around Homebush Station (Both on Loftus Crescent and The Crescent) appear to be quite narrow.**

- **Pathway between The Crescent and Beresford Rd:**

Are there any plans to move the existing light poles from the centre of the pathway? If not, placing reflective tape around them may make them more obvious so riders don't collide with them.

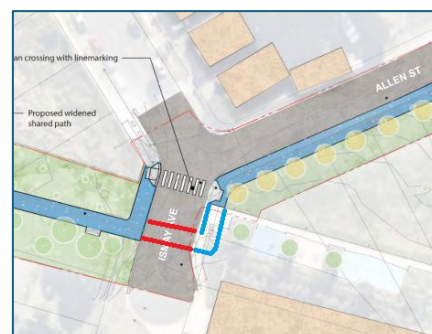


*Pathway between The Crescent and Beresford Rd*

- **Sections 3 & 4 will require liaising with TfNSW for the installation of combined pedestrian and cyclist crossing lanterns at the Raw Square crossing of Albert Rd and the Parramatta Rd crossing at Knight St respectively.**

- **Ismay Ave crossing**

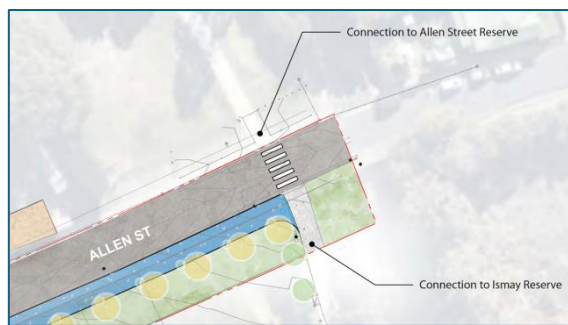
If feasible, it would seem better to me to move the crossing down on Ismay Ave to make it in line with the existing shared path on the western side. This removes one of the 90 degree turns on the path.



*Mark-up of 'Sheet 9'*

- **Allen St crossing**

It's encouraging to see that a combined pedestrian/cyclist crossing is being proposed at the current Allen St crossing on the Powell Ck path. I hope this crossing will negate the need for one of the sets of 'Cyclist Dismount' signs currently on this section of path.



From 'Sheet 9' in concept design pack

## Closing Comments

I am very supportive of this project as it would fix a couple of important missing Active Transport links in the Strathfield area. The number of road crossings required is less than ideal, however the challenge is to make all the crossings as seamless and as safe as possible for all users. Please consider the suggestions above for a couple of additional combined pedestrian/cyclist crossings.

Clear wayfinding signage and path line marking will be vital, particularly due to the number of changes of direction and different branch routes that riders can take.

Please try and eliminate or at least minimise the use of bollards. There have been serious incidents where riders have collided with them across Sydney. One other project in Sydney has been able to eliminate the use of them through design. If deemed necessary, please consider flexible types or at least paint them in bright colours with reflective tape. (The Powell Ck path has several different types including silver with no markings, silver with reflective markings and yellow with reflective tape).



*A Flexible bollard on a separated cycleway in Dunedin, NZ.*

Please also consider lowering speed limits or incorporating design elements that would help lower the speeds for motorists around some of the intersections.

Although outside scope, could I ask that the existing pedestrian crossing on Pomeroy St also be considered for an upgrade to a combined pedestrian/cyclist crossing? This would help improve the 'flow' for riders going between the routes outlined in *The Plan* and Bicentennial Park and beyond.

I look forward to seeing safer solutions proposed for the remaining short 'on road' sections of the Cooks River path in the Strathfield Council area. It's been a long-held dream of CAMWEST to have a complete off-road route linking the Cooks River path with Bicentennial Park/Olympic Park.

Please get in touch if further clarification or explanation is required.

Rob Kemp  
CAMWEST Bicycle User Group President and Advocacy Lead.

## References:

1. <https://haveyoursay.strathfield.nsw.gov.au/homebush-movement-and-place-connectivity-and-streetscape-upgrade>



## Attachment 1

These comments largely relate to the already constructed section of the Powells Ck shared path between Pomeroy St and Parramatta Rd/Underwood Rd. Being one of the more recently constructed shared paths within the Strathfield Council area, some of the comments in the main feedback were coloured by this existing infrastructure which one leg of the Homebush MaP project will link into when constructed.

I've heard comments from several cycling groups about the 10 kmph speed limit on the Powells Ck path. The only other section of shared path in Sydney which I've come across with a speed limit like this is the busy Pyrmont Bridge. I'm not aware of any other path across Western Sydney with this restriction. While the intent is acknowledged, from a rider's perspective riding at this pace with no or few pedestrians around can be frustrating. I'm normally a slow rider, but I've probably startled more pedestrians riding at slower speeds than faster. Education for both riders and pedestrians is the key here. If speed limits need to be imposed, then 15 kmph is more realistic for riders.

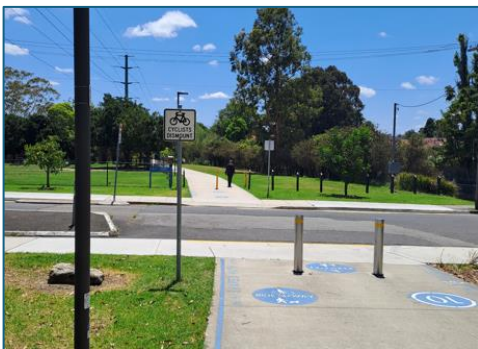
Incidentally, I was recently in New Zealand and spotted this sign in Queenstown which I quite like. Rather than imposing a speed restriction, it puts the onus back onto riders to ride responsibly – or walk.



The number of Cyclist Dismount signs over a short distance seems significant – and one for no apparent reason. As outlined above, these act as disincentives for riders to use the route.

Apart from those living locally, I think most riders wouldn't have any real reason to venture down this path at present as it doesn't really connect in with any existing cycling infrastructure. The connectivity provided with the MaP project has the potential to change this however.

I wanted to bring the following couple of examples to your attention so that maybe the type of signage used could be reconsidered for the MaP project. Hopefully some of the signage along the existing Powells Ck path can also be updated to be more inviting for riders.



*'Cyclist Dismount' signage at the Allen St crossing. (Although it is noted that a pedestrian/cyclist crossing is proposed here in the MaP).*



*'Road Ahead' signage at Fraser St, Homebush West crossing, which in my opinion is less harsh than 'Cyclist Dismount'.*



*'Cyclist Dismount' sign on bridge with wooden boards running perpendicular to direction of travel - Why?! If the boards were running parallel then I could understand the reasoning. This bridge is only 75m from the Allen St 'Cyclists Dismount' crossing.*