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4<sup>th</sup> December, 2023

## Guildford Town Centre Public Domain Plan Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Guildford Town Centre Public Domain Plan (The Plan).

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 the Penrith, Blacktown, Parramatta, and Cumberland council areas of Western Sydney.

This feedback starts off by looking at the broader picture for active transport primarily around the section of Guildford east of the railway line, before narrowing the focus back to the immediate Town Centre precinct.

The Parramatta to Glenfield Rail-Trail shared path which passes through the precinct along the eastern side of the railway line is quite a good and well used north-south route. As identified in Figure 6 of The Plan (copied below) Guildford Rd (East) is the official East-West link, connecting the Rail-Trail and the Lower Prospect Canal shared paths to the west with the Duck River Parklands (and associated shared path) to the east.

When built, the planned extension to the Lower Prospect Canal shared path from Guildford towards Regents Park will provide a viable but possibly less direct route for those traversing east-west, diverting users away from the Guildford Town Centre precinct.

One of the challenges traversing east-west is crossing Woodville Rd. The planned canal extension does this by constructing a bridge to cross, while Guildford Rd (East) has a signalised intersection. As shown on the map to the right, signalised crossings of Woodville Rd can also be made either side of Guildford Rd (East) at Oxford St and Rawson Rd.

*On the map to the right:*

*Thin blue lines are shared paths, wider semitransparent lines depict local/regional routes, both on and off road.*



Marked-up map from Open Street Map (Cycle Map layer)



Figure 6: Guildford Town Centre Transport and Open Space

- Legend**
- Town Centre Boundary
  - Bus Stop
  - Bus Stop (School)
  - **Existing Principle Bicycle Network**
  - A** Prospect Pipeline Corridor to Prospect Hill
  - B** Parramatta via Merrylands to Fairfield (Rail Trail)
  - - - **Future Principle Bicycle Network**
  - Prospect Pipeline Corridor to Duck River and Regents Park
  - Existing On-road Local Cycleway
  - - - Proposed On-road Local Cycleway
  - ↔ Laneway
  - Upgrade Pedestrian Cycling Crossing
  - Public Open Space**
  - 1. Warnock Park
  - 2. Guildford Park
  - 3. Elizabeth St Park
  - 4. Surrey St Reserve
  - 5. Maunder Reserve
  - 6. The Espanade Reserve
  - 7. Beaufort St Park
  - 8. Linnwood
  - 9. McCredie Park
  - ↔ Future Green Link



While Guildford Rd (East) may be usable for more experienced riders who don't mind mixing with some traffic, it's not presently the sort of road that would be used by less confident riders. In Figure 6 above, Mountford Ave, which runs parallel to Guildford Rd (East), is marked as a proposed on-road cycleway. This is probably a more appealing alternative for less experienced riders and appears to have a better gradient to boot. However, as there is no signalised crossing of Woodville Rd, any riders would need to come back to Guildford Rd (East) to cross. Using this as an alternative again draws riders away from the shops of the Town Centre precinct.

Figures 11 and 12 of The Plan appear to show 'Shared Paths' along Guildford Rd (West) and Guildford Rd (East) within the Town Centre precinct, while still retaining most of the current on-street parking bays. Given one of the objectives of The Plan is 'To ensure our streets remain vibrant and liveable, footpath widths will need to accommodate an increasing population in the centre, as well as street furniture, signage, and opportunities for outdoor dining' (page 12), we can't really see how cycling and other wheeled active transport modes could be realistically accommodated within the existing path confines.

A section of the southern side of Guildford Rd (East) between Cross St and Station St has already had on-street parking removed, and the pedestrian area widened with tree and vegetation plantings. We can't realistically see how this area could safely accommodate wheeled active transport users as well. This widened section only extends for one block.

We are left with the impression that 'Shared Paths' in this document has a different meaning to the 'Shared Paths' or 'Shared User Paths' that are commonly used within the cycling community.



*Looking west along the widened pedestrian area on the southern side of Guildford Rd (East).*

It is not clear to us whether the plan is to route active transport users away from the town centre or encourage them through the area – or a bit of both. If encouraging users through the main street, we can think of a couple of possible alternative options, which is where we come back to The Plan:

1. Create a separated cycleway, probably on the northern side of Guildford Rd (East) within the Town Centre precinct. This would likely necessitate the removal of on-street parking on this stretch of the road.
2. Further lower the existing 40kmph speed limit in the area to 30kmph, to create a 'safer' space for less confident on-road riders.

Both suggestions have impact on the Town Centre precinct. However, they don't address the similar issues which exist with the remainder of Guildford Rd (East) for less confident riders. These would need to be examined outside the confines of The Plan.

Outside the immediate Town Centre plan, if Mountford Avenue is considered a viable on-road route, then we'd encourage Council to investigate an appropriate crossing of Railway Terrace near this intersection. Railway Terrace can be quite busy at times, and crossing can be perilous. To assist with crossing, we'd like to see either a combined pedestrian and cyclist zebra crossing or a centre refuge island (preferably of the offset variety). There are probably at least several other street intersections along this stretch of road that could benefit from similar treatments.

The directions that cyclists are meant to follow along the eastern side of Guildford station are unclear at present. We're not sure whether this is best handled within The Plan or outside of it. The photo to the right shows approaching Guildford station from the south along the shared user path. The path markings from this direction seem to indicate that riders should be using the roadway – at the time that the shoulder disappears. Markings prior to the current re-asphalting also indicated that riders from the north were meant to cross the road and join the path here. I'm unaware of equivalent direction for riders to leave the path when approaching Guildford from the north. Either way, there needs to be clear indications of what is required of riders around the station.



*Cyclists appear to be directed onto the road just before a barrier in the shoulder lane.*

Apart from the shared path crossing of the railway line south of the town centre precinct at the pipeline corridor, the other alternatives crossings are to use the Oxford St bridge roadway or footpath north of the town centre precinct, or dismount and use the steep ramps under the station or the lifts and overbridge at the station. These other alternatives all present barriers in one form or another to at least some potential active transport users. (Each time a user is required to dismount is seen as another 'excuse' not to use active transport – and often to use the car instead). We're not sure that there are any easy answers here. Retrofitting bridges would be welcome - but expensive. We've not sure whether the Duck Ck underpass of the railway line may be feasible to convert to shared path usage – but if so, would require major works.

We're less familiar with the western side of Guildford, as most of our riding in the area has entailed staying on the Lower Prospect Canal shared path and crossing to the eastern side of the line using the pipeline corridor bridge. On initial glance the proposed on-road routes look reasonable, although we would again suggest a separated cycleway along Guildford Rd (West) at least as far as the Pipeline Corridor shared path.

From the document presented, we are struggling to see a comprehensive strategy for developing active transport in the area. With the increase in population density around the Town Centre precincts, residents need to be given viable transport alternatives instead of always defaulting to motor vehicle usage.

We're aware of council's higher-level strategies as presented in the Walking and Cycling Strategy document (which we have provided feedback on) but feel that more granular detail is required for specific regions such as Guildford. At present it almost appears to be more a case of 'Seeing how Active Transport can fit in after other requirements are met'. Apart from a brief mention of bicycle parking and wayfinding signage in The Plan, there is no real detail of either. Both are important elements in encouraging cycling within the community.

CAMWEST would like to see a more localised active transport strategy articulated which can then inform other plans such as this.

We are happy to clarify or elaborate on any of the above points and are willing to assist in any way we can with the development of Active Transport in the area.

This feedback was provided with input from CAMWEST member Mark Robson.

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