



5th April, 2023

## Lidcombe Town Centre Public Domain Plan Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Lidcombe Town Centre Public Domain 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.

CAMWEST welcomes roadway and infrastructure changes that help make cycling a safer and more realistic travel option for the wider community. We aim to encourage residents to replace at least some of their local car-based trips with active transport options.

We believe cycling in a safe and welcoming environment can be a contributing factor towards physical health and mental well-being for a significant proportion of the population.

CAMWEST seeks to educate people about what cycling infrastructure exists and show them the safer linkage roads in between. Two ways in which we do this are:

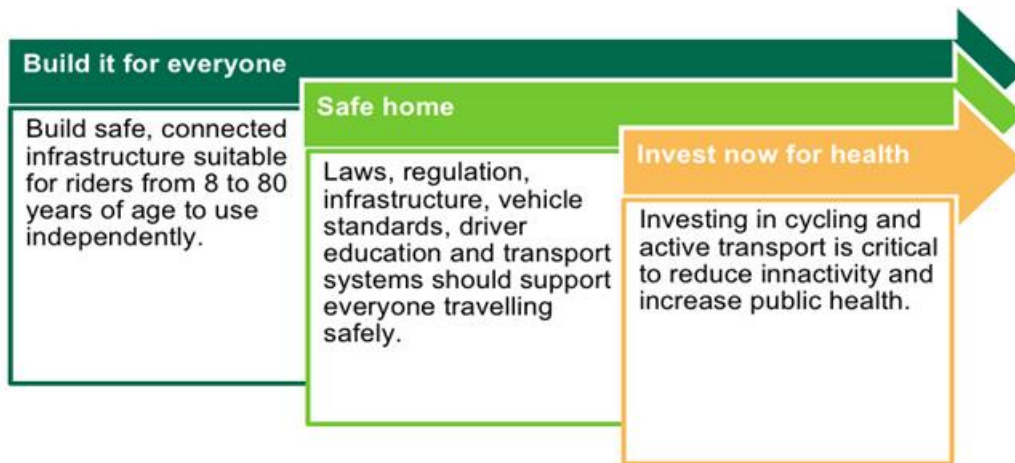
1. We hold small group social rides of approx. 15 – 40km distance on weekends (as other commitments and weather permits), and
2. We have started a list of [‘Self-Guided’ Routes](#) where riders use a GPS app on their mobile device with cycling specific voice cues to guide them along a route. This gives them the flexibility to ride the route whenever and with whomever they choose. The routes are a mixture of loop routes and ‘point to point’ routes, using trains to travel between the start and end points. We sometimes use these routes as the basis for our social rides. We currently have one ride starting at Lidcombe station with another one in the planning.

The following comments are based on material presented in the ‘Draft Public Domain Plan, Lidcombe Town Centre’ document, henceforth referred to as ‘The Plan’.

Whilst we applaud council’s effort to try and improve the amenity around the Lidcombe Town Centre, we believe the current proposal falls short of the **‘Well Connected’** design principle on page 8 of The Plan:

*‘Promote healthy living with good walking and cycling permeability throughout the town centre, supported by fit for purpose infrastructure ‘.*

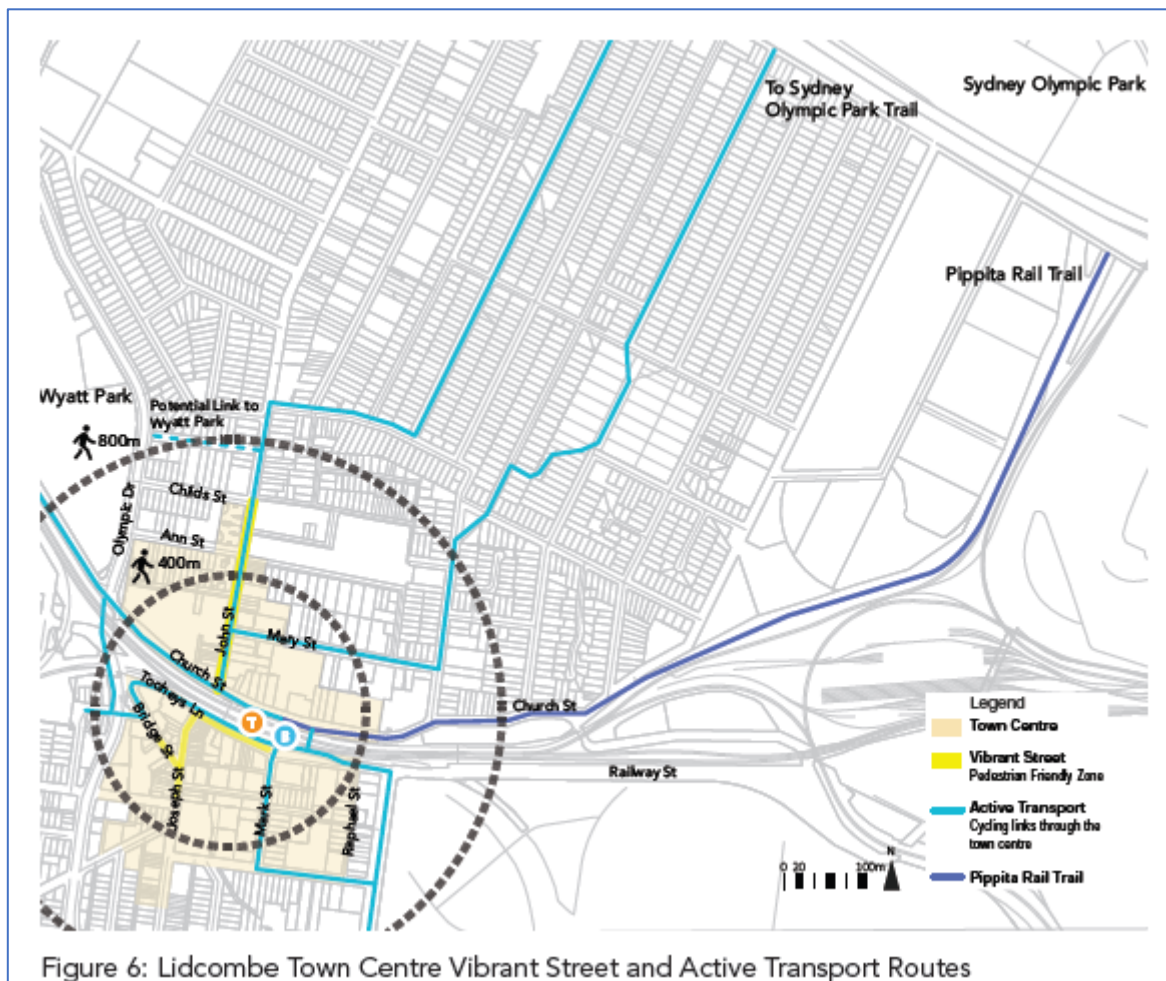
CAMWEST supports the policy framework set out by Bicycle NSW, which is guided by 3 main themes:



We believe that there are some missed opportunities in The Plan as it stands to address the above 'Build it for everyone' theme. While acknowledging that the constraints and challenges faced by Lidcombe Town Centre regarding bicycle movements are not unique, we believe that with some extra planning and infrastructure active transport participation can be increased.

## ➤ Reference Maps:

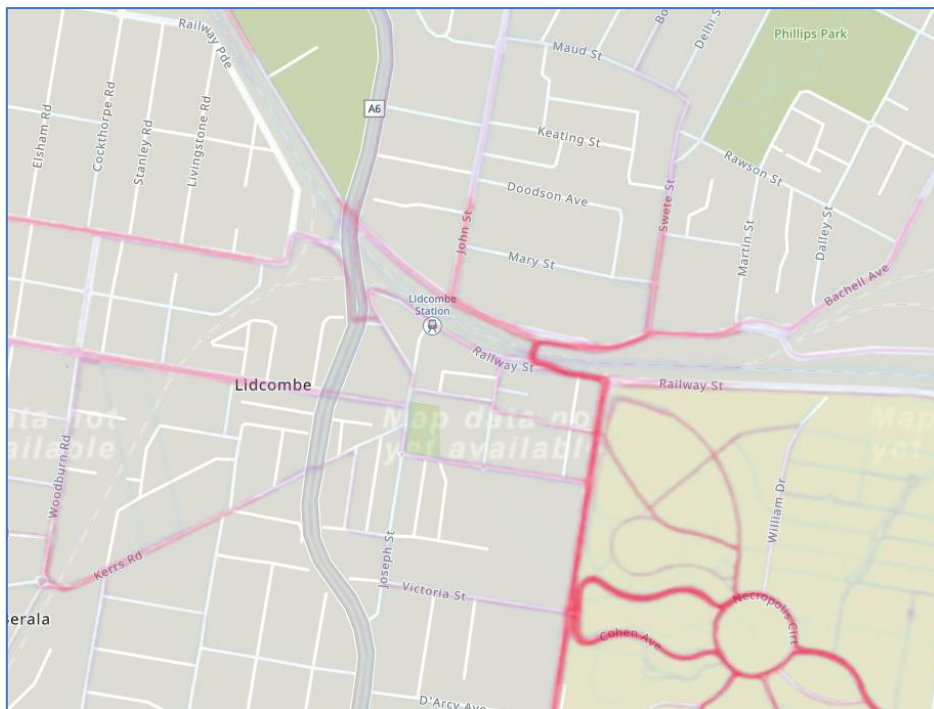
The following four maps will be referenced in this feedback. The first one is reproduced from The Plan and is the basis for the comments over the following pages.



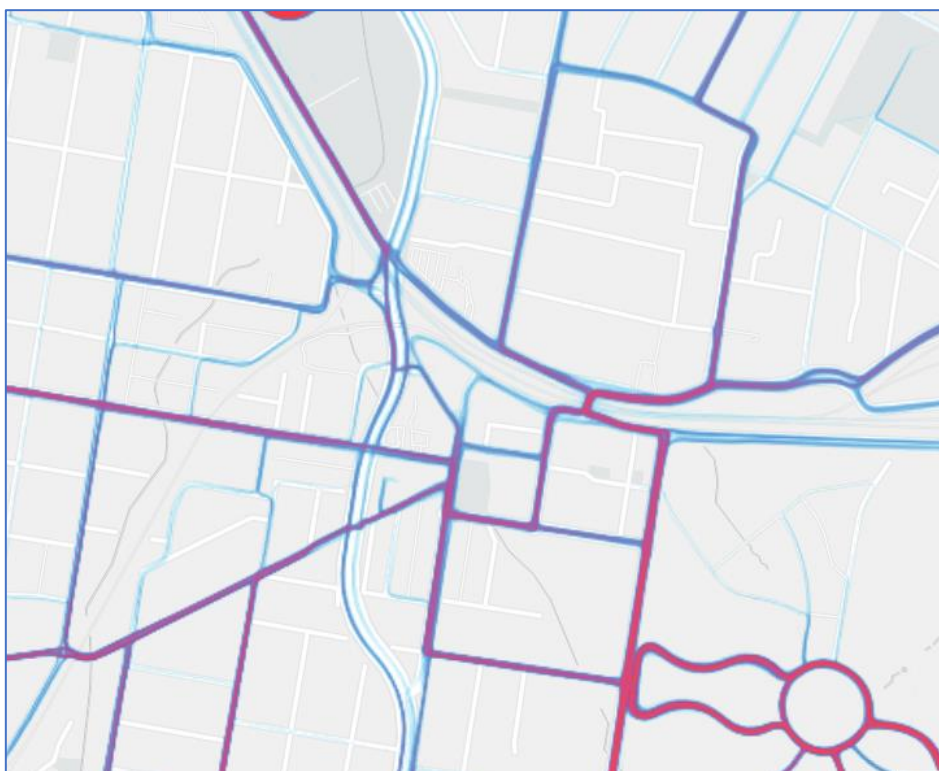
Map 1 - Reproduction from Page 12 of the plan

The second and third maps below are heatmaps of publicly available riding data using two of the most popular riding platforms – Ride with GPS (RWGPS) and Strava. Strava is probably more widely used and geared towards the more serious riders (and hence may make use of busier roads), whereas RWGPS is likely more used by social riders. There are several caveats to keep in mind when viewing this data:

- One person riding a route multiple times may appear the same as multiple people riding the route once.
- Both platforms only capture a percentage of those riding bikes; a lot of riders may not use an app, or if they do use one of these apps, they may choose to keep their data private.



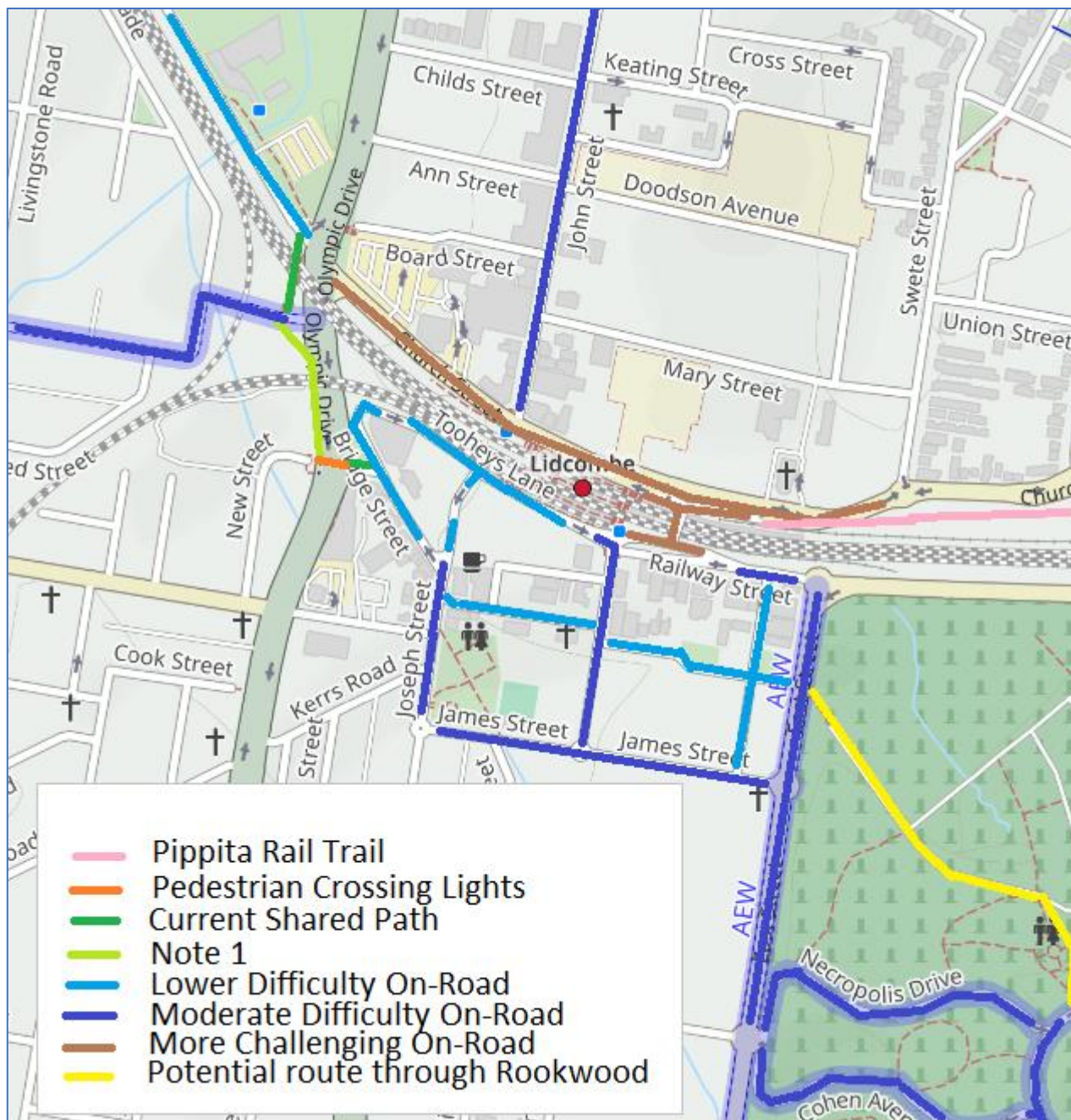
Map 2 – [RWGPS Heat Map](#) of the last 2 years of publicly available riding data in the area.



Map 3 – [Strava Heat Map](#) of the last 12 months of riding in the area.  
(Note: Map displayed in detail above using a free Strava account)

The fourth map is my attempt to define the relative riding competence required for the roads and paths around the Lidcombe Town Centre. I've attempted to define the relative levels from the perspective of a rider with lower on-road confidence or experience levels.

The 'More challenging On-Road' category involve roads that are either narrow or carry a reasonable amount of vehicular traffic and are on an incline. This assumes that the rider is using a non-assisted standard bike. The signalised intersection at Church St and Olympic Drive may also be intimidating for some riders.

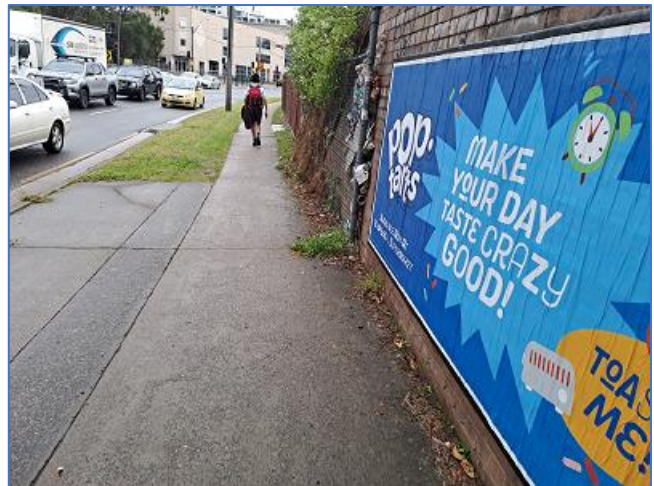


Map 4 - Marked up map from Open Street Map (Cycle Map layer) showing relative riding difficulty.  
See next page for notes.

#### Map 4 Notes:

- 'Note 1' on legend:

This section of pathway is defined in the RMS Cycleway Finder as shared path and on *Map 1* as an 'Active Transport Cycling Link'. However, around 130m of the 160m length is 'normal footpath' width with only around 30m (under the bridge) being of a width wide enough to be considered shared path. Apart from a sign on the northern side of Bridge Rd pointing towards Lidcombe there is no physical signage or markings to indicate that this is supposed to be a shared path.



*Path alongside Olympic Drive narrows after railway bridge underpass*

- An additional step in marking this is a true active transport link would be to change the lanterns on the 'pedestrian crossing lights' crossing of Olympic Drive to pedestrian and cycling lanterns. I suspect this may be the domain of Transport for NSW rather than council. As identified on the above map, there is already a short stretch of shared path between the eastern side of the crossing and Bridge St.



*Narrow path along Olympic Drive and off to New St West (right of image) and Pedestrian Crossing (left of image).*

- At the Church St end of the 'Current Shared Path' section under the main Western line (alongside Olympic Drive between Bridge and Church Streets), there's a 'Cyclists Dismount' sign due to the narrow ramp containing a sharp U-turn. The pedestrian crossing (or 'Beg') button to cross Church St from the south to north side is not readily accessible, being mounted on the traffic light pole facing the fence and away from the transit path of those using the ramp or steps.



*On the west side of Olympic Drive, crossing Church St from the south to north side.*

- Although not shown on the map, there is a walkway through the multi-storey carpark from the intersection of New St East and Bridge St to Tooheys Lane. If this car park were to be redeveloped, there would be potential to create a wider path through, which would be a more direct route than the present on-road route. There is also a route through the small carpark adjoining the library and around the boom gates through the hotel car park to Tooheys Lane – but I suspect this would not be usable as an official route.

## ➤ Comments on proposed Active Transport Links

Although we make several suggestions below, they are really just ‘playing around the edges’, and will have a reduced impact on the uptake of cycling until the ‘elephant in the room’ – the crossing of the railway line at or near Lidcombe station – is seriously addressed.

There are currently 3 options for crossing the line, each with challenges:

1. Path along the western side of Olympic Drive between New and Church Streets:  
The heat maps show that some riders do use this route. However, until the issues identified above are addressed, I don’t believe this can realistically be considered a viable active transport route for users other than pedestrians.
2. Crossing at the railway station:
  - a. Depending on direction of travel, riders legally need to walk bikes along footpaths to reach lifts, and then once on the over-bridge, to walk their bikes to the other lift back down to street level.
  - b. Lifts may not be operating – either due to a breakdown or for routine maintenance. I personally haven’t experienced this at Lidcombe station, but I have experienced breakdowns at several other stations with similar lift configurations. Carrying a heavy bike up the stairs is not fun – and may not be possible for some people (including wheelchair and mobility scooter users).
3. Road crossing bridge between Railway and Church Streets:

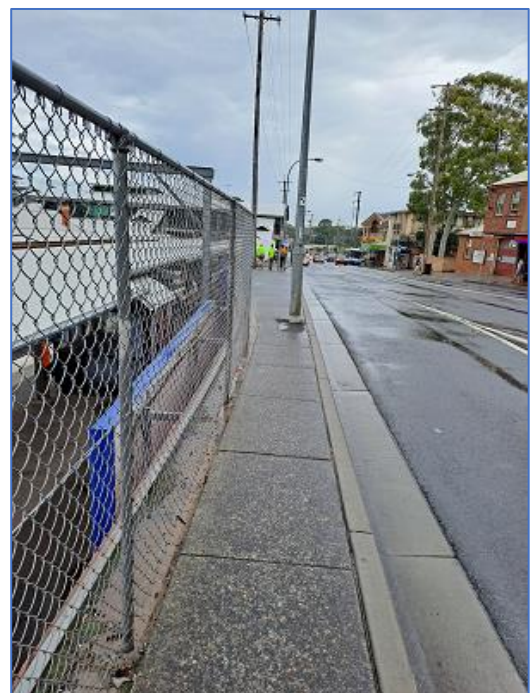
Narrow road with quite narrow (1.1m) footpath in parts, which may be challenging or dangerous to walk safely along if unable or unwilling to ride on the roadway. I doubt whether wheelchair or mobility scooter users would even attempt this crossing. The path surface is damaged in several places as shown in the photo to the right.



*Damaged footpath from bridge turning left into Church St.*

Currently, instead of a footpath on the southern (Railway St) approach to the crossing coming from the East, there is a ‘No Pedestrian Access Past This Point’ sign. If my understanding is correct, part of the Friends Park Precinct project appears to be the construction of a 1.2m wide path along this section which may at least improve access for pedestrians.

The bridge approaches are on an incline (more pronounced if approaching from the east along Church St) which some riders may find challenging. While this may not provide a barrier to the fitter riders or those on e-bikes, it certainly doesn’t appeal to everyone in the ‘8 to 80’ age range.



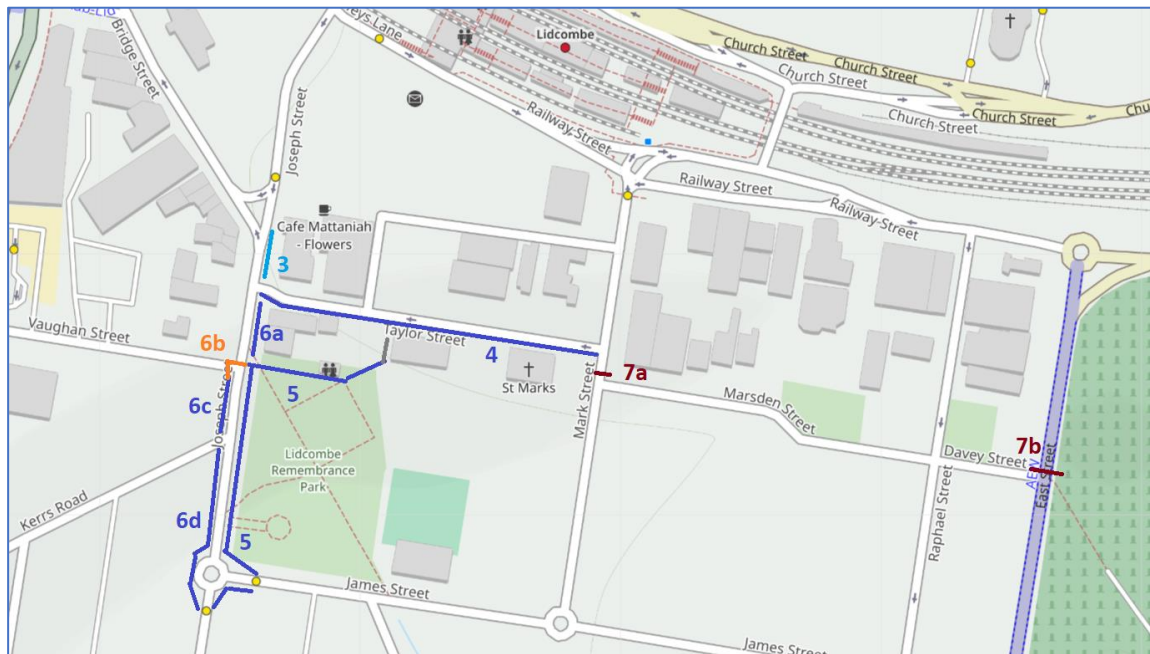
*1.1m wide path heading west towards Lidcombe station from the bridge.*

Bridge widening or road reconfiguration in this vicinity wouldn’t be easy or come cheaply but is the only viable option that I can see for reasonable active transport connectivity between both sides of the railway line.

## Comments on the three precincts on the southern side of the railway line:

We believe there may be further opportunities to provide safer cycling routes in and out of the town centre precincts on the southern side of the railway line. Several of the proposals below are aimed at providing safer routes between the town centre, Kerrs Rd and Joseph St south of the James St roundabout.

1. The aforementioned path along the western side of Olympic Drive needs work and money to bring it up to shared-path standard. This path appears to be geographically outside the scope of both the John St and Joseph St precincts.
2. The active transport link shown on *Map 1* from the Olympic Drive pedestrian crossing along Bridge St and Tooheys Lane into Railway Street is one way at present, heading west to east. Is there planned to be a contra-flow for cyclists? If not, there doesn't appear to have been any route marked for those heading east to west.



Map showing location of points raised below

3. The current east west link on the southern side of the railway line from Mark St to the Olympic Drive pedestrian crossing is via Taylor St, Joseph St, and Bridge St. The right turn from Taylor into Joseph can be intimidating, crossing two lanes heading south on Joseph St. We would like consideration given to converting the eastern-most lane of Joseph St between Taylor St and Bridge St (green line on photo) to a contra-flow cycle lane.
4. We'd like council to consider converting the 2.5m wide footpath along the southern side of Taylor St into a shared path – ideally two way, but at least contra-flow to the one-way roadway. The effective width of the path is currently reduced by the presence of poles and a service box.



Suggested contra-flow lane along Joseph St

5. We believe there's an opportunity to build a shared path from the current small carpark off the south side of Taylor St through Remembrance Park, providing access to the Joseph/Vaughan St signalised intersection and James St pedestrian Crossing near the Joseph St roundabout.
6. As the above heat maps demonstrate, Kerrs Rd, with its signalised crossing of Olympic Drive, provides an important cycling corridor to the southwest of the town centre. We'd like to propose some additions which we believe could improve access for less confident riders to this important corridor.  
Given that a crossing of Joseph St opposite Remembrance Park isn't possible due to the proximity of the Vaughan St signalised intersection and James St roundabout, the following is suggested:
  - a. Provide a route from Taylor St to the Joseph/Vaughan Streets signalised crossing – whether that be through Remembrance Park as above, and/or declare the 25m of reasonably wide path on the eastern side of Joseph St between Taylor St and Vaughan St lights as a shared path.
  - b. Convert the pedestrian lanterns crossing Joseph and Vaughan Streets to combined pedestrian and cycling lanterns.
  - c. Declare the 30m of footpath along the western side of Joseph St between Vaughan St and Kerrs Rd as shared path.
  - d. As a possible addition, declare the 75m of path along the western side of Joseph St from Kerrs Rd to the pedestrian crossing just south of the James St roundabout as shared path.
7. CAMWEST welcomes the proposal of Marsden/Davey Streets as a shared 10kmph zone. To encourage pedestrian and cyclist movement from the town centre into Rookwood Cemetery, we would encourage council to plan for:
  - a. A pedestrian/cyclist crossing of Mark Street near Taylor Street and Marsden Street.
  - b. A traffic island or pedestrian/cyclist crossing of East St near the end of Davey St to facilitate crossing to the Rookwood Cemetery pedestrian gate. Several car parking spaces may need to be removed on the eastern side of East St to facilitate safe crossing.

Just east of the immediate Friends Park precinct and inside the Rookwood cemetery grounds, we would encourage council to engage in dialogue with the Rookwood Necropolis Trust regarding improved access between the pedestrian gate (opposite Davey St) and Necropolis Drive. The area immediately inside the pedestrian gate is grassed and can become saturated after heavy or prolonged rainfall. The track beyond the grassed area leading to the chapel of St Michael the Archangel (marked in yellow on *Map 4*) is currently reasonably rough – and maybe too so for some riders. Improving the surface of this track could open-up Rookwood to more riders. As can be seen from the RWGPS Heatmap (*Map 2*) the tracks leading from the pedestrian gate do already get moderate use. In the past the Trust have been reported as wanting to encourage cycling within the Rookwood grounds. Improving this access route could be one positive step in that direction.

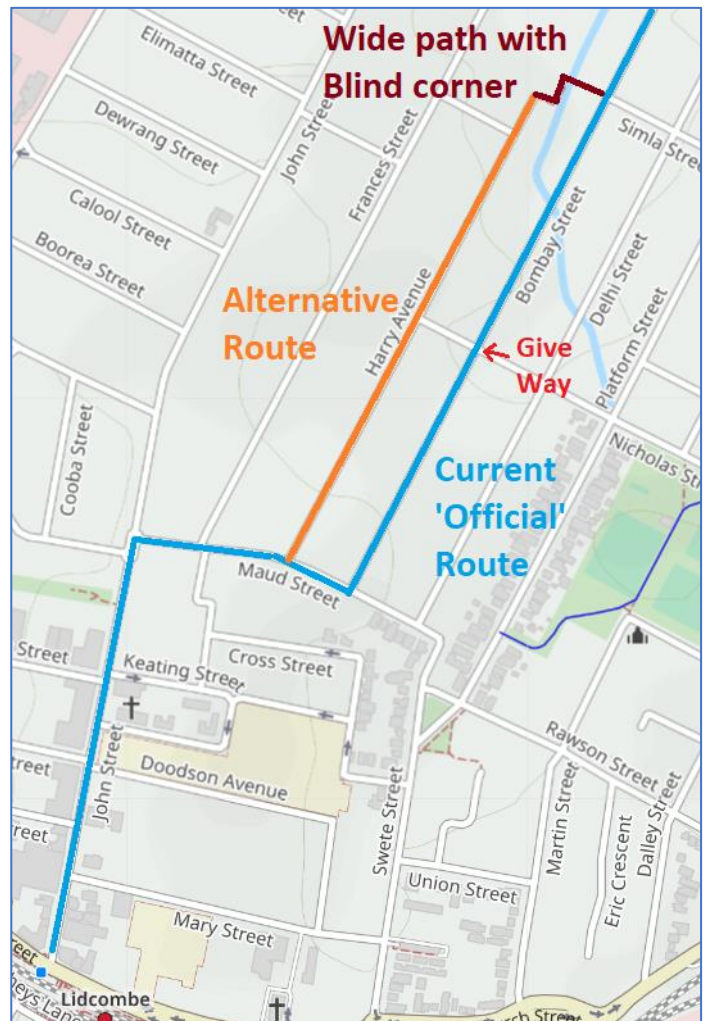
\* Note that the pedestrian gate is only open during daylight hours, so any routes through Rookwood are only a partial solution for those travelling from Lidcombe to the east or return.
8. As mentioned above, we welcome what appears to be a 1.2m wide footpath alongside Railway Street approaching the bridge over the railway line from the east. Although far from ideal from an active transport perspective, this may assist pedestrian connectivity.

**Comments on the John St Precinct and beyond on the northern side of the railway line:**

9. We feel that John St remains a challenge. We hope that the measures proposed assist in calming the traffic along this corridor.
10. We welcome the proposal of a 3m wide separated path along Mary St. However, given the relative unfriendliness of John St for inexperienced riders at present, harbour some doubts as to how well it will be patronised.
11. We would like to see more detail on the proposed Pippita Rail Trail route, particularly the section leading to the station along Church St.



12. Just outside the immediate precinct area, we would welcome any potential bridge crossing of Olympic Drive from Chadwick Reserve into Wyatt Park as briefly mentioned in The Plan. This could be a real boon for active transport in the area.
13. The following is outside the four precincts but shown on *Map 1*. It is raised here as a broader idea for consideration. Regarding the suggested on-road route from John St along Maude St and Bombay St towards Parramatta Rd and Sydney Olympic Park, my preferred route from Maude St is along Harry Ave (parallel to Bombay St) to the end of the road, then along a pathway around a blind corner, across the Haslems Ck tributary, and then to re-join Bombay St opposite Simla St. This may make a good route if the blind corner could be made safer. From my perspective, the advantages of using Harry Ave are that the road is quieter than Bombay St, and the 'Give Way' sign at Nicholas St can be avoided.



**Entire town centre precinct:**

14. If, as the current plan suggests, separated active transport corridors are not provided, we would strongly advocate for a reduction in the speed limit on roads around the town centre. We believe the current 50kmph limit is too fast for inexperienced riders to feel safe sharing the road with vehicular traffic. In line with the UN endorsed 'Stockholm Declaration' on road safety, we would encourage council to consider a 30 kmph speed limit on roads where 'vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner'.<sup>[1]</sup> Manly<sup>[2]</sup> and Liverpool<sup>[3]</sup> councils in Sydney as well as Yarra Council<sup>[4]</sup> in Melbourne have been trialling these zones and would encourage council to investigate whether they may be applicable within the town centre precincts. (Note that the Liverpool trial has ended, with the speed limit being increased to 40kmph. There was significant community backlash against the 30kmph zone, but this appears to have been exasperated by the installed speed camera catching large numbers of drivers travelling between 30 and 40 kmph).

15. Where a shared path crosses a road at a zebra crossing, we would recommend changing the crossing to a combined zebra and cycle crossing where motorists have a clear view of approaching bicycles on both sides of the road.



*Combined Pedestrian and Cycle Crossing when under construction on Adderley St West, Auburn*

## ➤ Closing Comments

- Unfortunately The Plan as it stands doesn't appear to offer too many incentives for residents to mode-shift from car-based to cycling-based trips. There would still be significant barriers for those less confident or experienced riders wishing to transit north-south or east-west through the town centre, or even into the town centre. The proposed bridge over Olympic Drive will offer one ray of sunshine if it comes to fruition. Hopefully the suggestions made in this submission offer some worthwhile options for council to consider. Even if several of them can be implemented we believe that better active transport outcomes would be recognised.
- We are happy to clarify or elaborate on any of the points or suggestions outlined in the feedback.
- We would like to be given the opportunity for further feedback to Council as the planning process moves into a more detailed and focused phase.
- CAMWEST stands ready to offer any support to Council in both creating a better cycling environment and promoting active transport and recreational cycling in the area.

Prepared by Rob Kemp on behalf of CAMWEST.

### References:

[1] - [https://www.20splenty.org/global\\_ministers\\_mandate\\_20mph](https://www.20splenty.org/global_ministers_mandate_20mph)

[2] - <https://www.movementandplace.nsw.gov.au/standards/design-solutions/precinct-wide-speed-reduction-improve-safety-and-quality-public-space>

[3] - <https://walksydney.org/2022/12/05/30km-h-zones-in-liverpool-should-have-stayed/>

[4] - <https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/news/2019/12/18/yarra-council-recommends-maintaining-30kmh-limit.>