



27th October, 2022

Penrith Accessible Trails Hierarchy Study (PATHS) Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Penrith Accessible Trails Hierarchy Study (2022-2032).

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. Our focus over the last 15 years or so has primarily been in the Blacktown, Parramatta, and Cumberland Local Government Areas. However, with no formal Bicycle NSW affiliated group representing the Penrith LGA and with CAMWEST members and associates living in the council area, we would now like to take a more proactive role in engaging with Council and encouraging cycling in the LGA.

We would like to acknowledge the work that has gone into constructing segments of the network over the last 10 or so years. From a recreational/tourism perspective, the Yandhai bridge and 6.4km 'Bridge to Bridge' river loop is fantastic. Some of the more recent linkages are really good too – although there is still more work to be done.

Due to the feedback time constraints and the size of both the LGA and the amount of documentation provided, we have had to limit the areas that we are providing comment on. Our main focus is on the section north of the Great Western Hwy.

Note:

Some of the map images in this document are taken from the 'Cycle Map' layer (or rendering) of Open Street Map – see <https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=13/-33.7390/150.7378&layers=C>. The map is edited by community members - including CAMWEST members – and may not be 100% correct. The thin blue solid lines represent existing paved shared paths. The quality of the paths may vary. The dashed blue lines represent unsealed or unspecified surface paths. The background colour on some of these lines and roads supposedly represent whether they are part of 'official' local or regional networks, although sometimes people specify their own 'unofficial' routes.

➤ Our Viewpoint

As a general rule we are in favour of new cycling infrastructure going in. Like Council, we'd like to see the maximum impact created with the minimum outlay. We strongly support:

- Routes to trip generators (Public Transport nodes, Shops, Schools etc), which benefit the local communities in several ways, including helping to reduce car dependency.
- Recreational routes – Routes of varying lengths and difficulties that appeal to individuals, families, and other rider groupings. These can be important for exercise and people's mental well-being.

One of the roles that most Bicycle User Groups (BUGs) perform is to encourage people to get out on their bikes. We educate people about what cycling infrastructure exists and show them the safer linkage roads in between.

CAMWEST does this in two ways:

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.

When riding as a group (and for a number of us as individuals) we try and stay away from busy roads where practicable. Our preference is for riding on paths through parks rather than paths alongside busy roads and/or roads where there are lots of driveway crossings (potential conflict zones). Even quieter roads are sometimes used in preference to paths alongside busy roads.

Often paths alongside roads provide a more direct route – although they may be hillier. For community members whose primary transport mode is the car, paths alongside roads can be more visible, instead of being hidden in a reserve or parkland. Some people may feel safer riding alongside roads, particularly in low light conditions. Swooping birds are probably less likely in more built-up areas alongside roads.

This is the lens that we are using to critique the existing and proposed cycling infrastructure in the PATHS documentation.

➤ CAMWEST’s Current Activity within the LGA

At present our only self-guided route which ventures into the Penrith LGA is one-way from [Mt Druitt to Penrith via Wianamatta Regional Park](#).

As the routes are publicly viewable, we try and stick to ‘official’ shared paths – or paths that we believe could reasonably be classified as shared paths (those that are at least 2.5m wide). We do use some shorter lengths of footpath on other routes, but clearly delineate this by a different colour line on the map and cues to the effect that riders *should* walk the section.

A couple of us did a recognisance for a future BUG ride earlier this year using the above route and extending it by doing the Bridge-to-Bridge River loop. We haven’t had the opportunity to run this as an organised ride to date.

One of the main challenges that we currently face while putting routes together into and around the Penrith LGA revolve around finding route segments that link up into a ‘meaningful’, enjoyable, safe and legal routes. As will be seen below, the background work for this feedback has revealed another potential route that we may be able to use.

We can see a few more options opening up assuming the Table B.4 ‘Other Local Priority Projects Pending Funding’ and Priority Local & Regional routes (Tables B.1 and B.2) get built, however options are likely to still be a bit thin on the ground.

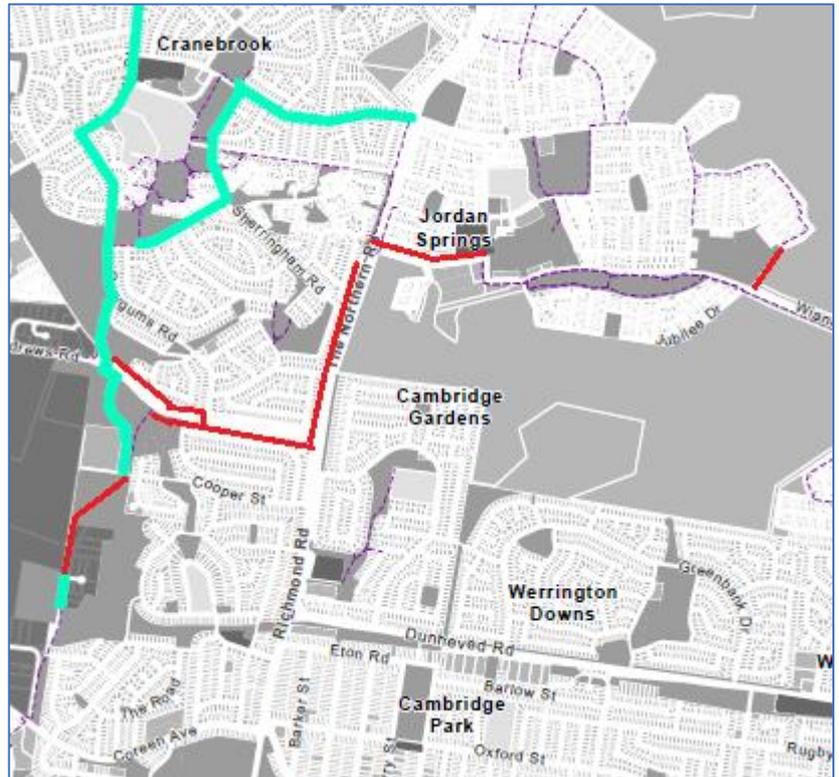
We offer some suggestions for variations and additional segments which may help fill some of the gaps that we see for creating more compelling recreational routes.

➤ Base Map paths and existing routes:

We have questions relating to the 'existing' paths on the maps included in the PATHS documentation.

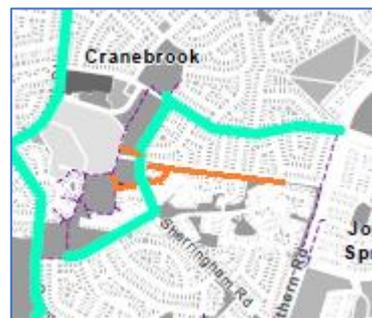
The map on the right shows some existing paths in red which we use that aren't displayed on the base map – although some of the text in the main document refers to portions of them.

We're also aware of paths around Jordan Springs and Claremont Meadows that aren't shown on the base maps.



Red lines - Known shared paths which don't appear to be marked on the 'base maps' as existing paths.

There are other paths marked that were previously unknown to us. The main orange marked path between Sherringham and Pendock Rds starts off as 1.8m wide at the Sherringham Rd end, before widening to 2m. There are no direct kerb ramps at either end (see photo below). The path looks like it could extend through the reserve to the shared path alongside The Northern Rd, but doesn't.



Orange Lines – Paths previously unknown to us.

Ignoring the furniture in this photo, there are no kerb ramps (or driveways nearby) from this marked shared path onto the Pendock Rd roadway.

The other end of this pathway has offset kerb ramps to Sherringham Rd roadway, but no direct link to the marked shared path on the other side. There is a branch path which has a zebra crossing and improved kerb ramps.

There are other examples of 2m wide paths around the area that aren't defined as shared paths which do have kerb ramps down to the roadway.

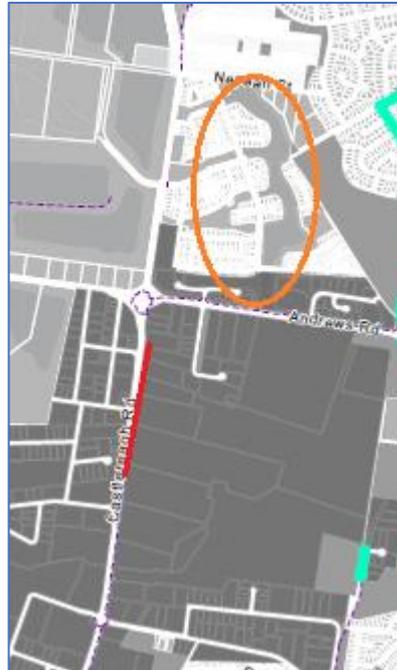


No kerb ramp from pathway to Pendock Rd roadway.

As the path alongside Castlereagh Rd heads north from Penrith CBD, it narrows to 2m up until the service road just before the Andrews Rd roundabout (apart from a narrower section out front of the Ampol Service Station near the Coreen Ave roundabout).

Part of this 2m wide section is marked as existing path, but the section in red on the map to the right is not marked. We are curious as to why.

There are paths around the 'Lakes Walk' (in the orange circled area) which are 2m wide but not marked as shared paths – which would act as a great connection between the Andrews Rd shared path and the path beginning on the corner of Nepean St and Castlereagh Rd.



Red line – continuation of 2m wide path along Castlereagh Rd to the service road near the Andrew Rd roudabout.



Most of these sections are shown on the [RMS Cycleway Finder](#) page.

As can be seen from the upper right-hand image, apart from the newest section between Andrews Rd and Lakeview Drive, these paths are listed on the sometimes overly-optimistic [RMS Cycleway Finder](#) page as shared paths.

This photo shows the 2m wide path along Lakeview Drive in Cranebrook making a 90 degree turn towards the lake, with the narrower 'footpath' continuing to follow alongside the roadway. There is no indication whether the 2m wide path is a shared path or not.



2m wide path alongside Lakeview Drive doing a 90 degree turn.

Note that as Toni Bracher pointed out in her comments to council, the crossings of Coreen Ave and Andrews Rd beside the dual-lane Castlereagh Rd roundabouts can be quite dangerous.

In general, we think pedestrian/cyclist crossings should be moved away from these types of roundabouts.

There are a number of similar problematic 'roundabout crossings' across Western Sydney.

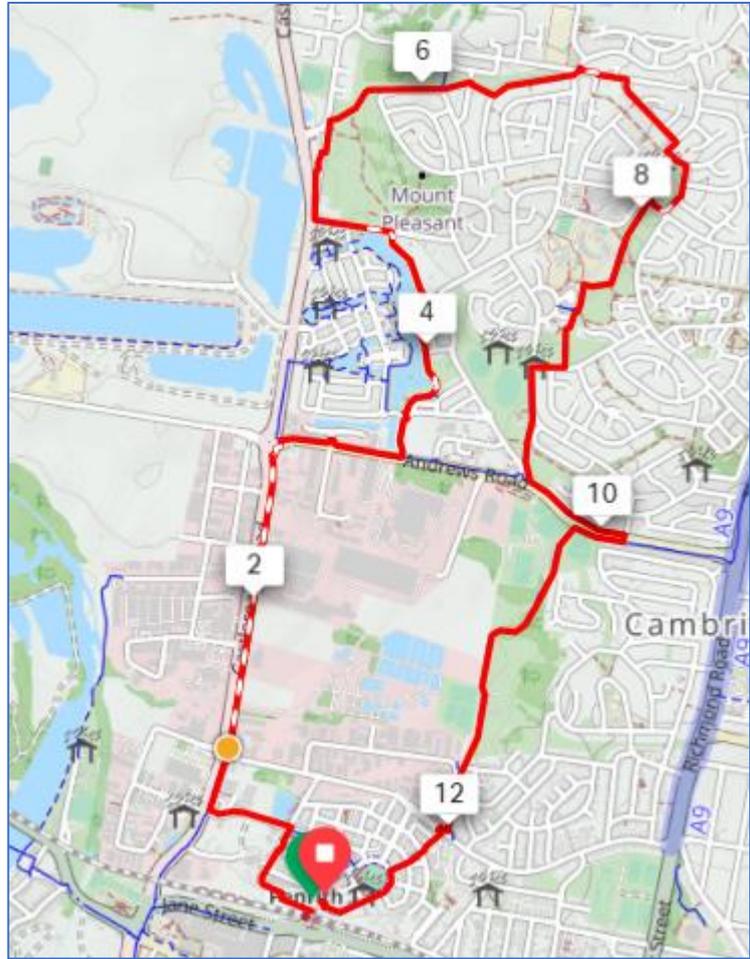


2m wide 'designated' Shared path alongside McHenry Rd doing a 90 degree turn.

We'd love to be able to promote cycling in the Penrith area by putting a route like this as one of our 'self-guided' routes, but feel unable to at present as some of this route is along 2m wide paths that don't appear to be recognised by council as shared paths.

(Our preference for a route like this would be to route away from the path alongside Castlereagh Rd where practicable to the northern section of the River Walk past Penrith Weir (between Nepean Ave and Cassola Place) – but this is impassable as I write due to flooding. Also note that connections between Castlereagh/Andrews Rd and Cassola Place could be improved).

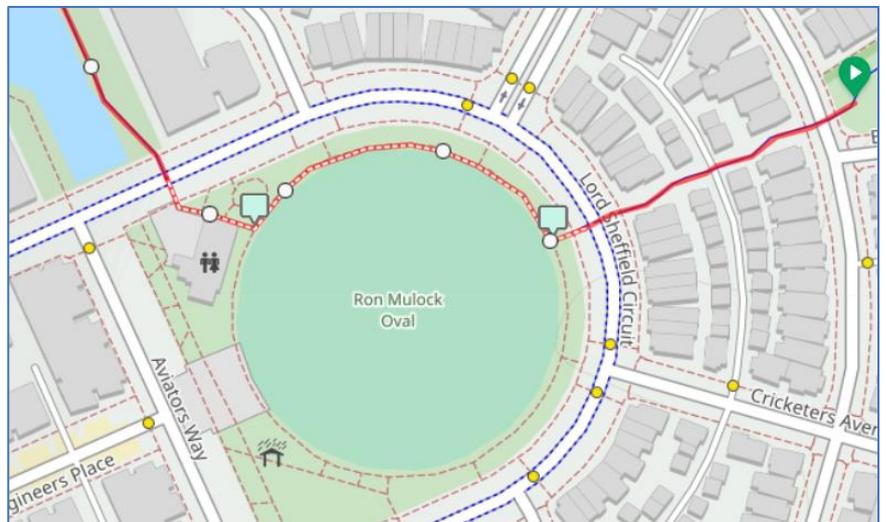
Note that this is the 'raw' route, with none of the delineation corrections between path and road or surface type which we would normally modify for our 'official' routes.



See <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/41247099> for this route.

CAMWEST seeks clarification from council on:

- Whether the existing 2m wide path along Castlereagh Rd as far as Andrews Rd is officially a shared path (noting that the whole of Castlereagh Rd is a proposed Regional Route with presumed width of at least 2.5m);
- Whether council are prepared to recognise all or some of the 2m wide paths around the Lakes Walk (above) as shared paths.
- Whether the path around the Ron Mulock Oval (Penrith) is a shared path. For example, is what's marked on the map legal, or do riders need to traverse this route on the Lord Sheffield Cct roadway?



Is the path around the oval actually a shared path?

➤ Improvements to existing routes

There are a number of improvements that could be made to existing paths that we feel would increase their amenity to the community:

General:

- Signposting and/or path markings, both to specify where shared paths begin and end, but also at intermediate intervals.
- Wayfinding signage.
- Ensuring that any 'official' shared paths have accessible kerb ramps to road surfaces.

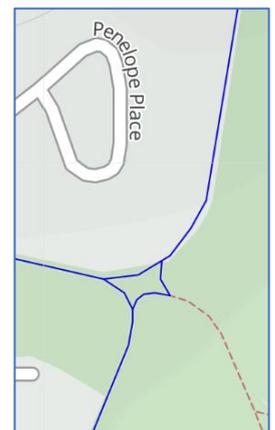
Specific:

- Widen the path at the NE corner on the intersection of Thornton Drive and Combewood Ave Penrith (or via other means) to better indicate the crossing of the shared path at this intersection.



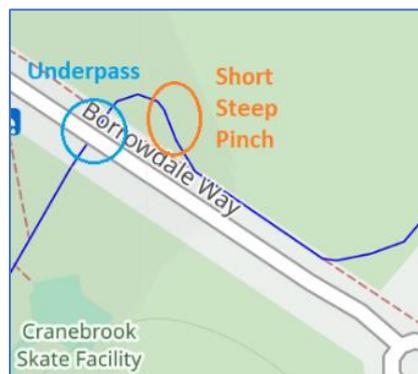
Marked-up Google Streetview image of the intersection. Red lines represent current shared paths, orange circled area shows the corner in question.

- Redesign of the '4-way' intersection in the reserve behind Penelope Pl, Cranebrook, where there is no direct path to go either north-south or east-west. CAMWEST are not generally in favour of 'cross' intersections. If possible, offset T intersections may be a better option in this instance.



4-way intersection in reserve behind Penelope Pl, with no path to go 'straight-ahead' in either direction.

- The same path goes through an underpass under Borrowdale Way. At the time of riding, the underpass was covered with pooled water. As no other sections of the path were suffering, we were wondering whether there might be a blocked drain, or is this a regular occurrence after prolonged rainfall?



Borrowdale Way underpass and steep pinch

- If feasible, it may encourage use of this path if the short steep pinch on the northern side of the underpass in Castillo Drive Reserve could be re-engineered.

- Ignoring all the sediment currently at the bottom of the stairs off Nepean Ave down to the northern section of the River Walk, improved access for bikes to this area would be strongly desirable. A ramp would be much easier to navigate from a rider's perspective and allow access for other wheeled modes of transport.

If not feasible, some means of helping keep a bike on the narrow ramp area, like a channel or even a pipe-barrier as shown in these photos, would be an improvement.



Current stairs with ramp

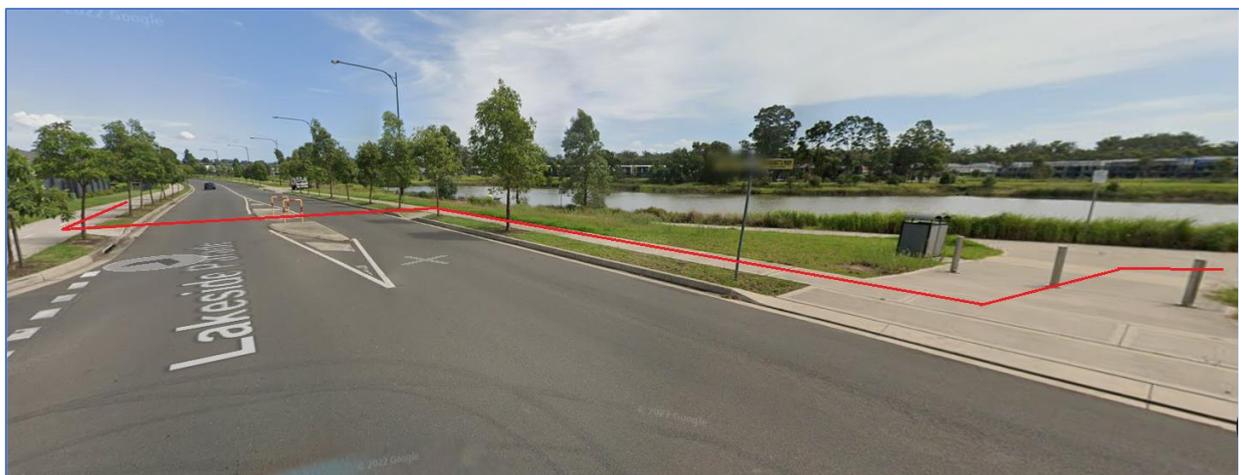
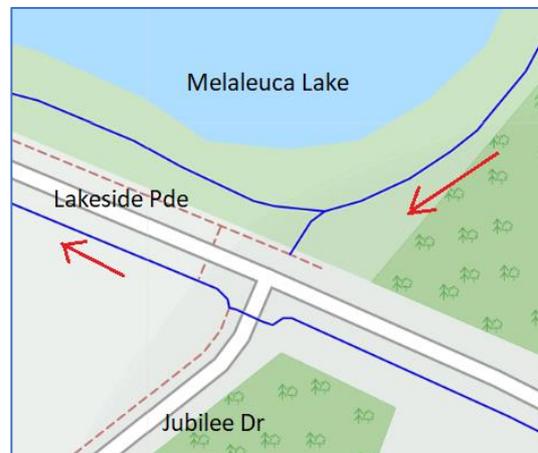


Stairs with ramp and pipe barrier at Wollstonecraft



Channel running down stairs at Rhodes

- Improve access for riders from around Melaleuca Lake (Jordan Springs) to the crossing of Lakeside Parade. At present the crossing is legally accessible by footpath, but not wider shared path.



Marked-up Google Streetview image of crossing.

➤ Suggested additional routes and segments

- The community of Ropes Crossing lies just outside the Penrith LGA. It has an extensive shared path network to serve its 7,000 residents, but no shared path linkage to railway services. While the links to Mt DrUITT station (within the Blacktown LGA) should be better than what they are, the shortest route to a railway station for this community is to the St Marys station within the Penrith LGA.

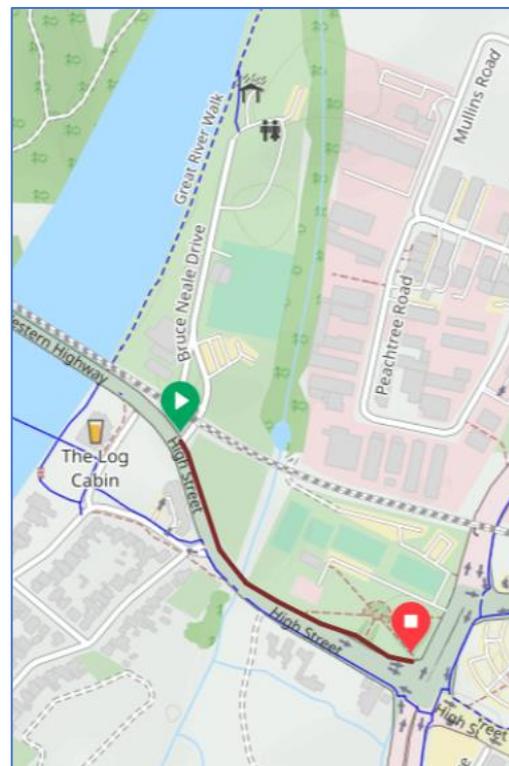
We note that within the Local Priority List (Table B.2) that entry priority 23 described as 'Forrester Rd from St Marys Station to Ropes Ck' appears to cover this section while possibly continuing up Forrester Rd to Ropes Ck and the Blacktown LGA border.

We ask council to reconsider the priority of the 2km section from the station to the Ropes Crossing Blvd roundabout to encourage those from Ropes Crossing and further north to have the option of safe cycling to their local railway station.



Red line showing proposed 2km route along Forrester Rd, St Marys. Blue lines are current shared paths.

- While acknowledging the proposed regional route 4 which includes the section from the Nepean River to Castlereagh Rd via the Boundary Ck corridor, we'd like to propose an additional 500m long path along the Great Western Hwy between Bruce Neale Drive and the Castlereagh Rd/High St/Mulgoa Rd signalised intersection. As well as providing a more accessible route down to the Northern section of the Great River Walk than the previously mentioned stairs south of the Yandhai bridge, Bruce Neale Drive also provides access to the Weir reserve area and the picturesque Weir picnic area. We think the picnic area is a real asset to this area, being so close to Penrith CBD. The footway on the Great Western Hwy bridge across Peach Tree Ck is reasonably narrow, which is probably the main barrier to this route. A new bridge across the creek would be the ideal, but probably cost prohibitive. Another option may be to use the shared path on the southern side of the Great Western Hwy and cross the Hwy near Ladbury Ave – but we can't see how this would be accomplished safely without major works.



Proposed widening of existing footpath along the northern side of the Great Western Hwy.

- Traversing the LGA east-west has always been a challenge. The path alongside the Great Western Hwy is welcome, but not complete or particularly inviting from our perspective due to the closeness to traffic noise for an extended period of time. In the past when riding between Rooty Hill and the Penrith area my preferred routes usually involved staying south of the railway line between Rooty Hill and St Marys, then crossing over to the north side at Werrington, and taking quieter streets that often involved going through the Werrington Lake Reserve. One such route is [here](#).

There are currently two ways of crossing the railway line at Werrington:

- Ride along Werrington Rd, where the road shoulder disappears to almost nothing across the railway bridge. There is a path on the western side of the bridge, but this is not readily accessible from the roadway.
- Walk across the Werrington Station overbridge, and ride along Rance Rd. If travelling north to south, a right turn needs to be made from Rance Rd onto Werrington Rd, which can be tricky.

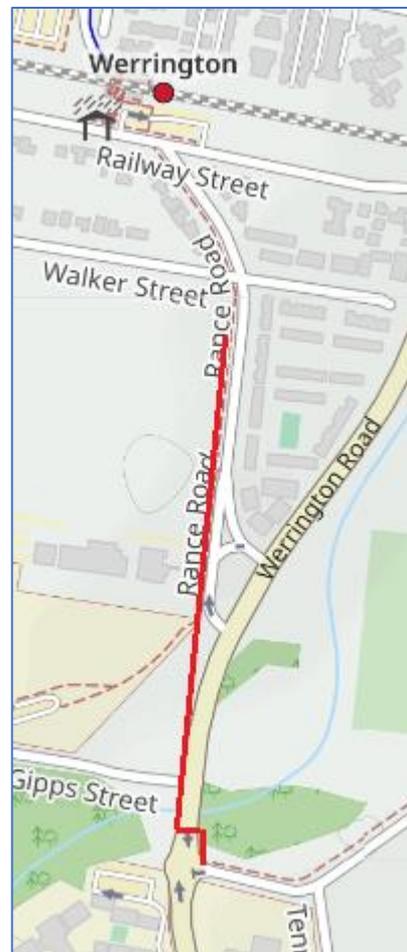
I haven't taken a group of riders along either option.

We note there is a proposal to realign this section of road under the [Werrington Arterial Stage 2](#). We would request that north-south and east-west connectivity for riders be implemented during this upgrade.

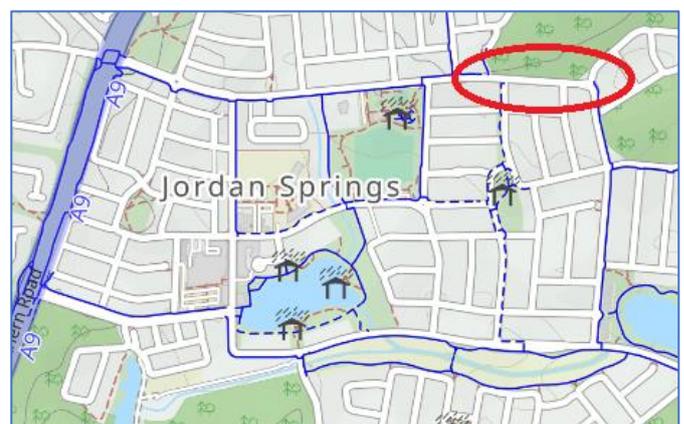
In the interim, we feel that safety for cyclists could be improved if a section of the current footpath alongside Rance and Werrington Roads were widened to shared path width. This would allow cyclists travelling south to cross Werrington Rd at the existing traffic island just north of The Kingsway roundabout, and continue either into The Kingsway or down Werrington Rd towards the Great Western Hwy.

- Jordan springs has quite a good shared path network around and within it. There is however one 'missing' 250m section along Greenwood Parkway. I'm unsure why, but this section is a narrower footpath rather than the designated shared path which encircles the remainder of the suburb. I imagine that this was funded and constructed by the suburb developers.

Do Council have any explanation as to why and/or leverage with the developers to request conversion of this segment to shared path width?



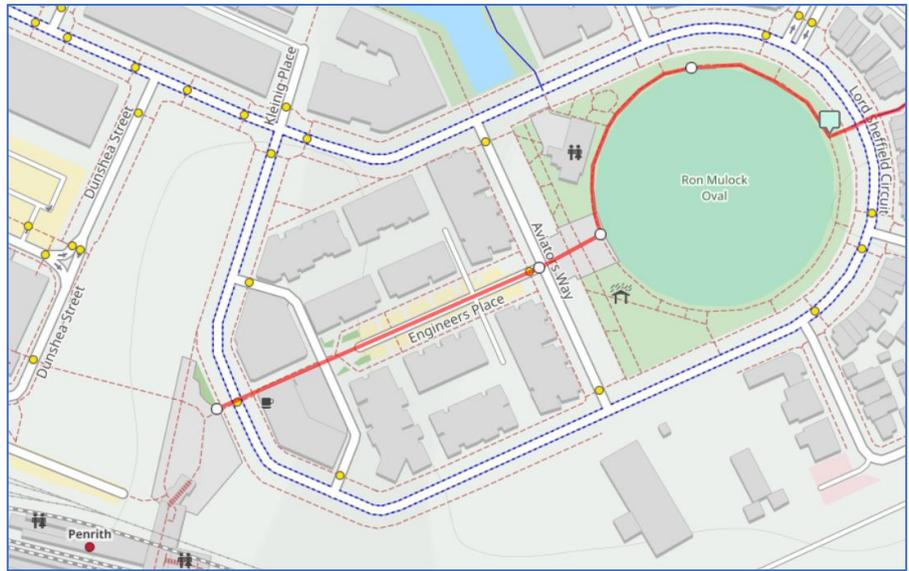
Proposed 420m path widening along Werrington and Rance Roads, Werrington.



250m section of missing shared path in red circled are along Greenwood Parkway, Jordan Springs.

- If the wide path around the Ron Mulock oval is considered a shared path (as asked above), would it be feasible to create the following route to the Penrith station forecourt?

A kerb ramp would be required from the oval path to Aviators Rd roadway, and then some kerb ramps and concrete for the few metres from the end of Engineers Place to the laneway behind Quest Penrith.



Proposed route from existing Cranebrook shared path off Lord Sheffield Cct to Penrith Station. The other shared-path alongside Thornton Canal can also link in near the Restrooms.

- There is currently a concrete footpath that links the shared path on the Blacktown LGA side of Ropes Ck across Boronia Park to a rough car parking area off Boronia Rd (near the Athel St intersection).

Particularly when Local Priority Routes 5 & 7 from North St Marys to St Marys Station are constructed, widening this path and finishing to Boronia Rd could form another important link.



Marked-up Bing aerial image of footpath across Boronia Park, St Marys.

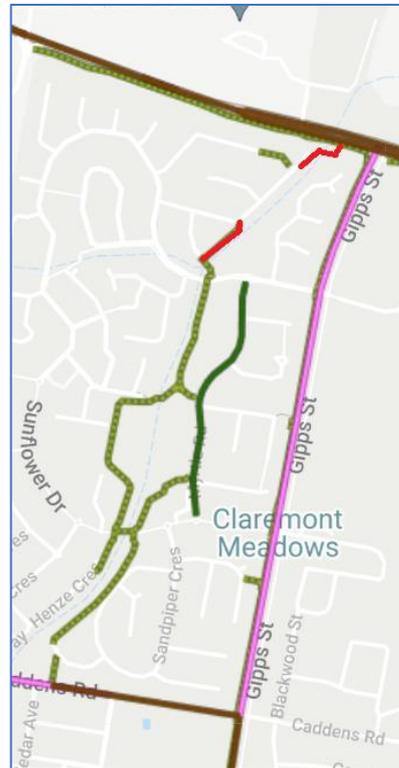
- If the path that CAMWEST is proposing along Forrester Rd goes ahead (red line on map), it may be worth considering a path along Maple Rd (orange line) to join the proposed Local Route 5 along Wattle Ave (green line) to Forrester Rd.



- These paths along the Claremont Creek corridor between the Great Western Hwy shared path and Caddens Rd in Claremont Meadows don't appear on the base maps. Some have shared path signage up.

We note that this corridor is mentioned as Project 25 in Table B.2 'Potential Local Routes and Projects'. Rather than all the sections mentioned in this project, it would appear to us that the sections marked in red which currently have narrower footpaths in place are the higher priority paths to upgrade. These sections are:

- Great Western Highway Shared Path to Mistletoe Ave (approx 140m), and
- Mistletoe Ave to Dahlia Pl (approx 125m).

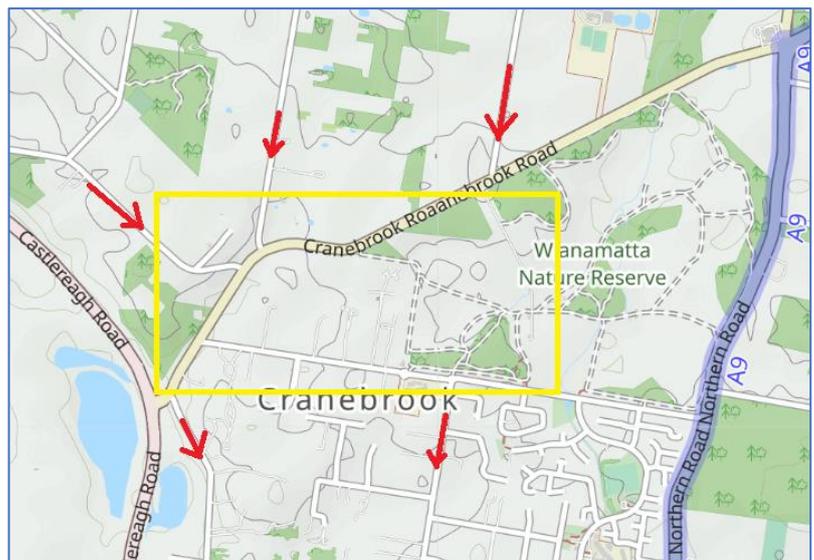


Paths along the Claremont Ck corridor through Claremont Meadows

- We have had a dream of a safe route through from Church Lane, Tadmore Rd and/or Taylor Rd to either Cranebrook Rd near the Castlereagh Rd intersection or Grays Lane for a while.

I feel uneasy about riding along some parts of Cranebrook Rd between Taylor Rd and Castlereagh Rd, and probably wouldn't take a group of riders along this section.

We note that Project 23 of Table B.1 'Potential State Government Routes and Projects' is along Cranebrook Rd between The Northern Rd and Castlereagh Rd. This would be one solution, but is well down the priority list.



Ways of getting around or through the yellow bordered area.

Another which we wish to investigate is through the Wianamatta Nature Reserve. We suspect this may be rideable in drier conditions. Are we correct in assuming that this parcel of land is managed solely by National Parks, and that Council doesn't have any direct say or control about what goes on within the boundaries?

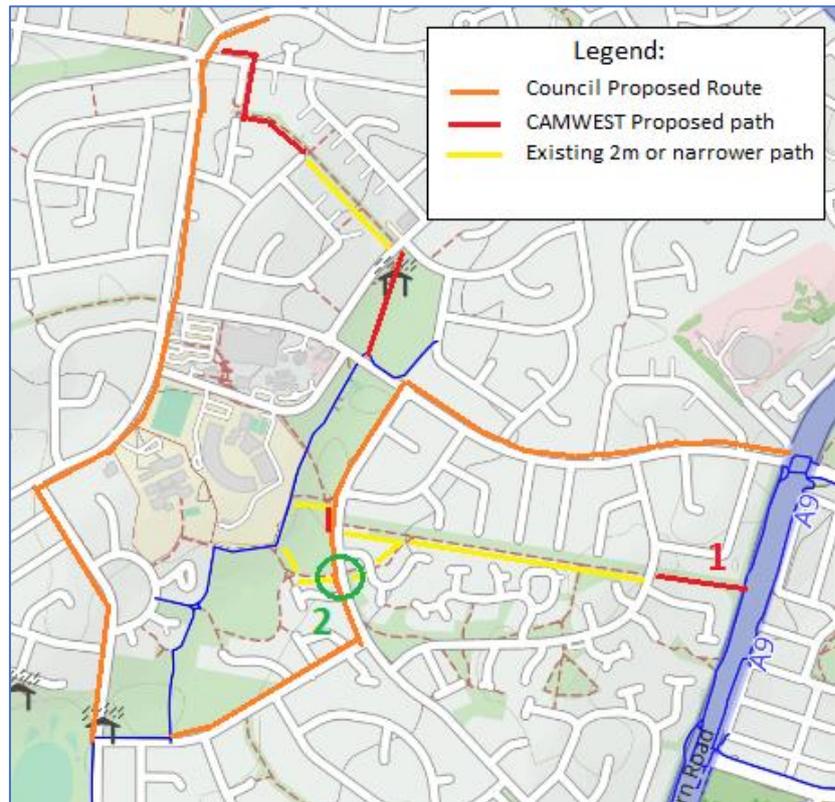
➤ Comments on proposed new routes

- With reference to 'Project Number 9 – Cranebrook to Penrith City Centre' in Table 6.2 'Proposed draft Local Priority Projects 2022 – 2032':

While the crossing of Andrews Rd at Laycock St is welcome, we question the value of the proposed paths along Greygums Rd/Laycock St and McHenry/Sherringham Rds in preference to upgrading and extending the existing path through the reserve.

For example, have the alternative options outlined in this map been considered?

The existing path south of McHenry Rd is mainly through reserve, so we're sceptical that riders to/from Penrith Station who are wary of riding through reserves would have their concerns allayed if these new paths were alongside roads.



Existing and proposed paths through Cranebrook

Is it feasible to put a path through the reserve area between Pendock Rd and the Northern Rd shared path (marker 1 on diagram), or is there a reason this can't be constructed?

If the above path does become a more usable route, CAMWEST would encourage the conversion of the current zebra crossing on Sherringham Rd (marker 2 on diagram) to a zebra and cycle parallel crossing. We would also encourage any new zebra type crossings on shared path routes to be parallel crossings.

Access to schools is maintained through the reserve.

Access to the shops is a little trickier, but there appears to be a ramp up from Hosking St at the Community Centre, or an additional path may be considered alongside Borrowdale Way from Hosking St corner up to the shopping centre entrance. Both options avoid the potential conflicts at the main car park entry/exit points.

These routes minimise conflict points with vehicles, but as a consequence of traversing reserves are less noticed by the community.

➤ Other Network Connections

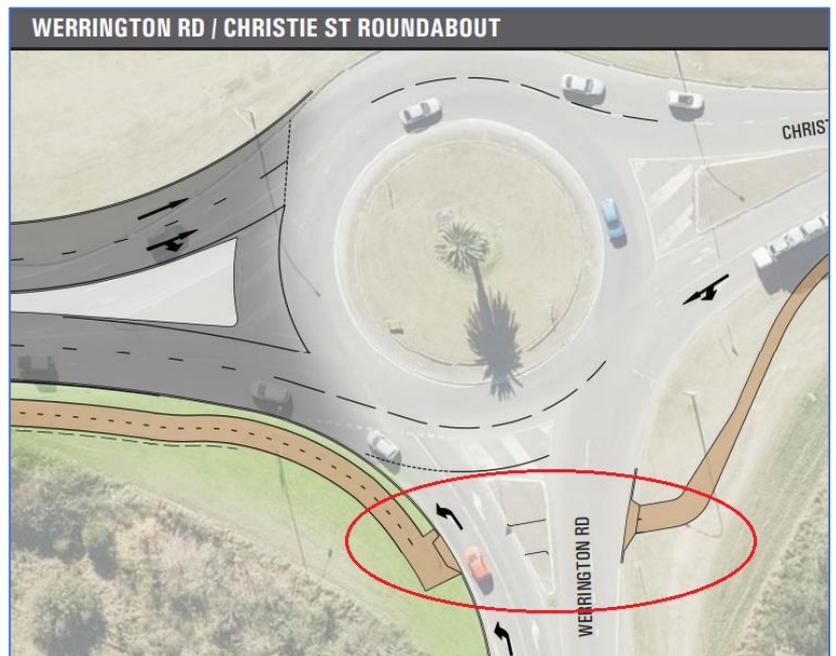
- We notice that in Table 6.3 'Additional Active Transport Infrastructure Projects' the 270m 'missing link' of Jamison Rd is identified. We would urge Council to prioritise completion of this important link for transit between Mulgoa Rd/Penrith and the river foreshore/Bridge to Bridge Circuit.



Missing 270m of Jamison Rd shared path.

➤ Other potentially impactful projects

- We're aware of the [Dunheved Rd Upgrade Project](#) between Richmond Rd and the Christie St/Werrington Rds roundabout, which is scheduled for construction over the next 4 or so years. There is a shared path proposed along the southern side of the road. However, we couldn't see any specific mention made of this project in the PLANS documentation.
 - However, Project 21 of Table B.2 'Potential Local Routes and Projects' mentions this route, and then continues down Werrington Rd to the Great Western Hwy. We would imagine (and hope) that the Werrington Arterial Stage 2 incorporates a shared path which would complete the Project 21 route.
 - On the Regional route map there is a gap in the proposed path alongside Richmond Rd between Dunheved Rd and Andrews Rd. Are we correct to assume that this is an error in the production of the maps and that section of the route is covered by Project 3 'The Northern Rd from South Penrith to Cranebrook' in Table 6.1 'Proposed Regional Priority Projects'?
 - The [Christie St/Werrington Rd roundabout](#) at the end of the Dunheved Rd Upgrade Project appears to have dual turning lanes, with the potential for a future shared path crossing. As previously mentioned, CAMWEST believes these crossings are dangerous, and a crossing further away from the roundabout should be planned for if at all feasible.



- There has been recent community consultation on the [Ropes Ck Corridor](#), along the Penrith/Blacktown LGA border. Although we missed putting in formal comments, we believe there is real potential for some vital shared path linkages and routes within the corridor. These have the potential to benefit residents in both LGAs.

➤ Closing Comments

- We encourage Council to look at any possible shared path developments along the South Creek corridor. There may be potential for construction of a path under the railway line behind The Kingsway. Although running roughly parallel to any new developments along Werrington Rd, being away from the traffic noise would make for a more pleasant cycling experience.
- We encourage Council to work collaboratively with neighbouring councils on shared path plans and implementation. As noted above, the Ropes Crossing community in the Blacktown LGA has a comprehensive shared path network, but no paths to connect to St Marys Station and town centre. There is a shared path along the Ropes Ck corridor on the Blacktown LGA side between Ropes Crossing and Whalan Reserve, but only a legal footpath crossing into the Penrith LGA at Boronia Park. The route along Debrincat Ave between Ropes Ck and Glossop St (Table B.4 *'Other Local Priority Projects Pending Funding'*) may become another good linkage but will only be fully realised if the proposed path along Glossop St is constructed.
- Where feasible, we would encourage conversion of any current zebra crossings along shared path routes to parallel zebra and cycle crossings.
- As mentioned above, from the supplied documentation it's not totally clear to us what is supposed to be part of the shared path network and what isn't.
 - While the current minimum width standard for a 'new' shared path is 2.5m, we are aware of older recognised shared paths in other council areas which don't meet this standard or even the 2m width that is common within the Penrith LGA. For example, several kilometres of the Orphan School Ck shared path in the Fairfield LGA is 1.8m wide. A shorter section of the Lethbridge Park to Mt Druitt path in the Blacktown LGA is 1.5m wide.
 - There are some discrepancies between the maps and other documentation. We're aware of current paths that are signposted or otherwise marked but not shown on the base maps. These extend across the LGA in areas such as Jordan Springs, Claremont Meadows and Cranebrook.

We're wondering how complete Council's knowledge is of existing shared paths. If there is a definitive database, it doesn't appear to have been used to generate the base maps. Does a full audit of existing paths need to be undertaken?

- CAMWEST are keen to help promote cycling in the Penrith LGA. We are open to beginning a dialogue with Council on how we might best contribute – whether that's being part of an active transport or similar committee, assisting with auditing of the current routes, feedback on proposed routes, or helping promote community participation in cycling related events. One of our members, Toni Bracher, has lived in the LGA for a number of years and would be open to discussions with council or at least used as a 'sounding board' for any cycling related plans or ideas that you may have.
- Lately I've been spending a few hours each month updating cycling related infrastructure in Open Street Map. I believe that it is important to have accurate data on this platform, as it feeds a number of other popular websites and apps (Including Strava and Ride With GPS, both used extensively within the cycling communities). I'm happy to update/correct any cycling infrastructure on the map that needs changing.
- We are happy to clarify or elaborate on any of the points or suggestions outlined in the feedback.
- This feedback has been prepared with input from CAMWEST member Toni Bracher.