



14th December, 2022

Pippita Rail Trail Active Transport Link Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Pippita Rail-Trail Active Transport Link.

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.

In general, CAMWEST applaud new cycling infrastructure being provided. 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 ways such as helping to reduce car dependency.
- Recreational routes – Routes of varying lengths and difficulties that appeal to individuals, families, and other rider groupings.

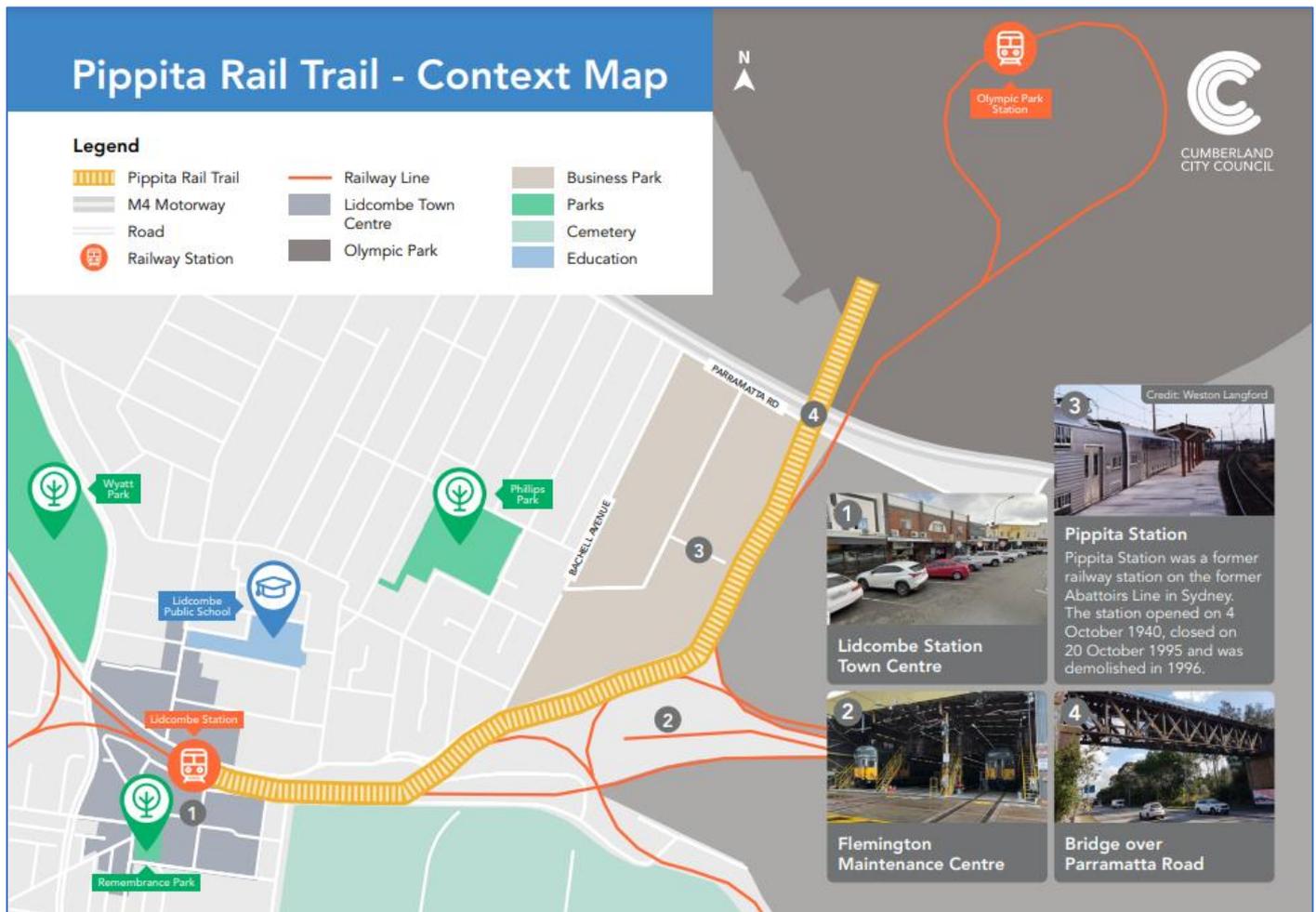
We believe cycling in a safe and welcoming environment can be a contributing factor towards physical health and mental well-being for a significant proportion of the population.

CAMWEST seeks to educate people about what cycling infrastructure exists and show them the safer linkage roads in between. We do 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.

The following critique of the proposed Pippita Rail-Trail is viewed through the above lens.

➤ Proposed Route



Context Map from the Cumberland City website.

CAMWEST are largely supportive of the 'broad brush' outline of the Trail as presented. We see some utility in having a good active transport link between Lidcombe Station and Olympic Park. For riders wanting to get to Olympic Park, being able to safely ride from Lidcombe to Olympic Park rather than catching the branch-line service between the two locations would hold appeal.

We understand there is some discussion about whether sections of the route could be built within the current rail corridors or whether they would need to be alongside nearby streets. With the lack of detail presented we can't really make informed comment on this. Our main requests for the actual route are that:

- Interaction with vehicular traffic is minimised as much as possible – including positioning away from busier roads (to limit exposure to vehicular noise and exhaust fumes),
- The route is as flat as possible, and
- There is provision for lighting the route at night, possibly via sensor lights.

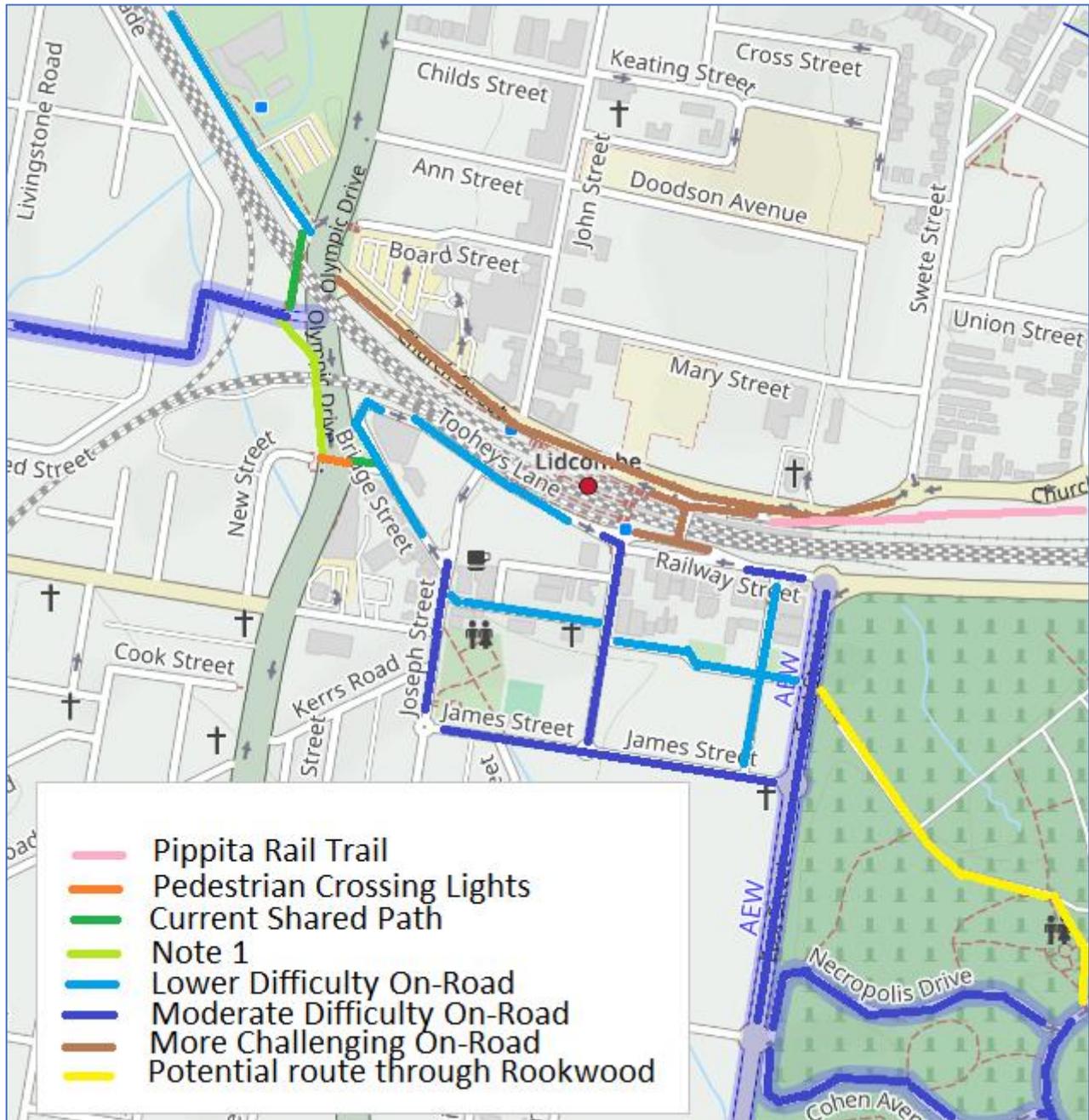
Our primary concern, however, is regarding connectivity at either end of the 2km Trail. There is insufficient detail in the above Context Map to determine precisely where the northern end of the Trail terminates. If the above route is proportionate and accurate, then it appears that the northern end may continue across Edwin Flack Avenue and into the Sydney Olympic Park Warm-Up Arena – but this is unclear.

We don't want this project to be another fantastic piece of infrastructure which hardly gets used due to poor integration with the surrounding cycling network. There are enough of these examples strewn around Western Sydney already.

The remainder of this feedback is looking at connections at either end of the Trail.

➤ The Lidcombe end of the proposed Rail-Trail

The below map is my attempt to define the relative riding competence required for the roads and paths around the Lidcombe end of the proposed Trail. I've attempted to define the relative levels from the perspective of a rider with lower on-road confidence or experience levels – the sort of rider who might be drawn to the Pippita Trail.



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

Map Notes

- 'Note 1' on legend: This section of pathway is defined in the RMS Cycleway Finder as shared path. However, in reality the pathway is of variable width (including that of what would be considered a normal footpath) and has no physical signage or markings to indicate that it is a shared path.
- 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 would come close to winning the prize for the least accessible button in Sydney. This section of path is not currently user friendly.

Unless riders have at least a moderate level of on-road confidence and ability, riding around Lidcombe legally is not easy.

The proposed Trail itself may be suitable for inexperienced riders, but there is very little in the way of accessible connectivity beyond the station for this cohort.

This could be partially ameliorated in a westerly direction by extending the route/shared path beyond the station to Olympic Drive, where riders could cross at the Church St signalised intersection to the more cycle friendly western section of Church St.

The railway line presents a real barrier to those accessing the proposed Trail from the southern side of the railway line. Crossing options are:

- Using the lifts or stairs to/from the station overbridge.
- Using the road overbridge between Railway and Church Streets.
- Using the footpath/shared path indicated on the map above alongside the Western side of Olympic Drive.

We believe that alongside this project, there needs to be some serious consideration given to creating safe and accessible connections across the railway line near Lidcombe Station.

A further step would be to provide connected routes to the East (including into Rookwood Cemetery, but alternative routes are required for non-daylight hours when Rookwood is closed) and other routes to the South & West of Lidcombe town centre. This would fall under Council's 'Walking and Cycling strategy' in general rather than this specific project.

➤ The Sydney Olympic Park end of the proposed Trail

We acknowledge that this end of the project is within the Parramatta LGA, and likely also on land which is managed by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority.

From the documentation seen so far, we are unsure where the Trail is proposed to terminate. The rail embankment finishes on the south-western side of Edwin Flack Ave. There is a fair height differential between the top of the embankment and the path along the SW side of Edwin Flack Ave, meaning a steep ascent/descent would be required if terminating the Trail here.



Top of rail embankment, looking NE across Edwin Flack Ave to the narrow embankment on the other side and beyond to the Warm-Up Arena.

The path along the SW side of Edwin Falck Ave is currently only 1.8m wide in places, and there are no ready crossings to get to:

- The path alongside Shane Gould Ave (3 way crossing at signalised intersection required),
- Sarah Durack Ave (4-way crossing required), and
- The wider path running alongside the NE side of Edwin Falck Ave.

If possible, a bridge across Edwin Falck Ave to join up with the existing path around the Warm-Up Arena would be the ideal – but the existing narrow embankment along the NE side of Edwin Falck Ave may present some challenges.

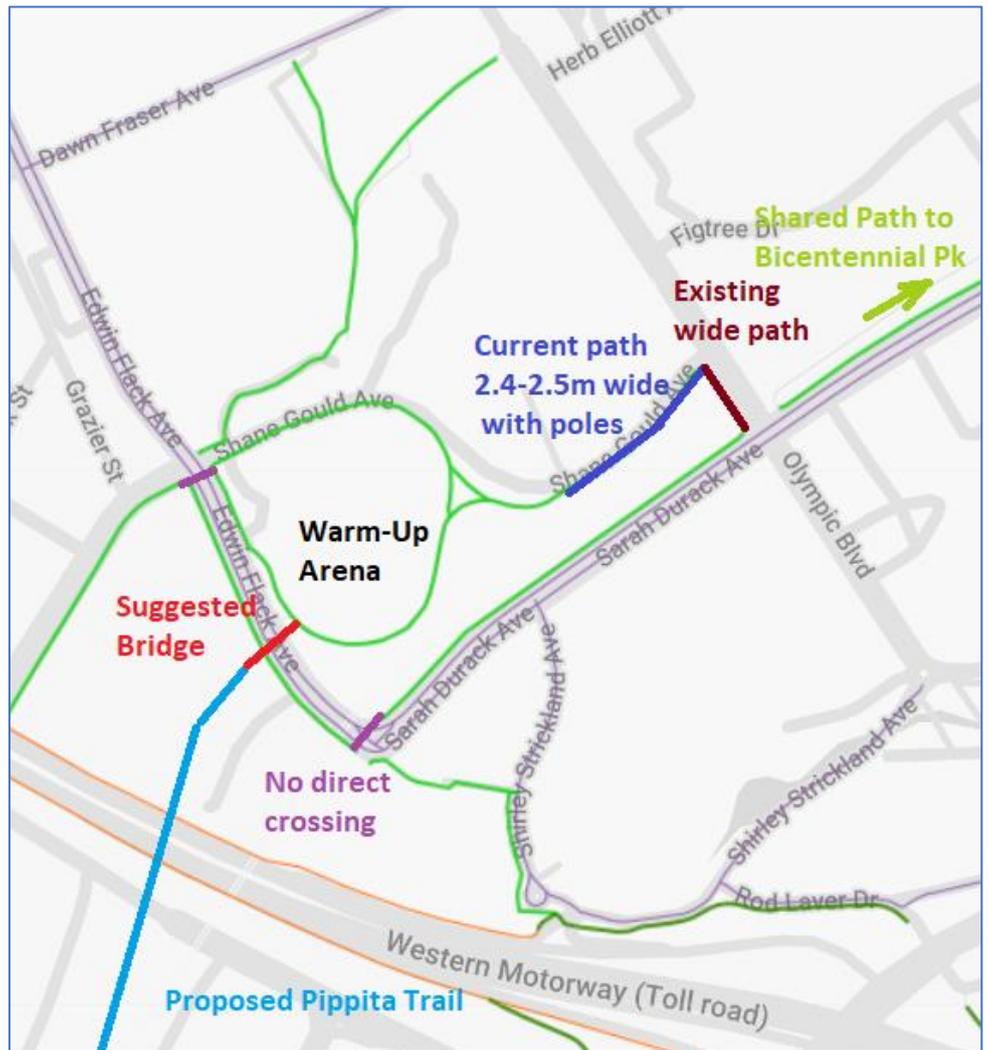
If planning to use this route around the Warm-Up Arena, some of the existing path alongside Shane Gould Ave would probably need to be widened as the current path varies between 2.4 and 2.5m wide with lamp posts in the middle.

We believe this route would create the most attractive and least hilly option between the Pippita Trail and the existing shared path alongside Sarah Durack Ave NE of Olympic Blvd. Ease of access to Bicentennial Park and the other Sydney Olympic Park facilities would be maximised if these connections could be created.

Note that the RMS Cycleway Finder page lists the SW side of Edwin Falck Ave as a shared path. As mentioned above, this path is narrower than the path on the other side of the road and has no easy crossing points.



Embankment between wider path alongside NE side of Edwin Falck Ave and path around the Warm-Up Arena.



Marked up map from RMS Cycleway Finder

➤ Closing Comments

- We are happy to clarify or elaborate on any of the points or suggestions outlined in the feedback.
- While CAMWEST is supportive of the 'broad-brush' outline of the project, we would like to see more detail particularly pertaining to the connections to existing cycle networks and infrastructure at either end. We believe that connectivity is the key to the community embracing and using the infrastructure once completed.
- 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.
- This feedback has been prepared with input from CAMWEST member Mark Robson.

Prepared by Rob Kemp on behalf of CAMWEST.