CAMWEST
CYCLISTS' ACTION MOVEMENT

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21st Feb 2025

New Richmond Bridge – Stage 2 - REF

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the New Richmond Bridge -Stage 2 REF (*The Plan*).[1] 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.

CAMWEST are very supportive of the main alignment of the SUP (Shared User Path) between Bells Line of Rd in North Richmond (east of Redbank Ck) and Chapel St, Richmond. However, we have questions and suggestions relating to the connectivity between the main SUP alignment and surrounding community. We also have questions as to the alternative active transport arrangements for when the old bridge is closed due to flooding, and the safety and usability of the on-road shoulders and intersections of the Richmond Bypass route for those wishing to cycle all or part of this route.

Background:

The map of the current Active Transport Plan for North Richmond shows the main proposed Shared Path corridors are along Bells Line of Road and Grose Vale Rd.
There is an existing signalised crossing at Gross Vale Rd with all 4 crossing legs covered, providing reasonable connectivity between these two corridors.

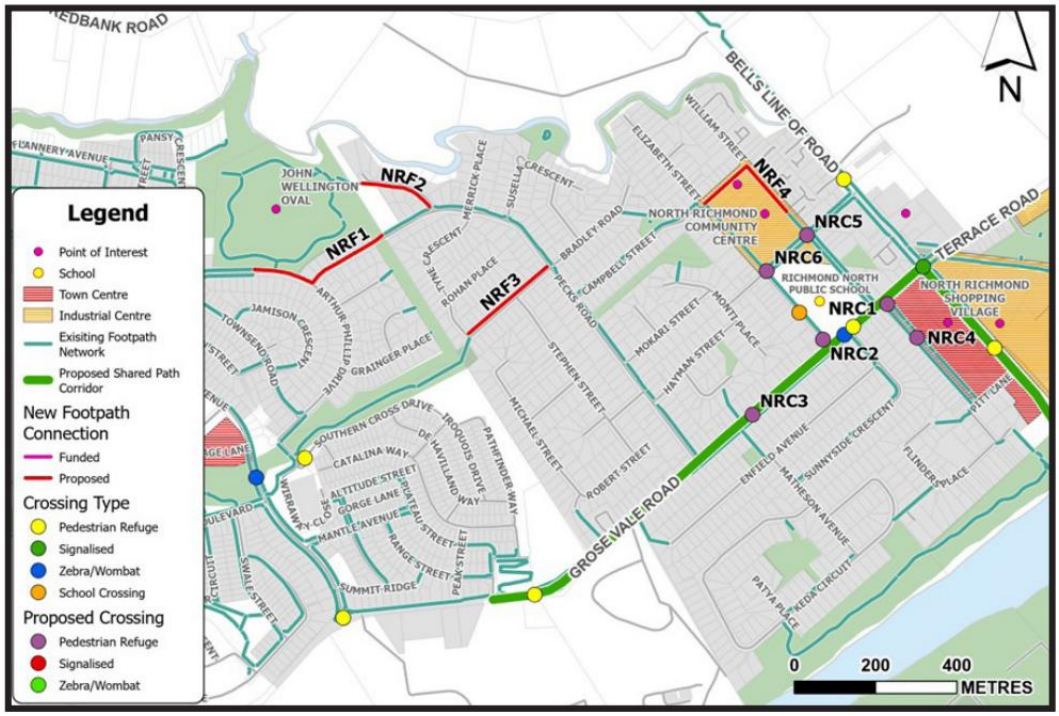
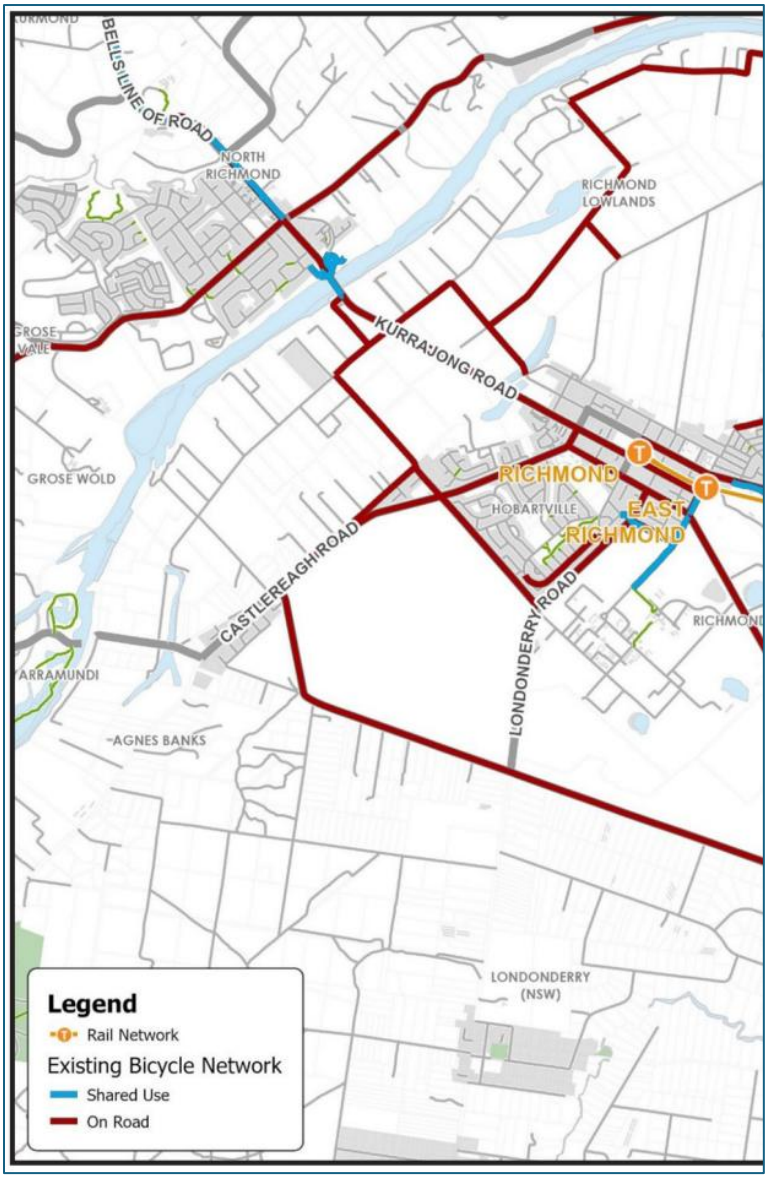


Figure 32 from the Hawkesbury City Council Active Transport Plan, February 2024, [2] showing the Proposed Shared Path Corridors in North Richmond.

Some of the comments in this document are based on the map to the right and our experiences of having ridden to and around the Hawkesbury area over several years.

Old Kurrajong Rd and surrounding roads have been popular cycling routes for both local riders and those from further abroad. We suggest some tweaks below that we feel would help maintain access to these routes under the new configuration.

It's interesting to note that the paths under the existing Richmond bridge on the North Richmond side of the river are defined on this map as being shared paths, whereas the REF defines them as pedestrian only paths. As outlined below, we believe that these should be maintained as SUPs to aid Active Transport connectivity within the North Richmond Precinct.



Part of Figure 8 – Hawkesbury Cycling Network – from the Hawkesbury City Council Active Transport Plan, February 2024 [2]

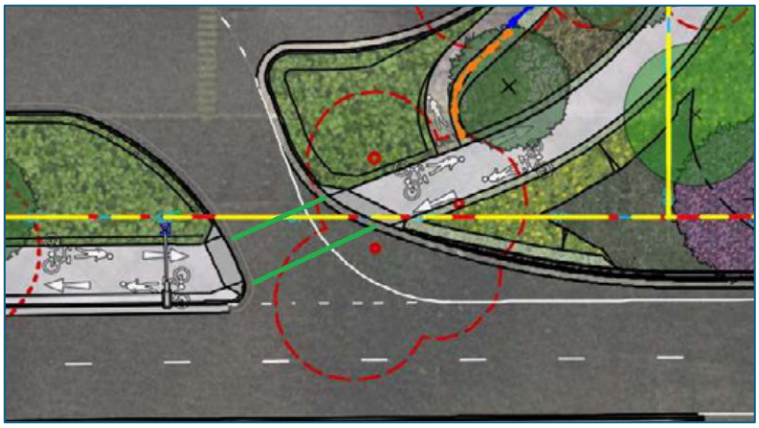
Open Street Map also recommends using the pathways under the bridge and up to Beaumont Ave, then Beaumont Ave roadway as the preferred route to traverse between Old Kurrajong Rd, the Bridge, and the existing SUP on Bells Line of Road.

Open Cycle May with Cycling layer enabled.[3]

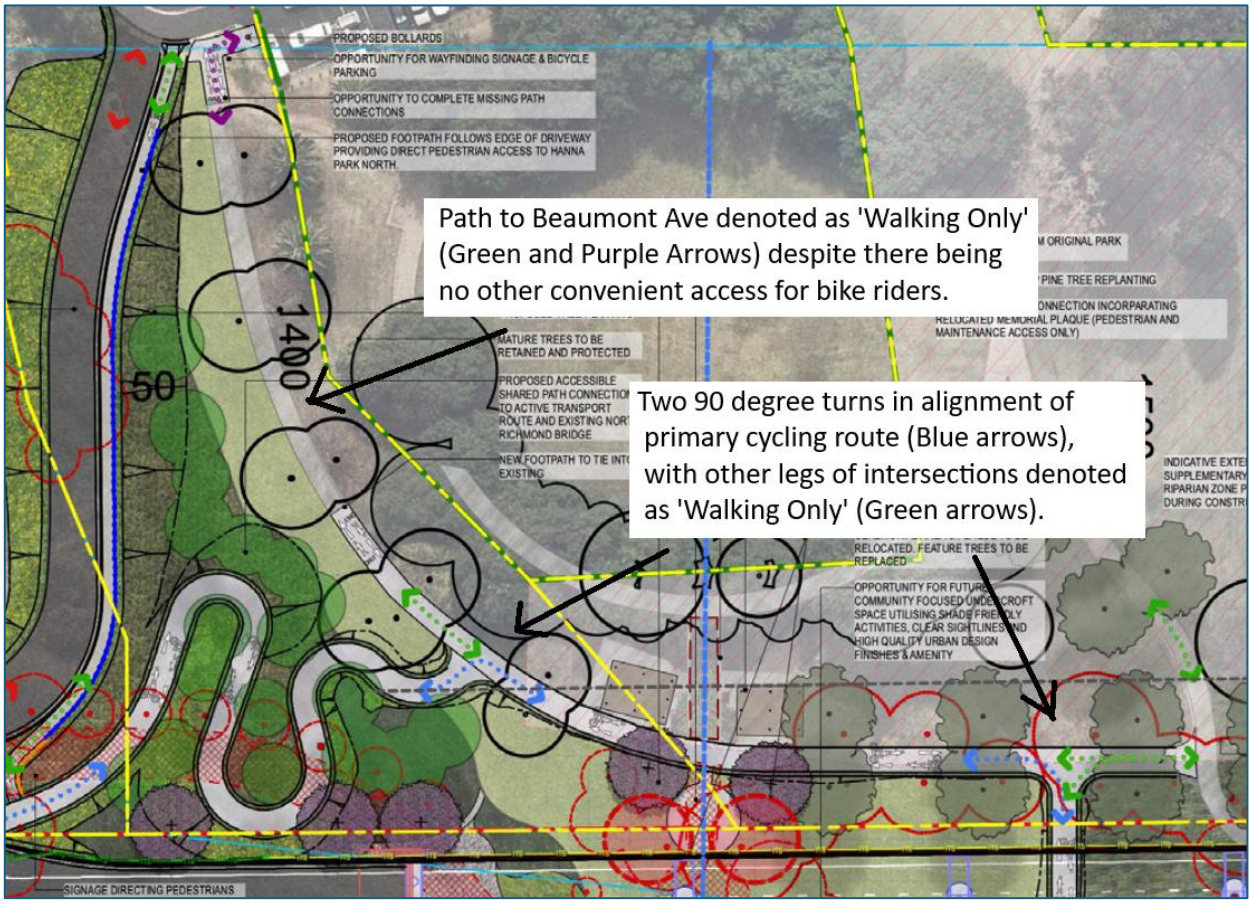
Main alignment questions and Comments:

The following points and diagrams are drawn from REF document: 'Appendix H - Urban Design and Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment' [4] and are in order starting from the North Richmond end of the project and heading east.

1. While noting that the 'Cyclist Dismount' signage at this exit from Westrock on the previous set of diagrams have been removed (or at least aren't present), CAMWEST would like to see a raised pedestrian and cyclist crossing installed here to give priority to Active Transport users.



Mark-up of part of Figure 4-4,[4] showing proposed shared crossing

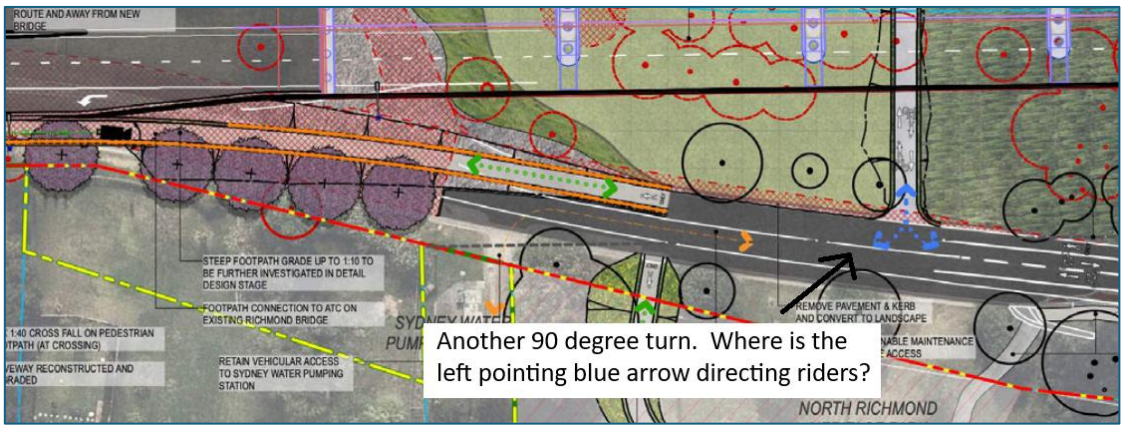


Mark-up of part of Figure 4-5.[4]

2. As shown in the mark-up of Figure 4-5 above, there are two 90 degree turns in this section of the primary cycling route, with the other legs of these intersections denoted as for pedestrians only (despite current maps defining at least some as SUPs). 90 degree turns make the primary route less obvious and increase the risk of startling pedestrians with riders suddenly rounding corners. Where possible, CAMWEST believes the primary route should have the least number of turns possible.

3. The linking path between the primary route and Beaumont Ave/Hanna Park car park is denoted as a pedestrian-only path. The existing section of this path appears to be around 2.5m wide and is currently used as part of the Bells Line of Road to Bridge detour (as captured on the Open Street Map images in this document). Going forward, if this is for pedestrians only, what is the plan for bike riders travelling to/from Panthers North Richmond, or those in residential properties around Beaumont Ave & surrounding streets to access the bridge SUP? There is the new access road which appears to be to the Westrock carpark and may be usable if un-gated, but this requires riders travelling between the bridge and Beaumont Ave to ascend the hill then immediately descend it again. From our perspective the most logical solution is to have this section of pathway declared as a SUP.

4. Another 90-degree turn in the main SUP alignment. Where is the left-pointing blue arrow directing riders? I can see two paths branching off, but they have green arrows for pedestrians only. Is this for riders who have ridden from Richmond across the new bridge to do a sharp turn and pass under the new bridge to the other side of Bells Line of Rd?

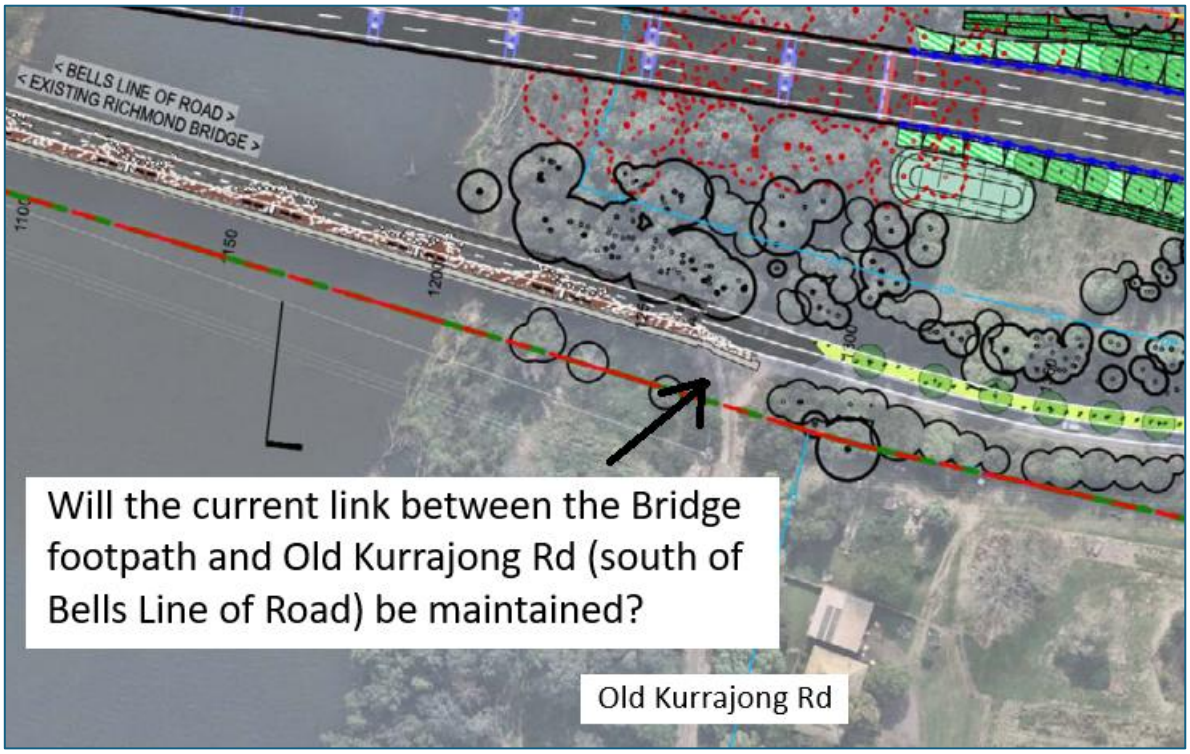


Mark-up of part of Figure 4-5. [4]

5. There's currently a pedestrian footpath leading from the path under the existing bridge to Shortland Close (indicated by the arrows on the map). Although not officially part of the Hawkesbury Active Transport Plan and largely outside the scope of this project, we would like to see the design elements within scope at the bridge end of the route to be amended from pedestrian only to shared path.
This could pave the way for the complete section to become a shared path in the future.

Providing connectivity from the main SUP alignment to both Shortland Close and Beaumont Ave would greatly assist Active Transport connectivity within the North Richmond precinct.

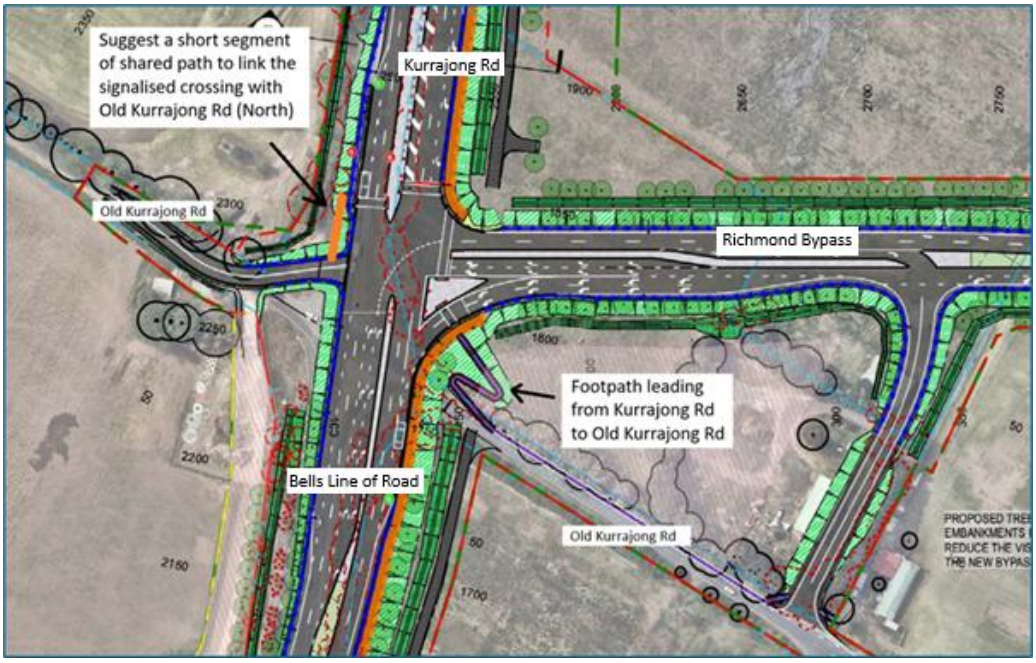
Marked-up Open Cycle Map with cycling layer enabled [3]



Mark-up of part of Figure 4-6.[4]

6. There is no indication on Figure 4-6 that the existing footpath link on the eastern side of the river to Old Kurrajong Rd will be maintained.
If it is maintained, will the barrier alongside the roadway be removed so that riders (on what is now the roadway) will be able to access the pathway? Are there plans to widen this short section of pathway?

Google Street-view image, looking from Bells Line of Road along the linking path towards Old Kurrajong Rd.



Mark-up of part of Figure 4-7[4]

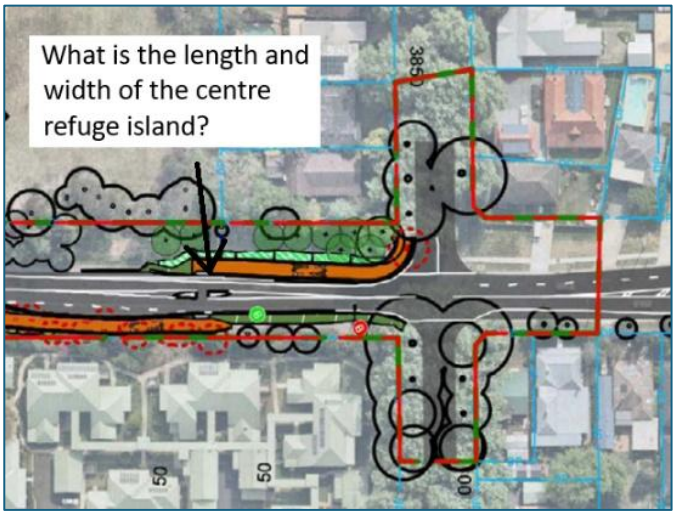
7. We note that the connection between the Bells Line of Road/Kurrajong Rd/Richmond Bypass route intersection and Old Kurrajong Rd (South) is a pedestrian footpath. Our preference would be to have this as a shared path, although if the link in point 6 above is to remain then that would reduce the inconvenience for some riders.

8. As noted above, Old Kurrajong Rd north of the above intersection is a popular cycling route. We note in the documentation that the current plan is to have a normally closed gate across this section of Old Kurrajong Rd, blocking vehicular access to/from the intersection. We would like to see bike riders and pedestrians be able to access Old Kurrajong Rd (North), and a short section of shared path installed between the Kurrajong Rd signalised crossing and Old Kurrajong Rd (north) as indicated in the diagram.

We note the following:

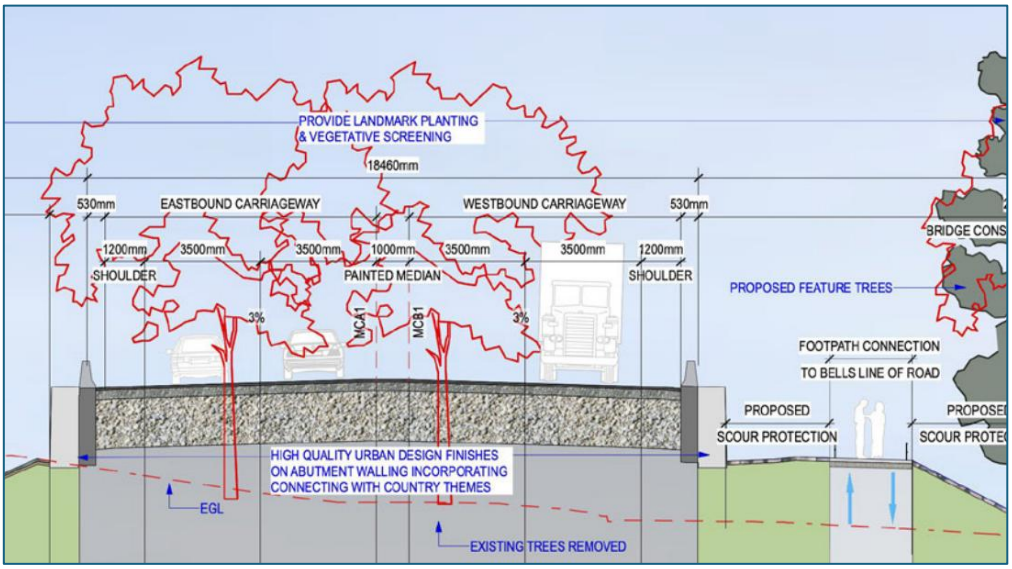
- The crossing of Kurrajong Rd is indicated as a split crossing, which is less than ideal for pedestrians and bike riders.
- There is no signalised crossing of Bells Line of Road on the western side of the intersection. Pedestrians or riders crossing Kurrajong Rd would need to cross multiple signalised segments. This is quite a disincentive for Active Transport users. We would like to see an additional crossing on the western side of the intersection as part of *The Plan*.

9. We question the design of the refuge island in the centre of Kurrajong Rd, west of Chapel St. Is the width of the island wide enough to fit a standard bike comfortably? What about longer bikes (eg Cargo bikes/tandems) or trikes? If riding in a small group, how many riders could fit side-by-side in the refuge? Would an offset refuge by more appropriate in this case?

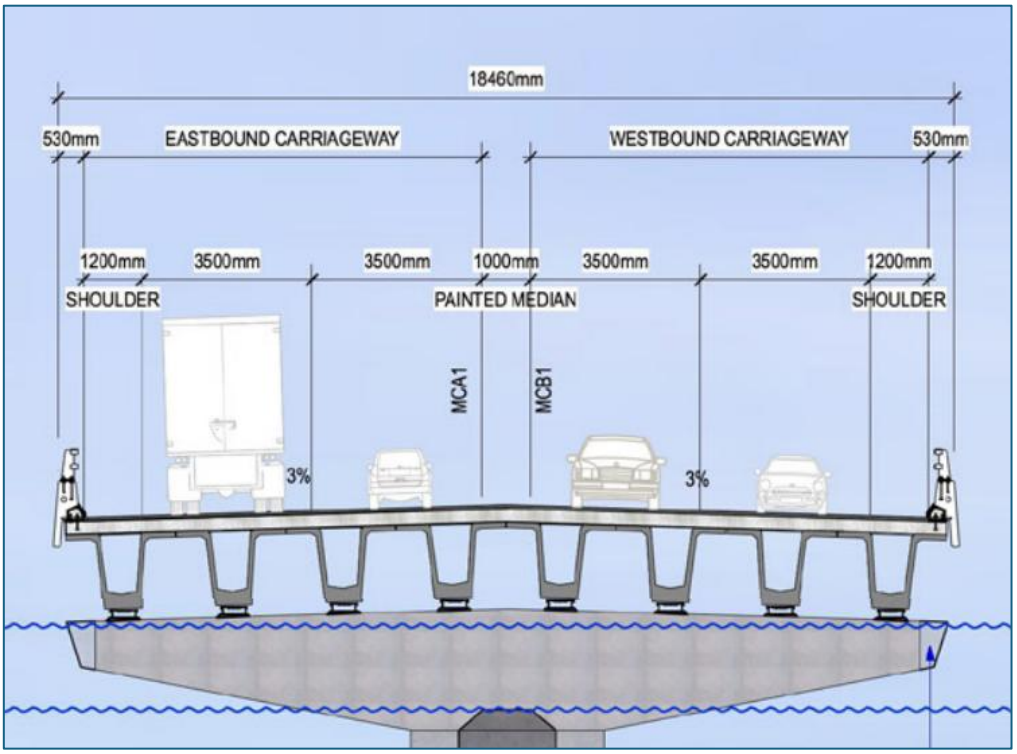


Mark-up of part of Figure 4-8. [4]

Active Transport Users diversion during flooding events:



Part of Figure 4-11 [4] – North Richmond side of new bridge.



Part of Figure 4-12 [4] – New bridge

What are the plans for Active Transport users when the old bridge is closed due to flooding? While the number of users may be low during intense rainfall periods, rider numbers would likely increase after the worst of the rainfall has finished and before the water level subsides sufficiently to safely use the old bridge again.

There is no footpath or shared path on the plans for the new bridge – just a 1.2m wide shoulder on each side. Will riders be expected to use this shoulder? While 1.2m may be adequate for confident on-road riders in a 60 kmph zone traversing a relatively flat area, is it adequate to compensate for the 'wobble' that many riders experience when riding up inclines (in this case the approaches to the bridge)? Have provisions been made for riders to safely enter and exit the roadway shoulder either side of the bridge? What about pedestrians who may want to view the flooding from the bridge, or those riders who want to cross the bridge but feel unsafe about riding on the roadway so close to vehicular traffic? Is this in alignment with TfNSW Active Transport policy?

Richmond Bypass:

The cross-sectional diagrams (Figure 4-14 [4]) indicate roadway shoulders of 2.5m or 3.0m width at these points. Are these widths consistent for the full Richmond Bypass alignment? The posted speed limit along this corridor is indicated as 80kmph.[5] Some riders would find it intimidating riding alongside traffic moving at this speed – particularly with larger trucks present. This is also a safety issue.

WSU Hawkesbury, a significant trip generator, is at the Londonderry Rd end of the Bypass route. What plans are in place for riders to navigate the Bypass route (during both flood and non-flood times), between North Richmond and UWS? (The Bypass route is a more direct route between North Richmond and UWS than the alternative route via Richmond, so would be attractive for riders).

What provisions are in place for riders and pedestrians to safely navigating the Castlereagh Rd / Richmond Bypass roundabout? This is a large roundabout with potentially fast-moving traffic through it.

Are there any provisions for pedestrians to cross Castlereagh Rd, which will potentially carry additional traffic, closer to the Hobartville Public School?

Closing Comments:

CAMWEST has previously provided feedback to Bicycle NSW which helped inform their responses to the previous consultation phase in March 2024. Looking at the current plans we see some of the same issues that were identified in that feedback with no apparent alterations made. This is somewhat disappointing.

For active transport to be successfully integrated into the wider transport plan, barriers to cycling need to be minimised. While *The Plan* at present presents a very inviting shared path link during non-flood times between North Richmond and Richmond, it doesn't appear to cater well for those who want to enter or exit part-way along the route, or who wish to use the Richmond Bypass route and don't feel comfortable mixing on road with traffic moving at 80kmph or navigating the Castlereagh Rd roundabout.

One of our underlying questions is: If one of us were living in North Richmond without access to a car and riding to Richmond station or UWS daily, would we still be able to get through safely if the old bridge is closed due to flooding?

CAMWEST looks forward to seeing this plan take shape over the two proposed stages. We would be happy to clarify any of the points outlined above or assist in any other way to improve the outcomes for the local community.

This feedback was prepared by Rob Kemp with input from others on behalf of CAMWEST Bicycle User Group Inc.

References:

1 https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/new-richmond-bridge-stage-2
2 https://ehq-production-australia.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/8975ed22db07a47e850ec49fb26462fde3af3fb4/original/1710296793/d21f3484a08f3e5b899116e6e0d1b349_Active_Transport_Plan_Main_Document_-_February_2024_-_Final.pdf
3 https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=15/-33.58407/150.72447&layers=C
4 https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/New-Richmond-Bridge-and-traffic-improvements-Stage-2-Landscape-Character-report.pdf
5 Table 3-3 [Numbered Page 43]of https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/New-Richmond-Bridge-Stage-2-Review-of-Environmental-Factors-December-2024-redacted.pdf