



## **Submission to Draft Central Sydney Bike Plan 2003-2007**

Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Submission by: Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group (MASSBUG)

Contact address: 342 Livingstone Road  
Marrickville 2204

Email: cyclist@massbug.org.au

### **Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group (MASSBUG)**

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group is a local bicycle user group, established in 1991, and affiliated with Bicycle New South Wales. We work with Marrickville and South Sydney Councils and state government bodies (e.g. RTA & Area Health Services) for the improvement of cycling infrastructure, urban amenity, community health and safety. We also provide information, advice and rides for members of the local community and local schools.

Our vision is for a safe, healthy, vibrant community whose planning and infrastructure provide for greater share of transport by walking and cycling in order that the personal, community and environmental benefits of more sustainable transport can be realised. We also regard public transport services as essential.

Many of our members and constituents ride to and through the City of Sydney to access work, study, and for recreation and shopping.

We are pleased to present this submission to the City of Sydney Council's Draft Central Sydney Bike Plan 2003-2007. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further any of the issues in this submission.

### **Executive Summary**

**Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group commends the City of Sydney Council for recognising the need to provide for people riding bicycles to and through the CBD.**

We believe this is a very important step forward for the Council towards a more sustainable, liveable, healthy, world-class city.

We do feel that the contents of the plan need certain improvements in order to be of sufficient standard to meet the stated objectives. Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group supports the recommendations of the city's bicycle group; BikeSydney, and we offer our own comments as follows.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group welcomes the Draft Central Sydney Bike Plan as an important step forward and offers the following recommendations to enable the Bike Plan to meet its objectives more fully.

### High Priority Recommendations

1. Implement the proposed routes during the first year (except where not possible due to dependency on the Cross City Tunnel)
2. Commence installation of bicycle parking at BikeSydney proposed locations, now
3. Maintain existing facilities throughout the expanded Council area
4. Paint bike logos in all bus lanes shown as bicycle routes on the bike plan and replace the George St bus lane route with a route on Pitt St.
5. Establish a bicycle committee to oversee the implementation of the Bike Plan and to foster regular dialogue on city bicycle issues
6. Implement a 40kph limit throughout the City of Sydney
7. Allow access to the cycleway to Pyrmont Bridge with a contra-flow lane or similar two-way treatment on King Street, between Kent and Sussex Streets
8. Provide sufficient space for all users on shared paths (particularly at Chalmers Street)
9. Acknowledge where bicycle desire lines pass through pedestrian areas and provide appropriate engineering to improve safety for pedestrians
10. Place bicycle logos in the **centre** of the traffic lane and in additional traffic lanes when required due to (a) kerbside lane allowing off-peak parking; or (b) bicycle route incorporates a right turn. Also allow for hook turns at route right turns.

### Secondary Recommendations

11. Employ a project manager with expertise in bicycle planning and/or engineering
12. Prioritise vehicle access over car storage and reduce car parking as a traffic reduction measure.
13. Position all street furniture throughout the CBD to meet minimum safety and residual footpath width requirements
14. Remove the car parking installed over the top of the bike lane in Union St, Pyrmont

### Recommendations for Future

15. Incorporate bicycle lanes in Gateway designs for Oxford Street and Broadway
16. Prepare an expanded plan to include the new Council areas
17. Carry out a demand study to indicate the true level of demand and that future City Bike Plans provide dedicated road space accordingly

## **Comments on the text of the Draft Central Bicycle Plan**

### ***Competing Needs (p. 2)***

We appreciate that the City of Sydney Council is constrained by the existing layout of Sydney and that there is great competition for street space. We note that some councils, in assessing their priorities, have stated that while they are in the business of providing transport corridors, they are not in the business of providing storage for unused motor vehicles. We agree, and recommend that provision of thoroughfare should take precedence over provision of storage facilities. Parking should be continually reduced to limit car use in the city.

*Definition: A coordinated car parking policy is directed to restricting car use. The aim is to encourage selective car use so as to make a favourable contribution to accessibility and the living environment by reducing car mobility which reduces congestion while at the same time stimulates alternative modes of transport. It also plays a part in the **sharing of scarce space**.*

C.R.O.W. (1994) "Guidelines for a coordinated parking policy"  
Centre for Research and Contract Standardisation in Civil and Traffic Engineering, The Netherlands

### ***Bike Plan Objectives (p. 2)***

We support the Bike Plan objectives of improving cycle access to and around the CBD (but would add "through"); to supply bicycle parking facilities; and to encourage safe cycling. We encourage the council to implement measures that will result in real success in achieving these objectives, as outlined in our recommendations.

### ***Upgraded footpaths (p. 3)***

We commend Council for its work widening and upgrading footpaths, but believe much still remains to be done in the area of reducing street clutter. Primarily, the often ill-considered placement of street furniture can and does cause both safety and amenity problems. We recommend that all street furniture positioning throughout the CBD meet minimum safety and residual footpath width requirements.

### ***"It is important that cycling also be facilitated and encouraged" (p. 3)***

We couldn't agree more, naturally, because: it supports Council policy in many areas; benefits residents, workers and visitors in many ways; and, fittingly, fulfils Frank Sartor's vision for Sydney:

*"Let us imagine a city whose urban form matches its natural beauty, whose streets are spacious, tree-lined and safe, whose transport is efficient and environmentally responsible, whose core is a vibrant blend of many cultures with one heart. Let us call that city, Sydney. Let us make this image a reality." Frank Sartor (1999)*

### ***The Transport Task and Trips Within Central Sydney (p. 4 & 5)***

We note that private car use accounts for some 27.4% of all commuter trips. Few would argue that this is appropriate for a city centre well served by public transport and where 43% of city commuters live within 10km (approx. half hour bike ride) from work and with such favourable weather.

We note, further, that **for internal trips, bicycles make up 16% of private vehicle trips**, the other 84% being motor vehicles (ie. 0.4% vs 2.1% of internal trips). This would appear to be a significant proportion, worthy of significant provision within the road system. Fortunately, since bicycles require less space than motor vehicles, provision would not need to be the full 16% of the road area currently available for private motor vehicle use. Half of that should suffice, easing congestion for cars as even more short car trips can be replaced with bicycles.

It seems odd that Council has used 1996 census data and 1991/92 Household Travel Survey data despite more recent (2001 and 1999/00) data being available, showing further increases in cycling. Also, there has been no attempt to assess latent demand.

We recommend that up to date data and a demand study<sup>1</sup> be relied upon to indicate the *true* level of demand and that future City Bike Plans provide dedicated road space accordingly.

### **Getting There (p. 6)**

It is not only trips "of between 3-5km" that are well suited for cycling. The NRMA 1997 Multimode Travel Time Survey found that for trips of 10km travel times were comparable between bikes and cars. The study notes, furthermore, that 43% of City commutes are 10km or less. The report's recommendations include

*"Investigate improvement of cyclist facilities travelling towards Sydney CBD. Given the similar travel times of bicycles and cars, improvements in cyclists' safety and efficiency would be desirable to promote this alternative mode."* (NRMA, 1997)

The draft Bike Plan trumpets the value of bus lanes for cyclists, apparently unaware that very few cyclists are prepared to ride in bus lanes. Bus lanes are widely regarded as much more dangerous than traffic lanes. In addition, people who ride bicycles may rather be displacing single occupant motor vehicles than hindering fully laden public transport. Bus drivers and cyclists alike would rather cyclists have separate facilities. As an absolute minimum, we recommend that any bus lanes intended for use as bike routes are marked with bike logos. With regard to George Street, an alternative bike route along low-traffic Pitt Street is preferable and our suggested alternative.

### **Existing Bicycle Routes to the City (p. 7)**

We welcome the news that a signalised intersection will be installed to cross Wattle Street.

We note that the list of existing bicycle routes in the City includes "marked bicycle lanes" in Union Street. We recommend that the inappropriate installation of parking over the top of this bike lane by Council be immediately corrected.

### **Getting Around Town (p. 9)**

We agree with "giving priority to public transport services and pedestrians" and believe that measures to discourage single occupant motor vehicles need to be increased. For the same reason we favour bicycle routes that displace private motor vehicles rather than hinder buses or light rail. We disagree that the City, with a 50kph limit, is a "low speed environment". In areas of high pedestrian activity and where vulnerable road users are expected to share the road, the RTA regards 40kph a more suitable speed limit. Most cities in Europe now adopt a 30kph speed limit as standard. We recommend that Council immediately accept the RTA offer of funding the implementation of a 40kph limit throughout the council area.

The statement, "Retention of parking is essential for pedestrian amenity" lacks credibility. Most people respond that a bicycle lane (and, some add, an added line of trees or vegetation) would be far more effective to achieve these aims.

We accept Council's proposal for "shared on-road facilities", using bicycle logos in traffic lanes, as a suitable compromise for the current constrained environment. We believe that it is very important that the logos be placed in the **centre** of traffic lanes to reinforce the legal right to a whole lane when required. It is widely acknowledged that riding in the centre of the lane makes the rider more visible to motorists and that this style of riding, known as "vehicular cycling" is much safer for most cyclists. Where the bicycle route incorporates a right turn, such as southbound on Elizabeth Street into Randle Lane, and northbound into College Street, it will be necessary to place logos in right hand lanes. Many motorists are under the misconception that cyclists are only allowed in the left lane (this only applies on multi-lane roads where the limit is 80kph or higher). Other lanes will also need logos where the kerbside bus lane or traffic lane allows for parking during the off-peak. To cater for less experienced cyclists at intersections for a right turn, there should be signage and a storage area to encourage and facilitate a hook turn<sup>2</sup>. In summary, we recommend use of logos in additional traffic lanes as required, that logos be placed in the centre of the lane, and that provision be made for hook turns at right turns on bicycle routes.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Austroads publication AP-R194/01, "Forecasting Demand for Bicycle Facilities" (2001)

<sup>2</sup> See Australian Road Rule 35 for a detailed explanation.

We agree that the safety of pedestrians should not be compromised. For this reason we recommend that sufficient space be allocated on shared use paths. Chalmers Street path at the bus shelter near Prince Alfred Park, for example, does not comply with the minimum footpath width in Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice Part 13. The suggested solution of cyclists dismounting to walk their bikes behind the bus stop will only aggravate the problem since this increases the width profile of a cyclist and bike from 60-70cm to 90cm, making it impossible for a pedestrian in the other direction to pass. The only solution at this location, with very high pedestrian activity when buses arrive, is to widen the path.

Similarly, to serve pedestrian safety, we recommend that adequate provision be made where cycling desire lines pass through pedestrian areas, as recommended by the Staysafe report on Pedestrian Safety of May 1996. Staysafe 30 recommendation 13 included, "marked bicycle lanes, including contra flow bicycle lanes, in pedestrian malls and on selected roadways throughout the Sydney central business district".

Narrow shared paths such as the Western Distributor Cycleway, in the long term, will need to be doubled to ensure safety and usability.

### ***Pedal 'n' Park (p. 13)***

We support the proposal to review the DCP requirements, to link the rates to floor space and to include car parking stations. We support the installation of more bicycle parking racks and are pleased to hear Council will work with BikeSydney to start installations without delay.

### ***Safety for Cyclists (p. 15)***

We welcome Council's plans for education campaigns and encourage Council to work closely with BikeSydney and Bicycle NSW to maximise acceptance and results.

### ***Implementation (p. 18)***

We strongly recommend that all the proposed routes (except those portions dependent on the Cross City Tunnel works) are implemented this year. Accelerated implementation will send a clear and effective signal to all road users and improve the legitimacy of cycling in the city. This alone will have a positive effect on safety and road user behaviour and is eagerly awaited.

We recommend that Council work closely with BikeSydney and Bicycle NSW to adjust routes to maximise their usefulness and safety and to improve compliance. For example, cyclists already regularly use Queens Square for access between King and Macquarie Streets. Usage will increase despite any official route deviating via Phillip and Hunter Streets. A better approach from a pedestrian safety viewpoint would be to facilitate safer use of the square for both users (eg. wider or separate kerb ramps, delineated space). Other crucial amendments including the King Street contra flow lane, a reassessment of the Druitt Street route and Pitt Street as a safer (and more public transport friendly) alternative should be resolved with the assistance of BikeSydney/Bicycle NSW.

We are disappointed that the plan doesn't provide an overall network or design philosophy and is missing fulfilment of some common desire lines. It is a plan clearly designed to meet real and perceived constraints rather than to meet cyclists' needs. We do, however, applaud the step forward that this plan represents.

We look forward to the improvement in the City that implementation of this plan will bring and wish to thank everyone involved in reaching this first milestone.