



Submission to Marrickville Council 2003/2006 Draft Management Plan

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Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group (MASSBUG)

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group is a local bicycle user group, 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.

We are pleased to present this submission to the Marrickville Council's draft Management Plan for 2002 – 2005 and associated documents. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further any of the issues in this submission.

Why is cycling relevant to Council functions?

First, we thought it useful to set out the ways in which cycling relates to Council's functions and major objectives over the coming term.

As an activity, riding a bicycle can serve as a form of transport and recreation. Cycling is a healthy way to get around! Cycling is also environmentally friendly: taking up little space, providing access for people of all ages and incomes, non-polluting, and conducive to urban amenity of public spaces. It is more efficient than motorised transport for short distances and cycling can serve as 'active transport' instead of car travel, thereby reducing reliance on cars (and car parking).

Since Council's last Management Plan, resolutions from the NSW Childhood Obesity Summit (2002) highlight the need for councils to take a leadership role in creating 'supportive environments' for walking and cycling. The full list of resolutions can be found in the summit Communiqué at www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity/adult/summit/communique.pdf. We

commend to you the Local Government resolutions which are on pages 19 & 20 and the Transport and Planning resolutions on pages 25 & 26.

Pleasingly in line with this approach, Marrickville Council states in response to the State of the Environment report that,

It is Council's goal to have an urban environment that encourages walking, public transport and cycle transport. Success will be measured by the number of (new) marked or identified bicycle routes, the level of bicycle use and the level of public transport use.

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group would like to congratulate Marrickville Council on its success, as evidenced by the recently released 2001 census journey to work figures.

Marrickville has the second highest bicycle mode share by origin SLA in Sydney, at 2.18% (behind South Sydney at 2.49%) compared with an average of 0.83%. Well done! We believe cycling demand in this area is high and that as Council improves the urban environment to encourage cycling further, there is potential for a cycling mode share to be much higher still. The whole Marrickville community will subsequently benefit from the healthier, safer, cleaner and quieter environment and higher levels of social capital. The wide range of benefits stemming from increased cycling and walking make council investment strongly in the entire community's interest and of great strategic importance.

Marrickville Council is also to be particularly commended for the PAMP works planned for this year and the bicycle and traffic calming works, as well as the sustainable transport program.

Initiatives aimed at increasing levels of cycling are necessarily part of a commitment to sustainability (ESD) and need to be at the heart of 'joined-up' policy making.

1. Recreation

We welcome Council's intention of working with local clubs and community groups to develop programs that will allow many more people to 'get active' and enjoy local opportunities. Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group already runs a regular local rides program, including rides suitable for people new (or newly returning) to bicycle riding and for families with children. We would be happy to work with Council's recreation officer to explore additional ways in which our group can help Council increase recreation opportunities for the community.

2. Planning Services

We note that many of Council Planning Services' aims and goals dovetail with the aim of increasing cycling and walking. In particular, we believe that increased active transport leads to significant benefits in terms of "a pleasant, safe and attractive urban area", "social interaction and community life", "affordability" and "accessibility", "a healthy living environment", "encouraging local development" and "business confidence and vitality".

Local development and business vitality are well served by replacing car trips with walking and cycling for a number of reasons:

- people on bicycle or foot tend to shop locally, supporting local businesses rather than, for example, driving to Broadway or Moore Park Supa-Centre;
- people without a car (or a second car) have more disposable income to spend on local goods and services;
- less car dominated environments are more attractive places for people to shop;
- space otherwise for car parking can be put to better commercial or public use; and
- people on bicycle or foot tend to shop more frequently and so tend to make more impulse purchases (European studies have found cyclists purchase more than drivers).

Hence investing in bicycle infrastructure (routes & parking) makes good local business sense and is worthwhile supporting from a planning perspective. We recommend that Council

specifically address opportunities to increase cycling and walking in its response to Plan First, the next review of its Section 94 Plan, the new Urban Strategy and other plans and strategies as they are developed or reviewed. Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group would welcome involvement and the chance to assist Council in this regard. We recommend that Planning Services ensure they have access to and familiarity with the forthcoming RTA NSW Bicycle Guidelines due out later this year and the forthcoming PlanningNSW sustainability checklist and planning guidelines.

3. Monitoring Services

We support Council's goal of "Community awareness of health and safety risks and of the need for responsible social behaviour and public practices" and the enforcement of the laws against parking on footpaths. We believe footpath parking is both a danger and a discouragement to children wanting to walk or cycle to school. It is important that footpaths are kept clear for pedestrians, children riding bicycles, parents with prams and especially for those using disability aids. High levels of enforcement and education about the health and safety risks offenders pose to the community are essential for encouraging active transport, particularly for those with a disability. We recommend that Council Monitoring Services place a high priority on enforcement of footpath parking offences.

4. Engineering Services

We strongly support Council's goals of "A built environment that is accessible to all residents and maximises the use of public transport & other alternatives to car use" and "A reduction of [motor] traffic on local roads, and an increase in pedestrian safety". We commend Council for its ongoing commitment to providing bicycle infrastructure. Specifically we:

- support the Holbeach Ave link to the Alexandra Canal and request that it join the deck (not path) level of the footbridge across the canal;
- support Marrickville's contribution to the bailey bridge for the Hawthorne Canal route;
- support Council's investigation and design for the western Alexandra Canal route;
- support the implementation of the Road Safety Strategic Plan and urge Marrickville Council to take up the RTA offer to nominate areas of high pedestrian activity (especially shopping strips and near major public transport stops) for the implementation of 40kph zones and to reduce the speed limit on all collector roads still zoned as 60kph down to 50kph by the 1st November implementation of the 50 GUSL;
- support the amenity and safety improvements from the LATM schemes, traffic calming works and other traffic works and recommend that Council ensures all such works take bicycle safety into account in the design (consistent with the forthcoming new edition of the Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice Part 10) and in the implementation;
- recommend that particular attention be paid to works on the following streets which form part of Council's bicycle route network: Campbell St, St Peters (route L8); West St, Petersham (L6-L4 link route); Abermarle St, Newtown (2004/5, L2); Railway Ave, Stanmore (2005/6, L2); Bridge Rd, Camperdown (L1); May St, St Peters (L8); and Cardigan Lane closure (2004/5, L1); and
- support Council Pedestrian Access and Mobility works on Parramatta & Addison Roads.

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group would be happy to assist the Council with forward planning for the Alexandra Canal western route beyond Tempe Lands by volunteering the services of one of our members with property searching expertise. We can research the current status of easements and rights of way and provide a full report to Council. Please email us at cyclist@massbug.org.au if Council would like to take up this offer.

5. Property Services

We recommend that the investigation of options for the development of a new civic library, consideration be given to *localisation* of council facilities, rather than *centralisation*, in order to both serve the interests of "access for all" and to reduce the traffic impact. Perhaps this could be innovatively achieved in the longer term by requiring developers of railway airspace to

dedicate space for community and library facilities. We note that the proposed new location would be less well served by public transport than the existing civic centre and wonder what effect such a move would have on Council aims of reduced motor traffic and greenhouse gas emissions. As a minimum the new centre would benefit from improved transport options and should have exemplary bicycle end-of-trip facilities for staff and visitors included in the design.

6. Environmental Services

We support the aims and goals of Council Environmental Services and commend them highly for the sustainable transport program. However we note from the draft Marrickville Local Action 21 document that the program has a behavioural focus. We believe that it is essential, for the success of the program, that the supporting infrastructure is in place. Action 21 does refer to end-of-trip facilities but bicycle routes and/or signage might also be required. We strongly recommend that bicycle routes to the participating institutions be included. Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group offer our advice, and expertise to support the project. We can also offer a buddying service (where we will ride with new cyclists for the first day, week or month to help them get started).

We support improvements to the Cooks River Foreshore and recommend that grant funds also be sought to bring parts of the Cooks River Cycleway up to standard (eg. between Mackey Park and Richardson's Crescent).

7. Parks and Reserves

We support the goals of Parks & Reserves and the work being done at Tempe Reserve. We note that Council's aim of reducing motor traffic, the fact that nearly a third of Marrickville households do not have a car and the amount of Council land turned over to car parks offer an opportunity consistent with "acquiring community land for open space". Reducing car parking is known to reduce traffic, encourages other, healthier modes, and would serve to free up land for children's parks rather than **car** parks. Council's car parks do not serve the significant proportion of residents who choose not to or cannot own a car, whereas open space serves all. In the interests of equity, health and amenity we recommend that car parking provision, especially at new sports and recreation facilities such as Tempe Reserve and Steel Park, is always sought to be minimised and healthier modes encouraged.

8. Corporate Development

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group supports encouragement of community input into Council services and planning and we have views on access and equity, social capital, environmental sustainability and getting value from Council and community assets. We look forward to involvement in the development of the next 5 year Marrickville Plan.

9. Administrative Services

We support improved ease of access to Council information and documents and increased public participation at Council and Committee meetings. We support improved (not "increased" as stated) response times to enquiries and requests. With regard to Council's interior courier service, we recommend consideration of the greenhouse savings and reduced traffic of utilising bicycle courier services for trips within the LGA.

In conclusion

We are grateful for your consideration of our submission to the Draft Management Plan and budget and trust that our suggestions and recommendations will be accommodated wherever feasible.