



## **Submission to Marrickville Council 2005/2008 Draft Management Plan**

Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2005

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

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### **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 Council 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 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.

### **Introduction**

Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group welcomes this opportunity to comment. This submission is the product of a specially convened meeting of our members.

We have included an overall statement on why cycling is relevant and important to Council's functions and how it fits into Council's broader aims and objectives on the last page.

It is our experience that Marrickville Council does well at engaging with the community and in achieving its social, environmental, and financial goals. We hope that our specific comments below are helpful in making Council's activities even more successful.

We are pleased to present this submission to the Marrickville Council's draft Management Plan for 2005/2008 and associated documents. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further any of the issues raised in this submission.

## **1. Community Development**

We support Council's aims of encouraging *a community which is safe, culturally enriching, accessible and ecologically sustainable and an environment where people feel safe... and their quality of life is improving*. We believe that increased cycling and walking will serve these aims well because it leads to increased road safety<sup>1</sup>, personal safety, and neighbourhood amenity.

We commend Council's proposals to further promote the transport needs of people with a disability, in particular the intention to incorporate disability requirements in the development of the new Marrickville Bicycle Strategy.

We suggest Council consider whether a work-for-the-dole funded bicycle recycling project might assist with both CD6 *improve access to employment and training for residents of Marrickville South* and also with CD5 *supporting emerging communities and working with settlement service providers*. The Commonwealth Government supports bicycle specific work-for-the-dole programs, see: [www.abc.dotars.gov.au/Publications\\_Resources/bike\\_for\\_dole.aspx](http://www.abc.dotars.gov.au/Publications_Resources/bike_for_dole.aspx).

## **2. Community Facilities and Recreation**

We support Council's aims of accessible and relevant leisure and recreation opportunities; a more active and healthy community; and high levels of social capital. We suggest that health and social capital benefits can be maximised by promoting cycling, walking and public transport to access leisure and recreation. Further, it will reduce the traffic impacts of venues and events for local neighbourhoods. Hence, we commend Council's Staying Active in Marrickville map.

We commend Council for recent work to support leisure organisations.

We support CR7 *Council staff and elected members to participate in community recreational events and be involved in healthy and active lifestyles* and extend an invitation to all staff and Councillors to join our regular, local, social rides. A calendar of rides is available from the Council information leaflet stands, we hope, as well as from our website.

With regard to the fees and charges for the hiring of community facilities, the proposed deposit is prohibitively high for new community groups. We suggest Council distinguish between different uses (ie. functions and meetings) and charge a low deposit fee for meetings of local community groups.

## **3. Children & Family Services**

We support Council's long-term objective of a "Healthy, safe and educational environment in which all children can grow and develop". Rapidly increasing levels of childhood obesity are a serious threat to children's health. So too, increasing car dependence for children's travel is a threat: to their health due to local air pollution; to their safety around schools; and to their geographical development skills. We urge Council's Children & Family Services to place a high priority on the safety and amenity of pedestrian and bicycle access to Council Services and to schools, as per the resolutions of the 2002 NSW Childhood Obesity Summit Communiqué<sup>2</sup>. To this end, we recommend that Children & Family Services is actively involved and contributing to the development of the new Marrickville Bicycle Strategy.

## **4. Communication & Cultural Services**

We support Council's aims of promoting the arts and cultural tourism and would like to explore suggestions our arts officer, Gilbert Grace, has for art themed bicycle tours to promote art, cultural and historic sites in and around Marrickville.

We support the strengthening of the Main Street Programs to enhance shopping strips as centres of community life. We recommend that the Main Street Co-ordinators are involved in the development of the new Marrickville Bicycle Strategy to explore ways to promote more

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<sup>1</sup> *Safety in numbers in Australia: more walkers and bicyclists, safer walking and bicycling*, Dr Dorothy Robinson, Health Promotion Journal of Australia, April 2005  
[www.healthpromotion.org.au/journal/articles/article9.php](http://www.healthpromotion.org.au/journal/articles/article9.php)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity/adult/summit/communiqu.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity/adult/summit/communiqu.pdf), specifically section 6 on Local Government and section 9 on Transport and Planning.

cycling to shops and restaurants as a way of encouraging residents to shop locally to support their local economy.

We recommend that the Precinct Guide for Newtown Entertainment Precinct shows bicycle parking locations.

## **5. History Program**

We support Council's aim of encouraging interest in local history and HP3, *to engage the community by conducting historical walks*. We would like to assist the Heritage Promotions Committee by offering one or more historical rides as part of our annual rides program.

## **6. 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", "social equity in terms of access to an affordable and healthy living environment", and "business confidence and vitality".

A "strong, vibrant and ecologically sustainable local economy" is 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 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 spend 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 the development of Council's new Strategic Plan, Urban Strategy, Local Environmental Plan and revised Section 94 Plan. The latter should ensure increased funding available for bicycle infrastructure, especially for the Greenway. Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group would welcome involvement and the chance to assist Council in the development of these plans, consistent with the stated "increase the level of community involvement in land-use planning".

We strongly support the continuing development of the integrated transport strategy and commend Council for its support of the Greenway and Car Share and for its opposition to the Marrickville Tunnel and the F6.

We recommend that the urban design analysis for the revitalisation for commercial areas around St Peters and Marrickville Railway Stations include provision of better transport interchange facilities and bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities.

## **7. Monitoring Services**

We support Council's aim, "to ensure all members of the community are provided with a safe and accessible public domain including parks, streets, and footpaths". Last year we recommended that enforcement of footpath parking offences be increased, including after hours. We strongly support Council's move to address after hours parking issues and hope this will improve residents' confidence in being able to access a safe, continuous path of travel for everyone, from children cycling to school to people with prams or disabilities. We also support the development of a Footway Licensing Policy and a register of footway licences. We recommend that the Policy cater for child cyclists as legitimate path users, especially near schools, and that the register be publicly accessible to encourage compliance. We would welcome the opportunity to provide input to the development of the Policy.

## **8. 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:

- most strongly support the development of the new Marrickville Bicycle Strategy, for the benefits that increased cycling will bring to help Council achieve its environmental and social capital goals as well as to improve the quality of life for all its citizens;
- strongly support improving safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians through traffic works and Road Safety Strategic Plan initiatives. We would welcome being involved;
- support LATM schemes for Lewisham, Morton Park and Petersham and expect that all LATM and similar works, including the regional traffic calming works on Marrickville Road, ensure bicycle safety is improved and not compromised;
- support the implementation of the Addison Road accessible footpath;
- support improved safety at pedestrian crossings by improving lighting and signage;
- support the resurfacing of roads and service lanes but recommend that because of the consequential increase in speeds in some locations, Council be prepared to mitigate this, including by designating shared zones in lanes with insufficient footpaths and where the lane is used by pedestrians;
- support the reconstruction of damaged and failed footpaths in residential streets;
- most strongly support the implementation of 40kph speed zones in local shopping strips, as we recommended in our submission last year;
- strongly support works on the Cooks River Cycleway, efforts for the Greenway, and bicycle route enhancements;
- recommend that the Engineering Services include the SOE Report performance measures "number of new marked bicycle routes" and "level of bicycle use" to complement the "kms of roads reconstructed and footpaths upgraded". We asked for this last year and wonder what reason there is for not doing so again this year?
- recommend that the resurfacing of Cardigan Place include or be replaced by the much more needed resurfacing of Cardigan Lane – a bike route in a shocking state of repair;
- recommend that the drainage reconstruction works in Cardigan Lane include the replacement of the dangerous grate at the gap by the closure gate, at the northern end.
- recommend that particular attention be paid to reconstruction works planned for regional roads Percival Road, Stanmore and Petersham Road, Marrickville which form part of Council's bicycle route network.

We note that the total capital works program for this year for roads, footpaths, traffic devices and car parks is \$2,690,000. Of this, the projected commitment for bicycle facilities and planning is \$140,000, or 5% (or 0.5% of Council's total budget). We commend Council on this investment and look forward to future growth for the benefit of the entire community.

## **9. Environmental Services**

We support Council's aims of *increased environmental responsibility by all sections of the Marrickville community; sustainable resource use and management by Council and the community; and improved community health through a reduction in air, noise, water and soil pollution*. Increasing cycling in the community and by Council will support these aims.

We strongly support Council's involvement in the development of a strategic plan for the Greenway. There is an allocation of \$4,000 for this year. The same amount was allocated in 03-04 and again last year has not yet been spent. We strongly recommend Council allocates the full \$10,000 required, and ensures it is spent this year. We note that the Greenway Masterplan would complement the USWIM program for developing sub-catchment masterplans.

We recommend that any interpretive signage program for Cooks River be multi-lingual and consider adding shared path behavioural signage (as in RTA's *NSW Bicycle Guidelines*).

We recommend that the Watershed programs on sustainable living include a transport component. We would be prepared to assist.

We recommend that projects for reducing energy for Council buildings be extended to Council's fleet, for achieving Council's 20% greenhouse gas reduction goal. We recommend investigating whether staff salary packaging options could include, for example, home installation of solar energy to the value of a car instead. Council could count the GHG credits from one less car AND from the staff member's reduced energy consumption. The staff member doesn't lose out by not choosing a car, saves energy bill money instead of transport costs, and has the option to buy out if they leave or to return the panels, as for a leaseback motor vehicle.

We are concerned that Council's profit from the sale of fleet motor vehicles (\$1.99 million this year) brings Council's financial objectives in conflict with its environmental objectives and serves to undermine the 20% greenhouse gas emissions target.

We recommend that the Environment Means Business Program, in developing a high level of environmental responsibility amongst local businesses, includes businesses producing TAGs (Transport Access Guides<sup>3</sup>) and installing bicycle parking or arranging Council bike parking rails. We recommend that the Marrickville Agenda 21 community awareness and education programs, including joint projects with schools, include a transport component.

## **10. Parks and Reserves**

We support the objectives of Parks & Reserves, particularly "community health through recreation and leisure", "increased access... for all age groups" and "increased community involvement in the planning and management of parks and reserves". We request that Marrickville-South Sydney Bicycle Group be included in the list of community organisations to be consulted on park management plans. We commend Parks & Reserves for their recent consultations with us on issues regarding O'Dea Reserve and Jack Shanahan Park.

We are concerned by the threat that the F6 poses to the new recreation and sporting facilities at Tempe Lands, sorely needed by our community given the scarcity of open space and sporting fields. We recommend encouraging users of Tempe Lands to voice opposition to the F6.

We support riverbank restoration works and improvements to the cycleway at Kendrick Park.

## **11. Corporate Development**

We believe we have a good understanding of Council's objectives and programs and good links into the community. We would welcome the opportunity to be involved in the development of Council's Strategic Plan and the ten year Marrickville Plan.

## **12. Administrative Services**

We commend Council for being one of the best Councils at seeking community input on documents including the draft Management Plan and for presenting the plan so clearly. Unfortunately, the website version is not downloadable by most people and the unclear scans of the associated documents were largely unreadable. The website download problems are ongoing and widespread, applying to many of Council's documents for many users. We recommend that IT works to ensure the documents are more widely accessible. We can provide more specific error messages and symptoms if needed.

## **13. Employee Services**

We recommend that the following courses be added to Council's staff development and training programme, in order to support Council's environmental goals and the Engineering Services long-term objectives:

- RTA Bicycles and Pedestrians for Managers Course (1 day course suitable for managers, directors and councillors)
- RTA Designing for Bicycle Riders and Pedestrians Course (2 day course suitable for traffic engineers and transport planners)
- Sydney Community College's Cycling Proficiency Course

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<sup>3</sup> [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/transportaccessguides](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/transportaccessguides)

## **Appendix: Why is cycling relevant to Council functions?**

As an activity, riding a bicycle can serve as a healthy form of transport and recreation. Cycling is also environmentally friendly: taking up little space; providing access for people of all ages and incomes; non-polluting and greenhouse gas emission-free; 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).

The 2002 NSW Childhood Obesity Summit Communiqué<sup>4</sup> highlights the need for councils to take a leadership role in creating 'supportive environments' for walking and cycling.

Pleasingly in line with this approach, Marrickville Council states in the 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 has the **second highest bicycle mode share in Sydney** by origin SLA, 2.18% (behind only South Sydney at 2.49%) compared with an average of 0.83% (ABS 2001 Census). 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.

Increased levels of cycling and walking will contribute to Council's vision, that "Marrickville be a great place for all people" and will support the achievement of Council's four goals:

- **value-for-money:** by serving the whole community, including the one fifth of Marrickville households who are car-free<sup>5</sup>; and because unlike cars, bicycles cause no pavement damage and so benefit road asset management;
- **sustainability:** because it builds community prosperity (cyclists spend more, especially locally, than drivers do<sup>6</sup>), supports local businesses and benefits local and global environmental sustainability<sup>7</sup>;
- **social capital:** because it is a form of travel which *connects* people with the community; increases social interaction; and reduces traffic (the level of traffic is directly linked with the level of social capital<sup>8</sup>); and
- **citizenship:** as a result of cycling connecting people with their neighbourhood and their surroundings, people who ride bicycles care about their local area and are often actively involved in the community<sup>9</sup>.

Increased levels of cycling and walking will also contribute to the following Council SOE goals: to have a healthy community free from the effects of air pollution; to have clean water in Marrickville's rivers (since motor vehicles are a major source of water pollution); and to have an environment that is free from noise pollution. It will also contribute to social plan goals, in particular, "ensuring young people have access to opportunities...".

The wide range of benefits stemming from increased cycling and walking means Council investment in cycling is strongly in the entire community's interest and of great strategic importance.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity/adult/summit/communiqu.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity/adult/summit/communiqu.pdf), specifically section 6 on Local Government and section 9 on Transport and Planning.

<sup>5</sup> ABS 2001 census for Marrickville LGA, disappointingly down from 28% in the 1996 census.

<sup>6</sup> More information at [www.massbug.org.au](http://www.massbug.org.au)

<sup>7</sup> For example, assisting with Council's stretch goals of reducing air pollution by 10% and greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2010 on 1997 levels.

<sup>8</sup> More information at [www.massbug.org.au](http://www.massbug.org.au)

<sup>9</sup> Evidenced by the number of bicycle riders involved in Council meetings and events and number of bicycle-related submissions to Council consultation processes in years past.