

MASSBUG notes on the consultant's brief for Marrickville Bicycle Strategy

We can see that many of the important and worthwhile issues we'd like to see covered have been incorporated in the brief. We are particularly pleased to see the emphasis on reviewing other Marrickville policies, plans and instruments - so integrating cycling into other areas of Council's operations.

We apologise for the potentially overwhelming long response here, but we believe that in doing this right, the benefits for Marrickville will be manifold and justified. We welcome the chance to discuss it tonight.

1. Most importantly of all: we believe that one major thing is missing and that is the policy context and, hence, the aims of the strategy. There is a section on objectives of the study but this section is more the tasks that need doing. There is nothing on what Marrickville Council wants to achieve with this bicycle strategy and how it fits into the broader Marrickville Council goals.

Marrickville Council's four overarching goals are social capital, active citizenship, value for money and environmental sustainability. How will the bike strategy help to fulfil these goals and how will it fit in? We believe it is important for Council to set this high level direction and aims. You have to know what you're trying to achieve to be really effective. More detail on page 3.

2. As we are trying to achieve a whole-of-council strategy (presumably?) and the brief currently is engineering focused, we think it would be useful for it to be a joint strategic planning and engineering project. In future there will be a transport planner and it would be useful to get the strategic planning section involved early.

3. Also considering that the strategy really could be broader than just engineering and could utilise a more community development approach (consistent with the active citizenship Council goal) in getting broader involvement in not only developing but delivering the strategy (eg. community bike maintenance workshops like Council's current worm farm workshops), it might be worthwhile considering that the consultants should have some community development experience or be prepared to collaborate with someone with this expertise. There is likely to be value in including more "software" measures in the strategy than in times past.

4. It might be useful for the consultant to review the final report of the HCAT project, currently being finalised, to look at what learnings there are for increasing cycling in the area.

5. The list of Council policies and plans could be expanded still further to include, for example, the Recreation Strategic Plan, Agenda 21 and other areas of Council we've yet to explore?

6. Also useful would be to include a review of general road and traffic conditions (including speed limits) throughout the Council area to see how they fit with an increasing Council emphasis on improving sustainable transport.

7. We thought it worth mentioning that community dynamics and demographic variations within the Council area maybe should be considered by the consultant. There may be easier gains in increasing cycling in certain conditions that could then influence the less predisposed areas.

8. We are very interested in the section on monitoring. With a consultant specifying the details we feel it would be essential to ensure (a) that the measures fit with (and results are fed into) the annual SoE reporting process; and (b) that Council's annual budget includes an allocation to allow the monitoring to actually take place.

9. We discussed the role of massbug in the development of the strategy. We contributed generously to the South Sydney bike plan since it was developed by staff who were genuine about utilising our input. Massbug's experience with the previous 1996 Marrickville bike plan consultant was that our

time was wasted as the consultant didn't have enough time to genuinely incorporate what we gave. We're concerned about getting the best result for Marrickville but without massbug members wasting our precious time.

10. We'd like to see a genuine collaborative approach in the development of the strategy because we've seen with South Sydney the superior results it gives. One possibility is combined rides - with the consultant, massbug, Council engineers and RTA representative. This allows all sides to see where the issues are and to work out collectively agreeable solutions. It's much easier than having to re-do work, or even designs, later.

11. We'd like to see the bike strategy look at opportunities for building alliances with Chambers of Commerce in the area.

12. The references in the brief to black spots using police/injury data: it may be necessary to use reported near-miss or perceptions of danger data instead or as well, since other statistics are too thin and the natural response is for cyclists to avoid that location rather than continue and get injured.

13. The consultant may need to consider temporal factors (eg. difference between clearway and parking times on the same road; or night time personal security issues).

14. The brief refers to "formal" consultation with Council and massbug. Informal consultation with massbug should be encouraged.

15. We understand progress reports and meetings can be additional burden without productivity for consultants in some cases. We'd like to suggest rather than formal and stand alone progress reports, an update on and review of actual work might suffice. Massbug may be available to be on the Steering Committee (there has been massbug experience being on RTA/Austrroads steering committees).

16. Noting that Council has applied for matched funding for a Greenway study, how will that study and the development of the bike strategy dovetail? There would need to at least be regular two-way communication between the two.

17. The words "off-route" can be deleted from the reference to the Greenway in the brief.

18. It is usual for a brief to include a section on the deliverables but this doesn't seem to be clearly enough outlined.

19. We see two principles that should underlie the bike strategy and Council's policy and operation: (a) all streets and footpaths (for under 12s) are used by bicycles and should never be worsened for bikes; and (b) the network consists of principle routes that cater for regional trips; a finer grain network that caters for local trips to shops and schools; and that every street can and does form connections.

20. Based on feedback we've had from the community, schools should be an important focus.

21. We see value in focusing on a fewer number of higher quality routes and actions as the priority. Fewer things, done well, rather than attempting to blanket the entire area too thinly. Not just routes but also critical connections and crossings.

Policy Direction for Cycling

The Marrickville Bicycle Strategy should be developed around, and directly respond to Marrickville's four key result areas of Social Capital; Active Citizenship; Value for Money; and Environmental Sustainability. The Bicycle Strategy should identify broad, and then specific goals for each of these policy areas.

For instance in the area of *Active Citizenship*, a broad goal could be the "development of a cycling culture at the grass-roots community level". Specific goals could include "local community participation in developing and implementing cycle proficiency training", and "active involvement of a social/community organisations in a developing and running a local bike bus for school students".

For each goal should be developed:

- an understanding of the current and potential future issues relating to this goal;
- cross referencing between this goal and other areas of Council responsibility and policy;
- a clear strategic approach for action in implementation of this goal;
- criteria and methodology in measuring success in achievement of this goal; and,
- protocol for review and response to the assessment and monitoring process, including integration in SOE reporting.

The Strategic policy direction for cycling in Marrickville should be consistent with and support Council's Local Action 21 policies (and "Stretch" Goals), the ESD policies contained within the key result area of Environmental Sustainability, and in relation to the State of the Environment reporting.