



**LIVERPOOL
BICYCLE
USER
GROUP**

Liverpool Bicycle Users Group

Submission: NSW BIKE PLAN

Introduction

Liverpool Bicycle Users Group welcomes the development of a new bike plan for NSW. Liverpool Bicycle Users Group represents people who live and/or work in Liverpool who ride a bike for transport, fitness or recreation. This submission highlights achievements from the Bike Plan 2010, comments on state-wide initiatives for the future Bike Plan and identifies specific concerns for cycling in the Liverpool area.

Bike Plan 2010

Achievements

- Improved quality in cycle path construction. The RTA NSW Bicycle Guidelines (RTA 2003) and subsequent RTA training for road and traffic engineers, has generally lifted the standard for facilities delivered. The RTA guidelines for local bike plans (2002) also assisted the development of local bike plans in many areas of NSW.
- The Regional Cycleway Program in the first 5 years of Bike Plan 2010 delivered major improvements. The emphasis on constructing the often more expensive but vital connections, between existing isolated routes, particularly bridges and underpasses. Another significant feature of the regional cycle ways program was the innovative land use outcomes. Cycle facilities were constructed converting canal ways, railway access land, and water and gas pipe access land as well as existing streets. The development of the regional routes obtained cooperation from multiple NSW Government Departments of RTA, Rail Access Corp, Sydney Water, Area Health Services and as well as local government. The cooperation has been sorely missing in recent years when local government has been left to initiate most of the non-major road related cycle facilities.
- The cancelling of the regional cycle routes funding in 2005 was a major disappointment. The construction of cycle facilities has shrunk to 100-200 metres of path per year in many local areas, and little infrastructure to overcome geographical barriers such as creeks/rivers, rail lines, high traffic roads, involving bridges or underpasses have been built. The current matched local cycle facilities funding only covers the construction of new facilities, when lower cost options such as cycle lane marking or consistent way-finding signage are not included in the funding guidelines. For the Liverpool area the failure to continue with the regional cycleway funding meant the second part of the south western rail trail i.e. Liverpool to Campbelltown has not been completed or even planned. Currently there no safe way route for most cyclists to move between these two town centres.

- Coupling cycleway construction to major road construction has influenced regional cycle facility development for the past 3-4 years. A number of facilities in south western Sydney build in this funding arrangement, particularly the M7 shared user path, and shared user path on sections of Cowpastures road.
- One of the major boosts for cycling in NSW the past 8 years has been the development and promotion of facilities at Sydney Olympic Park that has accessible routes from nearly all directions to cycle to the park (except from the south west - Auburn / Duck River). The operational management actively encourages and promotes different types of cycling - recreational, fitness, training for competitive cycling and commuting. It is one of the major areas in Sydney for novice cyclists to ride and improve their skills and fitness. *(Personally, I have the pleasure of riding through SOP on my twice-weekly commute between West Ryde and Liverpool).*

Bike Plan 2020

Priorities for the next State bike Plan

1. The provision of useful, safe cycling routes
2. The delivery of cycling education and skills programs targeting road safety.
3. Address unaware motorists, through better education and highly visual prompts such as bike logos in the primary road position.
4. The promotion of knowing where to ride – quality cycling maps, web resources.
5. Promote the health, environmental, community engagement benefits of cycling. Promotion of model cycling facility and programs.

The provision of useful, safe cycling routes

Local routes that link residential areas to shops, schools, recreation facilities such as a parks, swimming pools, and transport connections eg railway stations. Regional routes that allow transport option between suburbs or regional town centres. Recreational routes through parks in metropolitan areas, or targeting cycling tourism in regional NSW. In-terms of cycle tourism infrastructure, NSW is a long way behind nearly all other states.

Specific recommendations

- NSW needs a state wide consistent bicycle 'way finding' signage. In Sydney metro area this requires name the main regional routes in each sector, showing the name of regional route destination options and distances. The system in Perth, is shown in the photo.



- Priority in Sydney metropolitan area is increasing continuous regional routes. In many cases, this will mean completing the regional routes set out in the 2010 plan that have not be constructed. It will also include completing the connections of the new toll-road related cycle paths to other cycling routes.
- Local cycle facility funding. Increase the total pool of funds available for LGA matched cycle facility funding. Consider less than 50/50 contributions split for facilities that address cycle key access but may have higher costs, bridges, underpasses etc Allow local facility funding cover non-construction eg implementing regional cycle signage, cycle lanes, green surface for cycling priority space on roads. Require those LGA without a local bike plan to develop and publish one.
- Engage in a whole of government approach. The best and the lowest cost routes for cycling is on local streets, however ideally there are often crucial safe connections through land held by other government instrumentalities. A number of linear routes are the verge of arterial roads, along railway maintenance access tracks, water and gas pipeline maintenance access tracks, through large hospital grounds (this is particularly relevant to the sandstone metal health hospitals i.e. Gladesville, Cumberland, Callan Park). In regional cycle route planning needs the engage and support from other government departments and local government, and cyclists.
- Shoulders on regional roads – predominantly a regional / rural roads issue – however there are a number of key roads in Liverpool LGA that do not have sealed shoulders – Heathcote Road as a prime example. This is regional cycling route (because there is no other way of riding between Holsworthy and Voyager Point (the access point for cycle route to East hills).
- Focus on commuting and utility cycling. The most benefits are likely to be from cycling facilities in the centre of and within 8km of Sydney CBD and metropolitan business centres, Chatswood, Parramatta, Penrith, Liverpool, Gosford, Wollongong etc.
- Promote examples of good cycle facility through web site that demonstrate engineering solutions, good use of cycle counters etc

The RTA NSW Bicycle Guidelines should include the requirement the completion of a 'saddle survey' – that is a thorough assessment of new cycle path or cycle lane etc by actually riding on it, prior to the final sign off. Many smaller, but very annoying faults, of new facilities such as angles where path surfaces meet, spacing of bollards, sight lines around vegetation, lack of flush curb ramps etc are obvious on riding the route but by not walking along it.

End of trip facilities

- All City Rail station entrances, ferry wharves and major bus interchanges to have cycle parking that meets Australian design standards – complete and audit and set timetable and funding for installing cycle parking.

- Improve cycle parking at major retail developments; most major shopping centres have inadequate bike parking, some failing to have any (eg Westfield Parramatta). A model would be the Rhodes shopping centre, which has good quality, highly visible cycle rails at all four street front entrances to the mall.
- Cycle parking facilities and educational institutions (schools, TAFE and universities). Particularly targeting schools adjacent to local / regional cycle routes. A model has been the installation of the excellent bike parking facilities at Miller TAFE, which has two regional cycle routes (Liverpool Parramatta T-Way path and Hoxton Park Rd path) passing its boundaries.
- Cycle parking requirements have been written in to all relevant Local Development Plans. Only in the most recent (2008) LDP for Liverpool CBD has cycle parking stipulated as a requirement for all developments that require off-street parking. Helpful improving future cycling access, but fails to address the large number of buildings and businesses that (mostly government departments and large NGOS's) have no cycle parking facilities.

Education and skill development for cyclists and drivers.

Having access to a bike does not appear to be a major impediment for most people in NSW. In running local information stalls, our bicycle group finds the questions;

- do you ride a bike ? Is often answered no. BUT
- do you have a bike in the garage? Is nearly always yes!

Along with safe cycling routes the next bike plan needs to address safety perception and safety education in cycling.

While there have been campaigns on 'sharing the road', the education and particularly skill development of both drivers and cyclists could be significantly improved.

The best example of this approach in cycling education is the National Cycling Proficiency Standards, United Kingdom. Here, basic bike riding skills (Level 1) are taught in car park and cycle path. The majority (level 2 & 3) of the program focuses on riding on the road.– passing parked cars, safely negotiating intersections, choosing a safe riding 'position' on the road to be most visible to other vehicles. Not being seen by a driver at an intersection or roundabout is a much higher real risk than motorists being deliberately aggressive. The course is taught and assessed on local roads.

A major success in the UK since 2007 has had a national rollout of 'Bikeability' the skills training program to accompany the National Cycling Proficiency Standards. Bikeability has targeted older primary and high school children, but is equally applicable to 'back on your bike' and safe road riding programs for adults. Unfortunately cycling skills programs in Australia above the very basic level (CycleSkill) focus on competitive cycling.

- Develop opportunities for adults and children, to improve the cycling skills – with an emphasis on safe riding on the road, from aged 12 up.

- Encourage the delivery of basic and more advanced cycle skills programs – similar to the way swimming skills education is managed – standardised program (AustSwim) widely delivered by government, sporting groups and other not for profit as well as commercial services.
- Publish a RTA guide focused on safe cycling similar to the guide given to learner drivers that covers safe driving and the road rules. Using similar line drawings, showing the best way for cyclists to approach intersections, ride on a roundabout, cross lanes etc. Cyclecraft by John Franklin is useful background resource.
- Consider the acquisition and use of safe cycling on the road skills as an underpinning to learner driver training.
- Report bicycle accidents especially ones that do not involve require report to the police to get better information on safety issues in cycling. Information to pedestrians, motorists and cyclists as to what accidents / incidents should be recorded.

Maps

NSW is lagging behind all mainland states in the provision of quality cycle maps. The RTA maps are not recommended by many cycle groups because of the focus on RTA constructed facilities and failure to map the majority of local and regional routes which use local streets as well as cycle paths, and often fail to identify street names on the map. In the past 3-4 years some local councils and NSW Health (health promotion) have made some more purposeful maps, but the coverage is patchy.

In comparison to other capital cities the RTA set of maps for Sydney do not match the cycle map systems that exist in Brisbane (Brisbane City Council) , Melbourne (Travel Smart) Perth (Ministry of Transport). Adelaide (SA Dept of Planning). These may have 10+ covering their greater metropolitan area which is considerably smaller geographical distance than Greater Sydney. On the same pattern and estimate to cover Sydney adequately might be 14 maps (3-4 LGAs per map in inner areas 2-3 LGAs in outer areas). There are additional linear route maps for major recreational / tourist routes (e.g. Perth to Fremantle in WA).

- As part of the 2020 Bike Plan, NSW develop and publish quality cycling maps for all metropolitan areas and 10 regional cities.

Integration of bike related transport with public transport

Remove requirement to purchase a concession fare for a bike in peak travel. Crowded trains in themselves are a sufficient disincentive for taking a (non-foldable) bike on a train at the same time and direction as the main commuter flow. The current ticketing requirements are a discouragement for combining bike and train transport in peak times in secondary directions where there is more than enough space on trains for bikes eg from Strathfield to Liverpool in the AM , Parramatta to Blacktown in the AM.

- Increase the carriage of bicycles on Intercity and Country Rail trains.

Promotion of Cycling

There are a number of elements of cycling that could be promoted as part of the 2020 plan. Low cost and sustainable transport, health benefits as physical activity, community engagement – the slower pace of transport allows more attention to place and people. Highlight accessing local shops libraries, schools , swimming pools etc by bike.

Bicycle hire largely evaporated in NSW due to public liability insurance cover issues about 8-9 years ago and in Sydney is now limited to Centennial and Olympic parks. In comparison Melbourne has 4-5 stand alone bike hire in tourist areas but more importantly about 1/3 of city and suburban bike shops offer bike hire as part of their commercial services.

- Less restrictive Bike Week funding - currently can only be used in advertising / promotion.
- Encourage and fund schools to have Bike Week activities.
- Highlight local councils, workplaces etc with successful cycling projects and facilities.
- Examine cycle tourism opportunities in NSW – provide project funding for regional areas for 3-4 priority projects over the 10 years of the bike plan.
- Require all local councils to report on the mechanism in place for the input of cyclist in to LGA planning eg through a bicycle advisory committee, a bicycle representative on the traffic committee, a bicycle representative on sustainability committee etc.

NSW Bike Plan 2020 and priorities for Liverpool

1. **Development and publication and publication of a Liverpool LGA Bicycle Plan.** Liverpool LGA does not have a Local Bike Plan. This is a major disincentive to planning and promotion of cycling. There is no consistent way local residents can input to council on cycling for recreational / transport.
2. **Safe cycling route from Liverpool CBD to the east crossing the Georges River. Linking of this to cycle path in Chipping Norton Moorebank.** Currently the only route is on Newbridge Road the main arterial road. The Regional city plan for Liverpool has a cycle/pedestrian bridge described. No timetable of funding has been attached to implementing this plan.
3. **Safe regional cycling route from Liverpool CDB to the South accessing Casula and Glenfield.** Potentially partially addressed in the Casula Parkland proposal between Liverpool CBD and Casula Power station regional art gallery. But no documentation has been published. Funding announcement made in August 2008 by Premiers and Department for Western Sydney press release, nothing subsequently.
4. **Completion of links and signage between cycle paths in the western suburbs of Liverpool**
 - Hoxton Park Rd Path and the M7 path.
 - Completion of the path the length Cowpastures road

- Completion for the Western Sydney Parklands track to Camden Valley Way
- Completion for the path on Camden Valley Way.
- The first to are committed to as part of RTA major road upgrades over the next 3 years.

5. Completion of the recreational cycle path Herron Park to Rickard Rd.

Chipping Norton. Shared user path for the pedestrian access on Newbridge Road (crossing the Georges river). Construction of safe access from Ricard rd to the bridge crossing. There has been a regional path constructed by Bankstown Council on the eastern side of the bridge with no corresponding facilities on the Liverpool. (This is what happens when the regional cycleway funding got axed, and different councils have different priorities).

6. Heathcote Road - Sealed shoulder, cycle lanes and cycle bridge over the rail line on.

There are no sealed shoulders on Heathcote Rd between Holsworthy and Voyager Point. A particular issue is the bridge on where Heathcote rd crosses a creek which has no footpath or road shoulders in 80km speed zone – cyclists are forced in to main vehicular position on the road path.

7. Cabramatta Creek Path. Connection of the Liverpool Rail Trail path and Lansvale Path through Jacqui Osmond Reserve, crossing Hume highway / Cabramatta Creek. The adjoining sections of path have been constructed by Fairfield Council, the missing section is in a Liverpool Council park. Crossing the Hume Highway - minium would be installation of pedestrian/cycle lights. Bridge crossing of Prospect Creek from Mirambeena to Lansvale.

8. Cycle facility along Governor Macquarie Drive outside Warwick Farm racecourse.

Section from Hume highway has been constructed – but ends abruptly. Cyclists, evidenced by the single track worn into the grass, regularly use this missing section. Also link from this path to Scrivener drive access to Liverpool Hospital.

9. Inclusion of cycle facilities in Future Urban Development.

- Local and regional cycle routes be required in master plan for Bringelly.
- Future shared user path / bridge crossing Georges River between Anzac Rd Wattle Grove and Casula.
- New subdivisions in Moorebank

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