

Gary Schmidt
24 Rowley Street Camperdown NSW 2050

Mr Werner Steyer (werners@bicyclensw.org.au)
Bicycle New South Wales Inc.
GPO Box 272
SYDNEY 2001

CC: Ms Elizabeth Hole (EHole@bicyclensw.org.au)

Wednesday 3rd December 2008

Input Consideration for NSW Bike Plan Workshops

Mr Steyer,

Firstly thank you for extending an invitation to attend the Sydney session on 3rd December 2008 – one workshop that is part of the NSW Bike Plan Workshops series over November and December.

Unfortunately I can not attend in person due to work commitments.

In lieu of attending I have put together some thoughts and commentary for consideration and input to the discussion on developing a NSW Bike Plan. I offer these either as a contribution at one of the workshops or alternatively as part of general input to Bicycle NSW's contribution to developing a response to NSW Bike Plan.

I use as basis for my contribution the document *NSW Bike Plan Workshops-17-10.pdf* (also included) which was forwarded to me by Ms. E. Hole. She provided this document in a reply to my enquiry about how to coordinate a response to stakeholder authorities associated with the provision of cycling facilities between Camperdown and Macquarie Park, Sydney.

1. Introduction, setting the them & Objectives

- 1.1. A firm statement and appropriate grouping of stakeholders must be done so that awareness and ownership are created and participation provided. In the very least these should include but not be limited to:
 - a. LGAs (Local Government Authorities)
 - b. State Government bodies including:
 - i. Roads & Traffic Authority
 - ii. State transit authorities (Bus, Train, Ferry)
 - iii. NSW Police
 - iv. Planning authorities
 - c. Private transit authorities
 - d. Service providers such as utility entities (gas, electricity, etc.), telecommunication providers, etc. that require access to shared use or dedicated cycle ways to remediate path conditions once work has been completed.

- 1.2. I agree that cycling topics need to be considered, discussed and articulated individually but in a perspective such that an integrated solution is the final position.
- 1.3. The recognition and promulgation of **principles of mutual** respect need to be at the forefront of all solution design and permeate through designers and more so facility users.

2. Cycling Safety & Behavioural Change

- 2.1. The obligation of respect is underpinned by service and facility provision. Lack of adequate, quality and maintained facilities increases pressure and tension between users (cyclists, pedestrians and drivers) and serves, in effect, to *encourage* users to perform/act based on conditions rather than 'within relevant rules'. E.g. If there is no legal ability, or the legal ability is made so onerous, to cycle within the rules then performing contrary to them becomes the default position.
- 2.2. Considerations to users (cyclists, pedestrians and drivers) conferring with each other:
 1. Clearly, very clearly, marked usage paths.
 2. Consistent messaging e.g. ALL cycling signs uniform in colour, use of consistent symbols and presentation, clear visual separation from other road signage
 3. Unhindered visibility around areas where high traffic (cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers) conditions exist e.g. no advertising panels on bus shelters where foot and cycles must mingle.
 4. Use of green road colouring for every cycle path on a sealed surface (road or footpath) **especially** across streets.
 5. Placement of 'Do Not Queue across Bikeway' signs when they traverse roads
 6. Advertising of road rules and obligations within local press
 7. Consider community advertising (concessional rates) with electronic media providers
 8. Education in schools on road/cycle rules and safety irrespective of whether the child rides or not.
 9. Increased provision of bike racks
 10. Real and visible means to encourage the use of a cycling e.g. close down a car lane and provide dedicated cycleway
 11. Provide bike ways for a meaningful distance not just residually 'where the space allows'
 12. Provision/allowance to move/take bikes on public transport e.g. trains, ferries
 13. Standardised documentation and inclusion (grading, colours, etc.) of cycling ways across all street directory publishers

3. Cycling Safety

- 3.1. *Proficiency* of cycling can be provided via:
 - a. Formally through education (e.g. Schools, community colleges, police, etc.)
 - b. Informally by parents instructing and reinforcing road rules and etiquette
- 3.2. *Behavioural* skill education should be commenced when a child is first introduced to wheeled transport e.g. a trike. It is a learned skill that is a continuum of knowledge transfer in a natural progression from trike, bike with training wheels, bike without training wheels, footpath, and finally to road. So it should be started as early as possible – akin to learning to talk and read.
- 3.3. *Environmental* awareness is a skill that exists irrespective of a persons need to cycle. It is skill required to simply to walk and interact within a community. Cycling ‘piggy-backs’ off this but at speeds faster than walking. Courteousness, consideration, abiding to rules/laws and managing the practicality of cycling are all part of understanding the environmental aspects of cycling.

An additional consideration within the topic of environmental safety is to not consider cycling in isolation of itself but to combine it with other modes of public transport e.g. train and ferry.

4. Cyclists needs

The categorisation of cycling types is an excellent way to begin to understand profiles and inturn needs of all cyclists. With appropriate cyclist classification, planning by impacted stakeholders can then be more effectively managed and delivered.

I concur with the seven (7) category types (as enunciated in the Bike Plan Workshop document) even if altered titles could be considered:

1. Primary School Children (or Novice Cyclists),
2. Secondary School Children (or Intermediate Cyclists),
3. Recreational Cyclists,
4. Commuting cycling being either:
 - a. Commuting Cyclists or
 - b. Utility Cyclists,
5. Touring Cyclists, and
6. Sports & Competitive Cyclists.

Consideration to alter the titles of types 1 and 2 should be given so that they are more reflective of competence than age. For example an adult novice or intermediate cyclist can perform in a manner similar to a primary or secondary child even though they are not a child.

Furthermore, I believe all cyclists would prefer dedicated paths but certain categories (or competencies) will be more able and/or willing to use shared facilities being footpaths or roads.

4.1. Cycling infrastructure

Adequately capturing the infrastructure needs for each cycling category is difficult and if done poorly will disaffect a user group which will either encourages them away from cycling or place pressure on respecting other users (pedestrians, drivers, etc.)

How to capture the information requires analysis of techniques/methods and who are to be the collecting agents or bodies.

- a. Techniques/methods – This includes surveys, feedback forms, letters, emails and needs to transcend and/or be mindful of interest boundary zones e.g. LGA borders, etc.
- b. Collecting agents – Information capture can be performed by LGAs, grouped regional associations (e.g. SSROC, etc.), industry bodies (e.g. Bicycle NSW, etc.), community interest groups, Cycle ways often extend beyond 1 LGA boundary

Any action or position that does not encourage cycling is by definition discouraging cycling. Provision of maintained dedicated bike paths free from refuse (glass, vegetation, debris) and even-surfaced without degradation (i.e. potholes) infers that use will increase.

The best corollary is the intent associated with vehicle traffic management devices – the absence of these (roundabouts, speed humps, chicanes, etc.) encourages all types of traffic to use a street where the imposition of these is hoped and, eventual does, restrict use.

4.2. Implementation – Making it happen

The challenge extends beyond a whole-of-government approach (i.e. involving private bodies as well) but as is so often the case falls on government to legislate, approve or oversee activities. As a result a cascading or hierarchical responsibility matrix is required.

My input for targets setting would include:

1. Provision of continuous cycle ways that link the current piece meal approach.
2. Regularly maintain (i.e. clean) and keep cycle ways free from debris and obstructions (on the path as well as advertising, poles, etc.) and vegetation.
3. Actively plan for dedicated cycle ways. Make it difficult for cars and easy for cyclists to travel.
4. Permit cyclists to journey on all trains and ferries, without penalty to augment longer distance travel

4.3. Auditing, Learning from the Past and Checklists

The work that has been done by the LGAs that have provided improvement should be publically recognised and actively encouraged!

Even with this being said in Sydney there is such a low base to commence with that itemising specific improvement opportunities is an immense effort in its own right.

As a result the following suggestions are generic but targeted ways to improve facilities:

- a. Summarising and publicising plans for the current period and 3 years forward for cycle infrastructure provision. Part of this is to state the funds set aside to manage the schedule of work effort. Visibility and transparency will provide a more positive framework for engagement.
- b. Clear identification and dedication of preferred cycle routes in and across an area.
- c. Active provision and establishment of cycle ways not just a residual support effort i.e. where its convenient or the road is wide enough but where conditions cease then so too does the cycle way
- d. Statement of cycling black-spots akin to what is provided for road users
- e. Literally get cycleway planners to get on their (a) bike and cycle routes noting inadequacies from path condition, safety concern points to shared service challenged areas.

My final note attempts to convey by personal bike usage. The pertinent points are:

- I have been cycling for almost 30 years
- I've cycled to work for the past 10 which means I require shower facilities at both ends of the journey which I am fortunate to have. A lot of buildings/workplaces do not. I, thereby, fit the profile of a *commuting cyclist* most of the time.
- My present employer in Sydney means that my route takes me 20 Kms from Camperdown to Macquarie Park and return. Travel times are:
 - By bike 50 minutes.
 - By car (against main peak hour traffic) on a low traffic 'green light' journey 50 minutes. In the rain its 70 minutes +.
 - By public transport (not taking a bike) it is 70-90 minutes.

It is easy to observe its faster to cycle yet the conditions are deplorable and all my work colleagues observe that I'm mad and how unsafe it must be. To some extent it is - I need to take risks to complete the journey and the general quality of the path conditions is 2/10.

My end goal is to be in a situation where people say 'Yes its great - I do it too'. It's up to the planners to facilitate this and the public to use it - with respect! I am tired of inaction and words with minimal (for the journeys I take) improvement and respect provided to me. I yearn for even minimum adequate and maintained facilities.

I am available for more detailed and extended consultation if required.

Yours sincerely,

Gary Schmidt CPA, JP