

## **Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society Inc**

### **Submission on the 2013 Review of the 2008 Lane Cove Bicycle Plan.**

#### **Summary**

This Review of the 2008 Bicycle Plan has just revisited many of the ideas that were rejected in the earlier Plan in 2009. The first draft was modified in 2008 to remove many of the routes particularly those through bushland that were flatly rejected, before the plan was put to Council. Many of these have again been introduced into this reviewed plan. Why? What reason and with what hopes of achieving them. The community has already spoken on these and will do so again and again.

The figures quoted from the City of Sydney research might relate to fully dedicated cycleways, but that is not what is proposed in most cases here so we cannot accept that argument for our LGA. Some of the City of Sydney cycleways have also generated considerable anger and frustration for both the users of the cycleways and the local residents. This we don't want in Lane Cove.

LCB&CS agrees with the concept of cycling if it can be carried out in a safe and enjoyable way. It does help health, air pollution and reduces a minor amount of congestion on the roads if it is embraced by a large number of users as in some European countries. It will make very little difference in Sydney and in particular in the lower north shore with its hilly terrain irrespective of the number of electric bikes becoming available and economically viable.

Our comments follow, firstly on some general concerns and then with detailed comments on each of the routes suggested.

#### **Environment.**

LCB&CS accepts most of the environmental, health and economic benefits listed regarding bike riding.

However the proposals ignore many other aspects of our environment which will be very adversely affected by the suggested routes. The first and most important of these is the impact on bushland with proposed routes going through our bushland reserves.

Lane Cove Plan of Management for Bushland specifically prohibits bike tracks in bushland. This has been in the Plan since its inception in the early 1990s. The reasons for this prohibition have been listed many times and there is no reason to relist them again here. Suffice to say the LCB&CS vehemently oppose any bike tracks in our bushland reserves. We also oppose any signage directing bikes to dead end streets that end adjacent to bushland – such as Dettmann Avenue and Karingal Road.

Other environmental issues have also been ignored in the proposals to introduce Shared User Pathways (SUP). These routes are shown along streets with street trees on the verge, some very significant trees. In order to provide sufficient width to accommodate bike traffic in two directions as well as pedestrians all obstructions would need to be removed including these trees together with any bus shelters, power poles and signage poles, let alone any verge plantings and the ability for residents to put their garbage bins out without impinging on the traffic lanes of the street. Lane Cove prides itself on its vegetated environment and this proposal would definitely affect that image and the amenity of the adjoining residents.

Bike tracks proposed hard against waterways also pose an environmental problem. In order to be safe they would need a protective balustrade along the waters edge and in the case around Burns Bay would need to have a cantilevered platform over the water to provide

enough width for the track. This would be most intrusive visually to the resident on both sides of the bay as well as a maintenance issue.

## **Safety**

SUPs are already available for pedestrians, people with strollers and prams, mobility scooters and primary school children. These users are infrequent and generally pose no safety problems, but to increase the use for the general cycling public would be a safety hazard. SUPs adjacent to front boundaries, whether fenced or not, create dangerous situations because of both cars and pedestrians exiting their properties with cyclists approaching from both directions. Cyclists are not able to stop as quickly as pedestrians or able to hear cars. The danger is not only to the cyclist but also to the resident leaving the property not being able to see or hear a cyclist coming nor possibly expecting one from either direction.

On road marked bike lanes (shoulder lanes) are also a definite hazard not only from the “car door zone” but also because bikes are not always visible when cars drive out between other parked vehicles. These should be discouraged.

The only real safe bike path is a dedicated lane, free of obstructions and clear of access from the side by either pedestrians or cars. This could be achieved by removing one traffic/parking lane from the roadway and dedicating it to bicycles only. This is the ideal method of retro fitting bike lanes to existing street patterns. LCB&CS thinks that this will not be accepted by any traffic authority particularly along major feeder roads but it is still the best safety solution.

The comments following will be based on either the environmental concerns or safety concerns associated with each route.

### **Route 1 –KingsLangley Road**

Basically no problem with this route subject to the opposition to removal of any street trees necessary to provide the required width of path.

### **Route 2 – Lane Cove Town Centre to Greenwich**

We totally oppose this route and call it for what it is, a pipe dream and one that is impossible to achieve. Oppose the route through the golf course, through bushland at Dorritt St/Phoenix St, Gore Creek reserve, Shell Park and the board walk along the foreshore of Gore Bay. It has been rejected so many times that it should not even be included in any plan.

### **Route 3 – River Road – Longueville Road to Greenwich.**

Again oppose most of this route. Firstly due to safety of the SUP in River Road, particularly the hill near the school where visibility is very minimal. Secondly the footpath west of the set back access road is too narrow already for a decent pedestrian way and to increase this in any way would require major excavation into the cliff face of the bushland reserve devastating that area. The footpath adjacent to the golf course has some very mature trees along the route and it already winds around these so that widening to provide bike access would remove these trees. Again the route beyond Stevenson St goes through bushland reserve and would need an easement to traverse the proposed development on the old bowling club site being proposed by Council for development as retirement living complex.

#### **Route 4 – Longueville to St Ignatius.**

Totally oppose this route due to it traversing bushland reserve most of the way as well as well used public park land. The alternative route from Dettmann Ave is also opposed for the same reason.

#### **Route 5 – Burns Bay Rd-Bridge St**

Accept this route as it is along existing hard surface routes and does not involve SUPs

#### **Route 6 – Hinkler Rd**

Totally oppose the River Rd end of this route and really wonder if anyone has looked at the difference in levels between River Rd and Hinkler St and how a bike rider would be able to ride up this incline. This section is through bushland (and extremely good bushland at that). The remainder of the route is acceptable provided that the SUP can be provided without danger and the removal of any trees.

#### **Route 7 – Lane Cove to Hunters Hill**

Oppose great deal of this route and therefore the whole route. SUP along Tambourine Bay Rd or Fox St could require removal of trees. The section through Tennyson Park is totally opposed and is also impossible to provide without construction of an elevated track as was proved previously. The section through the oval will also prove difficult and the section around the water frontage of the bay would require a cantilevered boardwalk to achieve the width. We doubt if the footpath around Linley Point is wide enough to accommodate an SUP.

#### **Route 8 – Longueville Road**

This is one area where there would be major safety problems with the SUP as well as the necessity of removal of many street trees. The adjacent housing is mainly units with steep drives making it very difficult to see bikes or traffic. The only solution along here is on road route with the removal of one lane of parking.

#### **Route 9 – St Leonards.**

Accept this route but suggest that it be referred to the Master Plan being devised and the development approved for Marshall Ave.

#### **Route 10 – Epping Rd to Penrose St**

This route again requires an SUP and the problems of street tree removal and safety.

#### **Route 11 – Plaza to Mowbray Rd**

Again an SUP with its problems of street tree removal and safety particularly along Mowbray Rd.

#### **Route 12 – Lane Cove to Chatswood**

SUPs again required and their inherent problems as well as the description seems to indicate a path through Helen St Reserve which is opposed as it is the only reliable open space in the neighbourhood of intense unit development.

### **River Road West, Bridge St and Penrose St**

This route is not mentioned but seems to be assumed as an acceptable route. Once again the provision of an SUP along these roads would be a hazard and need the removal of many trees to achieve the required width of pathway. It is a major road system and does not easily adapt itself to bike paths in a safe manner.

### **Plan's Conclusion**

The conclusion in the Plan endorsing the use of routes through bushland does not accept the Plan of Management for Bushland nor the inherent problems of weed spread with the opening up of tracks, bike riders not adhering to paths, of bike riders travelling too fast in otherwise passive recreational areas. The statement that the paths can be narrow belies the facts that they would therefore be dangerous to both riders and pedestrians when they met on the path. Bike riding and bushland protection cannot co-exist and must be opposed.

### **Our Conclusion**

Bicycle routes are a good thing but not at the expense of other environmental considerations. They may be an option to be provided in the future when reduced access to fossil fuels means less cars and it is possible to provide bike routes along road ways without inconveniencing the traffic flows and causing increased congestion. At the moment this is not possible and we think that there are more pressing issues at stake than those proposed in this Review of the Bicycle Plan.

Doug Stuart for the Committee,

Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society Inc.

26<sup>th</sup> June 2013