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17<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Dear Mr McKee,

### **Pymble Public Domain Plan (Reference No S12249-1) Northern Sydney Local Health District Submission**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Pymble Public Domain Plan. Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) Population Health Promotion is committed to ensuring that the built environment has a net-positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals and the community.

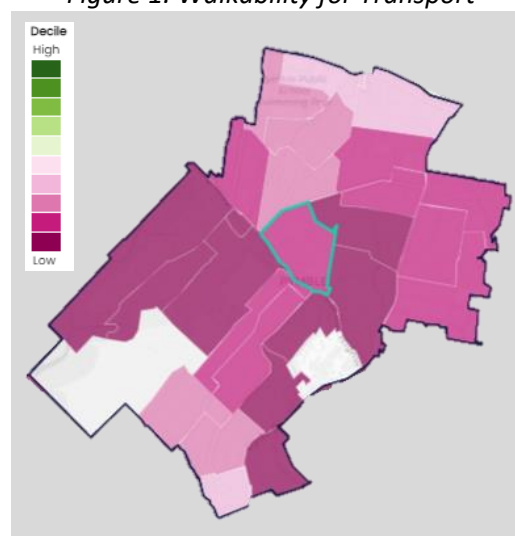
We commend the Pymble Public Domain Principles of improving pedestrian movement and connectivity within the Pymble Local Centre (hereby 'the Centre'); strengthening the tree canopy across the Centre through new and infill street planting; improving laneways and secondary streets; seeking opportunities for new urban parks and public spaces; improving walkability and pedestrian experience to and through the Centre; and enhancing connections to Robert Pymble Park.

In this submission, we provide further recommendations to maximise the potential health benefits of the Pymble Public Domain Plan.

#### **Active Travel**

The Australian Urban Observatory indicates that the suburb of Pymble currently has relatively poor walkability for transport (16<sup>th</sup> percentile across all Australian Urban Centres)<sup>1</sup>. Walkability for transport is calculated based on three key factors: land use mix and services of daily living (something to walk to); street connectivity (a way to get there); and dwelling density. These factors influence how people move around their local neighbourhoods to complete everyday activities, such as accessing supermarkets, convenience stores, petrol stations, newsagents and public transport stops.

*Figure 1: Walkability for Transport*



Source: The Australian Urban Observatory (2022)

<sup>1</sup> Australian Urban Observatory website, RMIT University. Available at: <https://auo.org.au/> (cited 16 November 2022)

Making walking and cycling the easiest mode of travel to and within the Pymble Public Domain is an important step in supporting physical activity among local residents and reducing the growing health costs associated with increasing sedentary lifestyles. The health-related benefits of walking and cycling are costed at \$1.04 to \$2.08 for each additional kilometre walked and \$0.02 to \$1.12 for each additional kilometre cycled.<sup>2</sup>

Transport for NSW research<sup>3</sup> suggests that cyclists who are already confident commuters will continue riding in challenging conditions. However, in contrast, infrequent cyclists – who form the majority of the bicycle-user population – will benefit the most from dedicated infrastructure that supports active travel. Transport for NSW research confirms the key needs of infrequent bicycle riders include:

- Safe connectivity and flow of street space and cycle paths
- Safe behaviour of other road users
- Supporting facilities during and at the end of the trip
- Health, wellbeing and knowledge of road rules.

Addressing these needs directly may persuade more people to ride a bicycle more often and/or further, resulting in positive physical, social, environmental and economic outcomes associated with improved health and wellbeing, social/community connection, increased local economic activity, and reduced traffic congestion and pollution.

Active transport for local and short trips can also reduce traffic congestion. The figure below, which compares the road space used by 69 pedestrians and 69 cyclists versus 40 cars, shows that active modes of transport use considerably less road space. From a planetary health perspective, reducing car dependency also produces co-benefits by reducing emissions from cars and mitigating the effects of climate change.

*Figure 2: 69 pedestrians, 69 bicycle riders and 40 cars, Canberra ACT*



Source: Cycling Promotion Fund<sup>4</sup>

### Recommendations:

1. Prioritise the hierarchy of road users to achieve a shift away from private car use to and from the Pymble local centre as follows; 1. Pedestrians, 2. Cyclists, 3. Public Transport, 4. Private Vehicles.
2. Implement best practice design using the [NSW Movement and Place Framework](#)<sup>5</sup> and the [Walking Space Guide](#)<sup>6</sup> (see Appendix 1).

<sup>2</sup> NSW Ministry of Health (2015). An evidence review and modelling exercise: The effects of urban form on health: costs and benefits. Sydney, NSW: An evidence review.

<sup>3</sup> Transport for NSW (2021) Cycling Transport for NSW Cycling Customer Value Proposition (CVP) Research

<sup>4</sup> Australian Government, (2013). Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport, Supporting Active Travel in Australian Communities, Canberra: Department of Infrastructure and Transport, pp.4-10.

<sup>5</sup> Transport for NSW (2022) Movement and Place Framework <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/industry/nsw-movement-and-place-framework> (cited 16 November 2022)

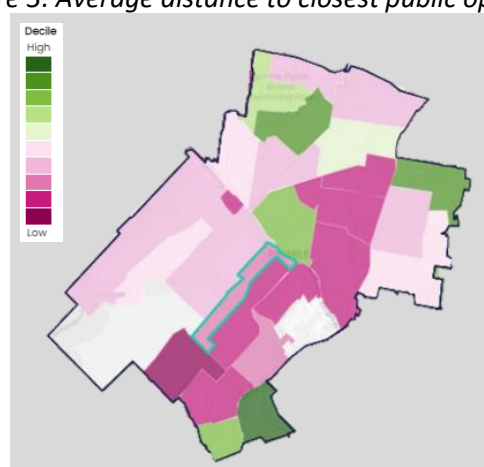
<sup>6</sup> Transport NSW (2020) Walking Space Guide <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers/document-types/guides-manuals/walking-space-guide.html> (cited 16 November 2022)

3. Extend the proposed separated cycle path through the commercial core on Grandview Street to provide direct access to retailers.
4. Provide adequate bicycle parking facilities – consider incorporating a commuter bike storage facility next to the train station and/or in the Grandview Lane car park. Alternatively, consider a row of bike racks in the existing on street parking lane on Grandview St adjacent to the Station between the pedestrian crossing and Pacific Highway.
5. Provide end of trip facilities within the Grandview Lane car park.
6. Work with neighbouring Councils to implement a connected separated cycleway solution linking the upper and lower north shore.
7. Consider a second raised pedestrian crossing on Grandview Street between Alma Street and Post Office Street where there is already evidence of high foot traffic.
8. Establish a maximum 40km/hour speed limit and traffic calming features throughout the Centre and surrounding roads where there is high pedestrian activity.
9. Provide sufficient way-finding signage which includes distances in metres to key destinations to guide pedestrians and cyclists.
10. Evaluate the performance of the Pymble Public Domain Plan against its stated objectives using the NSW Movement and Place built environment performance indicators.

## Open Space

According to the Australian Urban Observatory, access to public open space varies across the suburb of Pymble, with residents in the southern and eastern parts of the local centre experiencing relatively low access. There is now a significant body of peer-reviewed evidence supporting the positive health impacts of green open space, particularly on physical activity levels and a person’s mental health and well-being. Increasing the urban tree canopy also mitigates some of the impacts of heat stress and improving air quality.

*Figure 3: Average distance to closest public open space*



Source: The Australian Urban Observatory (2022)

## Recommendations:

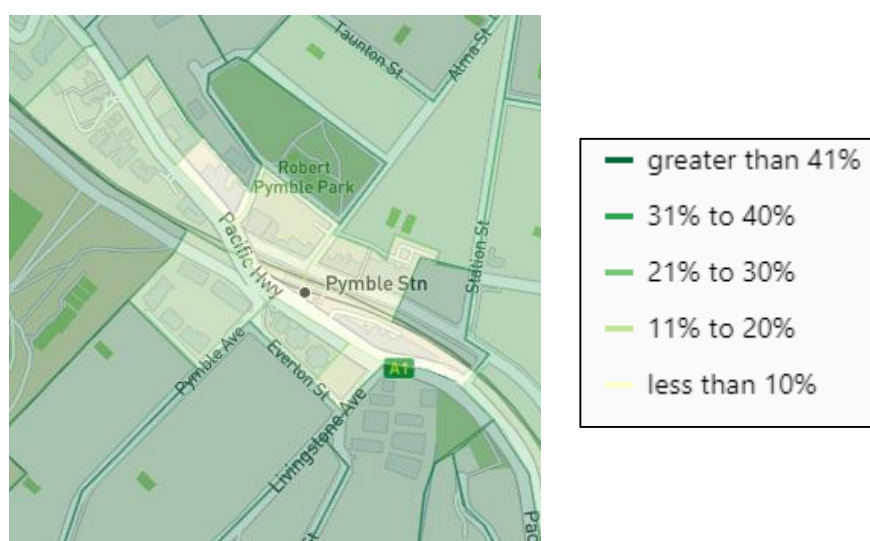
11. Incorporate green spaces dedicated to passive and active recreation throughout the southern and eastern parts of the local centre through the establishment of “pocket parks”.
12. Identify underutilised spaces to increase and enhance open space offerings e.g., collaborating with local schools for use of their ovals and playgrounds on weekends and school holidays.
13. Ensure public spaces and amenities such as toilets, drinking fountains and seating are accessible to users of different age groups and abilities through universal design e.g., older people, pram or mobility aid users.
14. Collaborate with the local community, particularly the Aboriginal community to integrate culture into the public space through public art.
15. Consider installing equipment that would encourage recreation and greater community interaction in public spaces e.g. outdoor table tennis tables, chess boards, lawn games etc.
16. Implement Tactical Urbanism/place-making strategies in partnership with NSLHD Population Health Promotion to activate public spaces.

## Resilient Open Spaces

Greener and more resilient public spaces are key features in DPIE's Public Space Charter<sup>7</sup>. Public spaces that are softer, greener and more connected to nature can cool towns and cities, providing relief and respite and reduce the impacts of extreme weather conditions. Public spaces can also provide a network of essential hubs that bring communities together and provide refuge and escape, while building our capacity to withstand shocks during times of crisis.

Whilst the overall tree canopy cover for the suburb of Pymble is relatively high, The NSW Movement and Place mapping tool indicates that the majority of the local centre falls well short of the Greater Sydney Commission's target of 40%. We encourage Council to continue to prioritise and improve the tree canopy in the Pymble public domain. An Australian study of 46,786 adults indicated that exposure to 30% or more tree canopy was associated with a lower incidence of psychological distress<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 4: Percentage of tree canopy



Source: NSW Movement and Place website (2022)

### Recommendations:

17. Consider how urban heat and extreme weather events, which have a negative impact particularly on our vulnerable communities, will be addressed through the choice of building materials and design e.g. pavement surfaces, green and blue infrastructure, renewable energy sources for lighting.
18. Prioritise street tree planting to improve amenity and provide shade, which reduces urban heat stress, helps prevent skin cancer from UV radiation and encourages walking.
19. Set a minimum target of 40% tree canopy coverage for the Pymble local centre.

### Smoke-Free Local Centres

Exposure to second-hand smoke from cigarettes or vapour from e-cigarettes can negatively impact on the amenity of public spaces. In addition to the obvious health benefits generated from a reduction in second-hand smoke exposure, the implementation of a smoke-free policy is expected to provide the following outcomes:

<sup>7</sup> NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website, NSW Public Spaces Charter. Available at: [https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/great-public-spaces/festival-of-place/public-spaces-charter#:~:text=The%20NSW%20Public%20Spaces%20Charter%20\(PDF%207.3MB\)%20has%20been,space%20experts%20and%20community%20members](https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/great-public-spaces/festival-of-place/public-spaces-charter#:~:text=The%20NSW%20Public%20Spaces%20Charter%20(PDF%207.3MB)%20has%20been,space%20experts%20and%20community%20members) (cited 16 November 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Astell-Burt, T. and Feng, X., 2019. Association of Urban Green Space with Mental Health and General Health Among Adults in Australia. JAMA Network Open, 2(7), p.e198209.

- A reduction in smoking litter
- Improved amenity, both within the open space and the surrounding residential buildings
- Increased patronage and time spent at retail businesses
- Greater compliance with the Smoke-Free Environment Act 2000, particularly in regards to the commercial outdoor dining areas.

**Recommendations:**

20. Incorporate a Smoke-Free Policy into the Pymble Public Domain Plan and other town centre plans throughout Ku-ring-gai local government area.
21. Ku-ring-gai Council commits to enforce the proposed Smoke-Free Policy under the Local Government Act 1993.
22. Strategically locate waste and recycling bins to discourage littering.

Thank you for considering our submission. Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact our Healthy Built Environments Program Manager, Jonathon Noyes on 02 8797 7311 or at [Jonathon.Noyes@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jonathon.Noyes@health.nsw.gov.au). We look forward to continuing our work with Ku-ring-gai Council to support projects that benefit the health, wellbeing and safety of the community.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Klarenaar  
Director Population and Planetary Health  
Northern Sydney Local Health District

## Walking Space Guide Summary

Footpath Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5
<b>Typical description:</b> Local footpath – Low activity	Local footpath – Medium activity	Main street footpath – Medium activity / Local footpath – High activity	Main street footpath – High activity	Main street footpath – Very high activity
<b>Short walk interaction:</b> Unlikely to pass someone	Likely to pass someone	Virtually certain to pass someone	Virtually certain to meet multiple groups of people	Busy
<b>Peak hour maximum use:</b> Very few people per hour	7 or more people per hour	70 or more people per hour	400 or more people per hour	More than 2,000 people per hour
<b>MINIMUM TARGET Walking Space: 2.0m</b>	<b>2.3m + 0.6m Passing Zone</b>	<b>3.2m (3.0m not adjacent to active shopfronts)</b>	<b>3.9m (3.7m)</b>	<b>less than or equal to 9.5 People Per Metre / Minute</b>
<b>Intervention Trigger (less than): 1.3m*</b>	1.6m + 0.6m Passing Zone	2.3m (2.2m)	2.9m (2.7m)	greater than 18.0 People Per Metre / Minute

### Kerbside Traffic Buffer

The required Walking Space excludes obstructions and the Kerbside Traffic Buffer which is measured from the face of the kerb.

Kerbside traffic speed limit (km/hr)	Kerbside Traffic Buffer (m)
0-15 or cycle lane or parking	0m
20	0.2m
25	0.45m
30	0.7m
35	0.95m
40	1.2m
45	1.4m
50	1.65m
55	1.9m
> 55	2.15m



Low activity local footpaths are appropriate where people walking are unlikely to pass people coming the other way.

These footpaths support 2 friends walking together and passing if they walk in single file.

Medium activity local footpaths are appropriate where people walking are more than likely to pass people coming the other way.

These footpaths support 2 people passing abreast or 2 friends walking together passing another person using the Passing Zone.

Medium activity main street footpaths are appropriate where people walking are virtually certain to pass people coming the other way.

These footpaths support 2 friends walking together and passing another person without having to walk in single file.

High activity main street footpaths are appropriate where people walking are virtually certain to meet multiple groups of people coming the other way.

These footpaths support 2 friends coming the other way without either group having to walk in single file.

Very high activity main street footpaths are appropriate where it is very busy most of the time.

These footpaths provide enough space for large numbers of people to walk comfortably.

\* for equal access:

< 1.8m, insufficient space for two wheelchairs to pass

< 1.5m, insufficient space for a wheelchair to turn, if the length exceeds 6m. Action must be taken

< 1.2m, insufficient space for a wheelchair to navigate safely. Action must be taken.