

Mr Ken Gouldthorp
 General Manager
 North Sydney Council
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 25/02/2022



Dear Mr Gouldthorp

Re: North Sydney Walking Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Council’s North Sydney Walking Strategy.

Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) Health Promotion is committed to ensuring the built environment fosters places and spaces that support the health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider community. NSLHD Health Promotion commends Council on developing the Walking Strategy alongside Council’s commitment to improving pedestrian access, and promoting and facilitating the many benefits of walking as the preferred mode of transport.

Walking has many health, social, environmental and economic benefits. It increases opportunity for social interaction, reducing symptoms of stress and depression, and helps lower the risk of preventable diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer and overweight and obesity.¹ The health-related benefits of walking are costed at \$1.04 to \$2.08 for each kilometre walked.² Environmentally, at least 10% of carbon emissions from car travel can be saved by walking.³

Built environment factors can influence walking participation. For example, separated and well-connected walkways, the presence of shade, seating and lighting, and co-location of key services and destinations along walking routes help facilitate walking and can increase the distances people are willing to walk to a destination.⁴

NSLHD Health Promotion would like to offer the following recommendations for improving the Walking Strategy and its impact on the local community.

Recommendations

Existing text	Suggested amendments	Evidence
<p>3.1. <i>Walking Objectives</i> 3.1.3. <i>SOCIAL WELL-BEING</i> <i>More human interactions take place on North Sydney streets, contributing to a sense of</i></p>	<p>3.1. Walking Objectives 3.1.3. SOCIAL WELL-BEING More human interactions take place on North Sydney streets and people feel safe walking in their community, contributing to improvements in</p>	<p>Active transport choices, such as walking, cycling and using public transport for daily travel, can help people meet</p>

¹ Australian Government Department of Health. (2014). Australia’s Physical activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for adults and older Australians. Retrieved from <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines>.

² Diomedi B. Z., Brown V., & Veerman L. (2015). An evidence review and modelling exercise: The effects of urban form on health: costs and benefits. Sydney, NSW: An evidence review commissioned by the NSW Ministry of Health, and brokered by the Sax Institute for The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre

³ Neves A, Brand C. (2019). Assessing the potential for carbon emissions savings from replacing short car trips with walking and cycling using a mixed GPS-travel diary approach. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice. Volume 123, 2019, Pages 130-146, ISSN 0965-8564. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856417316117>

⁴ Lee C, Ory M, Yoon J, & Forjuoh S. (2012). Neighbourhood Walking Among Overweight and Obese Adults: Age Variations in Barriers and Motivators. Journal of Community Health,38: 12-22.

<p><i>social cohesion and community.</i></p> <p>3.1.4. ACTIVE HEALTH</p> <p><i>Walking is enjoyable, encouraging physical activity as part of daily routines, resulting in better health outcomes for individuals and the community. (Page 11)</i></p>	<p>mental health and a sense of social cohesion and community.¹</p> <p>3.1.3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</p> <p>Walking is promoted and encouraged as a healthy and enjoyable form of active transport to work and school, and as a daily recreational activity. Residents are encouraged to aim for at least 30-60 minutes of walking each day, which can help reduce their risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and overweight and obesity.^{1,5}</p>	<p>physical activity requirements.⁶</p> <p>In NSW, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of children and adolescents who are driven to school by car from 36 per cent in 2010 to 43 per cent in 2015.⁷</p>
<p>4.1.2. New North Sydney Policy Initiatives</p> <p><i>The North Sydney Land Use Diversity Plan:</i></p> <p><i>... To address this issue, the North Sydney Land Use Diversity Plan will investigate opportunities to support the delivery of more diverse land uses, shops and services in North Sydney's smaller neighbourhood centres. (Page 14)</i></p>	<p>4.1.2. New North Sydney Policy Initiatives</p> <p>The North Sydney Land Use Diversity Plan:</p> <p>... To address this issue, the North Sydney Land Use Diversity Plan will investigate opportunities to support the delivery of more diverse land uses, shops and services in North Sydney's smaller neighbourhood centres and the co-location of key destinations along walking and cycling routes.</p>	<p>Co-location of key services and destinations along walking routes help facilitate walking and can increase the distances people are willing to walk to a destination.⁸</p>
<p>4.2. The North Sydney Walking Action Plan</p> <p><i>Action Plan analysis is based on the following key metrics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>potential overlap with strategic walking links (North Sydney's Strategic Walking Network); (Page 15)</i> 	<p>4.2. The North Sydney Walking Action Plan</p> <p>Action Plan analysis is based on the following key metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> potential overlap with strategic walking links within North Sydney and neighbouring councils (North Sydney's Strategic Walking Network and neighbouring councils' walking networks); 	
	<p>NSLHD Health Promotion recommends Council include a communications plan, or similar, as a part of the North Sydney Walking Strategy to promote walking to residents and help achieve the Walking Targets (3.2.). For example:</p> <p>4.4. The North Sydney Walking Communications Plan</p> <p>Communication objectives:</p>	

⁵ National Heart Foundation of Australia. (2019). Blueprint for an active Australia. Retrieved from <https://irp.cdn-website.com/541aa469/files/uploaded/Blueprint-For-An-Active-Australia.pdf>

⁶ NSW Ministry of Health. (2020). Healthy Built Environment Checklist. A guide for considering health in development policies, plans and proposals. Retrieved <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/urbanhealth/Publications/healthy-built-enviro-check.pdf>

⁷ Hardy, L.L. et al (2016). NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS) 2015: Full Report. Sydney, NSW: NSW Department of Health

⁸ Lee C, Ory M, Yoon J, & Forjuoh S. (2012). Neighbourhood Walking Among Overweight and Obese Adults: Age Variations in Barriers and Motivators. *Journal of Community Health*,38: 12-22.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the health, social, environmental, and economic benefits of walking to encourage residents and local workers to walk. • Develop maps and other resources to promote walking networks and routes to residents and businesses. • Facilitate a North Sydney Walking Day to 'open' new walking routes and familiarise residents and businesses with new walking infrastructure. • Promote local walking groups which encourage people to be active and socially connected. • Encourage feedback by asking residents to complete a Community Walkability Checklist: https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/resources/community-walkability-checklist 	
	<p>Alongside Walking Targets (3.2.), NSLHD Health Promotion recommends Council include a plan for how the North Sydney Walking Strategy, including the Action Plan and suggested Communications Plan, will be monitored and evaluated over time and its impact on walking (process and impact evaluation).</p>	

NSLHD Health Promotion would like to acknowledge Council for investing in the health and wellbeing of its residents through its Walking Strategy and looks forward to providing any guidance as required to support its delivery. For any questions regarding this submission, please contact Nicola.Groskops@health.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Groskops

Healthy Built Environments

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