

General Manager
Ray Brownlee
Northern Beaches Council

1 April 2020

Dear Mr Brownlee,

Re: Northern Beaches Bike Plan (Draft)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Northern Beaches Bike Plan.

Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) 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 wider community. In this context, we commend Northern Beaches Council's commitment to increase cycling for transport and as an alternative option to using a car. These strategies are supported by evidence-based guidelines as important contributors to the health of the population¹.

We further support Council's approach to link the Bicycle Plan to the broader 'Move – Northern Beaches Transport Strategy 2038' and Council's aspirations to double the amount of 'active travel' trips like cycling and walking and reduce car trips by 30%.

Below are some detailed recommendations on the Plan's directions. However, some general recommendations relating to the overall plan include:

- Consider changing the title to 'Northern Beaches Cycling Plan'. This aligns with the title of other metropolitan Sydney Council plans where the focus is on 'cycling' rather than 'bikes'.
- Consider adding some case studies and infographics to the Plan which add meaning, perspective and clear messages.

Direction 1: Expand, improve and maintain the safe cycling network

NSLHD Health Promotion commends Council's intent to provide a 'safe and connected cycling environment'. As detailed in the City of Sydney Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018, riding numbers have increased where they have built separated cycle ways. For example, there are now five times as many bike trips on Bourke Street than before the cycle way was built, with around 1,700 bike trips each weekday. Some of those trips are by children, riding to Bourke Street and Crown Street public schools.

NSLHD Health Promotion recommends that the Northern Beaches Council:

- Build the local and regional routes as separated cycle ways where feasible.
- To increase cycling numbers at any time of day particularly at night, we suggest that Council introduces energy-saving lighting triggered by movement along popular bike paths.
- Investigates opportunities to more children's learning opportunities and learn-to-ride tracks

¹ Kent, J., Thompson, S.M., and Jalaludin, B., Healthy Built Environments: A review of the literature, Sydney: Healthy Built Environments Program, City Futures Research Centre, UNSW

Direction 2: Improve and maintain the road cycling network

As part of its commitment to improving the road cycling network, we support Council's commitment to implement 'best practice design methodology' in mixed land use areas such as Brookvale and Frenchs Forest. These areas now attract a larger workforce as a result of new health infrastructure including the Northern Beaches Hospital. Living and/or working in a location that incorporates mixed land use, has highly connected and well maintained streets/pathways and bike paths and provides access to good quality and safe open space is associated with higher levels of physical activity^{1,2}.

NSLHD Health Promotion recommends that the Northern Beaches Council:

- Partner with businesses and local organisations in areas of mixed land use including NSLHD Health Promotion to encourage healthier and more focused workplaces.
- Develop a 'car dooring campaign' which targets drivers in mixed land use areas such as Brookvale.

Direction 3: Provide and maintain end-of-trip facilities

As highlighted in the Draft Northern Beaches Bike Plan, end-of-trip facilities are a key consideration for people who choose to cycle vs drive.

NSLHD Health Promotion recommends that additional actions are considered for Direction 3 including the following:

- Support children and school communities to ride to school
- Plan for cycling as a travel mode when coordinating Council events

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Northern Beaches Bike Plan. Should you have any queries about this submission please contact Melissa Palermo on 9388 5295. We look forward to continuing our work with the Northern Beaches Council to support projects that benefit the health, wellbeing and safety of the community.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Klarenaar
Director, Health Promotion
Northern Sydney Local Health District

² NSW Department of Health, Healthy Urban Development Checklist. 2009