

Strategic Transport Planner and Road Safety Officer
Willoughby City Council
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Chatswood NSW 2057
council@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

29th November 2022

Dear Mr Gillies and Mr Penfold,

Willoughby Road Safety Plan – Community Consultation Stage 1 Northern Sydney Local Health District Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to comment toward the development of the Willoughby Road Safety 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. In this submission, we provide recommendations to maximise the potential health benefits of the Willoughby Road Safety Plan.

Road User Hierarchy

The Australian Government’s Urban Design Protocol¹ provides a framework that sets out the principles for better contemporary urban places and emphasises the following road user hierarchy for planning and urban design:

- Priority 1: Pedestrians
- Priority 2: Cyclists
- Priority 3: Public Transport
- Priority 4: Service Vehicles
- Priority 5: Private Motor Vehicles

Committing to this hierarchy by including it within the Willoughby Road Safety Plan will clearly communicate Council’s priorities and ensure they are incorporated into future road safety and planning decisions.

Vulnerable Road Users

Pedestrians, cyclists, riders of motorised 2- and 3-wheelers and their passengers are collectively known as “vulnerable road users” and account for half of all road traffic deaths around the world.² Footpaths, cycling lanes, safe pedestrian crossing points and traffic calming measures are critical to reducing the risk of injury among road users.

Bicycle riding has increased in popularity, especially among recreational and commuter riders, as well as food delivery riders across metro areas. Cyclists have less exterior protection and are at a significantly greater risk of death or serious injury if involved in a crash.³

¹ Australian Government, Creating Places for People – An Urban Design Protocol for Australian Cities (2015) *Design for People – Walkable*. Available at: <https://www.urbandesign.org.au/protocol-framework/principles/walkable/> (Accessed 25 Nov 2022).

² World Health Organization (2018) *Ten Facts about road safety*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/road-safety> (Accessed 25 Nov 2022).

³ Centre for Road Safety (2022) *Bicycle riders*. Available at: <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/bicycle-riders/index.html> (Accessed 28 Nov 2022).

Transport for NSW research⁸ 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 Fund⁹

Recommendations:

3. Create a supportive environment to facilitate safe active travel e.g., streets closed to cars, one-way traffic, designated cycle lanes, widened footpaths, reduced speed, safe crossings.
4. Work with local schools to identify their needs to support and encourage active travel to school e.g., school crossing supervisors, improvements to infrastructure surrounding schools.
5. Develop active travel maps with identified active travel routes (Transport Access Guides).
6. Provide adequate bicycle parking facilities and end of trip facilities.
7. Provide sufficient way-finding signage which includes distances in metres to key destinations to guide pedestrians and cyclists.

⁸ Transport for NSW (2021) Cycling Transport for NSW Cycling Customer Value Proposition (CVP) Research.

⁹ 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.

Other Recommendations:

8. 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.
9. Use the Healthy Streets assessment tools¹⁰ to measure how healthy the streets are and improve the scores.
10. Implement best practice design using the [NSW Movement and Place Framework](#)¹¹.
11. Evaluate the performance of the Willoughby Road Safety Plan against its stated objectives using the NSW Movement and Place built environment performance indicators.

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. We look forward to continuing our work with Willoughby 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

¹⁰ Healthy Streets (2022) *Healthy Streets*. Available at: <https://www.healthystreets.com/> (Accessed 28 Nov 2022).

¹¹ Transport for NSW (2022) *Movement and Place Framework*. Available at: <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/industry/nsw-movement-and-place-framework> (Accessed 16 Nov 2022).