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1. Introduction

This submission¹ presents the case for a safe-street neighbourhoods goal being included in Council's FuturesPlan20². This strongly supports strategies, policies and funding for cycling and walking and specific measures that provide for active transport. Our bicycling community wants the local streets to be made safer, friendlier and more attractive for all: families, their children and neighbours.

The submission is made on behalf of Canada Bay Bicycle User Group Inc. ("BayBUG") on behalf of the local community interested in bicycle riding. BayBUG has been helping cyclists and working to promote the use of the bicycle for transport and recreation as a means to improve quality of life and protect the environment since 2001. BayBUG has 153 members and is affiliated with NSW's peak cycling advocacy group, Bicycle NSW Inc.

The focus is for changing neighbourhood streets³ in ways that slows traffic and complements cycling networks under bike plans. It is an urban design-based approach to foster redesign of streets, help tame the behaviour of motorists and riders and make local streets safe for everyone to use and enjoy and will also be good for local businesses and service providers. It is not about routes or the implementation of the Bike plan 2015.

2. Aim & objectives

Make neighbourhood streets safe for all to use and enjoy.

Design or re-design local neighbourhood streets to:

- make all vulnerable users safe by introducing 30km/h speed zoning⁴
- primarily serve residential needs while maintaining essential vehicular access

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- further improve amenity through adaptations that serve people's use and enjoyment
 - make 'Every street a cycle street', for walking and for a connected neighbourhood

3. The case for safe-street neighbourhoods

3.1 Safety considerations

Safety considerations are the main deterrent to cycling. Many people and most non-regular cyclists, perceive our streets and bike facilities as too dangerous or risky to use⁵. This may be readily addressed for neighbourhood streets by lowering speed limits and using traffic-calming measures to gain compliance, with street-space re-assigned and re-landscaped over the longer-term.

Active Transport Social Research (Tavener). Survey for City of Sydney – key findings. (Quotes from *Themes Emerging from Research*, page 9, emphasis added):

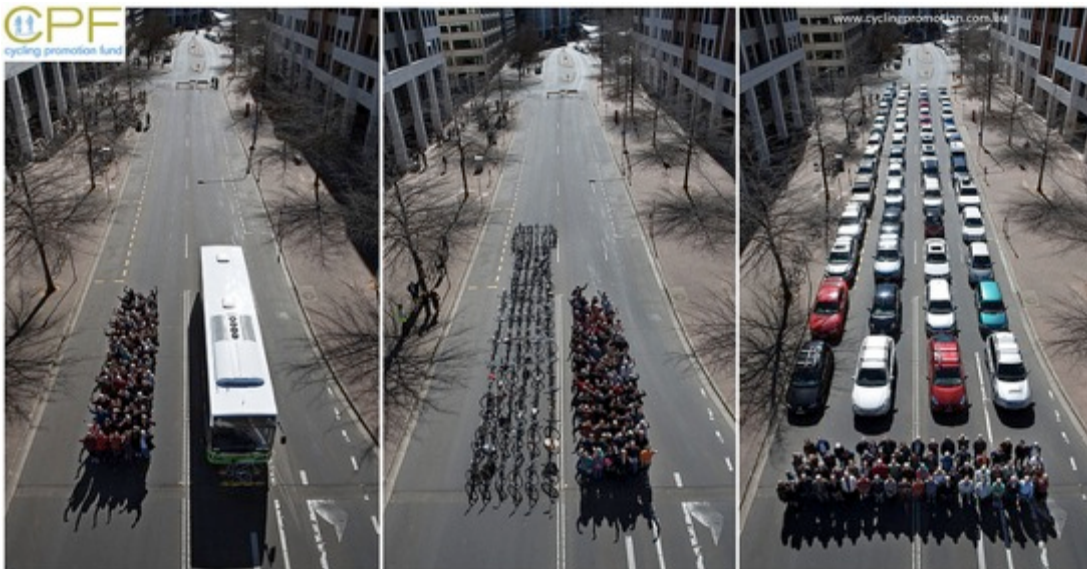
- **“Safety considerations are the main deterrents to cycling** with separate cycleway and dedicated lanes being the measures that would encourage the most non-regular cyclists to cycle.
- Over half of over 50 year olds were non-cyclists including 71% of females over 50 years old. Additionally only 24% of non-regular cyclists in that age group were interested in cycling more ... The same safety measures that would encourage under 50 year olds to cycle more would also encourage over 50 years olds. “

Both experience and surveys, here and overseas, show that when attractive low-speed neighbourhood streets are coupled with measures such as separated cycleways and shared paths along roads with more traffic, non-regular cyclists will be encouraged to ride more. Wider and better footpaths, walking and rider facilities and pedestrianised streets giving pedestrians top priority, are measures that would encourage more walking and bike riding and would lead to other uses being made of our neighbourhood streets.

Many programs have been introduced that demonstrate success justifying changes to neighbourhood streets to gain safety and high amenity.

Local surveys show that prevailing safety concerns and attitudes that cause people to drive rather than ride means that current targets set in New South Wales for ride-to-work (commuting) will not be achievable. That is unless people who can and sometimes ride are led to feel comfortable and safe enough to leave their home on a bike and reach cycleways that get them to where they want to go. That is, taking up riding a bike regularly.

Parents also need to gain confidence that it is safe to allow their children to ride to school and sports, and avoid driving them, which currently adds significantly to traffic congestion at morning peak times.



On Sunday 9th September 2012, 69 volunteers, 69 bicycles, 60 cars and one bus gathered in Canberra to recreate a world-renowned photograph.

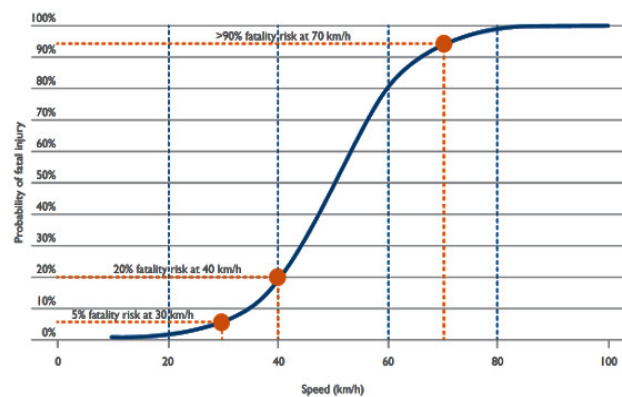
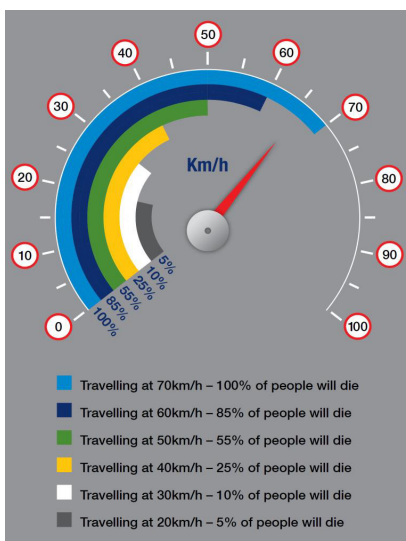
Traffic congestion also prevails due to active travel options being underutilised and underfunded. Additionally, road pricing (congestion charging) would help as an incentive for people to consider active travel, if coupled with a reduction of motoring danger to cyclists.

3.2 Reduce motoring danger

Motoring danger needs to be reduced to protect vulnerable users of our streets – pedestrians and cyclists. How? Slow the traffic and redesign streets in ways to ensure reasonable compliance with the speed limit and minimise through traffic.

Most neighbourhood streets pose a range of harmful risks. This is not just a perception, but is the case under 50km/h speed zoning and even at 40km/h traffic speeds.

Infrequent riders find it too risky to reach safe shared paths or cycleways. In many cases such paths or cycleways are disconnected at major intersections, as well.



Source: Austroads 2012, *On road Cycling on Higher Speed Roads*.

On road Cycling on Higher Speed Roads⁶ for risk of fatalities for a range of speeds.

Currently, to avoid risks of harm, many riders drive to parks or near to where they want to ride, carrying their bikes. This requires more time commitment and deters many that may otherwise ride more often.

Statistics show that for 40km/h the risk of fatalities is still about 20- 25% for accidents between a motor vehicle and a pedestrian or cyclist, while for 30km/h it is well below 5- 10%. It is now less than 2% in Denmark, Holland and Switzerland, where 30km/h speed limits apply in residential neighbourhoods and through village centres as well, after introduction over the past 40 years.

When governments introduced 50km/h and 40km/h speed limits there was significant opposition to these lower speeds, but now these limits are now widely accepted. It has saved lives and pain, as fatality and injury statistics over the last two decades show.

Inquiry into Aspects of Road Safety in Australia

(Quotes, 27/02/2015 letter to the Inquiry, page 5) ⁷:

“When such limits were introduced in 1992 across the entire city of Graz, Austria, the majority of residents were not in support of them: “When the discussion around speed reduction started in 1992, the approval for lower speeds was around 44%, but by 1995 this had nearly doubled to 82%”. In Graz, public support rapidly grew to a level where even the majority of motorists were supportive of the lower speed limits – 2/3 of car drivers were supportive of the lower speed limits in 1994, compared with 1/3 in 1992 when the limits were introduced. In terms of road safety, Graz project resulted in a 12% reduction of accidents with injury, 24% reduction in serious injury, 17% reduction in pedestrian injury and a 14% reduction in injury to car users. Despite only a 4% reduction in cyclist injuries, 83% of cyclists strongly supported the reduced speed limit. General acceptance soon became so high that in July 1994, the scheme was made permanent.”

In Europe and the USA, 30km/h or 20mph (32km/h) respectively, are now the standards. A 30km/h standard should be adopted here; the road safety benefits and other benefits, are significant.

3.3 Perceptions matter

Driving everywhere is an established attitude that locks-in behaviour posing an additional hurdle to residents' choice of transport. This is despite the health and other benefits of walking and riding that are increasingly recognised by the public.

What drives us to drive, walk or cycle to work in Albury, ⁸

(Quote from **Neighbourhood/Suburb/Cities** page 6):

“Some of the neighbourhood, suburb, and city related factors that support AT [Active transport] to work include short distances from home to work, off-road and well maintained paths, adequate and safe traffic crossings, lower traffic volumes and traffic calming devices and ‘pleasant’ routes. Aesthetically pleasing neighbourhoods and streets, mountable curbs, roads with fewer lanes of traffic and subsequent smaller street widths and presence and proximity of bus stops and railway stations to homes also enable AT.”

3.4 Local streets need to appear, feel and be safe and comfortable to use and enjoy by everyone.

This makes for a cycle-friendly neighbourhood.

There are a number of good examples of street design with appropriate traffic management incorporating landscaping. Safe-street neighbourhoods with slow traffic are proven to work and improve amenity.



Majors Bay Rd, Concord: landscaped kerb extensions, effective roundabout and 40km/h zoning



Noble St, Concord: Pedestrian priority through crossing and tree and kerb blister to narrow Rd



Bourke Street, Surry Hills: Separated cycleway along a neighbourhood street



Archer St, Concord: Pedestrian priority through crossing and post and kerb blister to narrow Rd and indicate a residential area.

3.5 Travel time, benefits and costs

Motorists' door to door travel-times increase by only seconds, not even minutes, for the average car trip to work, school, shops, parks etc., if 30km/h speed zones are introduced. Travel time increases likely average only 9 seconds for each kilometer travelled.

And that “cost” buys many benefits. These are mainly due to the reduction of fatalities and injuries, see para. 3.2 “Reduce motoring danger”. Fewer fatalities and injuries means a very high potential monetary saving for the community, as well as avoiding suffering and personal losses.

However, there are many other benefits not normally calculated when roads based measures are introduced.

*‘The Value of Cycling’*⁹ (Quote from Headline Findings, page 3):

“Personal benefits -

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- *Neighbourhoods with cycle-friendly characteristics – low traffic volumes, walkable, close to off-road cycle paths – are more desirable or have higher property values*
 - *Residential property values rise 1% if motor traffic is reduced by 50%*
 - *Children who walk or cycle to school tend to be more attentive and achieve better results*
 - *Cycle friendly environments promote more physical activity in later years”*

Once 30km/h speed limits are implemented in residential areas people will not really notice any loss of time.

Inquiry into Aspects of Road Safety in Australia' (Quotes, 27/02/2015 letter to the Inquiry, page 8) **The Speed Paradox**

“Reducing speed limits 30 km/h in residential streets will not lead to a loss of time. Indeed, it may even lead to a reduction in time pressure. Garrard explains: “Evidence from studies in several countries indicates that the main (publicly articulated) reasons for opposing reduced speed limits in urban areas; namely, increased travel time and costs, are substantially overstated. Small travel time benefits associated with higher speed limits (an average of 9 seconds/km in one study) come at substantial cost in terms of the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities”. In Bristol, signs-only 20 mph pilots resulted in increased walking and cycling, reduced road speeds, and no impact on journey times or bus reliability.”

A key consideration in establishing safe and comfortable 30km/h neighbourhoods is to select a network of higher speed roads that is no further than 500m, or so, from most residents.

3.6 Social & environmental benefits

Some of the key such benefits are qualitative and diverse:

a) Social interaction

'Ibid' (page 7) *“People living in areas with low volumes of motorised traffic experience much higher levels of interaction and friendliness with their neighbours. Children have more local playmates when traffic speeds and volumes are lower. A lack of social connection is now being recognised as a key determinant of poor health (both mental and physical).”*

b) Fuel savings

'Ibid' *“30 km/h zones lead to less fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions, and reduced air and noise pollution.”*

“German 30km/h zones led to car drivers changing gear 12% less often, braking 14% less often and using 12% less fuel”.

c) Noise and exhaust fumes

'Ibid' *“Compared to 50 km/h, 30 km/h reduces traffic noise by 3 decibels. This supports greater social connection as people can converse more easily, as well as sleep more easily.”*

Traffic adversely impacts neighbourhood street environments, as well.

d) **Underutilised street space:**

Excessive spatial requirements for cars on our neighbourhood streets displaces other forms of access or economic and recreational activities. They also take away room for landscaping and making space for places people could otherwise use.



Phillip Street, Strathfield: landscaped road narrowing slows traffic. But could have been done to allow residents to use the space taken from the road.



Marceau Drive, Concord: Closed street with garden and cyclist priority to Lyons Rd West

e) **Car-sharing and automated vehicles:**

In urban areas, car-sharing is now an increasingly available service. The evidence is that this form of car use is increasing and that commercially provided car-share vehicles save up to 7 parking spaces for every car-pod set aside within a neighbourhood street. It enables people to gain access to cars that are close, but saves households from having to own a second or third car. While not saving much street space, it may lead people to consider alternatives to the car for short trips, once convinced that walking and cycling are safe and convenient.

Another prospect is that fully driverless cars will eventually come onto the market. It is best to make neighbourhoods safe by introducing 30 km/h speed limits well beforehand so that GPS and other electronic controls for operation of these vehicles are put in place. The public would be very concerned about allowing these vehicles if speeds are not kept very low in their neighbourhood.

The environmental and other factors mentioned add to the case for lower speeds, for diverting traffic with no business in the street, and thus lead to street re-designs that encourage active transport and making for better use of the road reserve¹⁰.

4. The way forward

The case presented is to aid convincing the community and you, our Councillors, of the benefits of introducing 30km/h speed limits along neighbourhood streets. It helps gain understanding that:

- the only way to entice more people to choose to ride a bike is to minimise, if not eliminate, the incident of crashes between motorists and riders; and
- people want assurance that they can comfortably ride from their door to their destination within the neighbourhood or reach a cycling network that gets them safely to their destination, beyond.

4.1 Introduce 30km/h speed zoning

The first step is to introduce 30km/h speed zoning for neighbourhood streets and street designs that slow motor traffic while still permitting vehicular movements (e.g. service vehicles) that are appropriate in a residential setting. The second step is to apply urban design, landscaping and traffic management best-practice that has a focus on high residential amenity with safety being a fundamental aspect of amenity.

40km/h zones were introduced in some Inner Sydney areas. These will need to be reviewed. For instance, in Paddington, prior to the opening of the Cross City Tunnel, 40km/h speed zoning was introduced¹¹. However, due to poor compliance with the new speed limit (well below the 85% compliance target) various other measures needed to be taken additional to roundabouts and street closures, including narrowing of traffic lanes, adding angle-parking, blisters, landscaping, thresholds and even some footpath widening.

To gain compliance with 30km/h speed in parts of Paddington, trafficable lane widths may need to be reduced from 3.8m to 3.3m. For example this may require the extension of existing blisters by 0.5metres (see below). In many situations, no further work is necessary to gain compliance.



Elizabeth Street, Paddington, between Oxford and Caledonia Streets

Other measures, including cheap interim ones, can be undertaken to implement 30km/h speed zoning. For example, paint can be applied and supported by temporary features, such as portable planter-boxes until comprehensive redesign and permanent traffic management measures and appropriate landscaping can be undertaken.

Or, where high pedestrian traffic demands justifies, for instance at local shops, 10km/h Pedestrian Priority zone, with high safety benefits, can also be introduced within neighbourhoods (although the current warrants set by the RMS may also have to be reviewed to permit this to happen). Or wide “foot” paths can be utilised as shared space for cyclists and pedestrians. See illustrations, below



Central Park Ave Chippendale: Combined cyclist pedestrian priority and shared footpath



Queen Elizabeth Drive, Bondi Beach in front of the Bondi Pavilion (Pedestrian Priority area)

4.2 Auditing and mapping neighbourhood streets

An audit and mapping of the local streets suitable for inclusion as low-speed neighbourhood streets must be undertaken. These documents must also identify streets in the local bike plan, and routes on high traffic streets, where separated paths or cycleways are in place or proposed. Such facilities may be part of a regional network and need not preclude the introduction of 30km/h zones. But this low speed may provide an alternative to having to provide costly separated bicycling facilities along such neighbourhood streets. A key element is to establish a “road hierarchy” where most residents live within 500m from a higher speed road.

4.3 Regulatory framework and opportunities

A range of Australian, NSW and Local Government policy frameworks and other guides are applicable.

One overarching platform justifying the safe-streets neighbourhood initiative is the *National Charter on Land Use and Transport* (adopted by Australian and State Ministers of Transport and Ministers of Planning in 2003), which states in section 6 (interalia) that local areas should:

- be created as precincts where provision for vehicle traffic is subservient to the needs for quality and amenity;
- provide route continuity through local streets for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and promote urban design and street layouts that encourage the use of these modes; and
- preserve, enhance and encourage local scale and accessible development and develop local functional road/environment categories and networks which reflect the relationship between different transport functions.

While a dated governmental commitment, this Charter nevertheless makes very clear the obligations of governments at all levels to consider traffic and transport relative to residential neighbourhoods.

Additional opportunities for change present themselves when a new strategic plan needs to be prepared, or local land use plans are updated by the local council.

The Local Area Traffic Management Plans applied over the past decade have provided for some considerable road safety and amenity improvements. However, their focus has generally been too narrowly

based and mostly retained 50km/h speed limits. If LATMs are fully integrated under an urban design based approach, with longer-term street re-design, landscaping and 30km/h speed controls introduced, the aims and objectives of safe-street neighbourhoods can be achieved.

The above approach is also relevant to future updates of State and Regional level plans and the new plans being created by the Greater Sydney Commission for its Central District.

5. Conclusion & Recommendation

This submission provides the aims, objectives and the case for the making of safe-street neighbourhoods.

The submission is the basis for convincing you, our politicians and communities, to agree to take immediate steps to lower speeds in our neighbourhood streets to 30km/h. It serves to help alter prevailing perceptions, or miss-perceptions, about the effects of driving, the hazards of the current 50km/h and 40km/h standards. It has a responsibility to address the public's concerns about safety on our local streets recognising that motor traffic and speed are the main factors limiting the take up of riding of a bicycles as an active form of transport for all capable and willing.

The recommendations to the Council are to:

- a) Include in its next or updated **Community Strategy Plans (currently the FuturesPlan20)** – clear aims, objectives and policies for implementing the Safe-street Neighbourhoods approach
- b) Include in its next or updated **Delivery Programs and Operational Plans** – provisions and specific actions and funding for the planning, development and implementation of Safe-street Neighbourhoods, including for the introduction of 30km/h speed zones and 10km/h Pedestrian Priority zones
- c) Provide a response to the proposal and recommendations well prior to the exhibition of the above strategies and plans, please.

Geoff Ashton

For Canada Bay bicycle user Group Inc.

¹ BayBUG gratefully acknowledges the authorship of most of this submission by Adrian Boss, BIKEast's representative on the Bicycle NSW Inc. Bicycle User Group Council. Adrian has been involved professionally in urban and rural planning, design and residential amenity, for over 55 years. He has been advocating and promoting active travel choices for people and using the bike to get around, almost all of his life. He prepared the base form of this case for safe street neighborhoods for Bicycle NSW, and wishes us to also acknowledge Dick Van Den Dool and Sara Stace for their advice and inputs.

² For example, The FuturePlan20's "Thriving and Connected" Theme's third goal "I can get where I need to go safely without too much delay" is ripe for including safe-street neighbourhoods ideas. Current actions are focused on roads, car parking, footpaths and commercial centre beautification, with very few of the actions directed to enhancing the amenity of cyclists and pedestrians while using the neighbourhood street.

³ A simple definition of a neighbourhood street is a road that presently provides vehicle access primarily to serve residential properties. Under the NSW Bicycle Guidelines these are defined as Local roads and Mixed traffic streets (but not all such streets). Inclusion should be limited to streets where the volume of motor vehicles is less than 5,000 vehicles per day. This task should be left to the Council's professional staff to determine, after consultation with BayBUG.

⁴ Not easy to do but let's try. Under Roads Act 1993, the RMS, NSW Road Management Arrangements 2008, provides three categories of roads: State, Regional and Local. For local roads, a council may initiate changes to the default 50kph speed zoning. This is by proposing lower speed limits (i.e. 30km/h) and pedestrian priority areas (i.e. 10km/h), subject to adequate justification, street re-designs, the Traffic Committee(s) endorsements and final RMS approvals. This is an extremely bureaucratic exercise. RMS has guidelines and warrants that define and limit a council's scope for change. Local roads must ensure compliance with the rules and designed to minimise the policing of, for example, speed limits.

⁵ Taverner Research, Research Report: Active Transport Social Research. City of Sydney, April 2015, (Project Ref: 4940).

⁶ Austroads, On road Cycling on Higher Speed Roads, 2012.

⁷ Dick van den Dool, INQUIRY INTO ASPECTS OF ROAD SAFETY IN AUSTRALIA, GTA Consulting, Feb 2015.

⁸ Brendan Pearson, Health Promotion Coordinator What drives us to drive, walk or cycle to work in Albury, Murrumbidgee Local Health District.

⁹ Fiona Rajé and Andrew Saffrey 'The Value of Cycling', Phil Johns Associates, DfT, University of Birmingham.

¹⁰ Road reserve – means the street-space between property boundaries that contains, footpaths, road-side landscaping (if any and the road-way (including any road-related areas).

¹¹ The Paddington Society, An Integrated Plan for the Public Domain and Transport in PADDINGTON, July 2004.