



To the General Manager

Attach: Nil

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**SUBJECT:** (4.3) St Peters Park Path – 3-month Review

**AUTHOR:** Report of Sustainable Transport Projects Coordinator, Lindsay Menday

**DESCRIPTION/SUBJECT MATTER:**

In late 2019 and early 2020 amendments were made to the path network through St Peter's Park, North Sydney. This included minor revisions and repairs to the existing concrete paths, improvements to landscaping, and new signage requiring people to dismount when travelling through the park with their bike.

Council resolved to install the 'dismount' signage at their meeting of 6 April 2020 (rescheduled from 23 March 2020). At the meeting, Council also resolved to provide a further report on the matter to Traffic Committee after the signage had been installed (this report).

The signs were installed in April 2020.

Following the changes, Council received six (6) submissions seeking that the paths be reopened for cycling as well as feedback that people were not complying with the 'dismount' signage.

Camera data collected on the path found that around 20-25% of riders dismount when passing through the park while the remainder continue to ride, and that during the busiest period there is approximately one person cycling in the park every two minutes. The data collected – on one Saturday and one Tuesday – did not document any incidents of conflict or near misses.

Since the changes were made in the park, the NSW State Government has announced (on 24 August 2020) that they will install pop-up cycle paths on the Pacific Highway. These paths are considered likely to reduce cycle trips through St Peters Park, particularly by long distance commuter riders. In this context, use of the St Peters Park paths may drop significantly in the coming months.

Given that the crash and count data did not indicate an immediate level of risk in the area, and that the situation may change significantly if pop-up bike lanes are installed on the Pacific Highway, this report recommends that Council staff continue to monitor how the situation develops before recommending any additional changes in the park.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**1. THAT** staff monitor the use of the St Peter's Park path following the installation of pop-up cycle lanes on the Pacific Highway, and report back to the Traffic Committee should any further concerns be raised by the community.

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## DETAIL

**Standard or Guideline Used:** NA.

**Signs & Lines Priority:** NA

**Precinct and Ward:** Hayes, Victoria.

**Impact on Bicycles:** No changes are proposed in this report.

**Impact on Pedestrians:** No changes are proposed in this report.

**Impact on Parking:** nil.

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In the latter part of 2019 and into early 2020 minor amendments were made to the concrete path connecting Blues Point Road to Mackenzie Street along the eastern side of St Peters Park, North Sydney. The amendments included:

- Widening and realignment of kerb ramps
- Repair of sections of concrete and removal of trip hazards
- New sandstone edge to the existing garden beds
- New signage requiring people cycling to dismount when using the path

In the lead up to the works being undertaken, Council received feedback from the community raising concern about pedestrian safety on the path due to use by people riding, particularly for elderly people living in buildings adjacent to the park. Council was informed that some elderly people felt unable to use the path, and that this significantly limited their sense of personal mobility and independence.

In response Council, at their meeting of 6 April 2020 (rescheduled from 23 March 2020), resolved to restrict cycling access through St Peter's Park. "Cyclists Dismount" signage was installed in April 2020 as shown in figures 1 to 3.



Figure 1. Dismount signage on existing chicanes



Figure 2 Dismount signage at Mackenzie Street





*Figure 3 Dismount Signage at Blues Point Road*

Following the works, Council received six (6) community submissions seeking that the path be reopened for people cycling, most of which also put forward a view that closing the path represented a risk as there is no suitable, low traffic alternative for people riding. Council also received two (2) written submissions and verbal feedback that people were continuing to ride on the path despite the signage.

### **Usage Data on the Path**

Usage data was collected on the path on Saturday 22 August 2020, and Tuesday 25 August 2020. A camera was installed to record the number of people walking, the number of people who dismounted and walked with their bike, the number of people who remained on their bike, and any near misses between people walking and cycling.

The data for the weekday recorded 113 people walking and 52 people using the path for bike access during the six (6) peak hours. This equates to approximately one person walking along the path each minute and one person riding on the path each three (3) minutes during the peak 6 hours. Of the 52 people that traveling along the path with a bike during the weekday peak hours, 39 (75%) rode their bike while the remaining 13 (25%) dismounted and walked. Similarly, during the one-hour period recorded on a Saturday, 8 of the 10 (80%) people with bikes rode along the paths while the remaining 20% (2 people) dismounted and walked.

While there is a high level of non-compliance with the ‘dismount’ requirement, no incidence of conflict or near misses were observed during the seven (7) hours during which camera data was collected. ‘Near misses’ were defined as any incident where either people walking or people riding had to suddenly change their course or stop to avoid each other.

### **Pop-Up bike lanes on the Pacific Highway**

The NSW State Government announced on 20 August 2020, that planning is underway for a new Pop-Up cycle path connection along the Pacific Highway between Alfred Street and West Street, North Sydney. At their meeting of 24 August 2020 Council resolved to provide input and feedback to TfNSW as part of the development of the Pop-Up bike lane project.

While there will likely remain some demand for local trips that traverse St Peters Park following the installation of the Pop-Up, it is anticipated that the completion of the Pacific Highway paths will cater for a large number of those currently using St Peters Park route to access the Sydney Harbour Bridge. In this context there is a significant likelihood that cycle traffic through St Peters Park will reduce significantly in the coming months.

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report responds to the Council resolution of 6 April 2020 (rescheduled from 23 March 2020) that a follow up report to Traffic Committee be provided following the installation of ‘dismount’ signage on the path network in St Peters Park.

Data collected to inform this report identified that there is a level of noncompliance with recently installed ‘dismount’ signage, although no conflict or near misses were recorded.

Since the matter was last considered by Council, and signage changes were made in the park, the NSW State Government has announced (on 24 August 2020) that they will install Pop-Up cycle paths on the Pacific Highway. These paths are considered likely to reduce cycle trips through St Peters Park, particularly by long distance commuter riders. In this context, use of the St Peters Park paths may drop significantly in the coming months.

Given that the crash and count data does not indicate an immediate level of risk in the area, and that the situation may change significantly if Pop-Up bike lanes are installed on the Pacific Highway, this report recommends that Council staff continue to monitor how the situation develops before recommending any additional changes in the park.