

Item 4.3 - Traffic - 7/02/20

N O R T H S Y D N E Y C O U N C I L



To the General Manager

Attach:
nil

SUBJECT: (4.3) St Peters Park, Lavender Bay - Shared Path

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DESCRIPTION/SUBJECT MATTER:

In October 2019, public notification of maintenance and minor works proposed to the path connecting Miller Street to Mackenzie Street via St Peters Park was distributed to properties within the vicinity. The works planned included:

- Reconfiguration of kerb ramps at either end of the path.
- Renewal of sections of concrete path.
- Widening of the path by 50cm to reduce erosion of adjacent turf due to path runoff.
- Replacement of existing chicanes with a location specific alternative.
- Installation of shared path specific 'blue' line marking and advisory 'slow' signs.

Following the notification, Council received feedback from members of the community raising concern about the works and the use of the path by people cycling.

In response to this concern, the scope of the work was reduced. The kerb ramps were still constructed and minor repairs carried out on the concrete path. New sandstone edging to an existing garden was also added. Other works planned, including the replacement of chicanes, complete renewal of the concrete path and line marking were omitted.

A further action requested in feedback was the removal of signage permitting use of the path by people cycling. A search of available Council records back to 2001 did not reveal a Council resolution endorsing the initial installation of the signs, although the matter had previously been considered. The earliest available reports indicate that the signs have been in place since 2001 or earlier.

This report seeks Traffic Committee feedback on the community request to remove the signs. In determining a recommendation to Council the following matters are relevant:

- The path has provided access for people cycling since 2001 or earlier;
- The path would remain accessible to children under 16 and those accompanying them under NSW Road Rule 250;
- As existing alternatives to the path take more difficult and higher traffic roads, people may continue to use the path or ride in more risky settings;
- The installation of 'blue line' line marking has been effective in other locations in reducing conflict and the perception of conflict on shared paths.
- While alternatives to this route are proposed in the North Sydney Cycling Strategy, they are large projects that require funding and approval from the NSW State Government and are unlikely to be delivered in the short to medium term.

- Any engineering solutions to prevent cycle access would also impact on access for less mobile people, people using mobility aids and people pushing prams, and also likely noncompliant with access standards and requirements.
- Research undertaken by the NSW State Government indicates that the perception of risk of conflict between people walking and riding on shared paths is far higher than the actual risk, which was reported as extremely low.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Traffic Committee consider alternative signage in this location, that identifies both pedestrians and cyclists using this footpath and that cyclists must slow down when using the footpath.

DETAIL

Standard or Guideline Used: Austroads guide to Road Design Part 6A: Paths for Walking and Cycling

Signs & Lines Priority: N/A

Precinct and Ward: Lavender Bay, Wollstonecraft

Impact on Bicycles: Impacts as outlined in the report

Impact on Pedestrians: Impacts as outlined in the report

Impact on Parking: nil.

On 14 October 2019 public notification went out regarding maintenance and minor works proposed to the path connecting Miller Street and Blues Point Road to Mackenzie Street via St Peters Park. The location of the site is shown in Figure 1 below.

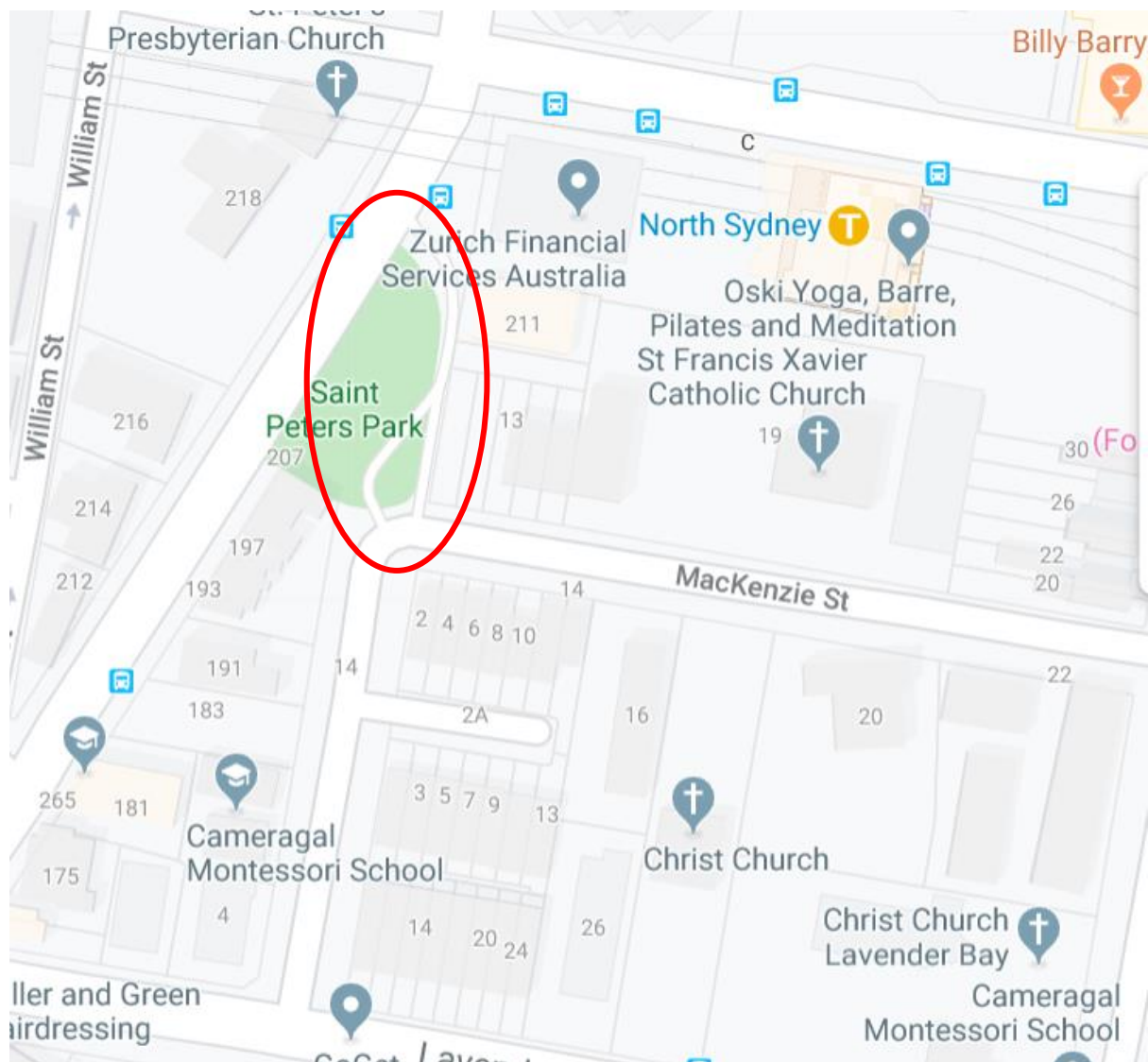


Figure 1 Site location

The works planned included:

- Reconfiguration of kerb ramps at either end of the path. This was to align the kerb ramp with the ramp on the opposing side of the street. It also provided benefit in terms of increasing the area available for landscaping, improving the legibility and amenity of the path network, and reducing cycling speeds on entry to the path by removing a straight path alignment from Miller Street through to Mackenzie Street
- Renewal of the concrete path as sections were cracked or worn.
- Widening of the path by 500mm as the water runoff from the path had eroded turf alongside the path, leaving a section of exposed soil and creating a gully next to the path that causes a potential trip hazard.
- Replacement of the existing chicanes with a location specific alternative. (Figures 3 and 4).
- Installation of the shared path specific 'blue line' line marking. This has recently been installed during other shared path upgrades in the LGA to increase user awareness of the status of the path and encourage slow riding. Path markers proposed included 'slow' text and '10kph' (Figure 2 shows the line marking plan).

Following the notification, Council received feedback from members of the community raising concern regarding the works and the use of the path by people cycling. The feedback emphasised a view that the speeds and volumes of people riding on the path represented a risk for people walking.

Following the feedback from the community, the scope of work was reduced in response to the matters raised and pending further input from the North Sydney Traffic Committee and Council. The works carried out in the interim included:

- The existing kerb ramp to Blues Point Road was widened to line up with the ramp on the opposing side of the road
- Four uneven concrete panels in the existing path were repaired
- A concrete apron was constructed around a utilities pit to remove a potential trip hazard
- A sandstone kerb edge was constructed to define the existing footpath and delineate the existing garden beds (these were additional works constructed in response to matters raised by the community)
- A kerb ramp to Mackenzie Street was reconstructed to better align with the existing path alignment and improve access
- A kerb ramp on Blues Point Road was demolished as it was unneeded and the removed allowed for an increase in garden bed

The works omitted from the original scope were:

- Fewer concrete panels were constructed.
- Site specific chicanes (Figure 4) were not installed and the existing chicanes (Figure 3) were retained
- The shared path 'blue lines' were not installed given that sections of the community were seeking a review of the shared path status of the path.

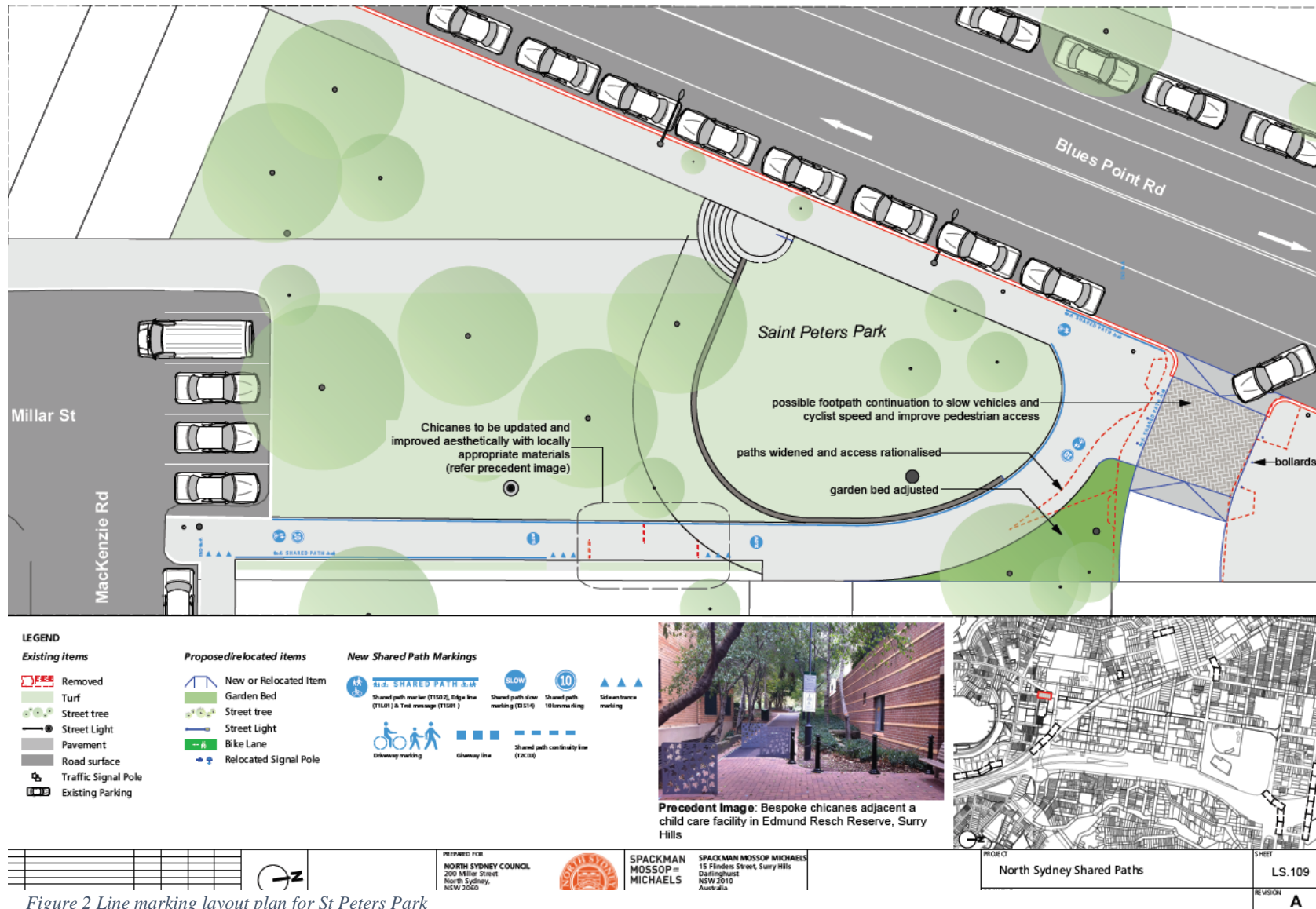


Figure 2 Line marking layout plan for St Peters Park



Figure 3 Existing chicanes in St Peters Park



Figure 4 Site-specific chicanes for St Peters Park

Feedback from the community also included a request that existing signage permitting use of the path by people cycling was removed. This signage is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Existing path signage

A search of available Council records back to 2001 did not reveal a Council resolution endorsing the initial installation of the signs, although the matter had previously been considered. The earliest available reports indicate that the signs have been in place since 2001 or earlier.

Factors to be considering in determining the removal or replacement of the signage (of change to the path status) include:

- The path has provided access for people cycling since 2001 or earlier, and is used by people accessing the Sydney Harbour Bridge via Middlemiss Street. Data available indicates that the path attracts a relatively high level of usage (Figure 5). Bike North use the route for one of their low speed recreational rides. Use of these type of local street network links is also increasing with the growth of e-bike food delivery.
- The path would remain accessible to children 16 and under riding bikes and those accompanying them, including parents/carers carrying their children on bikes and electric bikes under NSW Road Rule 250.
- As existing alternatives to the path take more difficult and higher traffic roads, people may continue to use the path as noncompliance presents a lesser personal risk than negotiating the difficult road environment. While a number of people use those links, it is likely that less confident or experienced riders will favour the path through St Peters Park.
- The installation of 'blue line' line marking has been effective in other locations in reducing conflict and the perception of conflict on shared paths.

- While alternatives to this route are proposed in the North Sydney Cycling Strategy, they are large projects that require funding and approval from the NSW State Government and are unlikely to be delivered in the short to medium term.
- Research undertaken by the NSW State Government indicates that the perception of risk of conflict between people walking and riding on shared paths is far higher than the actual risk, which was reported as extremely low.

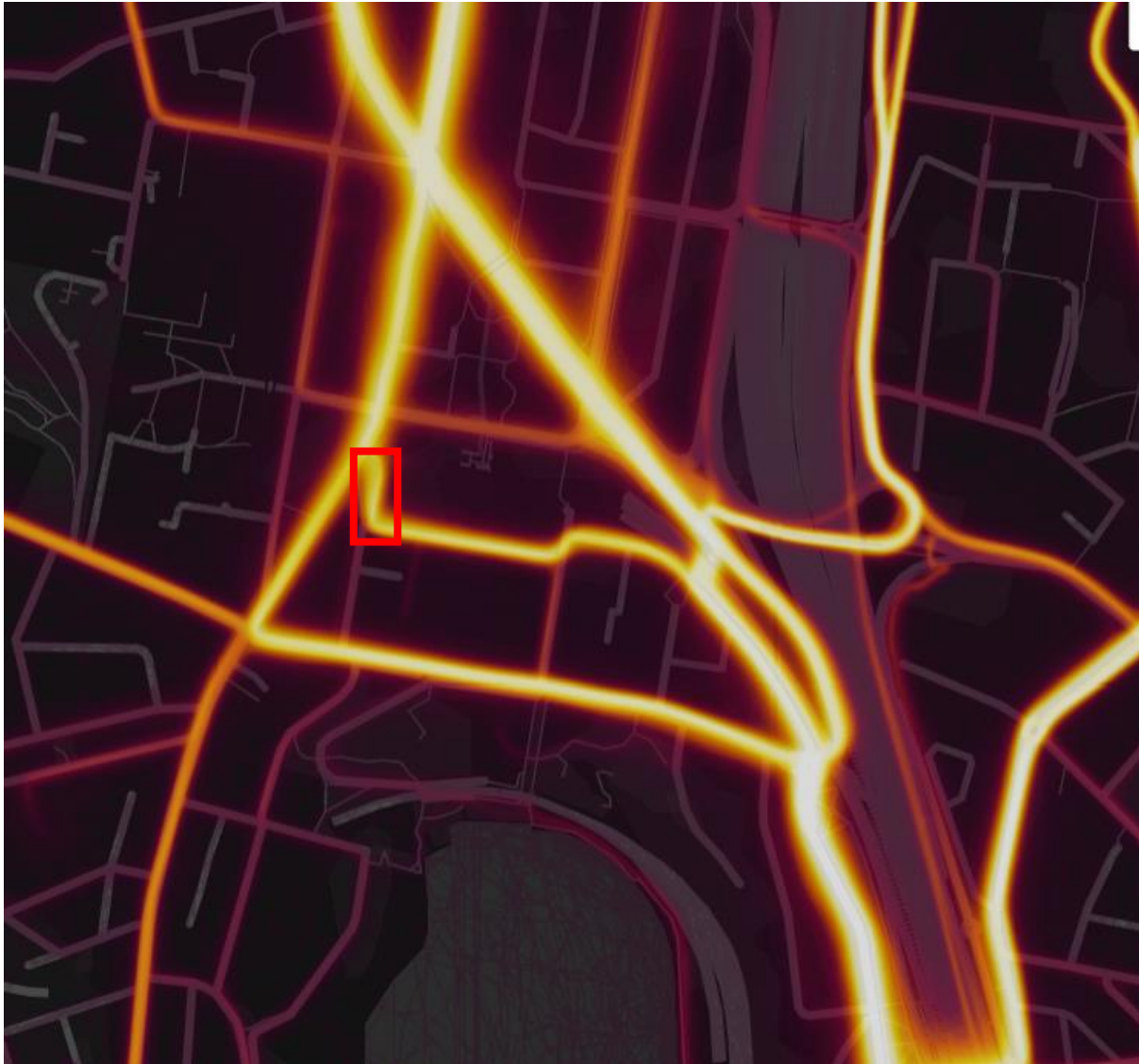


Figure 5. Extract from Strava Heatmap showing the site and relative number of bike trips. Source: Strava

Given that the removal of signage may have a range of slow on impact, an assessment of potential responses to this matter and considerations are presented in Table 1 to assist Traffic Committee members and Council in determining a preferred outcome.

Table 1 Assessment of options and considerations

Option	Comment
Removal of signage relating to cycling, such that the path reverts to a 'footpath' that can only be used by pedestrians and people riding where they are children under 16 or those accompanying them (including those carrying a child on their bike).	As existing on-road cycling alternatives follow more difficult and higher traffic volume roads, it is likely that some people will continue to use the path if designated as a footpath as the risks associated with noncompliance may be perceived as less of a risk that taking the road environment.

	For less confident or experienced riders, the alternative routes would be significantly more challenging and potentially constitute a greater risk.
Improving the path standard consistent with current trends for shared path management – including ‘slow’ and ‘10kph’ signage.	Evaluation of paths in the City of Sydney has indicated that the provision of path improvements such as widening, installation of ‘blue line’ shared path marking and positive messaging and general public domain upgrades has led to measurable improvements in the user perception of safety and conflict on share paths.
Provision of alternative cycle route	The provision of alternative routes is proposed in the North Sydney Integrated Cycling Strategy, however these are large scale projects that require funding and approval from the NSW State Government and are unlikely to be delivered in the short to medium term.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recent community feedback has sought that the signage permitting cycling on the path through St Peters Park connecting Blues Point Road and Mackenzie Street be removed.

This report outlines the potential impacts that the change to the signage may have to assist the Traffic Committee and Council in determining a position on the matter.

The report identifies that removing the signage and changing the status of the path may have a number of flow on impacts to be considered in making a determination on the path status.

Both pedestrians and cyclists use this path and it is not feasible to prevent cyclists from accessing the path. In the interest of public safety, Council should consider signage that alerts both pedestrians and cyclists to be careful when using the path.

The report recommends that Traffic Committee refer to the information contained within this report and consider alternative signage that identifies that both pedestrians and cyclists use the path and that cyclists must slow down when using the footpath.