NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL REPORTS



Report to General Manager

Attachments: 1. Consultation Material

SUBJECT: Ridge Street Active Transport Plan (Stage 2) - Consultation Outcomes

AUTHOR: Lindsay Menday, Sustainable Transport Projects Coordinator

ENDORSED BY: Duncan Mitchell, Director Engineering and Property Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The *North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028* identifies improved walking and cycling connections as a key priority for the community, and community feedback consistently identifies that more people will choose walking and cycling as transport options as safer and more convenient routes become available. The *Ridge Street Active Transport Plan – Stage 2* ('the Plan') responds to this demand by proposing improved access for people walking and cycling to be delivered as part of a comprehensive streetscape upgrade that includes landscaping and public domain improvements.

The project will deliver significant benefit to the community by enhancing the walking and cycling network and improving streetscape and visual amenity along the southern edge of St Leonards Park in accordance with the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan. The works will also enable access to a cycling bypass of St Leonards Park proposed in the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan and result in additional car parking on Ridge Street.

Consultation on the Plan took place from 31 October 2019 to 17 November 2019, and included stakeholder notification via letter, print and social media, and a web survey on Council's "Have Your Say" page. Council received 29 responses to the survey and 19 submissions/comments.

Survey responses identified strong support for the Plan and in particular the construction of new walking and cycling paths. Given the high level of support in consultation and the consistency of the Plan with Council plans and policies, this report recommends proceeding with the construction of the project in the current financial year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Council has received a grant from the NSW State Government to construct works discussed in this report in the 2019/20 Financial Year. The grant is for \$275,000 which is 100% of the estimated construction value.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **1. THAT** the detailed design for the Ridge Street Active Transport Plan (Stage 2) be referred to the North Sydney Traffic Committee for consideration under delegation to the Traffic and Transport Operations Manager.
- **2. THAT** subject to concurrence from the North Sydney Traffic Committee, Council construct new paths, traffic changes, landscaping and public domain works proposed in Ridge Street between Miller Street and the Warringah Freeway in the Ridge Street Active Transport Plan (Stage 2).

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

Direction: 2. Our Built Infrastructure

Outcome: 2.2 Vibrant centres, public domain, villages and streetscapes

BACKGROUND

St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan

Council resolved to adopt the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan ('Landscape Masterplan') at its meeting of 26 March 2018.

The Landscape Masterplan includes a proposal to construct new paths and landscaping along the southern perimeter of the Park. This report proposes that these be constructed as part of the Ridge Street Active Transport Plan – Stage 2.

The Landscape Masterplan also proposes a new cycling connection between Ridge Street and Falcon Street alongside the Warringah Freeway to enable higher speed commuter riders to bypass the internal park path network (Figure 1).

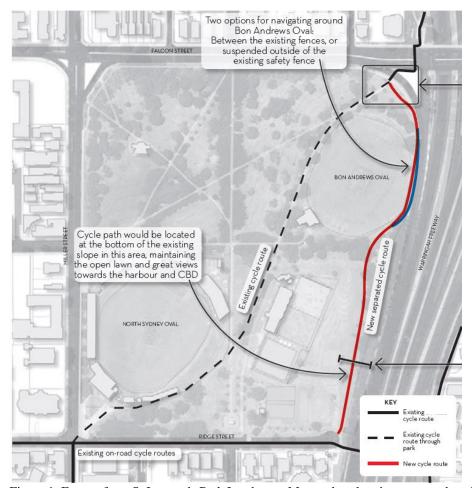


Figure 1. Extract from St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan showing proposed cycle connection.

North Sydney Integrated Cycling Strategy

The North Sydney Integrated Cycling Strategy was adopted by Council in September 2014. The Strategy proposes the delivery of five (5) 'Priority Routes' that will provide the key connections in a network that spans North Sydney LGA and enables people of all ages and cycling abilities to choose cycling as a transport option. The cycle paths proposed in this report forms part of the adopted 'Route 5' from the Cycling Strategy.

Ridge Street Active Transport Plan – Stage 1

Stage 1 of the Ridge Street Active Transport Upgrade Plan was completed in December 2019. The project was 100% funded by the NSW State Government.

These works currently provide access along one block of Ridge Street between West Street and Miller Street and will form a critical section of the network once cycle paths planned as part of Stage 2, along West Street, alongside the Warringah Freeway (refer Figure 1), and over the Warringah Freeway (see below comments section regarding the Western Harbour Tunnel project) are constructed.

State Government Active Transport Context

On 28 January 2020, the NSW State Government publicly released an Environmental impact statement relating to Western Harbour Tunnel Project. The project documentation indicates that the project includes a proposal to replace the existing shared (walking/cycling) bridge over the Warringah Freeway with an upgraded bridge with separate walking and cycling path paths (Figure 2). This proposal is indicative that network planning by the State Government identifies Ridge Street as a key link in the walking and cycling network. The new walking and cycling paths proposed for Ridge Street in this report would connect to and complement this proposal.

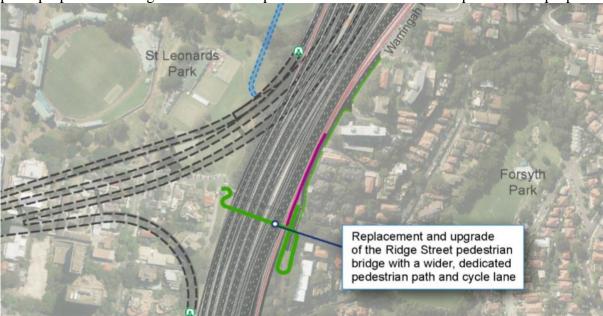


Figure 2. extract from Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade Environmental impact statement

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

This report provides the results of community consultation. Consultation took place between 31 October 2019 and 17 November 2019 and involved a letter and survey sent directly to 548 properties, notification to precincts, and the upload of the survey and documents to Council's 'have your say' page. A Councillor briefing on the project was held on 10 December 2018 to provide an overview of the project.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The following table provides a summary of the key sustainability implications:

QBL Pillar	Implications		
Environment	The proposal includes measures to reduce the reliance on private vehicle		
	use, reduce congestion on local roads and enhance environmental quality		
	and amenity.		
Social	• The proposal aims to support a healthy community by promoting active living, improving safety for all road users, and providing improved and		
	equitable access to public spaces and civic facilities. Streetscape		
	improvements will help to build sense of place and community connectedness.		
Economic	Improvements to public space and the walking network will prov		
	improved access to retail spaces in North Sydney to potentially improve		
	the vitality and amenity of these areas.		
Governance	• The proposal responds to community feedback identifying need to		
	improved and expanded walking and cycling networks in North Sydney.		

DETAIL

Project Description

The North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2018–2028 identifies improved walking and cycling connections as a key priority for the community, and community feedback consistently identifies that more people will choose walking and cycling as transport options as safer and more convenient routes become available. The Ridge Street Active Transport Plan – Stage 2 ('the Plan') responds to this demand and proposes new paths for people walking and cycling to be delivered as part of a comprehensive streetscape upgrade that includes landscaping and public domain improvements. Stage 1 of the Ridge Street Active Transport Plan, in the block between Miller Street and West Street, was completed in December 2019.

Broadly, Stage 2 of the Plan comprises the following features:

- new footpaths along the southern perimeter of St Leonards Park and other upgrades to the pedestrian network such as improved crossing point and kerb ramps;
- a cycling path along Ridge Street;
- landscaping and public domain improvements; and
- retention of car parking on both sides of Ridge Street and an increase in parking on the north side of Ridge Street.

The Plan has been designed to be consistent with the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan ('the Landscape Masterplan'). Proposed works include walking paths and new landscaping identified in the Landscape Masterplan. The cycle path in the Plan has been designed to feed into the new cycle path proposed within the Landscape Masterplan alongside the Warringah Freeway (refer Figure 1) to provide a bypass around the park for high speed commuter riders. The works take place entirely within area identified as road reserve on Council's GIS mapping.

The NSW State Government has provided Council with a grant for 100% funding of the project construction value, via the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) Active Transport Program,

given the project is complimentary to State Government active transport network planning/projects in the area.

Further detail regarding specific aspects of the design is provided below. A copy of the consultation plan describing the proposed works is attached to this report.

New Footpaths and Associated Landscaping

The plan proposes the construction of a new asphalt footpath along the southern edge of St Leonards Park. This is consistent with the proposed path network in the Landscape Masterplan as shown in Figure 3.

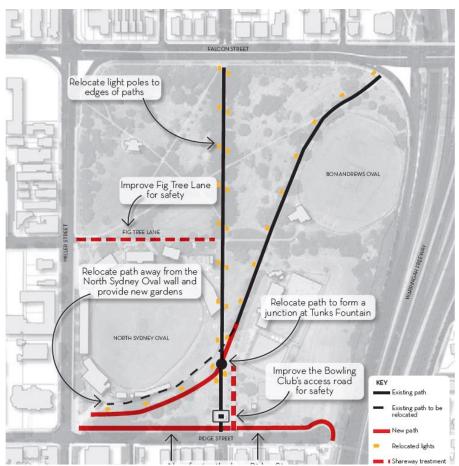


Figure 3. Extract from the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan showing the proposed path network

The alignment of the proposed path is already heavily used by people walking and jogging, which has led to the formation of an informal path and heavy wear to the turf and presents potential for damage to the roots of significant fig trees along the southern edge of the path (refer Figure 4). The installation of the proposed path will address this issue. Sections of this path are proposed as elevated boardwalk to protect fig tree routes.



Figure 4. Informal path that has formed in the location of the permanent footpath proposed in this report

The construction of the path will include extensive landscaping to improve visual and environmental amenity and contribute to the quality of the park. Figures 5 and 6 provide an artist's impression and cross section of the layout of the new paths.



Figure 5. Artists impression of new paths

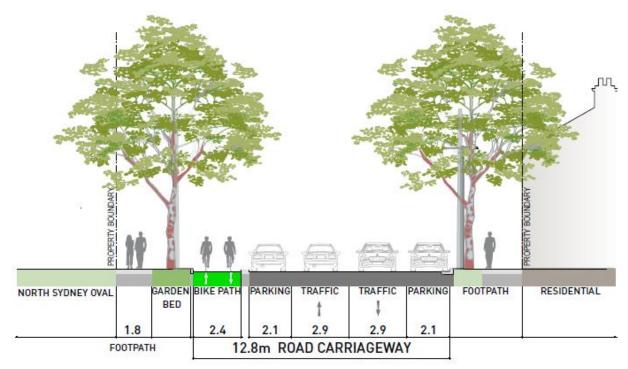


Figure 6 Cross section showing proposed new path layout

New Bi-Directional Separated Cycle Path

A new separated bi-directional cycle path is proposed on the north side of Ridge Street. Separated lanes are proposed as community feedback indicates these will best enable uptake of cycling by those who want to be able to cycle but currently feel unable to due to fears over safety.

The proposed new path will connect the recently completed separated cycle path along Ridge Street to the west of Miller Street (Figure 7) and with the existing walking/cycling bridge over the Warringah Freeway (the latter of which is scheduled to be upgraded as part of the Western Harbour Tunnel project as detailed above). It will also facilitate future connection to cycle routes proposed along West Street and through St Leonards Park alongside the Warringah Freeway as proposed in the Landscape Masterplan. The relationship between this project and other sections of the network is shown in Figure 8. Other cycling projects in North Sydney and other parts of Sydney have demonstrated that the benefit of these paths multiplies as sections and missing links in the network are connected and completed.

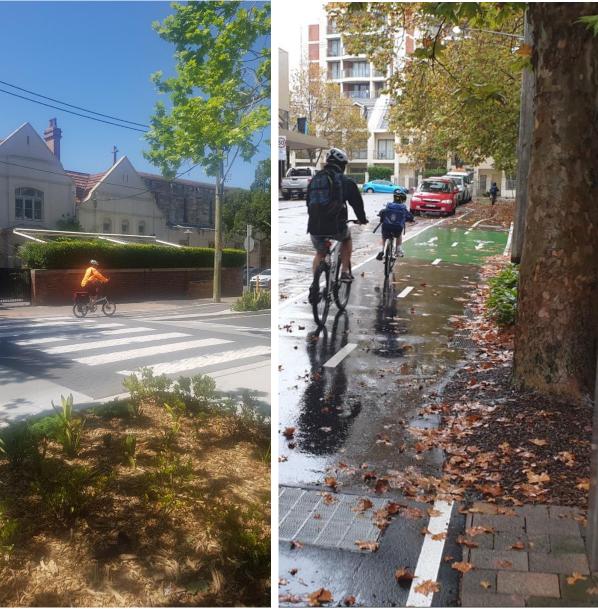


Figure 7 images of existing cycle path on Ridge Street

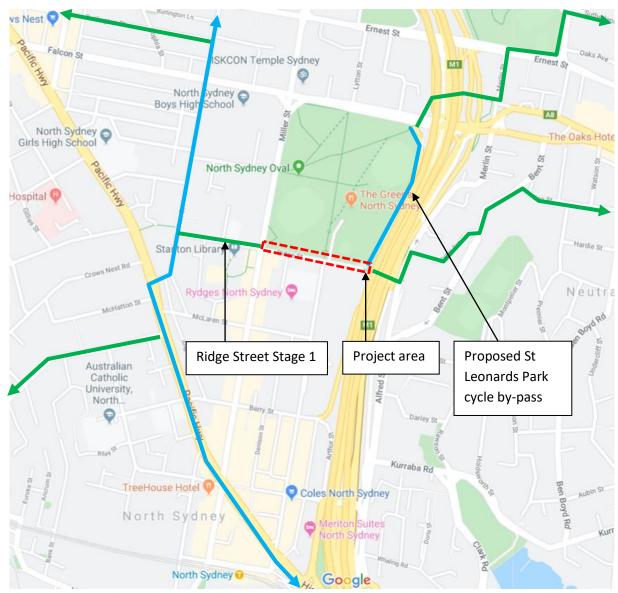


Figure 8. Map showing project area (red) and the relationship to related existing (green) and proposed (blue) cycle connections

The cycle path can be constructed within existing kerb lines and without removal of car parking on either side of the street. The project will result in the creation of three additional metered parking spaces on the northern side of Ridge Street near to the intersection with Walker Street.

The new cycle path includes additional opportunities for landscaping to improve streetscape amenity and help to delineate separation between the cycle path, footpaths and road areas. The cycle connection includes a short section of shared path on approach to the intersection between Miller Street and Ridge Street to facilitate crossing to the west of Miller Street. This section of path will be delineated with site specific path markings to reduce the potential for conflict between people walking and cycling.

New Landscaping and Public Domain Improvements

Large areas of new garden bed will be installed alongside the new footpath and cycle paths to improve visual and environmental amenity. Approximately $160m^2$ of new garden beds is proposed as part of the works. Plants and locations will be in accordance with the Landscape Masterplan.

The works will also include the construction of sandstone retaining walls (in accordance with the Landscape Masterplan) to frame and protect existing trees along Ridge Street where these are located next to proposed new paths.

Sections of elevated path are proposed where the new paths cross the roots of the existing fig trees planted alongside the southern perimeter of the park parallel to Ridge Street. The elevated path is proposed to both protect the fig roots and emphasise the significance of these trees. The elevated path is proposed to be constructed using decking that ties in with the colour of the proposed asphalt path (Figure 9).



Figure 9. example of decking material proposed to provide path access over fig tree roots

Impact on Traffic and Parking

The design of the proposed paths allows for two-way traffic and parking arrangements to continue as is existing. Parking will be available on both sides of Ridge Street, and the minor rearrangement of lanes and traffic management will allow for the creation of up to three (3) additional spaces on the north side of Ridge Street near to the intersection with Walker Street. The resultant lanes all fall within the widths recommended in relevant guidelines.

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Public Exhibition of the Ridge Street Active Transport Plan – Stage 2) was undertaken between 17 October 2019 and 17 November 2019, a period of 31 days. Consultation activities included:

- upload of information about the project, concept drawings and supporting documentation to Council's website and 'Have Your Say' page.
- public advertising/notification of the project via:
 - o three (3) display boards mounted in St Leonards Park
 - o direct mail out to 548 properties
 - o notification of precincts
 - o advertisement in the Mosman Daily
 - Social Media
- a survey on Council's 'Have Your Say' page which included questions on specific parts of the proposal the option to provide additional comments.
- upload of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the project on the 'Have Your Say' page.

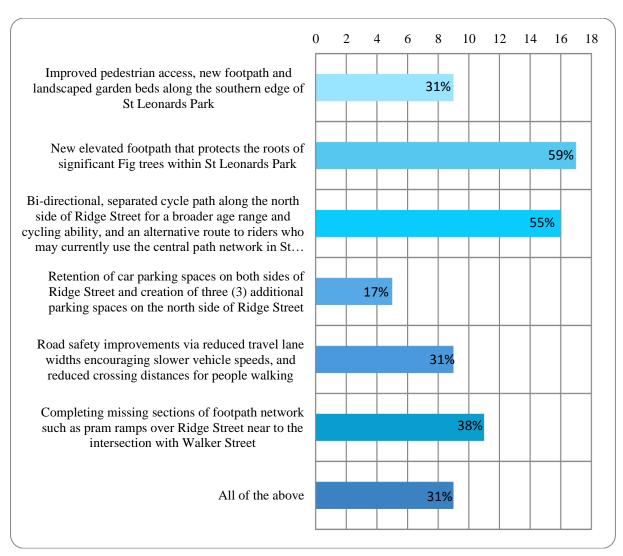
29 responses to the survey were received with 19 respondents also providing additional comments.

Survey responses confirmed strong overall support for the Plan. All of the respondents

supported at least one of key features in the proposal, and 93% of respondents supported two of more than one of the key features. The provision of new walking and cycling paths received the most support, further detail regarding support for each key feature is provided in Figure 10 below. The survey did not indicate consolidated opposition to any aspect of the plan and no objections to the Plan as a whole were received.

The survey asked respondents a series of multiple-choice questions about different aspects of the proposal, the results of which are provided in the Figures 10 to 12 below.

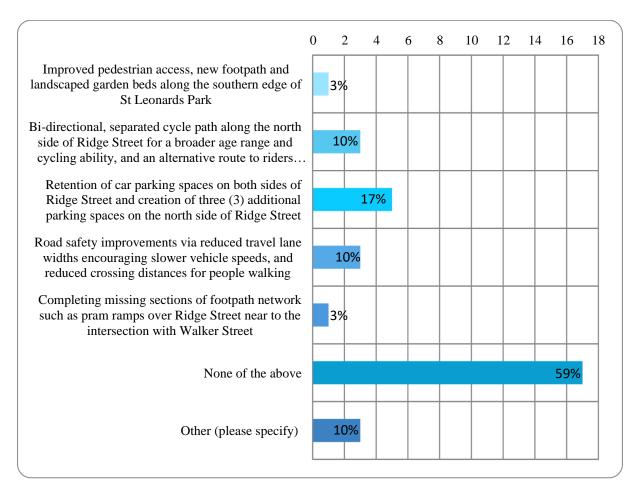
Figure 10. Responses to "Which aspects of this proposed upgrade appeals to you? (select all that apply)" (The total number of respondents = 29, the number that selected each option is shown in blue).



The responses to this question in particular indicate strong support for the proposed new foot and cycle paths, and a positive response to the provision of an elevated path where it passes over fig tree roots.

The second question sought feedback on what parts of the Plan people would like to change or improve.

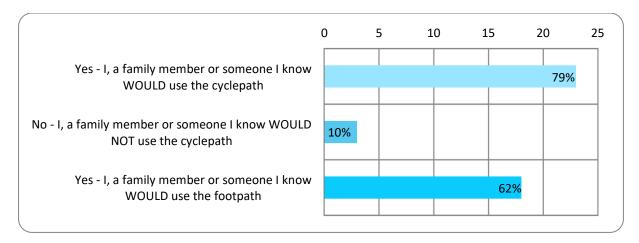
Figure 11. Responses to "Are there any aspects of the proposed upgrade you would like to change? (select all that apply))" (The total numbers of respondents = 29, the number that selected each option is shown in blue)



The extent to which the 'none of the above' stood out as the predominate response indicates that respondents strongly support the delivery of the Plan as a whole, with new paths integrated into a whole of streetscape upgrade.

Respondents were also asked about the anticipated usage of the new foot and cycle paths once constructed. The responses are provided in Figure 12 and indicated that respondents anticipate that both the footpath and cycle path will provide useful and well patronised walking and cycling routes.

Figure 12. Responses to "3. Would you or someone you know (including a family member) use the proposed cycle path or footpath? (select all that apply)" (The total numbers of respondents = 29, the number that selected each option is shown in blue)



Qualitative feedback on the Plan confirmed the positive response to the project provided in the survey questions. Most commonly, submissions and comments voiced support for the cycle path and/or sought that more cycle paths be built in the LGA, with comment such as:

"like the proposal. Please build more cycle paths so that me and my young family can ride"

"North Sydney needs more separated cycle paths like this".

"I strongly support active transport and making the separated cycle way network better... I also support the right of all road users to feel safe so I am happy with this proposal"

"Top marks for the cyclepath...I'm really pleased that North Sydney is doing this."

"A long awaited upgrade that will provide the missing link between the cycle... through to North Sydney and will avoid potential clashes with pedestrians currently sharing the paths through the park."

Other comments offered suggestions regarding how the cycle path be improved, for example:

"Support concept but to be successful cycle path must continue along southern edge all the way to the freeway overpass otherwise this last section is very dangerous as cyclists are forced back on to the road to battle those trying to park cars"

These comments/suggestions will be further considered in preparing the final construction designs for the project. There were also a small number of submissions/comments received which raised opposition to part of the design for example:

"Please do not put in extra car parking spaces!"

"Don't make the road too narrow Better to lose car spaces on one side of the street than create these narrow more dangerous streets"

As there was no consolidated opposition on any one aspect of the design, these comments were not considered sufficient to warrant major design changes however will be considered where possible in the preparation of final designs for the project.

Appendix A contains a full version of the submissions received on the project.

Summary and Recommendations

Consultation on the *Ridge Street Active Transport Plan - Stage* 2 took place from 31 October 2019 to 17 November 2019 during which 29 survey responses and 19 comments/submissions were received.

The feedback indicated strong support for the project and in particular, construction of new walking and cycling paths.

The construction of the Plan will deliver significant benefit to the community by enhancing the walking and cycling network and improving environmental and visual amenity along the southern edge of St Leonards Park. The works will also enable access to a cycling bypass of St Leonards Park proposed in the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan and result in additional car parking.

The works will be funded by a NSW State Government grant (the RMS grant for the project applies to the current Financial Year only).

Given the strong support for the Plan received in consultation, and that the Plan is consistent with Council's plans and policies, it is recommended that Council proceed with the construction of the project in the current financial year.

Report of Lindsay Menday, Sustainable Transport Projects Coordinator
Re: Ridge Street Active Transport Plan (Stage 2) - Consultation Outcome

(16)

Appendix A – Submissions/Comments on the Plan

Number	Submission	Key Issue Raised	Comment
1	Stage 1 still not completed. Bicycle traffic light still covered by a plastic hood although flashing red/green. It has been a work in progress for about 18 months. Was the installation of bicycle traffic light a mistake? why is it still under cover?	Comments relating to Stage 1 works	Issues raised have since been resolved
2	Support concept but to be successful cycle path must continue along southern edge all the way to the freeway overpass otherwise this last section is very dangerous as cyclists are forced back on to the road to battle those trying to park cars. Unclear how path interacts with entrance to Bowling Club - why is this not clearly articulated on the plans? How will reduced lanes impact on incredibly busy school drop off and pick up times?	Support for the proposal with request for design amendments	The issues raised will be considered in preparation of construction documentation for the works. The final design will be subject to a Road Safety Audit
3	Like the proposal. Please build more cycle paths so that me and my young family can ride.	Support for the proposal	
4	North Sydney needs more separated cycle paths like this	Support for the proposal	
5	Please do not put in extra car parking spaces!	Opposition to additional car parking	The provision of car parking in available locations is considered consistent with current community expectations
6	Top marks for the cycle path. Moving from Melbourne in the past two years, it was a shock to discover how difficult and dangerous Sydney is to navigate in anything other than a car. The public transport is dismal, cars quite often don't look for pedestrians, and cycling is scary and unsafe. Given the traffic congestion, beautiful weather and stunning scenery, it is completely mystifying to me why councils in Sydney are not pouring more resources into safe cycle networks. I'm really pleased that North Sydney is doing this.	Support for the proposal	

7	As avalist Latronaly appear any removal of a green	Comments relating to an issue outside of the	
/	As cyclist, I strongly oppose any removal of a cross-	Comments relating to an issue outside of the	
	park route for cyclists in St Leonards Park.	project scope	
8	A long awaited upgrade that will provide the missing link between the cycle commute from Mosman area through to North Sydney and will avoid potential clashes with pedestrians currently sharing the paths through the park.	Support for the proposal	
	In addition there needs to be a designated cycle link across Falcon Street to the park as this is currently a safety threat with only a small shared island crossing.		
	Hopefully it will encourage further cycling commutes that will ultimately link with the new Victoria Cross train station in four year's time.		
9	Wenona private girls school should be forced to include a child drop off / pick up area on their ever expanding school grounds and not have parent's cars causing traffic chaos by blocking Ridge street and Walker street.	Comments relating to an issue outside of the project scope	
10	How successful is the bicycle path between West St and Miller St? I am not sure if it is being utilised i.e. good idea in the wrong place. Will the same be the case between Miller to Walker Sts? Also the short distance from Miller St that is shared may cause problems as bicyclist tend to travel at speed and also some are rather aggressive.	Comments relating to an issue outside of the project scope	As more sections of the network are completed, more people will have access to cycling as a transport option. In this context, it is anticipated that Stage 2, and the future completion of a route along West Street, will increase use of the existing paths on Ridge Street.
11	As a cyclist separated cycleway for whole length would be preferred (obviously trees are priority though). I believe a short path from end of ridge st beside the war memorial to the nearby fountain would be strongly appreciated by cyclists. A pedestrian footpath along the length is long overdue!	Support for the proposal with request for design amendments	O I

12	Don't make the road too narrow eg Merlin St north - new bike paths added parking retained & now street too narrow. If car door opens issues with passing traffic. Better to loose car spaces on one side of the street than create these narrow more dangerous streets.		Travel lane width of approx. 3.0m will be provided which complies with Austroads guidelines.
13	More separated cycle paths in North Sydney please.	Support for the proposal/additional cycle paths	
14	Since both ends of the ridge at separated path will require cycle traffic to cross the road, a low friction handling of cycle traffic is required to ensure delays aren't incurred diminishing the value.	Request for design amendments	Comments to be considered in the preparation of detailed design
15	Parking for this area should not be given priority over movement of people. If you lose parking, you lose parking for very few residents, and if an event is on at the park/North Sydney oval then these should be low use roads and possible even pedestrian/bike only for large events.	Comments regarding car parking/view that car parking is not a priority	The provision of car parking in available locations is considered consistent with current community expectations
16	A dedicated "Zebra Pedestrian Crossing" om the eastern side of Walker Street where it intersects Ridge Street. At the moment there is traffic from both ends of Ridge Street, Walker Street entry at Park to "the Green". Dangerous to cross	Request for additional pedestrian crossing	The installation of a pedestrian crossing at this intersection was considered during the design development process, however it did not meet the required criteria in terms of pedestrian and vehicle numbers as required in RMS technical standards.
17	I strongly support active transport and making the separated cycle way network better. I also support the right of all road users to feel safe so I am happy with this proposal	Support for the proposal	
18	Ideally the turning lane or some parking would be removed to allow the cycleway to run the full length of the street rather than using a 'shared path' configuration which will discourage some users from using the separated infrastructure.	Support for the proposal with request for design amendments	Comments to be considered in the preparation of detailed design

19 **Miller Street entry**

The existing cycleway on the western end of Ridge St is rarely used by cyclists, possibly due to the cycleway not maintaining a straight path, the multiple blind crossings with driveways / laneways, it being narrow and its slope to the side, and its poor integration with Miller Street. Instead, the vast majority of cyclists use the road.

The now proposed pedestrian and cyclist shared portion of path near the Miller Street end would require cyclists to join pedestrians. This would be more inconvenient than sharing the road with vehicles as at present as pedestrians are less predictable and do not follow the flow of traffic. I consider, where cyclists are not using the available cycleway on the western side, that it is unlikely cyclists will use a path that increases inconvenience.

Section 1

The Section 1 diagram does not depict the majority of the proposal: The pedestrian path, at 1.8m with planter beds next to it, would not be sufficiently wide two walkers to be passed by a jogger.

The path is likely to form part of a wide running circuit around St Leonards Park. The planter beds between the pedestrian path and separated cycleway should be deleted, and the pedestrian path should be 4.5m constantly. Council should also directly consult local running and cycling groups in the design of the proposal.

Comments regarding concerns with the design/requests to amend the design

Comments to be considered in the preparation of detailed design

Ridge Street exit near the intersection of Walker St

The 90 degree turn into and out of the cycleway requires cyclists to slow, including to slow rapidly, is narrow, and is impractical. The entry and exit do not link with Walker Street which, on the diagram, is marked as a shared road for vehicle and cyclists.

Cyclists are unlikely to use the entry and exit and would either use The Greens driveway or, more likely, continue not to use the cycleway.

General

Any cycleway should not be sloped to the side: Any cycleway should be at road level and flat.

However, strong consideration should be given to retaining the existing road width that is shared by vehicles and cyclists but installing traffic calming measures, e.g. frequent speed humps (but which are not across the full width of the road, thereby requiring vehicles to slow down, limiting opportunities for vehicles to rush to overtake cyclists, and enabling cyclists to continue without slowing).

RIDGE STREET ACTIVE TRANSPORT PROJECT - STAGE 2

THE PROJECT

The Ridge Street Active Transport Project Stage 2 includes improvements proposed between Miller Street and the existing shared-use (walking and cycling) bridge over the Warringah Freeway. It is also designed to deliver part of the footpath network proposed in the St Leonards Park Masterplan and provide an alternative cycling option to the internal path across the park.

This project is fully funded by Roads and Maritime Services 2019/2020 Active Transport Priority Cycleways Project. Stage 1 of the Ridge Street Active Transport Upgrade Plan was completed in February 2019.

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WAYS TO HAVE YOUR SAY

You can provide feedback via the following options:

- ON-LINE:

https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/ridge-street-active-transport-stage -2

SUBMISSIONS:

Email: yoursay@northsydney.nsw.gov.au (Attention: Stella Stefan)

<u>OR</u>

In writing to the General Manager, North Sydney Council, PO Box 12, North Sydney NSW 2059.



- 500sqm length of new footpath along southern edge of St. Leonards park.
- New raised footpath protecting the significant fig trees and new garden beds.
- Landscaping to improve amenity.
- Provision of pram ramps near the Ridge St & Walker St intersection.



- 117m of new 2.4m separated cycleway providing safe access along Ridge St.
- Link to existing separated cycle path on Ridge St, west of Miller St.



- 162 sqm of new garden beds.
- Retention of existing street trees.
- New and renewed paving and footpaths.



- Retention of all existing car parking spaces.
- Road safety improvements through reduced travel lane widths encouraging slower vehicle speeds, and reduced crossing distances.
- Two-way traffic maintained with lane widths approx. 3.0m as per acceptable standards.

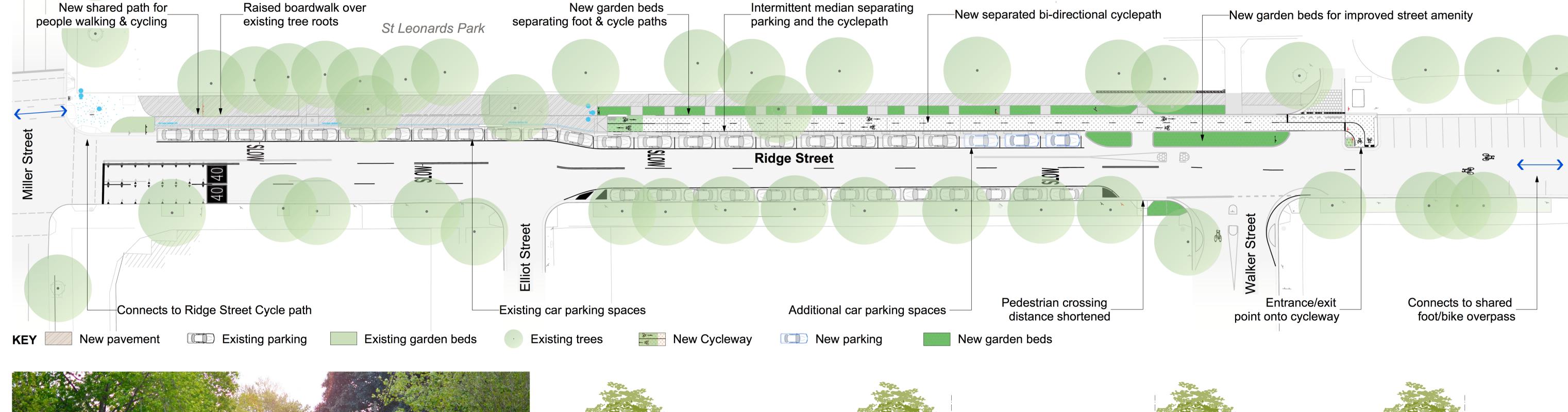
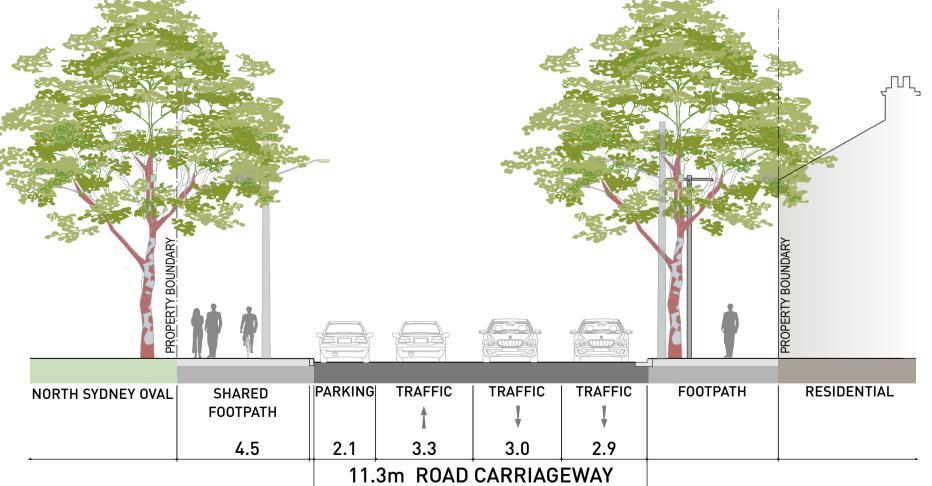
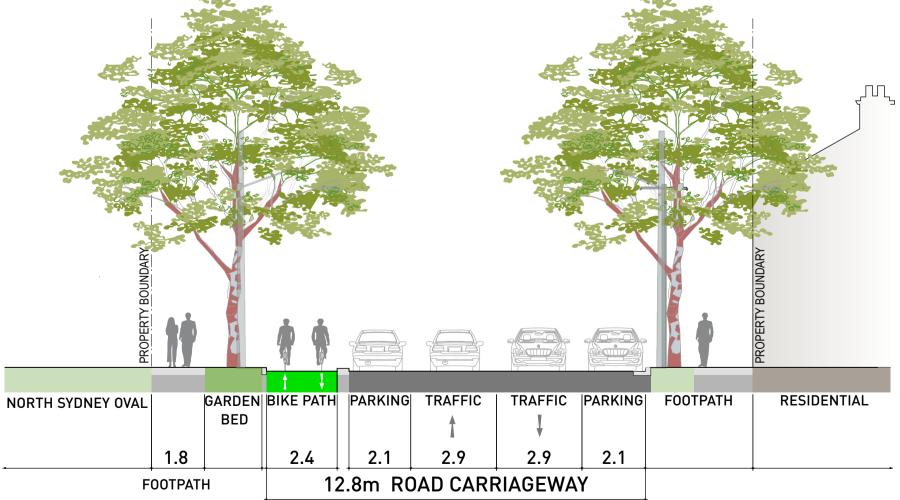




Figure 1: Artist's impression of Ridge Street Actvie Transport Project.



Section 1: Ridge Street Shared Path



Section 2: Ridge Street Bidirectional cycleway



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION



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