

#### **6.4. MM04: Assault on Bradfield Park by Transport for NSW**

While formal decisions have not been made, Transport for NSW is holding confidential meetings with Council Officers and selected North Sydney residents with a view to gaining tacit support for an extensive cycle ramp on the western side of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The Council has a long history of supporting active transport strategies and we can see the benefit of cyclists being able to cross the Bridge without having to dismount. However, the proposals being considered bring cycling into direct conflict with Bradfield Park, one of our community's most loved and best used parks.

This is not a new conversation. A cycling ramp has been under consideration for years. The distressing aspect, for me, is that every concept appears to have a detrimental impact on our precious park and how it functions, as well as an impact on the beauty and heritage of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge.

While Council has care and control of some sections of Bradfield Park, the section that would be impacted by a ramp was given outright to Council in recognition of the significant impacts the construction of the Bridge had on the local community. The land was specifically provided "for public parks and for public recreation and for the purposes of public parks and public recreation" as approved by a resolution of both the Legislative Assembly and Council of NSW in March 1935.

I don't believe I am exaggerating when I say that our open space is under assault. North Sydney currently has 557 people per hectare of open space – as a comparison Ku-ring-gai has only 80 people and Willoughby, which has its own high-density areas, has just 220 people per hectare. We even have more residents per hectare than the City of Sydney! Yet the thinking behind every NSW Government infrastructure project is that it is okay to chip away at our open space.

If cycling proposals gave us visionary active transport infrastructure that would support the city for the 50 years, perhaps the trade-off on open space and heritage would be thinkable. But any ramp constructed will link to the substandard Bridge cycleway that is approximately only 2.5 metres wide and unfit for any real growth in commuter and recreational cycling.

In other words, a ramp is a Band-aid solution at the expense of North Sydney residents.

What needs to be done is for the Government to look at a bolder vision for cycling and create a designated lane on the deck of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Personally, I think that the re-allocation of the Sydney Harbour Bridge traffic lane adjoining the pedestrian walkway to a bi-directional cycling facility warrants serious consideration.

This lane feeds the Cahill Expressway, which has been recently cited as a possible pedestrian highline rather than road. If the Western Harbour Tunnel reduces traffic on the Bridge as predicted, then a dedicated cycling lane will be easily accommodated. More importantly, the lane will be a more direct route for cyclists, provide an improved experience for both pedestrians and cyclists, and significantly increase capacity for future growth in cycling.

**I therefore recommend:**

**1.THAT** Council strenuously objects to any Sydney Harbour Bridge cycle ramp proposal that:

- a) has a deleterious impact on our precious parkland
- b) detracts from the heritage significance of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and its curtilage
- c) reduces pedestrian safety
- d) removes parking from Alfred Street South.

**2.THAT** Council request that the current TfNSW confidential proposals be made available to the North Sydney community and public consultation be initiated.

**3.THAT** Council writes to the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, the Minister for Planning and Public Places, Robert Stokes and Minister for Transport and Roads, Andrew Constance, to request that relocating cyclists onto the main deck of the Sydney Harbour Bridge be seriously considered as a strategic imperative for providing for cycling as a mode of transport in the future.

**COUNCILLOR JILLY GIBSON  
MAYOR**