



...making cycling better in northern Sydney

**Bike North Inc**

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BNA/NSY2004002

Mr Ken Gouldthorp  
General Manager  
North Sydney Council

### **COVID-19 – Generating spaces for walking and cycling**

Bike North has been concerned to date at the lack of an adequate response from many government authorities to address physical activity and transport issues that already long existed but will only accentuate during our current lockdown and increase further as we gradually return to work and other activities while still maintaining necessary physical distancing. This is in contrast to many cities around the world and despite the call from over 100 Australian Health Researcher experts for governments to enable safe walking and cycling during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the future (copy attached).

Bike North has previously called for [COVID-19 Temporary Bike Lanes on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Pacific Highway](#). We are now quite heartened to read in the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) that *'The NSW Government is working with local councils to implement temporary traffic changes, and create temporary roadside public spaces to allow safe physical distancing and keep people walking and cycling as the country moves out of lockdown and back to work.'* This is totally consistent with Bike North's proposal that road space be dedicated for temporary bike lanes in North Sydney to provide safe space for bike riders, separated not just from traffic but also to create a safe space for pedestrians.

**Bike North therefore asks what action North Sydney Council is taking either alone or working with Transport for NSW, Planning for NSW or other state or federal authorities to create this extra space for walking and cycling in general and also, in particular, with regard to addressing the cycling gap between North Sydney boundary with Willoughby and the City of Sydney.**

Bike North requests that North Sydney provide separated bike lanes and more space for pedestrians in North Sydney as:

- Additional space is needed right now to provide safe spaces for residents to exercise locally by walking and riding bikes. In particular, many families are out riding bikes, scootering and walking and they simply need more space for social distancing.
- Separated bike lanes will be needed for North Sydney residents and workers as they start returning to work under social distancing. This will continue at least for many months, if not for several years. This space ideally should be allocated from roads, rather than compromising footpaths where space is also needed for pedestrians. Temporary bike lanes are an excellent way to quickly provide safe spaces.
- In the longer term safe and separated space will continue to be needed for bike riders and pedestrians as we finally emerge from social distancing and address the on-going and increasing impacts of climate change.

While Bike North recognises and supports the need for action on more space for pedestrians, our expertise is in space for safe cycling and therefore we request that Council work with Transport for NSW and other government authorities to quickly develop and obtain funding for temporary separated bike lanes to address the gap in the Principal Bicycle Network between Naremburn and the City of Sydney. Our proposals, outlined below, for temporary bike lanes along the Pacific Highway and West Street also provide safe access to several public and private hospitals and a number of local schools.

We request that the following be quickly investigated at a high priority, with the view to implementing feasible projects as soon as possible:

- Safe space, including possibly separated bike lanes along West Street
- Safe, separated bike lanes on the Pacific Highway between West Street and Milsons Point
- Working with Willoughby Council to provide safe, separated bike lanes connecting West Street and the Gore Hill Cycleway
- Safe, separated bike lanes on the Pacific Highway to the Willoughby boundary at St Leonards.
- Safe, separated bike lane one-way southbound bike lane on the Sydney Harbour Bridge to provide greater distancing for high volumes of bike riders.

### **Returning to Work**

North Sydney residents and workers will return to work under physical distancing rules. Under these conditions:

- There will be a reluctance from many, but not all, people to use public transport
- Public transport will not be able to cope with the previous passenger levels and still be able to offer safe distancing from others
- There will be a significant drop in pedestrians accessing the North Sydney CBD from the North Sydney Railway Station
- There will be potential for many more residents and workers to drive to work unless alternative options are made available and safe. North Sydney CBD does not have the capacity to cater for this potential level increase in vehicular volumes.
- During social isolation many new bikes have been purchased and used by everyday people including families. There are potentially many more people interested in making short rides to school and other essential locations, but they need safe spaces to ride: spaces that are separated from cars and pedestrians.
- Bicycle use is cheap transport which could be highly desirable during the difficult economic times highly probable over the next few years.
- Under social isolation there has been very light private vehicular use of major roads. The air has been so much cleaner and there has been no traffic congestion. Unless action is quickly taken to provide safe, alternative options, these benefits will be lost, even worse. Safe bike lanes enable many more people to travel differently and would work well with new working behaviours. These new behaviours have been trialled during social isolation and may see an increase in partial working from home and more flexible working times. In this way we can all avoid a return to even worse traffic congestion and air pollution.

Bike North would be happy to discuss these points, provide further input to these proposals and any other cycling issues with the relevant Council officer. As far as Biker North is concerned our best representative is Carolyn New ([carolynn@iinet.net.au](mailto:carolynn@iinet.net.au) or 0427 018 516)

Yours sincerely



Tom Rubin  
President, Bike North

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