

2 Need and options considered

2.1 Need for the proposal

2.1.1 Strategic context

Cycling has a significant role to play in the NSW Government's pursuit of a number of initiatives to decrease car dependence and improve the environment in accordance with the NSW State Plan and the City of Cities: Sydney Metropolitan Strategy.

The NSW Government has developed a four point action plan for bicycles in NSW:

- Improve the NSW cycleway network.
- Make it safer to cycle.
- Increase community awareness of bicycles and bicycle use.
- Improve personal and environmental health.

A number of cycle strategies have also been developed by local councils. The cycle strategies relevant to the proposal are outlined below.

City of Sydney Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017

The City of Sydney Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017 outlines the infrastructure needed to ensure a safer and more comfortable cycling environment and the social initiatives that will encourage more people to cycle. Specific aims of the strategy are to:

- Create and maintain a comfortable and bicycle friendly environment in Sydney to encourage more residents, visitors and workers onto bicycles.
- Improve cycling safety.
- Promote the benefits of cycling.
- Increase the number of trips made by bicycle in Sydney.

The project is consistent with the aims of the City of Sydney Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017 by improving the safety of and facilities for cyclists.

Leichhardt Municipal Council Bicycle Strategy

The vision of the Leichhardt Municipal Council (LMC) Bicycle Strategy is:

“To create an environment where cycling is the easiest and best, most enjoyable and convenient way to get about, where there are no barriers, and everyone has the confidence and desire to simply pick up a bike and go whenever they feel like it”.

The aim of the LMC Bicycle Strategy is to double weekday bicycle trips from 0.5 per cent to one per cent and to provide 500 bicycle parking spaces over the next five years.

The project is consistent with the aims of the LMC Bicycle Strategy by providing improved bicycle facilities to encourage bicycle trips within the area.

2.1.2 Project need

Improvements to cyclist and pedestrian facilities in Drummoyne and Rozelle were identified as important issues during community consultation for the Inner West Busway along Victoria Road. Close to 200 submissions called for improvements to cyclist and pedestrian facilities in the Drummoyne and Rozelle areas. Discussions noted that cyclists and pedestrians face a number of issues and obstacles travelling along the Victoria Road corridor between Gladsville Bridge and The Crescent and connecting with the Bay Run crossing of Iron Cove.

Issues included:

- Concerns about the safety of the staircase at the Rozelle end of Iron Cove Bridge.
- Conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians on Iron Cove Bridge and shared-use paths.

- Obstacles on shared-use paths including bus shelters and rubbish bins.
- Improved connections to the Bay Run.

The proposal is considered necessary to provide safer and more continuous routes for cyclists and pedestrians and to facilitate further growth in these transport modes.

While the proposal is separate to the Inner West Busway along Victoria Road, the construction of some elements of the proposal (such as the shared-use ramp connection from Henley Marine Drive to the new bridge over Iron Cove) would be subject to the construction of the Inner West Busway along Victoria Road, which was approved on the 9 April 2009.

2.1.3 Project objectives

Objectives for the project were developed following consideration of government strategies, and the needs identified during community consultation. The proposal objectives are to:

- Improve cyclist and pedestrian facilities within Drummoyne and Rozelle.
- Improve cycling safety.
- Improve connectivity with the Bay Run.

2.2 Options considered

GTA Consultants and Sustainable Transport Consultants were asked to propose cycleway improvements using details of the proposed Inner West Busway along Victoria Road and with reference to the Bicycle User Groups (BUGs) improvements list and bicycle plans from both councils. The development of these improvements is discussed below.

In September 2008, the RTA published some of these potential improvements and over 50 responses were received from the community. These responses were considered when finalising the preferred option.

2.2.1 Consideration of alternative cycle routes

The provision of on-road cycle routes to complement the existing shared-use paths in parts of Drummoyne and Rozelle was considered to provide an alternative, more continuous, and in some locations, safer route for cyclists to use. The routes could be provided along residential streets using signage and pavement markings.

The convenience of the route was a significant consideration. Convenience was based on the route having better or comparable travel times to existing routes, fewer interruptions (eg traffic lights, bollards and kerbs) and a reasonable grade (ie not too steep).

The capacity of the existing roads was also a significant limiting factor. One of the outbound routes considered for Rozelle was found to be beneficial for cyclists, however the final portion, on approach to Iron Cove Bridge, was complicated by the roads being one-way in the opposing direction to cyclists' travel. These one-way streets did not have sufficient width to provide for a separated contraflow cycle lane. Based on this, it was instead proposed to convert the existing Victoria Road footpath between Moodie Street and Iron Cove Bridge to shared-use path to provide a more direct route for cyclists.

In terms of road capacity, the impacts to parking were also considered. In Rozelle, the proposed citybound route also proposed to direct cyclists down a one-way street (Nelson Street) in the wrong direction. To provide a contraflow cycle lane on this street required the removal of a significant amount of parking. Given the potential impacts to local residents, an alternative route was sought.

A number of obstacles along preferred routes were encountered, including:

- The road closure along Wrights Road at Seymour Street, Drummoyne.
- The bus turning bay at Lyons Road and Wrights Road, Drummoyne.
- Bollards at Elizabeth and Quirk streets, Rozelle.

To address these issues it was proposed to provide dedicated paths through the Wrights Road road closure and the Lyons Road bus turning bay and to remove the bollards at Elizabeth and Quirk streets.

2.2.2 Refinements to the preferred option

While the provision of on-road cycle routes was considered important, on their own these improvements would not address the issue of obstacles on existing shared-use paths along Victoria Road, or provide an improved connection to the Bay Run. It was therefore considered that the provision of on-road cycle routes should be accompanied by other additional improvements to maximise the benefit to cyclists across the entire Victoria Road corridor in Drummoyne and Rozelle.

Shared-use paths along Victoria Road

In much of the consultation undertaken for the project, the issue of conflicts at bus shelters between waiting bus passengers and passing cyclists and pedestrians was raised. Given the space and property constraints at many of the bus shelter locations, the possibility of acquiring land to widen the paths to the rear of most of the bus shelters was not a viable option. Instead the provision of a through-route for cyclists and pedestrians around the rear of bus shelters was proposed. This would require adjusting the location of some bus shelters and providing fencing to separate waiting bus passengers from passing cyclists and pedestrians.

At the White Bay bus shelters at the corner of Victoria Road and Robert Street it was also proposed to widen the existing shared-use path in addition with the proposed bus shelter improvements given the narrow width of the existing path.

Connection between the Bay Run in Drummoyne and the new bridge over Iron Cove

The design of the proposed new bridge over Iron Cove (being constructed as part of the Inner West Busway along Victoria Road) allows outbound cyclists travelling on a shared-use path on the new bridge wishing to rejoin the Bay Run at Drummoyne, to travel along Victoria Road to Park Avenue, west along Park Avenue and then south down Formosa Street to Henley Marine Drive. At Henley Marine Drive cyclists would then be required to cross this two lane road in an uncontrolled manner (ie without traffic signals) before joining the Bay Run. A similar issue would be encountered for citybound cyclists travelling from the Bay Run at Drummoyne to Rozelle via the new bridge over Iron Cove.

To improve cyclist and pedestrian accessibility between the Bay Run in Drummoyne and the shared-use path along the new bridge over Iron Cove a number of connection options were proposed, including:

- A ramp parallel to the new bridge connecting down into the existing car park next to The Cove at Drummoyne café.
- A ramp perpendicular to the new bridge connecting to Henley Marine Drive (a number of variables of this option with differing impacts to the café and Henley Marine Drive were assessed).
- A spiral or curved ramp from the new bridge to the car park next to the café.
- Stairs from the new bridge to Henley Marine Drive.
- A new shared-use path from the end of the new bridge to the intersection between Formosa Street and Henley Marine Drive, which would be signalised with pedestrian phases.

These options were assessed against a number of criteria. The parallel ramp had significant visual impact and cost due to its length. The spiral and curved ramps had significant impacts on the car park without any real reduction in structure length. Stairs could be provided at a relatively minimal cost and small footprint, but would not provide for a large number of the Bay Run users and would require cyclists to dismount and carry their bicycles up or down the staircase. A path and signalised intersection would not remove the road crossing and would place traffic signals on a crest, which is undesirable from a traffic safety viewpoint.

A perpendicular ramp with some realignment of Henley Marine Drive (to avoid direct impacts on the café) was identified as the most suitable option.