



east sydney neighbourhood association inc.

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Note new contacts: esna@esna.org.au ~ www.esna.org.au

Fiona Lewis
Council of the City of Sydney
GPO Box 1591
Sydney NSW 2001

27 May 2008

Dear Ms Lewis

Re: Bourke Street Cycle Route – Concept Design Consultation

Please find in the attachment ESNA's response to the above concept design consultation.

While we welcome projects like this which are extremely worthy we are aware that they can also provide 'solutions' which present a whole new set of problems.

As discussed at the consultation on Saturday morning the residents of East Sydney endure excessive volumes of through-traffic on our local residential streets. To date, traffic engineering measures which aim to reduce the conflicts which this situation imposes accept that such volumes are inevitable. We however do not accept this and look to worthwhile projects like the cycleway as an opportunity to seriously address the issues of excessive traffic, rather than re-inforce them by adopting easy but expensive solutions. For this reason we are particularly concerned that the over-use of traffic lights in East Sydney is counter-productive to the long-term solutions of rat-running through-traffic and to the improvement of our environment.

We see the proposed cycleway on Bourke Street and eventually the cycleway on Burton Street as a step in the right direction and as a means for also putting big-picture corrective measures in place, while at the same time making cycling in the urban area safer and more attractive. The big-picture solutions we suggest are for the most part less expensive than such things as traffic lights. They do require however a strong commitment to making decisions which will to some degree alienate motorists. To date the motorist usually wins; it would be good to see something different this time.

We are asking that this cycle route project be one of the first to put the rights of residents, pedestrians and cyclists first. As such we would appreciate our suggestions being carefully and seriously considered by your team. We will ensure that our response to the concept design is also sent to every councillor.

Yours sincerely

Martin Daley
President
ESNA

president: martin daley
vice-president: doug purdie
secretary: debbie williams
treasurer & public officer: veronica heron

committee members: christine byrne
nicki braithwaite
john boers

**Bourke Street Cycleway Route
Concept Design Consultation
Feedback
Map Area 2 – Darlinghurst
Saturday 24 May**

Interest in the project - Resident living within a few blocks Bourke Street
and President East Sydney Neighbourhood Association

For the area of Bourke Street identified above do you have any issues about the concept designs?

We have a strong disagreement with the introduction of an additional set of traffic lights on Bourke Street at Burton Street. There is already a set of lights proposed for the Bourke Street / Liverpool Street junction which is one small block away. Two sets of lights in such proximity will create unnecessary and frustrating delays for cyclists and almost certainly will be ignored.

The traffic light 'solution' on Burton / Bourke Street was not part of the recent City East Traffic Study and is clearly a quick-fix arrived at in haste. The response to the issue is inadequate and unsatisfactory.

We do not need another set of traffic lights to control the excessive traffic volumes on Burton Street – we need root and branch measures to reduce or remove through-traffic altogether. The source of the 'pedestrian – vehicle' conflict at this junction and elsewhere on our residential streets is rat-running traffic.

Burton Street is classified by the RTA as a local road the recommendation for which is 2000 vpd (vehicle per day) movements. Currently Burton Street has almost 6,000 vpd movements. As residents we find these figures completely unacceptable. There is an urgent need to redirect this through-traffic to where it properly belongs: on Oxford Street, the arterial road which exists for this purpose.

The 'experts' employed in the traffic department of Council continue to ignore the residents and also the philosophy of the elected administration which advocates that pedestrians, especially in residential streets, have parity with if not precedence over rat-running traffic. The consistent response to this issue is the implementation of measures such as traffic lights which both accepts and accommodates high volumes of traffic on local roads. Traffic lights here especially on Burton and to some extent on Liverpool Street are a lazy and unacceptable response which regrettably has become customary. Heaven forbid that the rat-running driver should ever be inconvenienced for the sake of local environment amenity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic lights on Bourke / Burton will serve to entrench excessive volumes of traffic long into the future. This not good news for residents, cyclists, pedestrians or the environment.

It really is about time the Council acted on its stated rhetoric and used projects like this as an opportunity to correct long-standing traffic problems and genuinely improve the local area instead of tinkering with it in a piecemeal way which achieves very little in the way of lasting improvements.

What suggestions do you have for the next phase of design development for this area?

A far better and cheaper solution is for the closure of Burton Street on the western side of the junction with Bourke Street plus the closure of Bourke Street on the southern side of the junction. Such closures should incorporate free passage for the Bourke Street cycleway as well as the Burton Street cycleway and take cyclists using both dedicated cycle routes safely across this junction. It will remove any reason for the cyclists to stop at this junction especially as they will be physically separated from the remaining right-turning traffic from Burton Street.

The closing of Burton Street would actively discourage a large number of rat-running cars from using the Burton Street junction altogether. This closure would also enable the creation of the proposed shared zone in front of the Tabernacle building by vastly reducing the number of cars that would need

to use this small section of Burton Street between Palmer and Crown Streets. There are obvious benefits for the local environment, the amenity of the area and for the many pedestrians who daily use Burton Street to commute to and from the CBD.

The closing of Bourke Street on the southern arm of the Burton Street junction would make the section leading up to Taylor Square an attractive cul-de-sac with the entrance and exit remaining on Forbes Street. There is no need for through traffic to use any part of these two roads. The small number of retail outlets proposed in the redevelopment of the Caritas site on Bourke Street could easily be accommodated. The opportunities this solution offers for the residents are numerous and could include considerably more angled parking and extensive landscaping. This is a win-win solution for the local area and for cyclists.

Other suggestions:

- Resolve the zoning issue affecting the land on the corner of Bourke Street and Stanley Street to ensure that the Tony Caro design for Bourke Street can be implemented comprehensively.
- Introduce traffic-calming measures along Bourke Street and Burton Street to assist in enforcing the 40 kph speed limit.
- Footpath replacement and improved street lighting, especially on Bourke Street between Taylor Square and Burton Street
- As much street tree and shrub planting as possible with properly constructed beds and container walls.
- Ensure all tree pits are treated with Terrabond to prevent the unsightly mess created by loose gravel.
- Provide bench seats wherever possible along Bourke Street.

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