Response to Going Places - An Integrated Transport Strategy for Inner West

WalkSydney is a community group advocating for walking. As Sydney’s population grows, we want people to be able to walk easily to schools, public transport, local shops and services and shared transport choices. Streets provide infrastructure for walking and also facilitate important social and economic engagement and WalkSydney wants to see action to make walking convenient, accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

WalkSydney supports walking and cycling at the top of the transport hierarchy in Part 5.4 of Going Places - An Integrated Transport Strategy for Inner West, Draft Report. In this high-pedestrian LGA, infrastructure needs to encourage safe healthier transport choices and the transport hierarchy needs to form the basis for planning of council budgeting and projects. Access by walking must be given priority in planning of the public domain as well as in the approval of development on sites which can provide new connections between public streets. Pedestrian access, safety and comfort needs to be prioritised in decision-making with clearly stated outcomes in the Local Strategic Planning Statement and LEP objectives and provisions.

The key projects identified alongside each of the seven principles are headed in the right direction and WalkSydney recommends ways these projects can be improved to support more walking in the Inner West.

Principle 2 to improve safety, personal security and provide equitable access needs to be supported with 20-30 km/hour speed limits.

The NSW Government’s 40km/hour speed limit is based on research carried out in 1994 which focused on vehicle speeds and fatal pedestrian collisions however, it did not take serious injuries into account. Research in 2016 by the Australian Road Research Board and the Centre for Automotive Safety Research (University of Adelaide) shows that previously accepted speed thresholds have limited applicability to reduce the severity of injuries in crashes with people walking.

Trials of 30 km/hour speed limits are underway around Melbourne, Perth and New Zealand and similar work needs to commence in the Inner West. Along with trials by other councils, this could support revision of the speed zonings applied by the State Government in high pedestrian areas and residential streets.

Inner West Council needs to uphold Principle 3 - prioritising people in centres and revitalising key roads - by influencing major change on Parramatta Road and Victoria Road Rozelle in coordination with the opening of the next stages of WestConnex.

Parramatta Road and Victoria Road provide connections between popular locations and have the potential to become vibrant streets with small businesses, medium scale housing, high-amenity footpaths, safe cycling infrastructure and mass transport. Work to implement these changes needs to commence immediately to correspond with the opening of the future WestConnex tunnels between Haberfield and Rozelle and between the ANZAC and Iron Cove Bridges. Fresh thinking, as shown by the examples below, is needed to create places
where people want to live and work and can get around easily and safely. Inner West Council needs to capture the opportunities presented by the future tunnels as well its knowledge of these corridors to work with the State Government to change them from traffic-clogged roads into vibrant interesting streets.

Centre-running transport as shown in *Let’s Get Wellington Moving* would provide high-amenity footpaths and allow potential conflict between people walking and cycling to be better managed.

Kerbside bus lanes in *Let’s Get Wellington Moving* are shown alongside wide landscaped footpaths and centre-positioned bicycle lanes provide physical separation from traffic.
The key project for **Principle 4** to build a pedestrian network doesn’t go far enough. While main streets such as those shown in the Strategic Pedestrian Network (page 50) need to be improved to provide more footpath space and amenity, all streets and intersections throughout the LGA should be prioritised for walking. Slip lanes and kerbside fencing need to be removed. More footpath space needs to be provided in busy locations and at busy intersections. Wide kerb ramps for prams, scooters and bicycles are needed where footpaths cannot be elevated across intersections. State Government advocacy is needed for changes to traffic signals including shorter waiting times, countdown timers at all non-conflict intersections and an automatic green-man so people don’t have to press the button.

A dense network of protected and connected cycling infrastructure needs to be provided to improve safety and amenity for everyone as people are travelling slower and engaging with the places around them.

**Principle 6** - a freight and goods delivery network to enhance efficiency and liveability - needs to identify the use of small vans and vehicles as well as cargo and e-bikes for use by local businesses to receive and deliver goods/services.

Whilst modern trucks may be suitable for large hauls between the ports/airport and regional areas, the use of small electric vehicles needs to be encouraged for the wide range of businesses in the Inner West council area. Small vehicles are safer for people walking and cycling and more suitable for confined inner city streets.

The footpaths in industrial areas like Sydenham and Marrickville have been destroyed by heavy vehicles and footpaths are often blocked by large trucks parked on the footpath. Replacing a vehicle fleet can be a long-term task for many traders and Inner West Council should identify strategic actions to support businesses to make transport choices which provide greater amenity and safety for everyone. Inner West Council could lead work this by incorporating vehicle downsizing as part of its fleet replacement and vendor procurement.

With an increasing population and greater environmental challenges, Inner West Council can provide leadership on how we get around and use the public domain and we hope your transport strategy will identify these much-needed actions for the future. If staff would like more information about issues raised in this submission, WalkSydney can be contacted by email at walksydney1@gmail.com

Yours truly,

Yvonne Poon
Vice-president, WalkSydney