



WalkSydney

The peak body for walking in Greater Sydney

<https://walksydney.org>

OUR FUTURE 2036

WalkSydney is a community group advocating for walking, exploring the issues that confront those who want to walk in Greater Sydney (Wollongong to Newcastle, and the Ocean to the Blue Mountains). The organisation is non-profit, governed by a committee.

Our mission is to make walking convenient, accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

WalkSydney promotes best practices, influences the infrastructure, policies, decision making processes and institutions, and encourages the education of practitioners.

‘Our Future 2036’ presents an opportunity for Council to lead a much-needed paradigm shift in Canada Bay from a car-dominated environment to one where our streets and public places are safer and more welcoming, more inclusive and more pleasant places for people.

A new Vision for Canada Bay, with supporting objectives, should describe:

- neighbourhoods where people of all ages and abilities feel comfortable in accessing their streets and public places without fear of the danger of speeding cars,
- precincts and routes where people walking and biking have safe access to key community facilities such as schools, parks, shopping strips, playing fields, waterfront paths and libraries.

WalkSydney is calling for a walkable Canada Bay.

The existing plan ‘Your Future 2030’ gives limited voice to this, eg the call by some residents to “get people out of their cars”. However, it fails to set out a vision of how our streetscapes can be more liveable places, nor does it address how this radical change might be effected.

Our new vision should re-imagine Canada Bay as a place where local access for people on foot and on bicycles is balanced more fairly with motor vehicle access and (especially) speed. This re-conceptualisation would have many more people than we see now on our streets and in our public places – parks, playing fields, recreational areas. There would be people of all ages and abilities out and about.

Such a strategic change would be progressively introduced, leading Canada Bay's transformation into a collection of European-style high streets, villages and residential precincts

The community wants slower traffic. People's main concern is less with motor vehicle travel times but, rather, that speeding cars present a real danger to everyone. And they create noise, air pollution and congestion, and make our streets unpleasant.

Canada Bay has many outstanding community assets but access to these is severely constrained by the speed and volume of motor vehicles, mostly private cars. Consider the safety and convenience of access, for example:

- to Five Dock Park across Ingham Ave and Barnstaple Rd
- to Timbrell Park across Henley Marine Drive
- to the Bay Run across the length of Henley Marine Drive.
- within Rodd Point, crossing First Ave, Arthur St and Barnstaple Rd, and
- from Rodd Point up to Five Dock shopping strip
- across Byrne Ave to the Five Dock Bay foreshore path
- to Campbell Park across Parkview Rd and Sibbick St
- across Hampden Rd in either direction, north or south.

Are these sufficiently safe for seniors, for people with disabilities, for children, even early teens? Clearly they are not; the relative absence of these groups speaks volumes for the very real reluctance people have for venturing out due to the danger from cars.

Canada Bay has twenty or so schools, where access is predominately by motor vehicle. Our new vision needs to aim for our schools to be safely accessible by walking and bike riding.

Our shopping strips would benefit from defined pedestrian crossings on side streets for example in Five Dock, Wareemba and Abbotsford. These would provide greater cohesion to these strips and improve their attractiveness to residents. Zebra crossings, or similar treatments, could be applied, for example, in Five Dock along Great North Rd on Rodd St, Second Ave, Barnstaple Rd, Henry St and Kings Rd. They would make these precincts more attractive to shoppers and therefore better for businesses. The community wants our local shops to thrive.

The Committee for Sydney has published a [Reclaiming Sydney's High Streets report](#) to illustrate opportunities and examples of poor design of high streets and identify a set of practical steps we can take to reclaim, revive, and restore high streets in Sydney. The report demonstrates the importance of local shopping streets as the true centres of neighbourhood life when they are working well, providing convenience and identity, an opportunity for small businesses to thrive and a natural way to connect people together.

Together with projected increases in our overall population and the resulting increased demand for travel, we will have new Metro stations. This combined step-change for Canada Bay drives the need for integrated planning across modes. It is crucial that the walk or ride to the bus along entire routes, and each Metro station, is pleasant and safe.

The Movement/Place urban planning model clearly points to the need to define opportunities for creating liveable spaces where movement by motor car is subservient to walking and cycling. The challenge for the strategic plan is applying the principles of the Movement/Place model to create a radically different and better urban/suburban environment.

Communities around the world are moving toward slower vehicle speeds by implementing 30 km/h, or 20 mph, though posted limit and/or road and traffic design. Sweden and

Germany have effectively implemented 30km/h decades ago. A big part of the EU, especially Northern Europe, has implemented 30km/h in most residential areas. Spain, Wales and the Netherlands have announced 30km/h to be the default speed limit in urban areas. In the UK, over 20M People live in local authorities that have implemented 30km/h (20mph) speed limits.

Experience with 30 km/h streets in other cities around the world show they deliver a host of other benefits: people of all ages and abilities will walk and cycle more, giving greater health, social cohesion and sustainability as well as economic gains; more people will walk to local shops and other businesses.

The projected increasing demand for car parking spaces, especially for free parking for residents and business operators, needs to be addressed strategically. Additional supply, such as multi-storey car parks, is likely to be counter-productive, leading to greater congestion and a municipality over-run by cars, which no-one wants.

An overall strategy of controlling motor vehicles is needed.

Strategies to achieve this new vision will include, but are not limited to:

- Posted speed limits of 30 and 40 km/h in residential and other areas, in the context of higher speed limits (eg 50, 60 km/h) on main roads (with the proviso of more and better crossings for active transport users)
- Local area traffic management plans with lower posted speed limits and street designs to effect these.
- Pedestrian priority zones, marked with coloured road pavement, where vehicles are limited to 10 km/h
- Traffic management devices such as thresholds and speed platforms complemented by innovative use of line marking and other lower cost measures.
- Street closures with access for active transport users.
- Angle parking where wider streets may allow it.
- More crossings of our busiest roads, including classified roads such as Lyons Rd, Harris Rd and Concord Rd. State funds would enable these.

The Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan will make an important contribution at the micro level through a range of improvements to footpaths, additional pram ramps.

The status quo of making driving more convenient – ‘Easy to Get Around’ - is outmoded thinking and needs to be replaced by one that prioritises the safety, liveability and amenity of our streets and public places. Perpetuating the existing mindset in the revised plan will not address future community needs and will only further increase car dependency.

A new vision of a walkable Canada Bay with lower speed limits and changed traffic environments will elicit initial hesitancy and opposition in some people. This is to be expected with any truly visionary approach. Strategic communications will be required to set out the benefits and the reasonableness of the implementation steps. They would cite studies that show how little impact lower speed limits have on travel time. Demonstration projects should be introduced in localities which have shown their willingness for change, such as Mortlake/ Cabarita/ Breakfast Point.

WalkSydney looks forward to a revised community strategic plan that will create neighbourhoods benefiting from lower speeds, that make walking and cycling more pleasant and safer and give locals an alternative to driving.

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