



WalkSydney
Level 3, 68-72
Wentworth Ave
Surry Hills NSW 2010
walksydney1@gmail.com
www.walksydney.org

WalkSydney is the peak community group advocating for people walking in Greater Sydney - Wollongong to Newcastle, the ocean to the Blue Mountains. It is a non-profit organisation, governed by a Committee, that was established in 2019. The membership and Committee consists of community members, academics and professionals in the industry. WalkSydney recognises that streets provide infrastructure for walking as well as places for social and economic engagement and we want to see coordinated actions to make walking safer, easier and more pleasant for everyone.

The review of the *Future Transport Strategy* as well as the changes imposed by COVID-19 present opportunities to improve cities, towns and places for walking and WalkSydney provides the following key recommendations:

1. Update the *NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines* to set the default speed limit to 30km/h
2. Develop better street design standards to encourage walking and bike riding
3. Provide more transport options and disincentivise private motor vehicle trips
4. Prioritise people walking and cycling and apply Movement and Place analysis on all NSW Government projects and State Roads
5. Measure outcomes and change
6. Change the Local and Regional Traffic Committees
7. Embrace technology to keep everyone safe

1. Update the *NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines* to set the default speed limit to 30km/h

The *Future Transport Strategy* needs to recognise the importance of safer speeds in residential areas by actioning an overhaul of the *NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines* to specify 30 km/h as the default speed limit in built-up areas. The *NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines* (current version 4, dated 2013) specifies an urban default speed limit of 50 km/h in a built-up area. Default speed limits apply in the absence of a signposted speed limit and are legally enforceable even when there are no speed limit signs in the street.

Speed contributes to both the frequency and the severity of injuries and studies show that the severity of injury at 30km/h is significantly lower than when speed limits are above 30km/h. Until the street environment includes safer infrastructure to handle the higher speeds, our streets and neighbourhoods should not be defaulted to 50km/h as is universally the case in NSW.

Review of the *NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines* and consistent implementation of safer speed limits in Greater Sydney as well as towns and cities throughout NSW is a critical component of the future *Future Transport Strategy* and the Strategy needs to specify this action for immediate implementation.

2. Develop better street design standards to encourage walking and bike riding

Currently too much street space is provided for fast moving traffic and the parking of empty cars. This needs to change with a more concentrated and targeted effort to create safer more equitable streets.

The Movement and Place framework recognises that streets do more than carry car traffic and WalkSydney wants to see the Safe System approach deeply embedded in all aspects of street design and planning. New street design standards are needed that provide more space for walking, trees and placemaking as well as more road crossings and slower moving traffic. To facilitate this, Local Government need to carry out compulsory and ongoing training on the Safe System approach to street design and safety. The *Future Transport Strategy* could find ways to support council staff, particularly infrastructure design and traffic engineering staff, to develop their knowledge and expertise about the Safe System approach.

To support street improvements in accordance with new design standards, kerbside space needs to be managed to benefit the wider community. Managing street parking can improve places, the economy and the environment and the *Future Transport Strategy* needs to capture this and work with Local Governments to implement change. WalkSydney would support the use of Parking Benefit Districts in both commercial and residential areas along with the pricing of kerbside space.

3. Provide more transport options and disincentivise private motor vehicle trips

The link between walking and public transport is clear. In cities around the world where most journeys are taken without a car, it's because there are other convenient transport options that get people all over city and Sydney needs to move in this direction faster. Concurrent to the delivery of transport options such as light rail and metro serving more of Greater Sydney better walking and cycling infrastructure needs to be provided.

The Metro should be expanded to cover more of Sydney with easy transfers between lines and from buses. High frequency, reliable, fast-boarding hybrid bus/rail systems are needed on arterial roads served by quality walking infrastructure and, with Sydney's confusing bus network we need to follow the work of other cities and carry out reform to provide a high-frequency transfer-based network. Access by general traffic as well as street parking need to be changed as needed to improve travel time reliability for on-road services.

A network of safer connected cycling routes would demonstrate the role cycling can play in Sydney's transport network. The delivery of safer cycling infrastructure over the past decade has shown that many people in Sydney will ride a bike when it feels safe and the NSW Government needs to lead the way by designing, funding and delivering a primary network of traffic-protected cycleways on State Roads. During the public consultation of the draft National Obesity Strategy stakeholders supported investment in infrastructure and urban planning that supported healthy lifestyles and the *Future Transport Strategy* can play a significant role in delivering this.

Actions are needed from beginning to end of a journey and with the delivery of more transport options it's necessary to simultaneously make changes to car driving and parking. Congestion charges in accessible locations could reduce traffic volumes and fund better transport services. Expressing onsite car parking provisions for new developments as maximum rates would provide clarity to Local Government and developers and, better management of street car parking could demonstrate its real costs and impacts.

4. Prioritise people walking and cycling and apply Movement and Place analysis on all NSW Government projects and State Roads

The efficiency or productivity of larger vehicles cannot be allowed to override the priority of people walking and cycling in locations with a high-place value. The significant mass differences between people and heavy vehicles means any collision has a high likelihood of severe injury or death. In centres and streets with a high-place value, people walking and bike riding need to be prioritised by removing or minimising the interaction with heavy vehicles.

Transport for NSW needs to apply Movement and Place analysis on all State Roads and NSW Government projects from planning to delivery, demonstrating that people will be prioritised in places. Currently in important places on State Roads, guard rail fencing as well as wide travel lanes, unsafe speed limits and the timing of traffic signals favour through-traffic and heavy vehicle use. First and foremost, heavy vehicles must be required to use the motorway network. Where there is no alternative but for vulnerable users of the road network to mix with heavy vehicles, the road design and operation must encourage speed reduction and/or time of day restrictions for heavy vehicles.

5. Measure outcomes and change

The *Future Transport Strategy* states 6 outcomes however it is unclear how these are being measured appropriately and reported. For too long the NSW roads and transport authority has worked to maximise levels of service for car traffic eroding great streets such as Parramatta Road and Oxford Street, creating transport inequity and increasing injury and death on the streets.

New methods of measuring how we move around are necessary, along with actions to achieve them, with the primary key measurements being:

- Increased walkability to train/metro stations and bus services,
- Reduced crashes (severity and frequency) involving pedestrians,
- Increased proportion of children walking or bike riding to school, and
- Reduced vehicle kilometres travelled maintaining traffic at levels prior to the opening of the motorway network.

Actions to create safer walkable neighbourhoods with convenient access to neighbourhood facilities and transport services need to be implemented along with a monitoring framework that includes the number of residents who can get to shops to buy basic household items in a short time frame (such as 5 or 10 minutes) without getting in their car.

The quality and 'enjoyability' of the walking experience also needs to be taken into account - shade, street landscaping, traffic speeds and volumes, perceived safety and opportunities for social interaction. Statistical safety and perceptions of safety are measurable and personal safety needs to be taken into account if we are serious about creating walkable places. Participation by women is a strong indication of a "walkable" street and counting to understand the gender split of people walking is also necessary.

Tools like the [Healthy Street Indicators](#) should be required for use by councils to report on their progress.

6. Local and Regional Traffic Committees need to change

The Local and Regional Traffic Committee processes need to be reformed. The process favours car traffic and too often voting members of the committees are not adequately informed about Safe System street designs that support people walking and bike riding in a range of different place types.

In the past proposals that would improve street safety and walking access have been rejected because of the view there may be delays to car traffic or because they did not comply with traditional warrants or standards. This has meant pedestrian crossings were not installed where they were needed resulting in people, including children walking to school, having to dash between gaps in traffic.

The Local and Regional Traffic Committees processes as they currently perform give no consideration of the benefits of proposals to the local neighbourhood or community and action is needed to re-think the Committee processes to achieve the strategic intentions outlined the *Future Transport Strategy*, the Sydney Region Plan and the District Plans.

7. Embrace technology to keep everyone safe

Technology to achieve greater safety for everyone should be a strategic priority.

Technology like Intelligent Speed Assist and geo-fencing are available low-cost tools that would save lives on our streets. Intelligent Speed Assist uses sign-recognition video camera and/or GPS-linked speed limit data to inform drivers of the speed limit and automatically limit the speed of the vehicle, and geo-fencing can be used to create a safer street network with the use of “digitalised” speed humps rather than “analogue speed humps”.

This technology will be made mandatory for new cars in the European Union from next year and NSW should be striving to adopt best practice to keep everyone safe.

The *Future Transport Strategy* can play a significant role in helping to overcome the sedentary nature of modern living by integrating physical activity into the places people live, work and play. Systemic changes are needed to better support everyone to walk more and live healthier and members of WalkSydney would be happy to meet with Transport for NSW staff to discuss the recommendations in the submission. You can contact WalkSydney Committee members at contact@walksydney.org.