Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway

Northern Access Project – FAQs – June 2021

TfNSW is seeking feedback on options for a ramp at the northern end of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway. Here are some questions that have been raised so far.

What's the big problem with the steps? Cyclists seem to manage fine.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway is the only cross-harbour bike link in Eastern Sydney. Riders have no choice but to navigate the 55 steps at the northern end. The steps are a bottleneck, restricting capacity and accessibility and creating a safety risk.

Fit and healthy cyclists have little problem with the steps. But older bike riders, those with heavy e-bikes, and people cycling with children, often struggle. The bridge is used by tens of thousands of people every day. Everyone should have access to all modes of transport across the bridge.

But the proposed ramp is not just aimed at less able-bodied riders. Nearly half of Sydneysiders are 'interested but concerned' about cycling (TfNSW *Cycling Customer Value Proposition Research*). Safe and convenient infrastructure that offers a good customer experience would help them chose bikes over cars.

Why won't lifts work?

We have modelled the impact of lifts and travelators on the capacity of the cycleway. We have assumed the steps would remain open and a lift or travelator would be in place as an alternative.

The model showed mechanical options would cause crowding as cyclists enter the cycleway via two sources.

In turn, crowding would reduce the capacity of the cycleway, removing the opportunity to meet increased cycling demand. It would also deter more people from taking up cycling.

Can't you find a more innovative solution to this problem?

This is the fourth time in more than 20 years that this problem has been looked at. All avenues, and more than 30 options, have been explored.

Most options don't meet our key project criteria. They are either too steep and have tight curves; would interfere with the structure of the bridge or would result in the loss of mature trees and larger areas of public open space.

The concepts on display are feasible and offer a real opportunity to double the capacity of the cycleway and meet cycling demand over the next two decades.

Why don't you build the 2012 HarbourLink proposal?

HarbourLink proposed to take riders from the bridge cycleway to St Leonards Park via an elevated shared path. The shared path would extend from the existing cycleway through Bradfield Park North and under the Lavender Street viaduct.

Columns would be placed along Bradfield Park North and would require removal of a significant number of mature trees.

The ramp curves and gradients required to take the path under the Lavender Street viaduct and up to the eastern side of the bridge would not meet rideability standards and have considerable heritage and visual impacts.

Around 20% of cyclists currently go east at Burton Street. These riders would need to back track significantly with the HarbourLink proposal.

Are the options on display final designs?

No. The draft concept drawings on display illustrate our aspiration for the ramps to be sculptural and architectural in form but do not represent a final design. No decision has been made about ramp materials – including concrete. A lot of work is still needed to determine features, materials, and design treatments.

After the selection of a preferred option, we would work with leading architects and designers to ensure the ramp was appropriate for the exceptional heritage location and public domain.

How will a ramp affect open space?

A linear ramp would result in a marginal net loss (around 5%) of useable open space. A looped ramp would result in a marginal net gain in open space by removing the old bowling club building. North Sydney Council's Masterplan for Bradfield Park Central also proposes to remove the bowling club building.

Passive recreation could still take place underneath either option. In addition, no trees are anticipated to be removed for a linear ramp and only a single Frangipani tree removed for the loop.

A design excellence process, and the ongoing involvement of high-calibre architects and designers, will ensure the final design enhances the location by providing shade, amenity, and architectural interest.

What heritage and design advice have you had so far?

Leading architects, urban designers and heritage experts have helped to develop the options. In addition, the options have been presented to the NSW Heritage Council. The panel has not made any determination on these options.

We have also had advice from the TfNSW Design Review Panel, which is made up of urban design, architecture and other experts.

How would Kirribilli markets be affected by construction and operation?

There would be minor impacts to Kirribilli Markets during construction. Some stalls may need to be temporarily relocated.

Beyond construction, a linear ramp would help the Kirribilli markets by removing most of the current conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians on Burton Street. The looped option would include a shared zone on Burton Street to help manage potential conflicts at this location.

The locations of the ramp columns have not been confirmed. Columns would be placed to minimise impacts on Burton Street, the markets and pedestrians.

A separated cycle path and crossing on Alfred Street would cause traffic chaos.

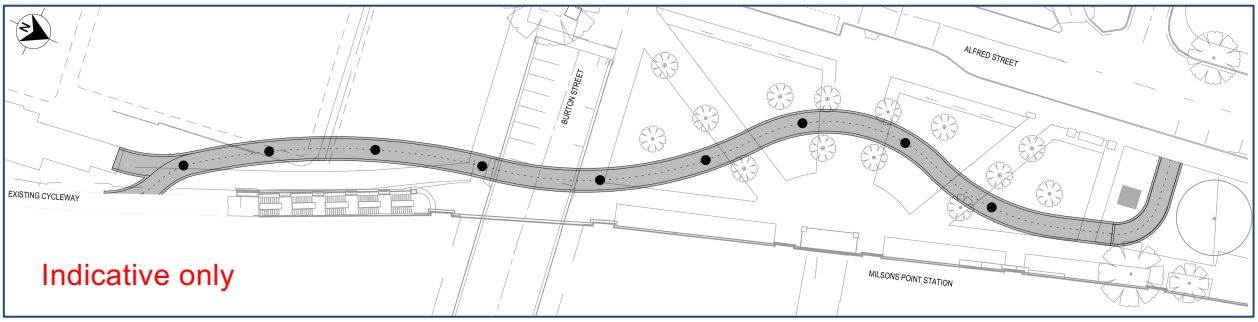
The plans for separated and shared cycle paths on Alfred Street will help move cyclists off the road reducing conflicts and delays for cars.

The plans are early concepts and demonstrate our commitment to making sure cyclists are taken safely from the ramp to the existing bike network. The separated path would be created by putting power poles underground. Trees in Bradfield Park would not be removed to create the new cycleway.

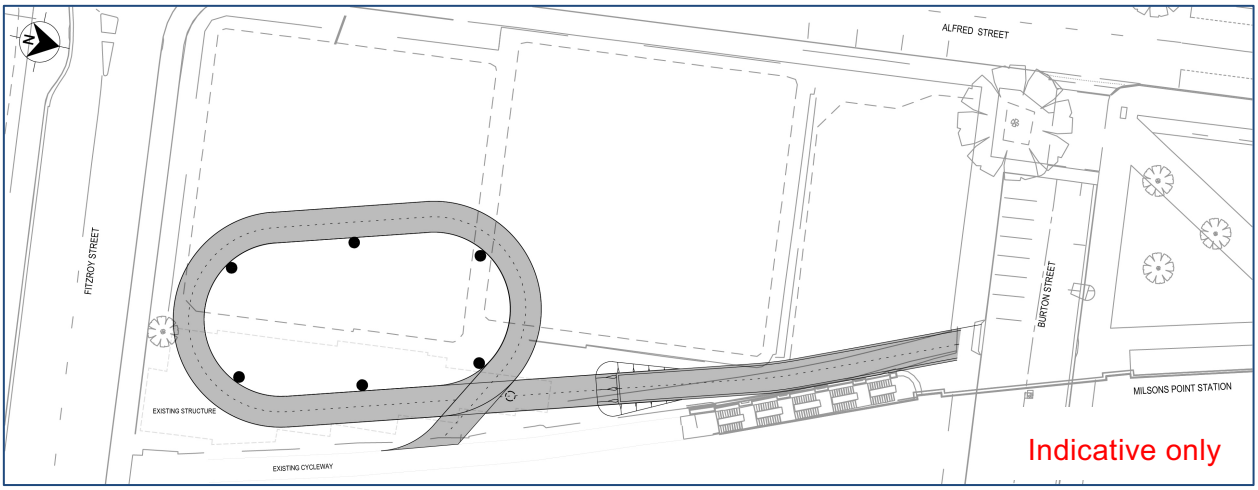
We welcome feedback on these concepts and will develop them further as we refine the project.

Can we see a plan of the ramps?

Plans of both the linear and the loop options are below.



Loop option plan



Find out more

1800 581 595

sydneyharbourbridgeprojects@transport.nsw.gov.au

nswroads.work/cycleway

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