



# Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway Northern Access Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

November 2022



### Overview

#### What is the Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway?

The Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway runs between Millers Point and Milsons Point along the western side of the bridge. On average, around 2,000 cyclist trips are taken across the cycleway on weekdays, making it one of the most heavily used cycleways in Sydney. It is the only cross-harbour bike route and a critical part of Sydney's bicycle network.

#### What are the problems with the current northern access?

Access at the northern end of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway is via 55 steps that connect with Bradfield Park at Milsons Point. The steps create a bottleneck, present a safety hazard and deter people from cycling. Plans to upgrade the cycleway access have been discussed for many years although no solution has been agreed. By letting this problem go unresolved we are missing the opportunity to enhance a critical link on one of Sydney's most popular cycleways.

#### Why does the Government want to upgrade the cycleway?

The NSW Government is committed to cycling as an important mode of city-serving infrastructure. Future Transport 2061 places objectives to increase cycling within 10 kilometres of major centres. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, cycling has seen an increase in popularity as people take to their bikes to avoid public transport and keep fit while access to gyms and leisure facilities has been restricted. In this context, the NSW Government has taken a fresh look at the project to address the continued access and safety constraints and find ways to encourage more people to cycle.

#### Has the Government looked at alternatives to a ramp?

We have carefully considered alternatives to a ramp including lifts and travelators, a cycleway on the deck of the Harbour Bridge, and swapping the cycleway to the eastern side.

As a result of this analysis, we have confirmed the current cycleway is an asset worth investing in and a ramp would be the best replacement for the northern steps. Our investigations have demonstrated that:

- A ramp at the northern end would more than double the capacity of the cycleway and help to meet increasing demand over the next 20 years or more.
- The cycleway needs to remain on the west side of the bridge to connect to the Kent Street cycleway and to cycle routes through to Darling Harbour and Pyrmont.
- While lifts and travelators would provide access to the cycleway for heavy bikes and older or less able cyclists, they would not remove bottlenecks or safety risks and could reduce the current capacity of the cycleway.
- Should it ever become feasible to put cyclists on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, an upgrade to the existing cycleway access would still be needed as a north-bound bike lane paired with a south-bound bike lane on

the bridge deck. This is because Lanes 1-7 are too narrow to accommodate a two-way bike path with the necessary safety barriers in place.

## Design process

### Why did Transport select the linear design concept?

Around 30 ramp concepts have been considered since 2012. We reviewed them against user, urban design and heritage criteria and arrived at two which met our objectives: a linear ramp extending north over Burton Street above Milsons Point Station forecourt, and a loop extending over the southern bowling green at Bradfield Park Central.

These two concepts were exhibited in June 2021. Feedback showed the linear ramp has strong public support. Our survey received 2,578 responses of which, 82.9 percent supported the concepts put forward, and 68.3 percent preferred the linear option.

### What about North Sydney Council's recommendation for a bike lane 8 of SHB?

Although Lane 8 is wide and protected by the bridge pylons, it does not easily connect into the existing bike network at the northern and southern ends of the Harbour Bridge. Large ramp structures would be required to facilitate these connections at both ends, presenting significant integration and engineering constraints. In addition to this, assessment regarding mass transit to inform options would need to be undertaken prior to a reallocation of existing road space on the deck of the Harbour Bridge.

### How did Transport select ASPECT Studios as the team to develop the ramp design?

We understand this is a highly significant location and is valued by visitors and the local community. This is why we issued a public Registration of Interest (ROI) in August 2021 to find leading design firms with Aboriginal design expertise capable of developing a concept befitting this nationally and internationally significant location.

We received 18 responses to the ROI. These were assessed with advice from the Government Architect NSW and Heritage NSW. We then shortlisted three teams and asked them to enter a four week competitive design process.

The three shortlisted design teams were:

- **Aspect Studios** with Collins and Turner, Design 5, Yerrabingin, JMT Consulting and Eckersley O'Callaghan.
- **Civille** with Dinjama, H+N+S, NEY and Partners and Sue Rosen Associates.
- **REALMstudios** with Dinjama, Aileen Sage, Lucas Stapleton Johnson, Dr Mike Harris, Pmiengineers and Nick Schleiper

The three teams were asked to enter four-week competitive design process in November 2021. Before they got underway, the teams were briefed by representatives from North Sydney Council and Heritage NSW, as well as experts in Designing for Country, who outlined their expectations and aspirations for the design process.

The completed designs were deliberated upon by a Design Jury chaired by the Government Architect, Abbie Galvin. We also put the designs out for community consultation.

The ASPECT Studios design was favoured by just over 50 per cent of the survey responses we received. In addition, the Design Jury shortlisted the designs by the ASPECT and Civille teams as the two most suitable for the location.

As a result, in April 2022, Transport announced ASPECT Studios as the winning design team.

### Who sat on the Design Jury?

The members of the Design Jury were:

- Abbie Galvin, Government Architect (Chair)

- Alec Tzannes, Tzannes Associates (architecture expert)
- Helen Lardner, Director HLCD (heritage expert)
- Lucy Creagh, Principal, Lucy Creagh Urban Projects (urban design expert)
- Garth Paterson, Director, Paterson Design Studio Pty Ltd (urban design and active transport expert)
- Craig Kerlake (Designing with Country expert).

## About the ramp design

### How has the design changed since the competition?

Since winning the design competition, the ASPECT team has developed their initial design to a Concept Design stage. Changes respond to feedback from the Design Jury, stakeholders and the community to achieve design excellence, reduce impacts to Bradfield Park open space and heritage, and ensure the safe integration of bikes and pedestrians.

### What are the changes to the ramp design?

The main changes to the ramp design are as follows:

- Connection to bridge has been developed to improve sightlines for riders while minimising impacts on the bridge heritage.
- The ramp has been shortened compared to the competition design entry to reduce impacts to Bradfield Park open space and heritage.
- Alignment remains close to the bridge viaduct which is the strong preference of stakeholders and the community.
- Gradient will be on average less than 3 percent for the ramp structure. (Around two per cent between the SHB cycleway and the station entrance, flat as it passes the station entrance, and up to five per cent for a short, straight section at the northern end where the ramp transitions to ground. These gradients comply with Australian and International cycling standards.)

### How are you integrating bikes and pedestrians at the bottom of the ramp?

The ASPECT team's competition entry impacted the footpath that currently runs alongside the bridge viaduct between the station plaza and park rotunda. We will relocate this path slightly to the east side of the bike ramp to still provide a direct access through the park and plaza. In some cases, pedestrians will need to cross over the bike path, but the design will slow bikes down to make this safer. In addition, the bike path will split in two at the landing so that pedestrians have a refuge between the southbound and northbound bike lanes, with good visibility.

### Will the separated bike path extend all the way to Burton Street?

In response to community and user group feedback, we will retain the existing shared path between the ramp landing and Burton Street. This means the bus stop, car share spaces and drop-off/pick up zone in front of Milsons Point Station will not move.

### How has the Lavender Street roundabout design changed?

The shared path at the north-western corner of Lavender and Middlemiss Streets will be built out to provide more room for bikes and pedestrians. There will be marked road crossings on Middlemiss Street and Lavender Street to allow bikes to access the shared path. In addition, planting will be placed on the north and south sides of the Harbour Bridge slip-lane on to Lavender Street roundabout to encourage people to use the dedicated and safer pedestrian crossings.

## Project approval and delivery

### How will the impacts of the Projects be assessed?

Transport has prepared a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to assess the Project under Part 5.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

## What is a Review of Environmental Factors (REF)?

A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is a planning document that includes comprehensive assessments of the potential impacts of a project and proposed mitigation measures. A REF can be self-determined by a government agency – in this case, Transport for NSW. A REF is prepared in accordance with Part 5.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)*, [[link to: https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1979-203#pt.5-div.5.1](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1979-203#pt.5-div.5.1)]. The REF process includes opportunities for community feedback and input.

## How much will the cycle ramp cost?

The cost of the project will be confirmed once a contract for delivery has been awarded.

## When will the Project be built?

Subject to environmental approvals, construction is expected to begin in mid-2023 and take about 18 months to complete.

## How will I be able to get involved and provide feedback?

The Review of Environmental Assessment (REF) is on display from Monday 28 November 2022 to midnight Monday 19 December 2022. To view the REF, and make a submission, you can visit our interactive portal via [nswroads.work/cycleway](https://nswroads.work/cycleway).

During the REF public display period, the project team will be out and about in the community providing information about the REF and submission process. More information can be found on our portal, by calling 1800 581 595, or emailing [sydneyharbourbridgeprojects@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sydneyharbourbridgeprojects@transport.nsw.gov.au)

## What is the new stage of this project?

The Review of Environmental Factors is on public display from Monday 28 November to Monday 19 December 2022.

After the close of exhibition, Transport for NSW will consider submissions received in response to the REF. A Submissions Report will be prepared to respond to comments received in the submissions. This report, along with the REF, and any other relevant information, will be used by Transport for NSW to assess and determine if the proposal would proceed.

Transport for NSW will notify the community and stakeholders of the outcome.

## Impacts

### What are the noise and vibration impacts of the project?

Some noisy work would be required during construction activities within Bradfield Park and on the adjacent local road network. Some residential and commercial properties may potentially experience high levels of noise from certain construction activities. We would consult directly with impacted stakeholders to discuss how we will manage these impacts, including providing periods of respite and ensuring that the noisiest part of the work is carried out during standard construction hours wherever possible, or before midnight during night work.

There is potential for vibration during some construction activities. This work will be closely managed to avoid risk of damage to surrounding structures and include the use of pre-construction and post-construction property condition surveys, as required.

The noise and vibration impacts are outlined in more detail in the Review of Environmental Factors Chapter 6.3 Noise and Vibration.

### Will there be night work?

Work would mostly be completed during standard construction hours of 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1 pm on Saturdays. Some night work would be proposed during the 18 month program to facilitate the delivery and installation of large components of the ramp and to minimise impacts on local traffic, if it cannot be done during standard day time hours due to safety or other reasons. We would work to reduce the amount and impact of night work as much as possible. The surrounding community would be notified of any potential night works a minimum of 5 days prior to the work starting.

### What are the impacts to trees?

The linear ramp design involves less impact on Bradfield Park compared with other early concepts. During construction, five poplar trees and one small ornamental pear tree in Bradfield Park North would be removed. In addition, the Canary Island Date Palm in the middle of the roundabout on Lavender Street would be removed. The trees removed would be replaced in accordance with Transport's Tree and Hollow Replacement Guidelines (2022). The potential location of replacement planting would be determined in consultation with North Sydney Council.

Tree removal is outlined in more detail in the Review of Environmental Factors Chapter 6.7 Biodiversity.

### What are the traffic and transport impacts to the projects?

During construction, community and stakeholders would experience temporary road closures, footpath diversions and loss of parking spaces.

The cycleway will mostly remain open during construction, with access restricted at certain times for short periods only. This will be planned in advance, with notice provided to users.

Once completed, the Project would improve access and safety for bike riders, pedestrians, and motorists by reducing the current conflict at the bottom of the Cycleway stairs and Burton Street.

The permanent removal of 15 parking spaces on the eastern side of Alfred Street and relocation of one bus stop on Alfred Street South (by 60 metres) would be required to construct the Alfred Street cycle path.

The traffic and transport impacts are outlined in more detail in the Review of Environmental Factors Chapter 6.4 Traffic and transport.

Visual impacts during construction would include views of the temporary construction zone, fencing and construction zone hoarding. The views of Bradfield Park and Sydney Harbour Bridge would largely remain visible.

After Project completion, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Milsons Point Station landscape character would be impacted by removing a small part of the Bridge parapet and the position of the ramp above the station entrance. The ramp has been positioned to preserve views of the decorative 1932 cartouche above the station entrance.

The visual impacts are outlined in more detail in the Review of Environmental Factors Chapter 6.2 Landscape character and visual impacts.

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### What are the heritage impacts?

The Sydney Harbour Bridge's status as an iconic cultural landmark will continue to be respected and protected throughout the design excellence process adopted for the proposed Project. While some



potential impacts to the heritage fabric of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Bradfield Park North were identified, we would manage these impacts with high quality, contemporary design, locating the linear bike ramp close to the bridge viaduct, and by ensuring ongoing independent design review of OFFICIAL the Project by the NSW Government Architect and experts in architecture, urban design, heritage and Designing with Country.

Transport and its design team has worked with local Aboriginal elders to understand stories of Country and as the design progresses, we will continue to acknowledge and respectfully incorporate Aboriginal cultural connections into elements of the Project. These themes potentially include incorporation of local totems and stories into designed detail elements and landscaping using local planting. The Project will provide a place to stop, reflect and learn about Aboriginal heritage.

The heritage impacts are outlined in more detail in the Review of Environmental Factors Chapter 3 Design, Chapter 6.1 Non-Aboriginal heritage, and Chapter 6.10 Aboriginal cultural heritage.

### Will construction of the ramp take up compound space in Bradfield Park?

During construction, we propose to install a temporary site compound on the northern green of the former Milsons Point Bowling Green and half of the gravelled boules court adjacent to Burton Street. The compound will be in place for about 18 months. As major structural elements of the ramp would be fabricated off site, the compound will mainly be used for site storage and amenities.

We are assisting the Kirribilli Markets with plans to relocate to Ennis Road during construction. We are also working with local schools and the Billi Boules Club to find alternate locations for their activities during construction. A fact sheet is available on [nswroads.work/cycleway](https://nswroads.work/cycleway) with information on the Kirribilli Markets relocation.

### Will Kirribilli Markets need to close during the construction of the ramp?

We are fully committed to ensuring the markets remain open during the construction of the Project. We are working closely with the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre to relocate the markets stalls within Bradfield Park, Burton Street and the 'boules piste' to Ennis Road during cycleway construction (Burton Street Tunnel will remain open for stalls). We anticipate this will be for a period of around 18 months.

### What are the impacts to the other stakeholders that use Bradfield Park?

The construction compound will take up half of the boules piste where the Billi Boules Club plays. This means the boules club will need to be relocated during the construction period. We are working to find a suitable alternate location. Students from Loreto Kirribilli and St Aloysius School will still be able to use the southern bowling green for sports and active recreation. We have committed to updating the schools regularly so they can plan school sports activities for the 2023 academic year.

### Will the bus stops on Alfred Street need to move?

The relocation (around 60 metres) of one bus stop on Alfred Street South near the roundabout would be required to construct the Alfred Street cycle path.

### Will any parking spaces be removed because of the project?

Through detailed design, Transport has sought to minimise the impact of the Project on local parking, however, it has been determined that the permanent removal of 15 parking spaces on Alfred Street would be required to construct the Alfred Street cycle path. It is also likely that up to 15 car spaces would be temporarily impacted during construction on both Alfred Street South and Burton Street.

## Southern cycle access

### What are the problems with the current southern access?

The main access point at the southern end of the cycleway is via a shared path that connects the Kent Street Cycleway to a ramp, which turns sharply to cross the Cahill Expressway and joins Upper Fort Street. We have a long-term vision to improve these active transport connections but we are not proposing this upgrade as part of this current project

## What is the current status of the southern access project?

In 2016, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) developed a design concept to replace the current southern access with a separated and more accessible ramp. A Review of Environmental Factors was displayed in 2017 and the design attracted a range of feedback. The feedback was not resolved, and so REF for the southern access was not determined, and the proposed design did not progress further.

Since July 2019, Transport has taken another look at the project and has determined:

The need to upgrade the southern access is not as urgent as the north. This is because a ramp, though not ideal, is already in place, and cyclists also have an alternative route along Kent Street, Argyle Street and Watson Road.

Staging investment in the cycleway provides an opportunity to monitor increased demand generated by the northern access upgrade and then assess the southern access design in this context. This would enable a longer-term cycleway solution to be more fully considered. Any impacts caused by the interaction of increased numbers of cyclists and students on Upper Fort Street, can be taken into consideration.

Currently Transport is consulting with City of Sydney and School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW) to explore possible interim solutions for the southern end of the bridge around Upper Fort Street. This is due to SINSW's current upgrade of Fort Street Public School on Upper Fort Street which will change the way pedestrians, bikes and vehicles interact in this area. Transport's input aims to reduce conflicts and make cycling safer and more appealing.

Transport will continue to work with stakeholders until a long-term solution at the south end can be implemented. Whilst these interim improvements are delivered an alternative route for cyclists via Kent and Argyle streets and Watson Road will be available. You can find out more about the Fort Street Public School redevelopment at the School Infrastructure project website.

## When will you deliver a long-term solution to the southern access?

We are committed to achieving the best long-term solution for the Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway and connecting to the wider cycling network.

Transport for NSW is staging our investment by first upgrading the northern access delivering user safety upgrades and we will keep looking at the investment needed as demand increases in response to the northern upgrade. In the meantime, we are working with School Infrastructure NSW to find interim active transport solutions for the area around Fort Street Public School.

Although long-term southern access improvements are not being delivered as part of the northern access upgrade, Transport would continue our commitment to design excellence, by undertaking a robust, design-led approach for the southern access at an appropriate time.