

48 >>

Sydney
welcomes
bikes

The Big Picture

50 >>

Ride to School
soundtrack

Ride2School

52 >>

Members mix
with champions

Membership Matters

55 >>

Nominations
for the Board

Your Bicycle Victoria

56 >>

In a hoopla

Bike parking

58 >>

Mythbusting!

Ride to Work

Sydney welcomes bikes

Sydney's transformation into a city that welcomes bike riders is quite a process. **Fiona Mackrell** hears from Clover Moore, the charismatic mayor making it happen

On a map it looks like the raised bumps and veins of a gnarled hand. But this vision of a bike network in the Sydney CBD highlights the complicated structure of the city. The hills, harbour and old narrow roads are central to Sydney's beauty but are a massive challenge to keeping a growing international city moving.

City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore says bicycles are part of the solution and she wants to keep the trend of bike riders heading into the city on the increase. What's more, she says bikes are cheap, quiet, clean and healthy, and she's putting some considerable money where her mouth is.

In all, there's \$70 million of it, allocated to building a bike network across the municipality. It's what she promised in last year's election with *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, in which Sydneysiders overwhelmingly said they wanted a more sustainable, accessible and liveable city.

The money will create 200km of integrated 'cycleways', 55km of separated bike lanes and 145km of dedicated bike paths. The promised outcome is to make bike riding a real transport alternative, that also brings the benefits of reducing road congestion and costs, easing pressure on a strained public transport system, helping to cut emissions and improving public health. The infrastructure will be the most important component in a package that includes better signage, improved end-of-trip facilities and educational campaigns that include free bike-riding confidence courses.

To give the budget some perspective, the City of Melbourne will be spending approximately \$1.3 million on bicycle-focussed capital works over this financial year. A survey undertaken by the Australian Bicycle Council and the Australian Local Government Association in July 2007 found the average expenditure across 194 local government authorities on bicycle programs was \$361,000 per year.

In the spirit of 'build it and they will come' the hopes for increasing bike riding are as ambitious as the planned infrastructure spend. Clover Moore, in a recent speech to a Bicycle Victoria seminar, said "Our goal is to have 10% of all trips undertaken by bicycle by 2017 – that's a 500% increase." The City hopes to lift the level of bicycle trips as a percentage of total trips from less than 2% in 2006 to 5% by 2011; and to 10% by 2016. They also want to increase the number of longer trips (between two and 20 kilometres) to 20% by bicycle in 2016.

"The reality is," says Moore, "we don't have a choice. There is an urgent need for investment in sustainable urban infrastructure."

An independent, Moore has been Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney since 2004 and has also been a member of parliament in the NSW Legislative Assembly for 20 years. Along with her team of independents, she has embarked on a broad range of ambitious (and at times controversial) projects. In the past, there has been highly vocal opposition to elements of the plan, particularly as it was perceived in some quarters as anti-development and anti-business. However, her *Sustainable Sydney 2030* strategy and transport focus was central to her re-election with an increased majority in 2008 and gives her a considerable mandate.

The *City of Sydney Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017* started to become a reality in May with the opening of the King St bi-directional, separated cycleway. This short path links routes from the inner west to the CBD. When other paths are completed there will be links along a central spine through the CBD, connecting the existing Harbour Bridge cycleway to the north and routes to the east and south.

Construction will begin this year on 2.8km of separated cycleway in Alexandria, with another 3.8km approved, and a 4.3km cycleway in Bourke St between Zetland and Woolloomooloo has been endorsed. Planning is being finalised for separated cycleways in Union St, Pyrmont, adjacent to Hyde Park on College St in the CBD, and Missenden Rd, Camperdown. Another 35km of cycleways have been identified in new priority projects that can be built quickly and with minimal disruption.

It's a plan that ticks all the boxes and a budget that would seem to fit the scale but still it will be a tough job to make riding in Sydney safer and more attractive to new riders. Improvements in the CBD will make a difference within the city but safe bike routes connecting with surrounding areas are what commuters really need.

Jack Russell, a Sydney Bicycle Victoria member, thinks the ideas are great but he'll "believe it when he sees it". Rob Mander and Louise Brown regularly commute in a group of 20 bike riders from the Sydney northern beaches. Both are similarly frustrated with poor infrastructure and facilities, aggressive traffic and dangerous gaps in bike routes, such as having to cross six lanes of traffic to get off the Harbour Bridge. None of these riders have seen any development of their routes as yet.

The push is on for the Federal Government's Infrastructure Australia to fund a 245km Inner Sydney Regional Cycle Network to the tune of \$295 million across 15 inner-city local councils, including the City of Sydney, to provide a radial and cross-regional travel network.

Barbara Khalifa is another regular commuter to the city from her home in Lane Cove but she counts herself lucky to have good bike paths for much of the journey. Khalifa says, "We're still behind other cities – our cycle routes are still fragmented – but progress is definitely being made."

"It's glorious riding along the bike path over the Harbour Bridge – even though I do it every day it still feels special. I feel so lucky to be able to cycle in such a beautiful place." With more routes making riding more accessible, safe and comfortable, Khalifa hopes more people will share the joy of riding through Sydney. ☺

Fiona Mackrell is a writer and researcher. When on a bike she's usually on an excursion with her daughter pedalling the tag-along around Melbourne's inner north.



www.sydneymedia.com.au/asset/2/upload/Cycleway_summary_map.pdf

BIKING IN CITIES AROUND THE WORLD

- Every time the city of Copenhagen establishes a bike lane on a street, the result is 20% more bike riders and 10% fewer cars on that segment.
- Around 1.5% of all journeys in London are made by bicycle but there are hopes to raise this to 5% by 2025.
- Portland Oregon's 2030 strategies are yet to be finalised but a goal of 25% of all trips by bicycle is mooted.
- In May this year, with the signing of the 'Charter of Brussels', 27 cities including Brussels, Milan, Munich and Edinburgh agreed to raise the proportion of bike journeys as a proportion of all journeys to 15% by 2020.
- In the 2008 Melbourne Bicycle Account, a target of 10% of on-road vehicle movement through the city by bicycle by 2011 has been set.



Sydney Lord Mayor
Clover Moore