

19 May, 2014

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Dear Ms Williams,

Re: Draft City of Wollongong Bike Plan 2014-18

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Wollongong City Council's Draft City of Wollongong Bike Plan 2014-18 currently on exhibition.

The Property Council commends council for its Draft Bike Plan and the extensive community consultation that supports this direction.

The Property Council is the nation's peak representative of the property industry. Our 2,200 members are Australia's major investors, developers and owners of commercial, residential, retail, industrial, retirement living and hotel assets worth over \$320 billion.

Our industry is supporting more than \$1 billion worth of growth in this city, including:

- GPT Group's \$200 million expansion of Wollongong Central,
- Stockland's investment in the West Dapto urban land release and regional retail projects,
- Folkestone's investment at 43 Burelli St and commitment to continue to improve its NABERS energy rating via a capital works program
- Redevelopment of key city sites including Oxford on Crown and The Crown sites

WCC's extensive Draft Bike Plan appears to have rightly identified key issues and actions to address these and meet the WCC's Community Strategic Plan objectives, particularly the improvement of accessibility to cycling as a means of transport, and to establish the city as being bike-friendly.

However, the Property Council has strong reservations about the proposed "Green Travel Plans" to possibly be imposed via the planning controls for developments. The Bike Plan only alludes to these and states council will investigate incorporating them into the Development Control Plan, without stating the exact measures or who will pay for their provision. Given the fact that developers already pay substantial levies as part of their community responsibility and provide cycle parking as part of developments, it is important for council to investigate how imposing further cycle initiatives as part of the planning process will impact the feasibility of developments. We recommend input from the Property Council should this initiative be progressed.

The Draft Bike Plan's goals, like the community strategic plan aspirations around cycling, should be clear that the focus of these objectives is for the general public or recreational cyclists. More serious cyclists, and in some cases commuters, will remain restricted in their use of the city's cycle networks, as many of these networks cannot be accessed safely due to the constraints of being for shared use.

In saying that, Wollongong needs cycle links in and around the city to be as safe as possible, as highlighted. Access to and from the University campuses, the CBD and Figtree are critical to meeting the objective of increasing city cycling for at least some workers and students. Currently only those people commuting north of the CBD can do so safely from Thirroul to Wollongong, but once they get to Wollongong Harbour they meet traffic again which is not a good option for a lot of people.

The draft bike plan proposes new cycleway links but unfortunately few appear to be true road upgrades. The plan includes the proposal to reallocate road space by removing parking from one side of the road or converting roads to one way traffic flow, but it is unclear which roads will receive these changes. The Property Council cannot comment on the specific affect of these measures without further specific detail and remain concerned whether the actions will address the issues raised.

In addition, the Property Council is concerned that that the Grand Pacific Walk upgrades north of the city are being promoted as a part of the bicycle network expansion when the challenges of safely accessing these as a cyclist mean they are unlikely to be used for that purpose. Whilst we commend the Grand Pacific Walk as a fantastic project, we recommend the final design of these hilly walkway sections safely separate cyclists and walkers if the objective is for dual usage.

The draft bike plan rightly suggests connecting the plan with the promotion of cycling, further education and events. However it is disappointing it doesn't identify any community partnerships to deliver these agendas (beyond government organisations). We recommend council investigates possible partnership opportunities with cycle shops, bike users group, student cyclists and our cycling competitors who could be utilised as advocates, educators, sponsors or champions of these programs, or even alternative funding partners for minor cycle infrastructure.

Likewise, the small reference to further investigation of an interactive bicycle network map, cycling tourism or self-guided tours on page 66 was encouraging but perhaps a missed opportunity. Council should always consider partnership opportunities as potential additional income streams to support the bike initiatives and develop cycling tourism, and to deliver beyond the current expectations of the Draft Bike Plan.

The bike strategy's Action Plan is commendable for the links to responsibilities, but the community and the property sector would be greatly assisted if there was a timetable, known funding allocations and costs where actions are unfunded as part of this Action Plan.

Highlighting the measures as high to low priority is helpful, but we recommend further detail will alleviate community expectations for what will be delivered, when and for how much. Likewise, bicycle parking, education, promotion and information are actions that could be potentially

delivered quicker and more effectively if partnership opportunities were investigated with existing bike networks/stakeholders as previously mentioned.

Overall, Wollongong City Council has completed some sound research, good community engagement and positive directions with this Draft Bike Plan, with specific funding already attached to some actions to see them implemented. The Property Council congratulates council and its stakeholders on the work completed, with the offer of further advice on particular issues as mentioned above.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you require further information or input into the Draft City of Wollongong Bike Plan 2014-18.

Kind regards,



Amanda Kunkler
NSW Regional Director - Illawarra
Property Council of Australia