



Appendix D

# Regional Recreation Planning Background

# RECREATION PLANNING CONTEXT

SHARING SYDNEY HARBOUR ACCESS PLAN  
DIPNR, 2003

## The Plan

- The Access Plan has been jointly prepared by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (formerly PlanningNSW) and the NSW Waterways Authority, following wide consultation.
- The Access Plan takes an integrated approach to land and water-based access requirements for Sydney Harbour. Typical projects identified in the Access Plan tend to be within 2.5 kilometres of the harbour foreshore but may go beyond to the catchment boundary. It contains the vision for improving access to the foreshores and waterways and proposes the following publicly accessible (non-commercial) improvements and facilities for a range of recreational users including pedestrians, cyclists and recreational boaters.:
  - Land-based
    - walking tracks
    - on-and off-road cycleways
    - improved access within public domain areas including parks, reserves, promenades and intertidal zones
    - improved access to, and interpretation of, Aboriginal sites and other cultural attractions.
    - public domain improvements, e.g. better accessways, promenades, shelters, seating, lighting, signage, planting, interpretive facilities, dry-boat and cycle storage
  - Water-based
    - wharves, jetties and pontoons (pick-up and drop-off)
    - boat ramps
    - soft access facilities such as pontoons, seawall steps and beaches (used by small craft).

## Funding of Projects

- Implementation of the Access Plan will be assisted through the State Government providing \$2 million annually, over five years, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, for capital works grants under the Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Program.
- The grants funding is being provided by:
  - Waterways Authority
  - Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA)
  - DIPNR.
- Projects suitable for funding will accord with the principles and objectives set down in the Access Plan. Applicants eligible for grant funding are generally expected to be local government authorities and incorporated or registered recreational organisations. Additional Access Program funds are encouraged in the form of direct improvement actions by major public land owners. Other agencies are likely to add to this funding potential through their existing programs.

## Background

- The profile of the Harbour as a place for residence, tourist destination and recreation continues to grow and with it the community desire to maximise public access to its foreshores and waterways. Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Plan (the Access Plan) helps address this demand. The Access Plan provides the framework for developing and implementing specific access improvement projects.
- The Access Vision builds on previous foreshore improvement initiatives, notably the highly successful Parramatta River Foreshores Improvement Program, which improved access to and recreational use of the Parramatta River foreshores in the lead-up to the Sydney Olympics.

## Access vision

- The Access Plan's vision is to improve public access to, and enhance the recreational enjoyment of, Sydney Harbour and its tributaries for the people of Sydney and visitors to the city.
- A catchment-wide network of accessways will link metropolitan parklands with urban waterfronts and connect to water access points. Improved boating facilities will provide better public access for recreational craft such as dinghies, canoes, kayaks and sailing boats. The Access Plan identifies strategic projects that may be developed in the short term, over the next 5 years, and over the longer term, over the next 20 years. Key points include
  - Foreshore places for a range of recreational activities, including exploration, relaxation, privacy and social interaction.

- The waterways linking metropolitan parklands and urban waterfronts.
- The Harbour being managed as a focus for community life and celebration.
- Innovatively designed, efficient and well-located boat ramps, public wharves, small boat access and boat storage facilities creating connections between land and water.
- A catchment-wide network of pedestrian and cycle accessways through green open space corridors connecting to water access points and public transport nodes.
- The Harbour and its catchment functioning as a healthy ecosystem accessed by non-polluting forms of transport.
- The unique and diverse scenic qualities of the Harbour foreshores being protected and enhanced.
- The rich Aboriginal and heritage fabric of the Harbour being conserved and interpreted.

#### Land-based access

- Around 59 percent or 134 kilometres of the 230 kilometres of foreshores of Sydney Harbour and its tributaries are fronted by publicly accessible parks, reserves or public domain areas such as foreshore roads.
- Uninterrupted and effective pedestrian access within the intertidal zone will be enhanced along 32 kilometres of the foreshore by removing structures that prevent or discourage walkers.
- Bicycle member organisations such as Bicycle NSW seek provision of cycle access to the foreshores from the hinterland. Providing for this form of access could reduce reliance on the private car, and thus reduce pressure on local access roads and demand for car parking in foreshore locations.
- Ten minute walking and cycling catchments are an important indicator of potential to access the foreshores on foot or bicycle by local communities and those travelling into these catchments by public transport.
- Bicycle parking will be considered in appropriate locations as part of the detailed planning and design of individual projects.
- There is scope to increase the existing level of foreshore access by extending existing accessways to and along the foreshores and by providing new accessways in currently inaccessible areas including redevelopment sites.
- Walking and cycling have many similar requirements, e.g. continuity, legibility, directness, low traffic volumes and low speeds, therefore both modes can often share the same access way. Sometimes their requirements may differ, e.g. a steep topography or sensitive natural environment may be better suited to walking than cycling. In some locations, such as waterfront promenades, shared access may be impractical and unsafe. A separate provision for each mode should be made in such instances.

SYDNEY HARBOUR CATCHMENT SYDNEY REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN  
DEPT OF PLANNING, 2005

#### Overview

- Sydney Harbour, including Parramatta River and its tributaries, is a major natural, cultural, recreational and commercial asset for both Sydneysiders and visitors alike. The continuing growth and importance of Sydney has resulted in increasing pressures on the harbour and its foreshores. As such, it is critical to have a clear and consistent planning framework to protect and enhance the unique attributes of the Harbour.
- The Harbour REP aims to establish a balance between promoting a prosperous working harbour, maintaining a healthy and sustainable waterway environment and promoting recreational access to the foreshore and waterways.
- The Harbour REP has amended SEPP 56 and includes its master planning provisions as they applied to the Harbour and its tributaries. It also identifies a number of strategically important foreshore sites.
- The Harbour REP applies to the hydrological catchment of the harbour. It also defines and contains specific provisions for the 'Foreshores and Waterways Area' (which is generally the area 'one-street back' from the foreshore), strategic foreshore sites, heritage items and wetlands protection areas.
- The Harbour REP aims to retain a viable working harbour which supports commercial marinas in appropriate locations around the harbour and retains and enhances public access to and along the foreshores and waterways through limiting the 'privatisation' of the foreshores and waterways. This has been achieved through distinguishing between 'commercial marinas' and 'private marinas'. The intent is to identify those marinas that generally support public recreational use of the foreshore and waterway and working harbour functions (eg, commercial marinas that provide facilities and services available to the boating public) and those that can alienate the foreshore and waterway through private use only (eg, private marinas that are for the exclusive use of the residents of an adjoining residential development).

## SYDNEY METROPOLITAN RECREATION TRAILS FRAMEWORK DIPNR, 2005

### Recreation Demand

- Approx 35% of people in NSW participate in regional trail related physical activities, more than 3 times the number who participate in swimming or aerobics.
- Walking for exercise identified as most popular recreational activity.
- Demand for access to natural areas using existing networks and foreshore greenspace was a common theme.
- The provision of new connecting walking and bike trails is the fourth highest priority among Western Sydney Regional Councils, while a strong demand was identified for the further development of recreation trails along attractive linear corridors and coastlines, which connect open spaces and provide health and fitness benefits. eg Bay Run – 15-20k users per week, Coastal walk (bondi-bronte)
- The study identified the demand for new trails as being closely linked to the demands for better planning of the shared use of these trails or parts of these trails, for improved signs, for the provision of seating, for retaining or extending public access to the coastline, for interpretation opportunities and for extending the links to residential, retail and commerce areas.
- The primary focus of the regional trails framework is off-road connections performing the functions of linking significant areas of Sydney Greenspace, connecting recreational precincts, providing links between major urban centres and public transport nodes and links to other destinations.
- The trails should be an integrated network of walking and cycle trails.

### Northern Sydney Region

- Demand for shared walkways and cycleways – opportunities exist for continuous foreshore reserves, most areas in Northern Sydney have potential for a network of walking and cycling tracks – ie. Links between Ryde, Meadowbank and Sydney Olympic Park.
- Area identified as a short term priority.

Short term priorities and initiatives (0 –5yrs) of the Plan include

- Strategic framework of trails
- Missing links to a regional recreation trail
- Trails connecting residents from a wide region to a major regional destination
- Trails connecting to a major urban centres
- Developing as a resource for regional populations
- Serving existing demand for regional recreation trail facilities

### WALKING SYDNEY HARBOUR

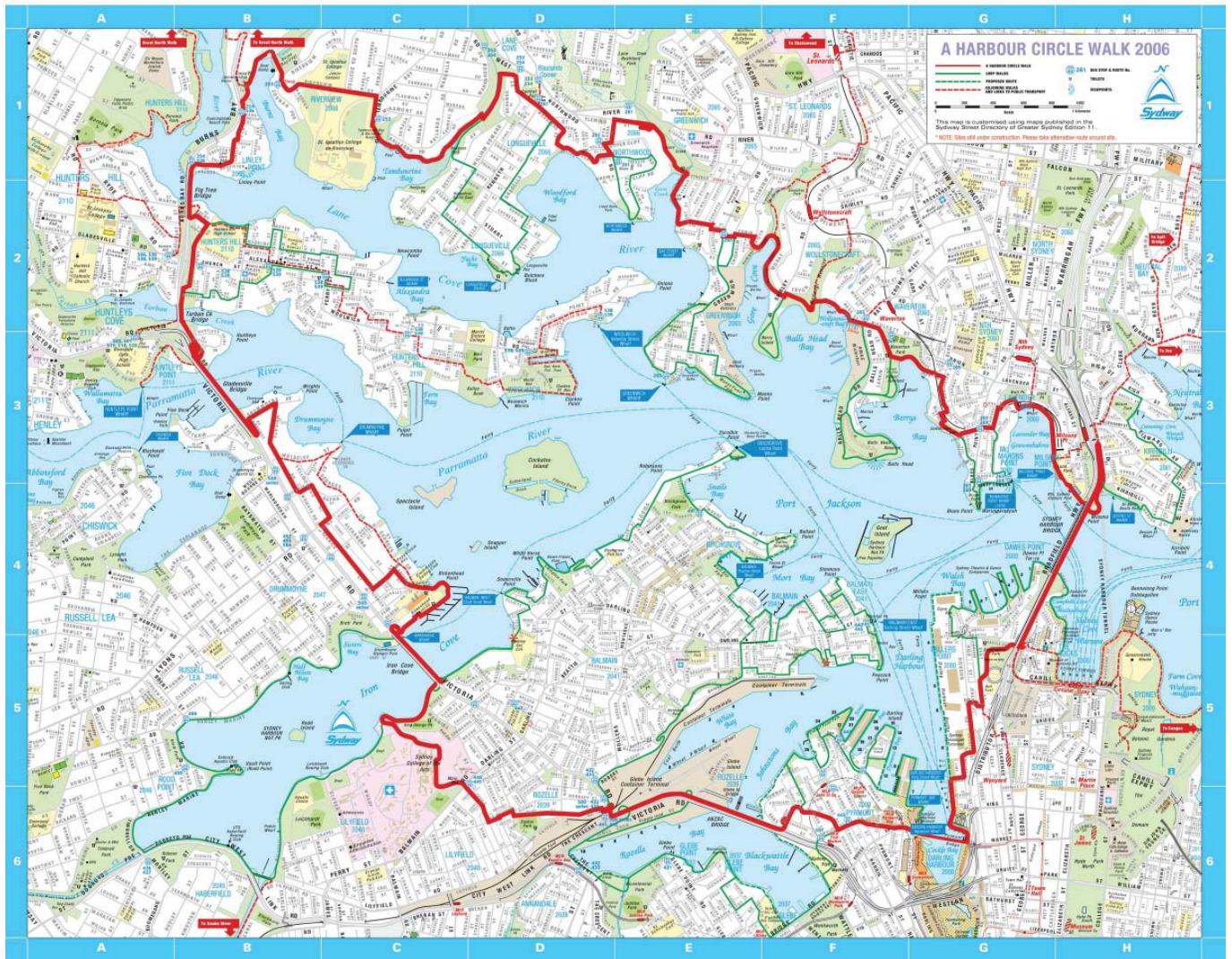
Walking Sydney Harbour is a partnership project between community walking volunteers, the State Government, Local Government and other relevant authorities. These partners share the vision to improve public access to, and enhance the recreational enjoyment of Sydney Harbour and its tributaries for the people of Sydney and visitors to the city. The 26 km walk focuses on the Harbour west of the Harbour Bridge linking foreshore edges, bays, headlands, bridges and historic streets.

A walking map is available through downloading from the internet (Refer Figure) along with notes on points of interest and historic information that accompany the route. There are a number of magnificent additional loop walks (marked in green on the map), to explore scenic and historic areas in more detail. The Ryde River Walk is located near the west corner of the main walk and could be marked as another alternative loop walk linking through Gladesville Hospital and Betts Park.

### METRO STRATEGY DEPT PLANNING 2005

Continue to develop the framework for an integrated network of regional recreation trails as part of the overall open space system in partnership with local government, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Roads and Traffic Authority.





Walking Sydney Harbour: harbour circle walk  
 Alternative loops shown in green. Potential to connect Ryde River Walk route through Gladesville Hospital to the Circle Loop.

Regional recreation trails meet the growing community demand for informal healthy activities, for recreation and active transport across Sydney. Trails are a corridor or pathway, mainly off-road, used for recreational walking or cycling and pass through or connect landscapes, facilities or sites of regional or metropolitan significance.

There is already over 900 kilometres of regional recreation trails across Sydney. Existing regional trails include the Waverley Cliff Top Walk, the Bay Run around Iron Cove and the new M7 Motorway 40 kilometre cycleway and walking path. The use of these paths and trails are increasingly popular.

The NSW Government released Planning Guidelines for Walking and Cycling (2004) to support councils, communities and the development industry to improve planning for walking and cycling and create healthier and more sustainable cities and centres.

Work in partnership with other Government agencies — such as Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, NSW Health and the National Parks and Wildlife Service — to develop a comprehensive communications package for regional recreation trails.

Department of Planning will work in partnership with other Government agencies — such as Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, NSW Health and Department of Environment and Conservation — to develop a comprehensive communications package, to ensure Sydneysiders are aware of the trails network. The package will provide signage and maps showing links to facilities such as railway stations, shops, picnic areas and playgrounds

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CYCLING STRATEGY 2005-2010  
AUSTROADS, 2005

#### **Multiple benefits of cycling**

Australia currently faces a multitude of transport, health and environmental challenges. There is a need to:

- Provide for the safe, affordable and enjoyable movement of people and goods
- Reduce the environmental and health impacts of transport, for instance by reducing motor vehicle tailpipe (including greenhouse gas) and noise emissions
- Increase physical activity by Australian people
- Combat rising traffic congestion, which is increasing travel times and industry costs.
- In order to meet these needs, we need to:
- Reduce our dependence on the private motor vehicle
- Increase the use of 'active transport' (walking, cycling and public transport)
- Providing a transport system that offers attractive choices for travel other than by the private vehicle – including cycling.

It makes good economic sense to encourage more cycling. The Norwegian Institute of Transport Economics calculated that investments in a continuous cycle path network in three towns would yield a net benefit of over three times the cost. It is estimated that the cost savings to society of substituting bicycle trips for short car trips can be of the order of 60 c/kilometre. Social cost savings are realised in a variety of other areas, including reductions in the cost of providing parking, environmental pollution, traffic accidents and road congestion.

In the long term, the existence of a substantial cycling infrastructure in Australian towns and cities - and a well-developed cycling culture - will be of great value to communities facing the reality of pressure on global oil supplies. As well as environmental gains, any progressive reduction of Australia's reliance on imported fossil fuels will have economic benefits for the nation.