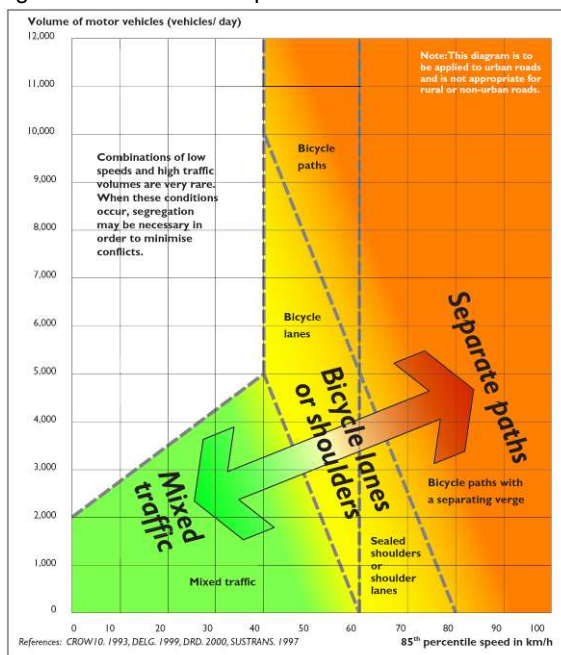


Every Street a Cycling Street

Depending on trip origin and destination, many residents will undertake part of bicycle trip on local roads that do not have formal bicycle route provisions. Cycling on local roads with low traffic volumes should be encouraged through cycle-friendly road maintenance, local area traffic management (LATM) and reconstruction projects, as well as through community education. This promotes sharing of the road reserve between all road users as well as raising the expectation and awareness of cycling activity. Improved amenity for cyclists also benefits pedestrians and mobility-impaired road users.

In accordance with the *NSW Bicycle Guidelines*, streets with low traffic volumes and slow speeds can operate with mixed traffic environments, without the need for formal cycling facilities as shown in Figure 1 (green area). Figure 1 also indicates that as traffic volumes and speeds increase, separated cycle facilities should be provided in the form bicycle lanes/ bicycle shoulder lanes (yellow area) or separate paths (orange area). The mixed traffic environment applies to many quiet residential streets, which would allow consideration of typical bicycle facility treatments which have an emphasis on engineering intervention including line marking, pavement logos, signage and physical devices where these are obtrusive and not of clear benefit for new local routes. In many cases simple directional signs would be sufficient to guide cyclists on their way.

Figure 1: Methods of Separation



Adopting this strategy will allow Council to review the use of typical bicycle facility treatments in the local street network, which has been subject to criticism due to visual intrusion in historic precincts such as Paddington. For local bicycle route connections, unobtrusive directional signage can be used to guide cyclists to key destinations and to provide an alternative to pavement logos. A focal point map is required to assist in the planning of the network.

This strategy has the added advantage of recognising cyclists in all future traffic management works and not just along formal cycle “routes”. There is also a need to update/create any cycling maps to include all local streets as cycle streets. This presents a good marketing opportunity to promote cycling for local access.

It should be noted, however, that there is still a significant role for engineering treatments such as line marking and pavement bicycle logos, particularly on key bicycle network links where driver awareness and cyclist confidence should be improved. Line marking, and in particular edge lines, also benefit motorists in providing clear delineation of the travel lanes during wet weather and at night-time, as well as improving on-street parallel parking compliance.

In designing bicycle facilities, physical separation is one of the key considerations as discussed in relation to Figure 1. While visually and physically separated bicycle facilities are important on busier roads, it is important to emphasise the role of the local street network in providing fine-grained access to residential areas and to a wide range of commercial, retail, educational and other services and facilities.

Mixed traffic environments for bicycles and motor vehicles are the preferred means of bicycle access along local roads with low traffic speeds and volumes such as residential areas, and on very narrow inner-city streets, where the aim is to keep all vehicle speeds low. Two key issues for this type of street are:

- The type of operating space for shared road environments. *NSW Bicycle Guidelines* recognise three types of shared space: spacious profile (it is clear that a car can safely pass a cyclist); tight profile (no passing, suitable for short distances); and critical profile (an ambiguous message which should be avoided); and
- Slow speeds and good inter-visibility between road users are important. These are general road safety requirements for dense inner urban environments. Effective speed management over the past few years is widely recognised to have contributed to the strong reduction in the NSW road toll, with 2008 recording an historic 64-year low.¹

Mixed traffic facilities are not suitable, however, for busier roads, where visual or physical separation for bicycles is required. The *NSW Bicycle Guidelines* state that when separation is provided for bicycles, there are equally great benefits to motorists. Bicyclists normally travel much slower than motorised traffic. When bicycles are required to share normal road lanes, they often find themselves in a very stressful and unpopular position. This can create disruption to the motor-vehicle flows and also increase the risk to the rider. By allocating road space to bicycles, road designers/builders can improve safety for all users, and increase the efficiency of the roadway.

Research conducted for the City of Sydney Bicycle Strategy (2007) confirms a strong community need for separated facilities: "75% of non-regular cyclists said off-road routes would make them cycle more regularly."

Separated facilities are important on many roads that provide access to urban villages and public transport hubs.

¹ NSW Minister for Roads (2009). News Release - Historic Low Road Toll for NSW. 1 January 2009.