Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan Review of Environmental Factors (REF)

Based on 960 pages of documents at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-inner/sydney-city-centre-access-strategy/capacity-improvement-plan/index.html with comments due 9/1/15.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL?

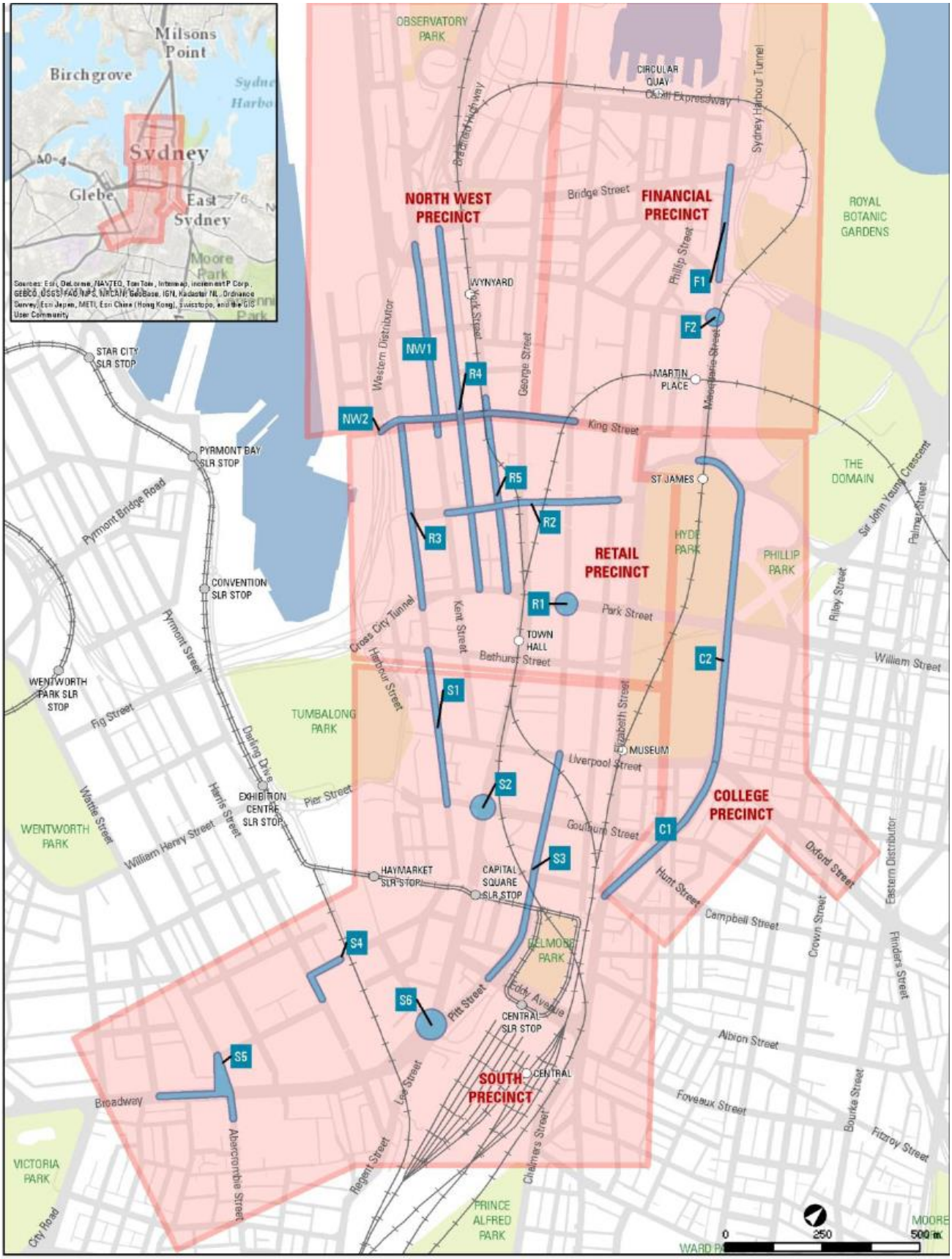
The projects described in *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan* are located across different parts of the Sydney CBD, from Broadway to Macquarie St.

The stated aim of these works is 'to make better use of Sydney's available street space over the coming years to **reduce congestion** and accommodate the CBD's future growth.'

The *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan* proposes 17 projects based on 7 project types:

	Traffic capacity improvement	Description of work*
1	Reconfigure intersections	• Modify layout, signage and line marking at the intersection approaches and departures • Alter lane priority leading into/from intersections • Change turning priority at intersections • Change the size of the intersection
2	Adjust kerbs	• Extend the kerb line to prevent traffic from turning left or right at intersections or to reduce the number of lanes at intersections • Modify or remove sections of kerb line, either at intersections or mid-block • Remove kerb extensions at intersections to allow traffic to turn left or right or to increase the number of lanes on the approach to or exit from intersections
3	Alter footpath widths	• Increase or decrease footpath widths between intersections to improve the traffic flow on the approach to, exit from, or through an intersection; or to alter the existing lane arrangements
4	Change turning restrictions and provisions	• Introduce left turn, right turn and through lane restrictions at intersections through line marking, signage and/or traffic signal changes
5	Modify kerbside uses	• Reduce, remove, relocate or place time restrictions on kerbside allocations
6	Reconfigure lanes	• Alter lane arrangements between intersections
7	Supporting work	Other alterations may include: • Major equipment relocation (e.g. telephone boxes, parking meters, post boxes) • Tree pruning or removal • Bus lane marking alteration or instalment • Bus shelter relocation • Road regrading and resurfacing • Traffic signal and lighting pole work • Utility work • Surface drainage modification and relocation • Bicycle rack relocation

Map of proposed projects in the *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan* (RMS, Nov 2014)



The proposal comprises 17 work sites that combine to form the proposal footprint

Figure 1-1 Regional context and proposal overview

According to Transport for NSW, '92 per cent of trips within the city centre are **walking trips** and this will continue to grow.'[1] There were also 50,000 cycling trips per day in the city centre in 2012, [2] and a doubling of **bicycle trips** in the past three years.

However, the proposed 'traffic capacity improvements' in the *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan* are focused exclusively on increased **movement of motor vehicles.**

Whilst some of these proposed changes are welcome, there are many proposed changes that will be highly detrimental to pedestrians, bicycle riders and public transport customers.

Attached to this submission are some of the plans provided in the *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan,* with annotations highlighting areas of concern or interest to bicycle riders and pedestrians. For example:

- **Wentworth Avenue** - Reconfiguring lanes and removing parking to make **seven lanes of moving traffic** (project C1), which is more than the current M4 motorway, without improving pedestrian safety or amenity.
- **College Street -** Removing the entire segregated cycleway to make way for **six lanes of moving traffic** along the length of Hyde Park (project C2), without provided a safe alternative for bicycle riders or pedestrians.
- **Macquarie Street -** Reconfiguring lanes, removing parking, removing footpath bump-outs and trees to create **five lanes of moving traffic** (project F1, F2) which will effectively make Macquarie St an on-ramp for the expressway.
- **George Street next to Railway Square** – reducing footpath widths and removing trees to make way for **seven lanes of moving traffic** (project S6).
- **Ultimo Road** intersection with Harris Street – removing a signalised pedestrian crossing (project S4) near the UTS and ABC buildings.
- **Broadway** heading toward Railway Square – removing a dedicated bus lane (project S5).
- **York Street** – removing the signalised pedestrian crossing outside the Grace Hotel (R5).
- **Market Street** – between Clarence and York Streets – reducing footpath width (project R2).

These proposed changes to the roads and footpaths will increase the volume and speed of vehicular traffic travelling through the CBD and around its fringe. This will endanger pedestrians and bicycle riders, induce demand for car travel in the central area, and eventually lead to greater congestion in the long term.

[1] Transport for NSW (2013) *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy*
[2] RMS (2014) *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan*, Appendix – traffic and transport assessment, p12

WHAT ARE SOME ALTERNATIVES?

There are many more **cost-effective alternatives** that should be considered to **reduce congestion**.

1. Reducing cross-city traffic, by better utilising the existing Cross City Tunnel and Eastern Distributor
2. Improving movement, safety and amenity for pedestrians, bicycle riders and public transport users within the CBD
3. Higher and better uses of existing vehicle lanes and on-street car parking.

1. Reducing cross-city traffic, by better utilising the existing Cross City Tunnel

In 2005, the Cross City Tunnel was opened at a cost of $680 million.[3] According to the NSW Auditor-General: 'The concept behind the road changes was to implement long-standing Government planning objectives to **reduce congestion in and around Central Sydney**, and to **improve public transport routes and urban amenity**. … the motivation was primarily to clear up the congestion on surface roads.' [4] It also noted that '**Without restrictions on surface traffic, there was a risk that the Cross City Tunnel would add to vehicle numbers and worsen congestion** in Central Sydney.' [5]

The project has gone into receivership twice. Just six months ago, the Cross City Tunnel was purchased by Transurban for $475 million, with a 30-year concession to operate the road until December 2035.[6]

Today, the 2.1 kilometre Cross City Tunnel is vastly underutilised. It was projected to take 99,967 vehicles per day by June 2016.[7] Current patronage figures, which are not readily available to the public, have been reported to be between 33,000 and 45,000 vehicles per day.[8]

Surely this major infrastructure asset can be better utilised?

Recommendation 1	**That consideration be given to reducing traffic flow through the CBD by reducing surface traffic lanes and reducing the tolls on the Cross City Tunnel and Eastern Distributor.**

[3] NSW Auditor General (2006), *The Cross City Tunnel Project,* p25 www.audit.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/138/152_Cross_City_Tunnel.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y accessed 7/12/14
[4] NSW Auditor General (2006), *The Cross City Tunnel Project,* p3
[5] NSW Auditor General (2006), *The Cross City Tunnel Project,* p3
[6] Transurban (2014) www.transurban.com/files/FY14_Full-year_results_presentation.pdf
[7] NSW Auditor General (2006), *The Cross City Tunnel Project,* p32
[8] Charting Transport (2014), *http://chartingtransport.com/2012/03/03/traffic-volumes-on-australian-toll-roads/* reported 33,000 at June 2014. Whereas SMH (2013) www.smh.com.au/business/no-light-at-the-end-of-sydneys-city-tunnel-20130910-2ti84.html reported around 45,000 at September 2013. The Australian (2013) http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/companies/investors-to-dig-sydneys-cross-city-tunnel-out-of-its-hole-says-greiner/story-fn91v9q3-1226722374620 quoted Infrastructure NSW former chairman Nick Greiner saying there were 250,000 vehicles per week.

2. Improving movement, safety and amenity for pedestrians, bicycle riders and public transport users

There are 1.3 million pedestrian trips per day during working hours, in the city centre alone. Between 2007 and 2011 there were 904 pedestrian casualties in the city centre.[9] There are also around 50,000 bicycle trips per day.[10]

The *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan* will fail to improve the safety, convenience and amenity of pedestrians and bicycle riders in a number of key locations.

The appendix to *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan* admits that 'the proposed reduction of footpath widths and removal of kerb extensions would impact pedestrian capacity in some locations'.[11]

It also, inexplicably, states that 'The existing bicycle network would not be fundamentally altered by the proposal. However, **the proposed removal of cycleways at some locations would impact cyclists**…. The impacts of the removal of existing cycling infrastructure would generally be mitigated by the provision of existing or new infrastructure in alternative locations: The loss of the existing College Street cycleway would be mitigated by the provision of a new cycleway on Castlereagh St.' [12]

This is clearly incorrect. It takes four minutes to cycle from College St to Castlereagh St, with no safe cycle route between the two. This is not 'mitigation', it is endangerment.

The Transport for NSW (2013) *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* was clear in its guidance on improved pedestrian, bicycle, bus and light rail flows. This needs to be followed through to implementation by the RMS.

Recommendation 2	**That emphasis be given to improving the movement, safety and amenity of pedestrians, bicycle riders and public transport users in the CBD, in accordance with Transport for NSW (2013) *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy***

[9] RMS (2014) *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan*, Appendix – traffic and transport assessment, p12
[10] City of Sydney bicycle counts
[11] RMS (2014) *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan*, Appendix – traffic and transport assessment, p67
[12] RMS (2014) *Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan*, Appendix – traffic and transport assessment, p67

3. Higher and better uses of existing vehicle lanes and on-street car parking.

Space is a critical constraint in the Sydney CBD. Mass transit systems (bus, train and light rail), walking and cycling are significantly more space efficient than private motor vehicles – both in terms of the road space used and parking space required. Every one of these individuals saves an additional car parking bay in the city, which can cost upwards of $60,000 per bay.

During the morning peak, across the Harbour Bridge, more people enter the city on buses than in all the cars combined.[13] The number of people riding along the bicycle path on the Sydney Harbour Bridge is enough to fill 30 buses, despite having to climb fifty steps carrying their bikes.

Some of the cycleways in Sydney CBD now take more people than in adjacent car lanes: Kent Street cycleway moves 34 per cent of all people travelling along the route at morning peak hour, and takes 25 per cent of the road space.[14]

Increasingly businesses and households are also using share cars – one share car can reduce the need for up to 12 households to own their own car. It can also be a more cost-effective alternative for businesses.

Many courier companies use bicycles and cargo bikes to reduce the need to vehicles to drive and park in the CBD. Whilst this is not an option for all deliveries, it should be given greater consideration in a bid to reduce demand for loading bays and on-street parking.

Recommendation 3	**That existing on-street car parking, loading bays and traffic lanes be reviewed for 'higher and better uses' such as wider footpaths, dedicated bus lanes, segregated bicycle lanes, share cars, and vegetation.**

[13] Transport for NSW (2013) *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy*
[14] Transport for NSW (2013) *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy: draft technical report on proposed strategic cycling corridors*

APPENDIX

Annotations in yellow boxes and red text/boxes are basic 'interpretations' based on more detailed maps available to the public at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-inner/sydney-city-centre-access-strategy/capacity-improvement-plan/index.html

These annotations are not endorsed by RMS/TfNSW.

EXTRACTED PLAN MAPS
NOTE: NORTH ARROW DOES NOT ALWAYS POINT UPWARDS!

Roads and Maritime

Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan - Volume 1

Review of environmental factors
November, 2014

EXTRACTED MAPS OF PRECINCTS
1. NORTH-WEST precinct (projects NW1-NW2)
2. RETAIL precinct (projects R1-R5)
3. SOUTH precinct (projects S1-S6)
4. COLLEGE precinct (projects C1-C2)
5. FINANCIAL precinct (projects F1-F2)

ANNOTATIONS ARE 'INTERPRETATIONS' BY LINK PLACE (10 DEC 2014) AND ARE NOT ENDORSED BY RMS OR TRANSPORT FOR NSW

1. North-West precinct (projects NW1-NW2)

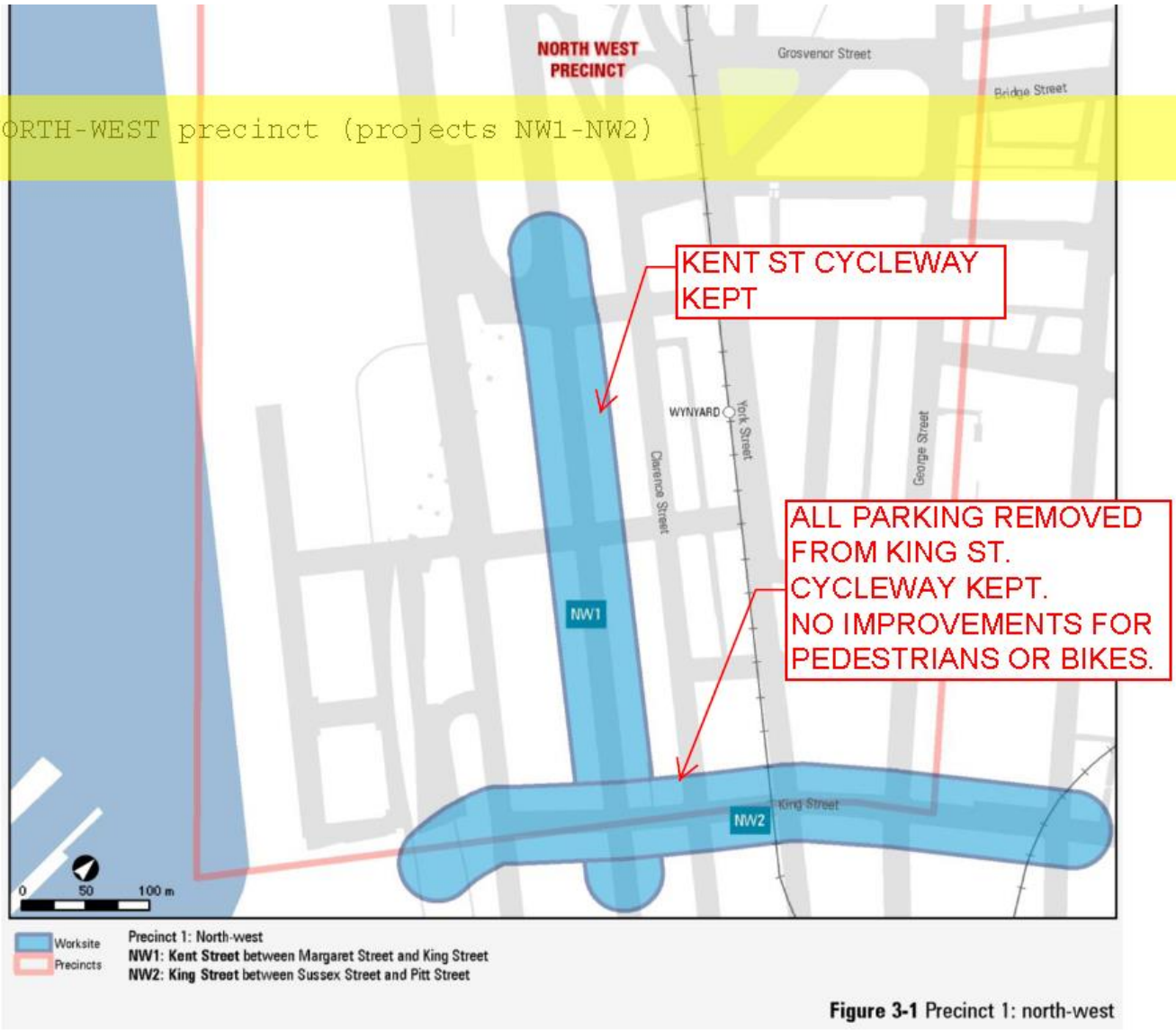


Figure 3-1 Precinct 1: north-west

2. RETAIL precinct (projects R1-R5)

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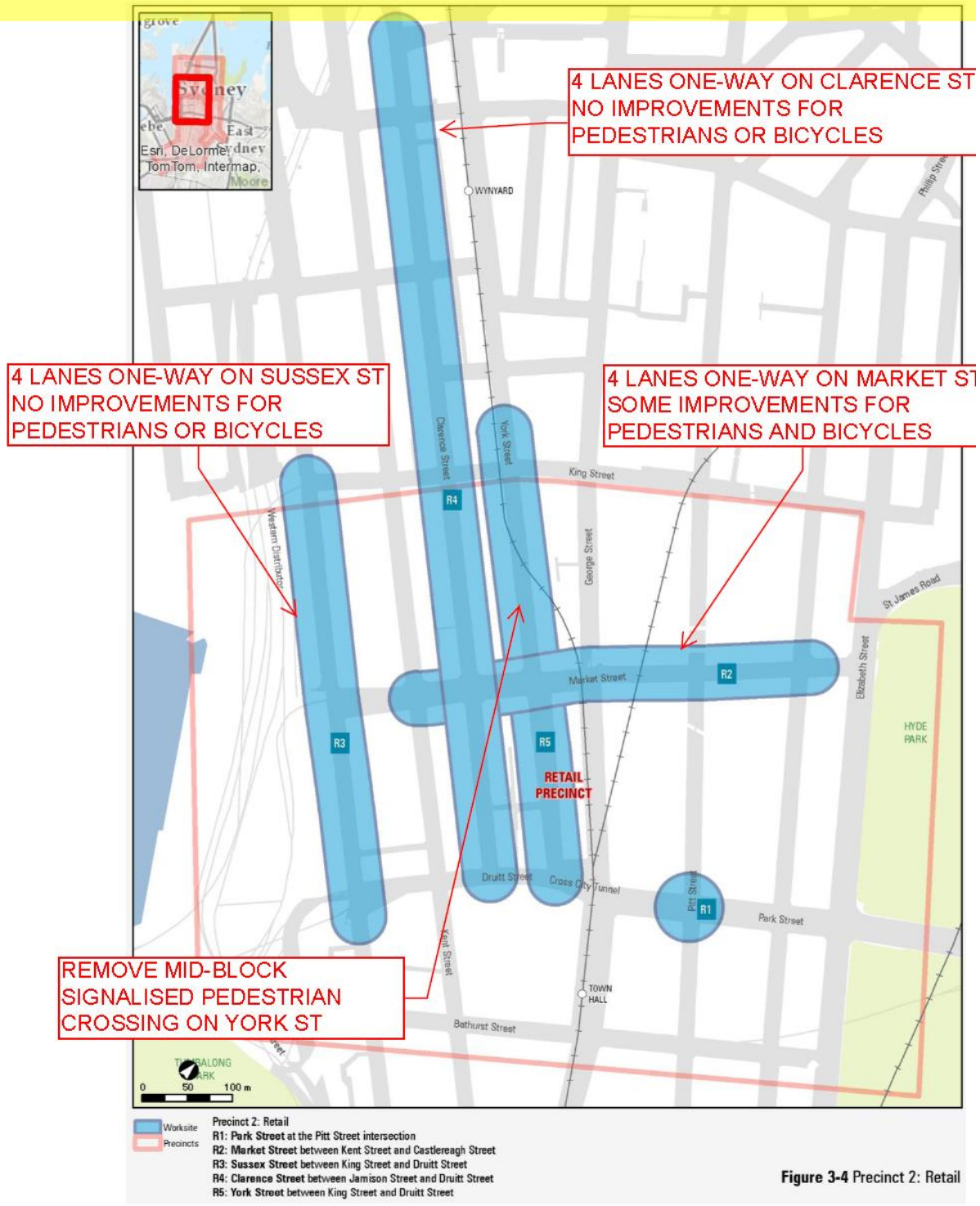


Figure 3-4 Precinct 2: Retail

3. SOUTHERN precinct (projects S1-S6)

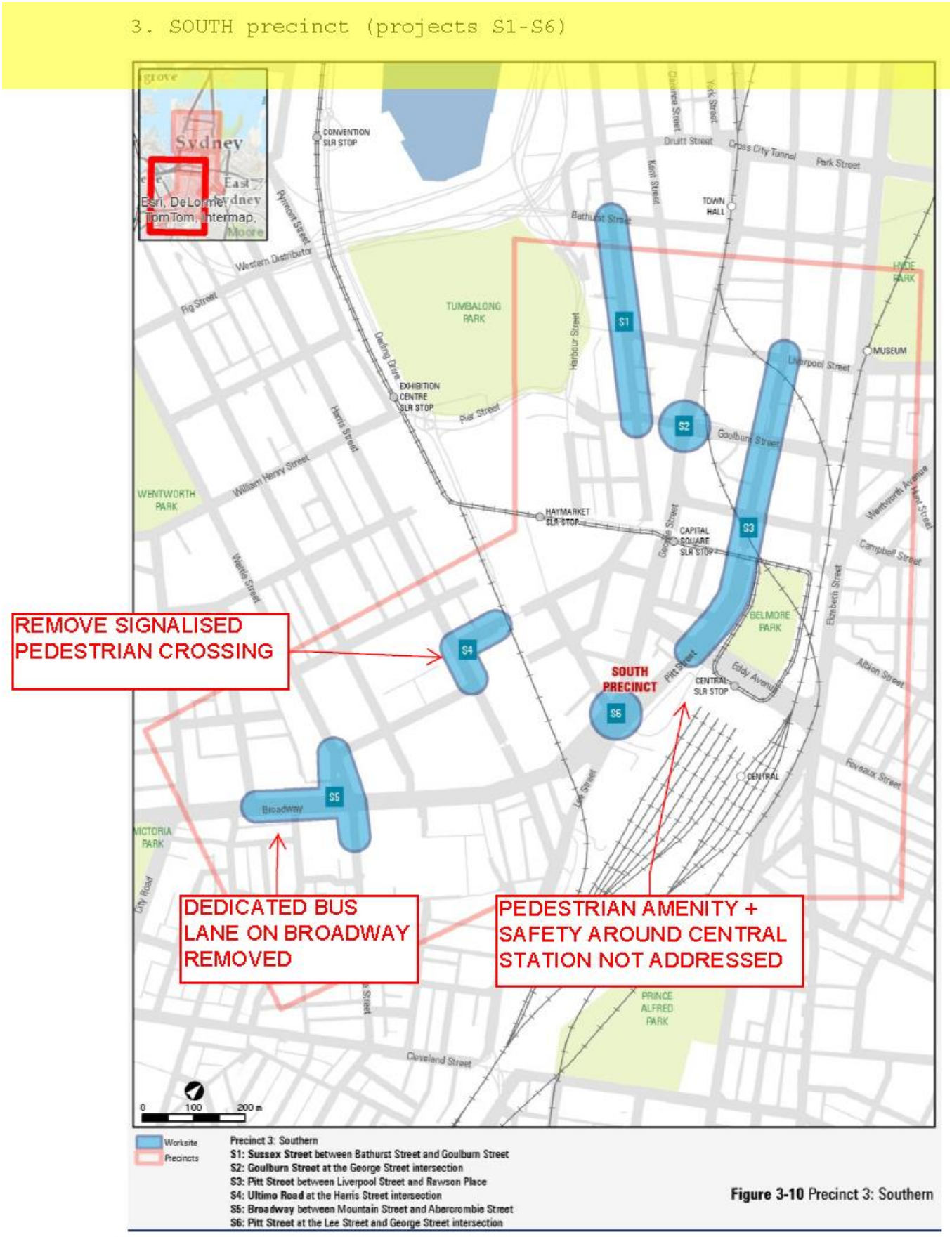
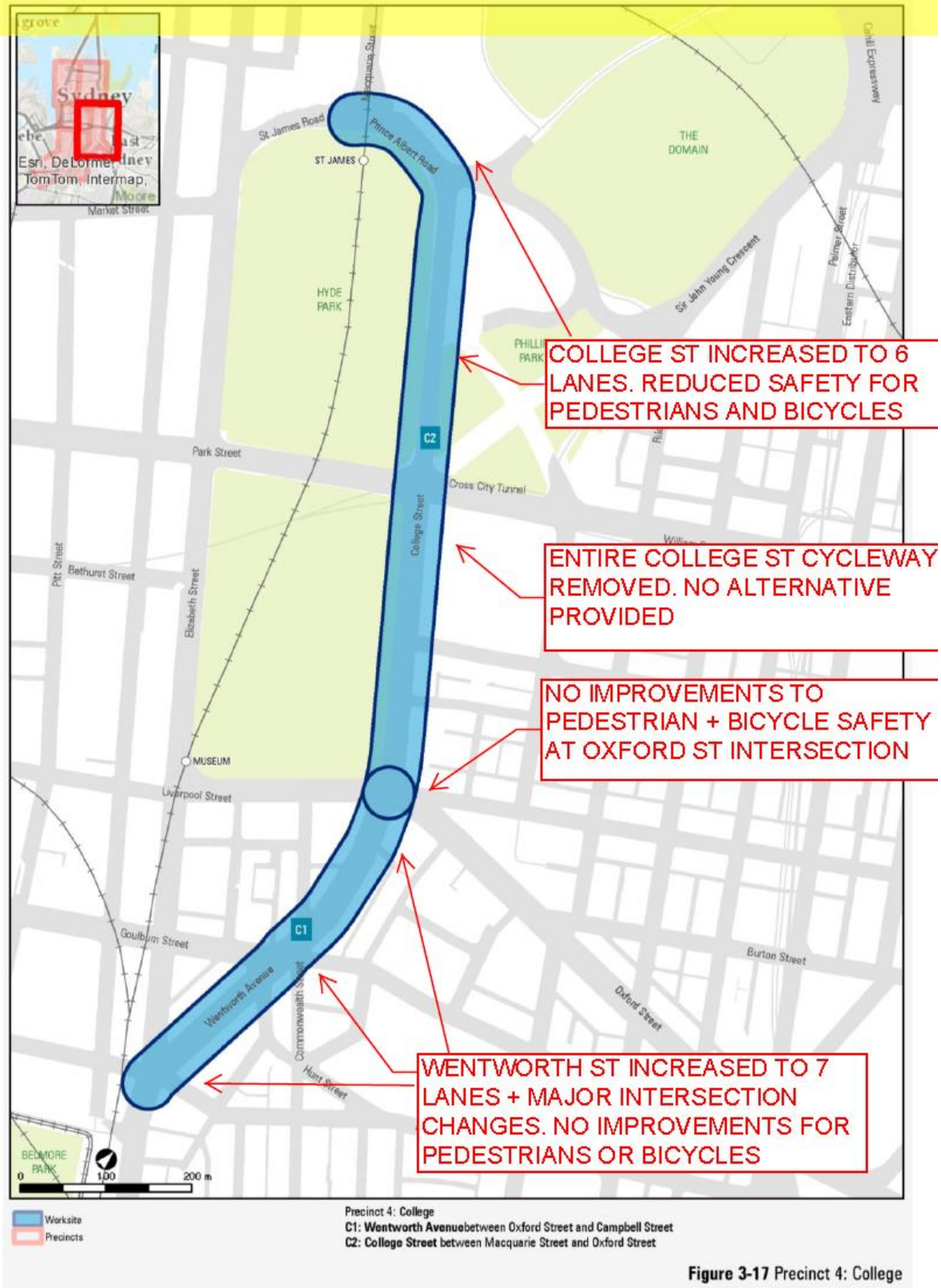


Figure 3-10 Precinct 3: Southern

4. COLLEGE precinct (C1-C2)

4. COLLEGE precinct (projects C1-C2)



Precinct 4: **College**
C1: Wentworth Avenuebetween Oxford Street and Campbell Street
C2: College Street between Macquarie Street and Oxford Street

Figure 3-17 Precinct 4: College

5. FINANCIAL PRECINCT (F1-F2)