

Sutherland Shire Council

Putting Local Knowledge on the Map:
How Community-Led Digital Engagement Shaped
a Safer, More Connected Cycling Future

OVERVIEW

When Sutherland Shire Council set out to create its first long-term blueprint for cycling infrastructure, it knew the success of the plan would depend on one critical factor: deeply understanding how people actually move through their community every day. Rather than relying solely on technical modelling or traditional consultation, Council invited residents to actively shape the future of cycling through an inclusive, highly visual digital engagement experience.

Using the Granicus **Sentiment & Feedback** (EngagementHQ) platform and its Places interactive mapping tool, Council empowered residents to share hyper-local insights – pinpointing routes, highlighting safety concerns, and identifying gaps in the cycling network. Over a month-long consultation, thousands of community interactions translated local knowledge into actionable transport planning outcomes, building trust, strengthening the draft plan, and setting a new benchmark for transparent, inclusive engagement.

This innovative approach earned Sutherland Shire Council the Community Engagement Award at the 2026 Granicus Digital Government Awards.

MUST HAVE SOLUTIONS

Sentiment & Feedback

5K+

project page
visits



1,694

interactions with
places map



97%

open rate on
consultation results
newsletter












“Our 10 Year Bike Plan is all about making cycling safer and more convenient for everyone in our community, ultimately creating a more livable, sustainable Sutherland Shire. By using the Granicus Places tool, residents were empowered to actively shape transport planning – sharing local knowledge that directly influenced routes, strengthened trust, and set a new benchmark for inclusive, transparent digital consultation.”

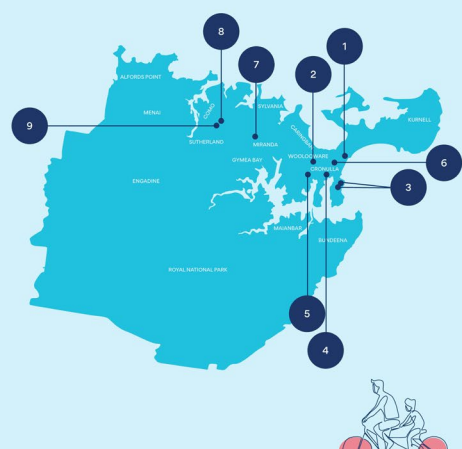
Stephanie Quine, Community Engagement Advisor, Sutherland Shire Council





LOCAL CYCLE PATH LINKS

The following (in no particular order) are Sutherland Shire Council's priority local active transport link proposals for the next 2-10 years. They are subject to change, depending on the delivery of NSW Government projects, and funding availability. They will also require community consultation and detailed design.

 1 HUME ROAD, CRONULLA <small>Michel Rd to Elouera Rd</small>	 2 GANNONS ROAD, WOOLOOWARE <small>Kingsway to Burraneer Park</small>	 3 GUNNAMATTA BAY BOAT RAMP/MARINA TO <small>Blackwoods Beach and Shelley Beach Baths</small>
 4 BURRANEER BAY RD, CRONULLA <small>Excelsior Rd to Kurrumatta Pl</small>	 5 BURRANEER PARK, BURRANEER <small>east-west link formalisation</small>	 6 WOOLOOWARE ACTIVE TRANSPORT LINK <small>Phillip St, Burke Rd, Craydon St</small>
 7 SYLVANIA RD, MIRANDA <small>Kingsway to President Ave</small>	 8 PRINCES HWY, KIRRAWEE <small>Oak Rd to Acacia Rd</small>	 9 ACACIA ROAD, KIRRAWEE <small>President Ave to Old Princes Hwy</small>







For more information visit go.ssc.nsw.gov.au/BikePlan24

SITUATION

Characterised by waterways, bushland, and diverse neighbourhoods, Sutherland Shire faces unique challenges in designing a connected cycling network. With interest in cycling growing, and a local government area covering 370 square kilometres, Council needed a way to meaningfully engage a broad cross-section of the community; from families and recreational cyclists to experienced commuters.

The goal was ambitious: develop a **10 Year Bike Plan** that prioritised safety, connectivity, and convenience, while also generating genuine community support and high-quality feedback that could influence real planning decisions.

To achieve that, Council needed more than a static exhibition or traditional survey. It needed a way for residents to show, not just tell, how cycling works – or doesn't – in their daily lives.

SOLUTION

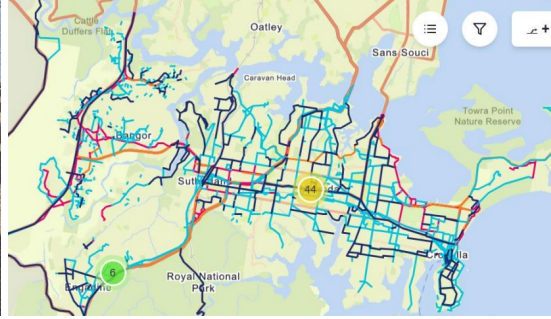
Council launched its Draft 10 Year Bike Plan on its **Join the Conversation** engagement hub, with the Places interactive mapping tool at the centre of the experience.

Working closely with its Traffic Engineering and Geospatial teams, Council's Community Engagement team was able to upload detailed, colour-coded shapefiles representing existing and proposed on-road and off-road cycling routes across Sutherland Shire. Residents could zoom from a whole-of-network view down to street level and drop pins directly on the map to provide feedback, identifying preferred routes, safety risks, missing connections, and local cycling "hot spots."

This approach transformed engagement from abstract to tangible. Instead of interpreting long documents, and many pages of static maps, residents interacted with a single, intuitive map that mirrored how they actually experience the network.

To ensure inclusivity and reach, the digital experience was supported by a targeted multichannel strategy; including social media, e-newsletters, QR-code flyers, site signage, and in-person pop-ups at a local market and bike tune-up event. Large printed versions of the map mirrored the digital tool, allowing in-person feedback to align seamlessly with online insights.

Behind the scenes, Grancius' survey analysis and reporting tools helped staff efficiently interpret hundreds of detailed responses and close the loop with the community.



RESULTS

The response exceeded expectations, both in scale and substance.

Engagement didn't end when the survey closed. A consultation results newsletter sent via Sentiment & Feedback achieved a 97% open rate and 60% click-through rate, demonstrating sustained community interest and trust.

More importantly, the quality of feedback directly influenced outcomes. Community insights led to additions, adjustments, and removals of proposed bike routes, informed further on-the-ground investigations, and shaped priorities for safety, connectivity, and e-bike education. The data now provides powerful evidence for future funding, advocacy, and capital works decisions.

As one project lead noted, these insights will be "really useful in grant funding applications" – reinforcing the tangible value of meaningful digital engagement.

"This project shows how smart digital engagement can deliver better results for communities while using funds economically," said Jack Boyd, Mayor of Sutherland Shire Council. "With modest investment, Council reached thousands of residents and gathered precise, actionable feedback that will guide cycling infrastructure priorities for the next decade."

This story highlights the hard work and innovation that earned Sutherland Shire Council's Community Engagement Team recognition as a winner in the 15th Annual **Granicus Digital Government Awards**, honoring exceptional achievements in digital government.

Interested in finding out how Granicus
can work for your community?

By the close of the public exhibition, the consultation generated:

