

**urbanrenewal - Submission re Newcastle Urban Renewal.**

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**To:** <urbanrenewal@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 12/02/2013 5:56 PM  
**Subject:** Submission re Newcastle Urban Renewal.

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Hello,

I approve of most aspects of the Urban Renewal Strategy. I believe the plan identifies potentials for Newcastle to become a brighter place. There is comprehensive attention given to use of Public space, improved spaces for cultural, residential, educational as well as commercial uses.

What I am concerned with is the lack of detailed attention to transport planning. Trains have been cut at Wickham, the principal reason, repeated ad nauseum in the document, being to allow improved access across the rail line. This, I believe, is an entirely insufficient argument for removing a transport corridor. I would have been less concerned had the decision been taken to use the rail corridor as a rapid transit corridor for the buses which are said to be the new improved way into the city. Previous plans have shown this possibility. There was also the possibility of the corridor being a separated pedestrian walkway / cycleway. This would have also fitted well into the NSW Governments stated aims for encouraging active transport. Instead the following appears;

***Future uses of the rail corridor***

In the short-term additional at-grade connections can be created across the corridor in strategic locations. Uses of the remaining parts of the corridor will need to be investigated, although there are opportunities for it to be landscaped in the short-term. This urban renewal strategy reinforces Hunter Street's current role as the main movement corridor in the city centre to support activity and economic opportunity. Any future uses of the railway corridor will need to factor this in.

My understanding is that the rail corridor, as it stands, cannot be sold or used for other purposes without an act of Parliament being passed. Nothing of this legal framework is mentioned in the above summary. Nor does it seem to rate a mention in the publicity around this plan. So in the end, after all the to-ing and froing and delays and studies, we have a "decision" to cut the rail line at Wickham, without any indication of how this will be achieved or even what the corridor would be used for. This I believe is an "artists impression" of a decision, not a real decision.

So on face value, based on the strategy and a recently released draft Hunter Street strategy to increase parking it appears we have moved from;

4 lane traffic in Hunter Street, 2 lanes of parking 2 rail lines, no cycleways. To  
 2 lane traffic in Hunter Street, increased parking, no rail lines, Bus lanes interrupted by 5 new crossing points and a trial of an on road (not separated) cycleway. How

this is will increase and improve access to the city, by any mode of transport, requires an imagination I am not blessed with.

So the bottom line of my submission is this. If access to Newcastle is to be improved as the Strategy suggests it should be, then the current rail corridor should be preserved as a transport corridor, not be allotted to some vague notion of “public space”. We need more space for transit, not for parking and coffee tables.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards

David Bennett