

Mr. Grahame Charge
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Newcastle East NSW 2300

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Manager Centres and Urban Renewal
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

**Submission to Department of Planning & Infrastructure
"Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012"**

Dear Sir,

As a long term resident of Newcastle city, I have studied the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 document in detail and have attended and spoken at public meetings run by the department and I wish to respectfully make this submission for serious consideration by the implementation group as a whole.

I have two major areas of concern:-

A. I do not agree with the decision to cut the rail line at Wickham

B. I do not agree with zoning proposed for recreational use along the water front -particularly in the area from the NIB building at 22 Honeysuckle Drive to the Fig Tree Park in Wickham.

A. The Rail Corridor

The strategy provides insufficient information and direction on what uses may be made of the rail corridor between Wickham and Newcastle East - in fact it proposes more uncertainty of use and retention as a vital infrastructure corridor -refer to page 124.....

"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."

and to page 120 :-

"In light of the government's recent decision that bus services will replace train services from a new transport interchange at Wickham, the resolution of more detailed transport issues to support the proposed city growth, land use and

connections in the city centre will need to occur in the final NSW Long Term Master Plan, the Regional Transport Plans and the final urban renewal strategy.

There is barely any other specific mention within the strategy document outlining the considerations given to the long-term retention of this vital corridor and the specific uses by which it may contribute to the overall benefit of the city.

There can be a WIN -WIN with the rail corridor that will largely satisfy all the interested parties and which would alleviate most of the political angst within the community:-

- Introduce light rail on the existing two tracks between Wickham & Newcastle utilising the existing rail infrastructure, as has been done in many other cities around the world.
- Install the new proposed north-south cross-over points along the track with infill to provide seamless at grade crossings and if necessary introduce traffic lights at the key vehicle crossing points.
- Remove all boundary fencing along the rail corridor to "open the city to the foreshore"
- Provide landscaping adjacent to the tracks and between the tracks with suitable grassed areas & trees on the verges.
- Lock in the Infrastructure Zoning (SP2) so there can be no cash grab by selling off the vital corridor by this or any future government.
- If two tracks are considered not necessary in the short term then consideration should be given to burying the second track to permit landscaping and pedestrian walkways and a dedicated cycle path. (Cathodic protection of the buried rails could ensure this line is preserved for next 30 years while the future of the corridor is confirmed)

It has been verbally stated by planners that light rail would not be viable and whilst this may be true in the short term, purely on direct operating costing, it is unlikely to be the case if the whole of life costing and expense of the set up of alternate capital works were included in a truly comparative study.

The lack of detail in the strategy and unwillingness of the Government to openly consider light rail is the cause of the serious fear and great suspicion held by many voters in the community.

The Public has not been given any study results on the light rail options and this option must surely be seriously considered and costed in the implementation studies.

B. Zoning for Recreational Use

Now is the time to correct the errors of the past where the planning did not recognise the huge benefits to the social fabric of the community and tourism that an open recreational area adjoining the water front provides.

This is very evident from the praise heaped upon the "foreshore park to the east of the city.

The "brick wall of buildings" that has been constructed along the water front around the Honeysuckle area cannot be allowed to be extended further west immediately adjacent to the harbour.

Page 138 of the strategy contains "Fig 5.1 Proposed long term Zoning for Wickham"
This diagram shows no RE1 zoning along the waters' edge from around 22
Honeysuckle drive to the fig tree park in Wickham.

Whilst the Newcastle LEP2012 shows a minimal strip of RE1 zoned walkway along
the harbour this will not provide the necessary open space to replicate the
connectivity to the harbour that is present to the east. This connectivity is one of the
key stated aims of the urban renewal strategy.

Page 197 shows:-

5.7 Pedestrian amenity

Figure 5.53 Proposed DCP map, pedestrian permeability

---this diagram indicates a cycle way along the foreshore well back from the water on
either side of cottage creek but this area is not planned as recreational zoning --it
should be at least 30m wide from the waterfront.

and

5.5 Landscape and open space

*New controls should be put in place to ensure the
primary east-west and north-south links are well landscaped
with continuous street trees and quality
paving to footpaths. Special area controls discussed
in the earlier stages of this strategy outline special
provisions for the Cottage Creek corridor and Civic
Park/Wheeler Place axis.*

The termination of the Cottage creek north-south corridor should surely not be at a
5m wide path along the harbour.

**There is a an opportunity now to make the cottage creek area on the harbour
similar to the wide park areas to the east so there is a real reason to connect
the new commercial hub of the city to an attractive parkland on the harbour.**

I thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and trust you will give it due
consideration.

Yours sincerely,


Grahame Charge