



***Submission in response to:
Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City
And Draft Hunter Regional Plan***

February 2016

Introduction

The CycleSafe Network welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Hunter Regional Plan and the Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City and look forward to continuing the positive discussion about our city and region.

The CSN is an incorporated association representing a wide range of businesses, industry groups, community groups, and residents.

The CycleSafe Network envisions the Hunter region to build 160 km of safe active travel infrastructure within 7 years, and based on the principles of:

- ✓ family safety and uniformity,
- ✓ connectivity,
- ✓ legibility, and
- ✓ amenity.

Through our research, engagement with the community and council, we believe this proposed project would have a positive impact on the Hunter City. Regardless of this project, considering active travel as a transport network and not as recreational infrastructure is key to ensuring a liveable city for the expected population growth, as well as, combating the health effects of an increasingly sedentary population.

The CycleSafe Network can contribute sustainably as the region grows in population and density, support innovation in a transitioning economy away from coal, and finding solutions to the health and economic impacts of an increasingly obese population.

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Overall response to Draft Plans for Hunter City

The CSN welcomes the commitment in the Draft Hunter City Plan build active transport through Hunter City and recognise its importance as a viable transport and alternative to car use. The additional 750,000 within the next 40 to 50 years or 117,850 by 2036 means an increasing population. Without changes to current infrastructure planning this is likely to exacerbate traffic, sprawl, and pollution, as well as, compound the increasing preventable diseases across the Hunter City, for example Newcastle and Lake Macquarie rank 16 (out of 92) with 27.2% of the population living with Cardiovascular Disease.

Individuals want active travel as shown by the recent revitalising Newcastle community consultation outcomes report which noted, “People wanted the revitalisation plan to include infrastructure and facilities that encourage the use of active transport (walking and cycling),” but they want it to be safe.

Providing a safe option that even a primary school aged child could ride on, the CSN offers a solution to normalising active travel in your everyday life. Whether it is a short trip to the local shop, the friend around the corner, the children’s primary school, or the journey to work using the network just three times a week could make a big difference. The population will benefit in health, well-being, social connections, and convenience.

Whilst we appreciate and acknowledge the importance of the health of the environment, it is not just the health of the environment or natural environment should be supported, its people, i.e. the future workforce and leaders of the community should be as well. In the 19th century urban planners and engineers began reengineering the streets to have modern sewage which reduced cholera rates and infectious disease tremendously; innovation and quality of life soared throughout the developed world. Similarly, active travel networks are the next major health infrastructure planning required to further advance our health and produce the next boost to quality of life and innovation.

The CSN solution has the opportunity to support and drive an urban framework necessary for medium mixed use development across the Hunter Region along key nodes. Providing amenity and reducing car pollution in areas with medium density could promote increase in active travel commuters as well as incentives to move in the city. Less space for cars means more space for parks, people, and business.

A connected and well developed active travel network can assist in driving economic return across the region. New industries to support the increase in servicing the industry or increase in local business turnover from replacing one car space with six bike parking spaces. It is an economy that can support itself. The effects of value capture along walking and cycling paths are only just beginning to be realised. This correlation is expected to continue. The CSN could be the vehicle to measure it.

The CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Network Project can help achieve the goals laid out in the Hunter Regional Plan, however the Growing Hunter City Plan must include the CSN as an transport infrastructure and not consider it purely as recreational infrastructure through its inclusion solely through the green grid.

The CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Project could be the mechanism to shift the thinking to transport infrastructure and provide meaningful support to Growing Hunter City.

Response to specific sections of the Draft Hunter Regional Plan

The response is structured first by identifying the goal, how the CSN can assist in meeting that goal, then any recommendations of figure additions, and finally any actions.

Goal 1: Grow Australia's next major city

Provision of an active travel infrastructure network will be imperative to managing the large population growth expected across the region.

Figure4 – Defining Hunter City should indicate a future active travel network or provision of one.

Goal 2: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia

Active Travel offers a potential tourism and new economy benefit to the region. Imagine visiting the port by cruise ship then cycling a cruise 3 to 4 hours to the wine country, meander back through the Richmond Vale Rail trail then off on your cruise ship the next day. In places all across the world, cycling tourism is gaining momentum, one study in Australia showed cycle tourist spend an average of \$244 per day per rider. A new economy could develop in addition to the one needed to support the active travel transition and sustainability.

Figure 5 – Exploring Coal Mining Activities and Exploration Areas in the Hunter should indicate a future active travel network or provision of one.

Figure 8 – Current Mineral Resource Titles and Exploration Areas in the Hunter should indicate a future active travel network or provision of one.

Figure 9 – Selected Primary Industries in the Hunter should indicate a future active travel network or provision of one.

Action 2.3.1 Identify and deliver transport corridors to enhance inter-regional networks

Incorporating the CSN into transport corridors particularly with separated infrastructure and end of trip facilities will enhance inter-regional networks. If major employment centres near industrial areas and railroads can reduce employee traffic around those points then freight will benefit.

Goal 3: Protect and Connect Natural Environments

It is important to remember that protecting the health of the population and the natural environment work together. Many conservation paths, such as the Richmond Vale Rail Trail, improves the connection to the natural environment. Whilst cycling in an urban environment reduces car pollution and improves air quality.

Figure 11 – High Environmental Values in the Hunter should indicate a future active travel network or provision of one.

Figure 14 – Water Catchments in the Hunter should indicate a future active travel network or provision of one.

Goal 4: Support Robust Communities Protect and Connect Natural Environments

In order to support robust communities you must protect and promote their health. Active Travel Infrastructure can promote healthy lifestyles and drive positive change in the community.

Action 4.2.1 Investigate options to integrate the delivery of housing with infrastructure

Planning controls should support the delivery of end of trip facilities in both public and private developments that includes lockers, showers, toilets, and secure covered parking. State controlled infrastructure should incorporate active travel modes or considerations of those modes in all developments.

Response to specific sections of the *Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City*

The response is structured first by identifying the action and stating the action, how the CSN can assist in meeting that action or a recommendation to the action then any recommendations of figure additions, and noting the page numbers for case studies located within the Plan where appropriate.

ACTION 1.1.1 Invest in strategic centres to grow jobs and housing and create vibrant hubs of activity

Investing in strategic area should include end of trip facilities (ETFs) with quality amenities for pedestrians and commuting cyclists. ETFs located at key destinations and public transport interchanges as well as private developments will be required to support the government's 5% cycling mode share target. Policy mechanisms and planning controls for ETF facilities within private developments may be necessary to improve standard or make mandatory.

Action 1.3.1 Integrate land use and transport planning to encourage more efficient travel patterns and sustainable mode of transport.

The CSN recommends Action 1.3.1 include the CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Network Project as a key infrastructure project and the need to connect employment and strategic centres of the Hunter Regional Plan.

The CycleSafe Network is a Transport Infrastructure network and must be considered in the same way as a road network with motor vehicles.

ACTION 1.4.3 Plan and deliver the Hunter City Green Grid

Whilst we thank you for the acknowledgement of cycle safe in this document, the CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Project is more than a green grid recreational project it is an effective mode of transportation infrastructure for business and city development. It should sit within the integrated land use and transport planning section of the plan to create a holistic network across the city.

Page 23 – Investments to the Newcastle

Project funding of \$10,000 and \$500,000 does not support a network or connectivity. If the government is serious regarding funding of active travel, then funding levels commensurate with other road infrastructure is required, e.g. \$100 million.

ACTION 2.2.3 Support increased walking and cycling, and improved connectivity in Inner Newcastle

A proper walking and cycling network should include the following principles:

- *Family Safe* - Connecting destinations with a uniform level of safety along the length. A primary school age child should be able to use it without supervision.
- *Connected* - Linking everywhere to everywhere the network operates as a grid versus the typical radial design. The grid network maximizes permeability and caters for diverse

transport needs; this is how the current car road network is laid out. Side branches will connect the network into major destinations such as shops, schools, the university, and employment centres.

- *Legibility* - Easy way finding signage that's clear, and consistent. It should not be necessary to consult a map once you are on the network.
- *Amenity* - Direct, attractive paths with end-of-trip facilities and secure interchanges with public transport can help make cycling a more convenient, enjoyable activity.

In addition, to support increases in walking and cycling, safe cycling programs for children and beginners need to be performed and driver education.

Recommendations

The CSN organising committee recommends in the *Draft Hunter Regional Plan*

- The designation of active travel infrastructure within transport corridors and enhancement considerations for the inter-regional network.
- The inclusion of the CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Network Project in the Hunter Regional Plan.
- Include strategic lines indicating the CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Network on the regional maps listed as figures 4,5,8,9,11, and 14; or the inclusion within the arterial road definition when appropriate, e.g. Coal and Industry figures.

The CSN organising committee recommends in the *Draft Plan Growing Hunter City*

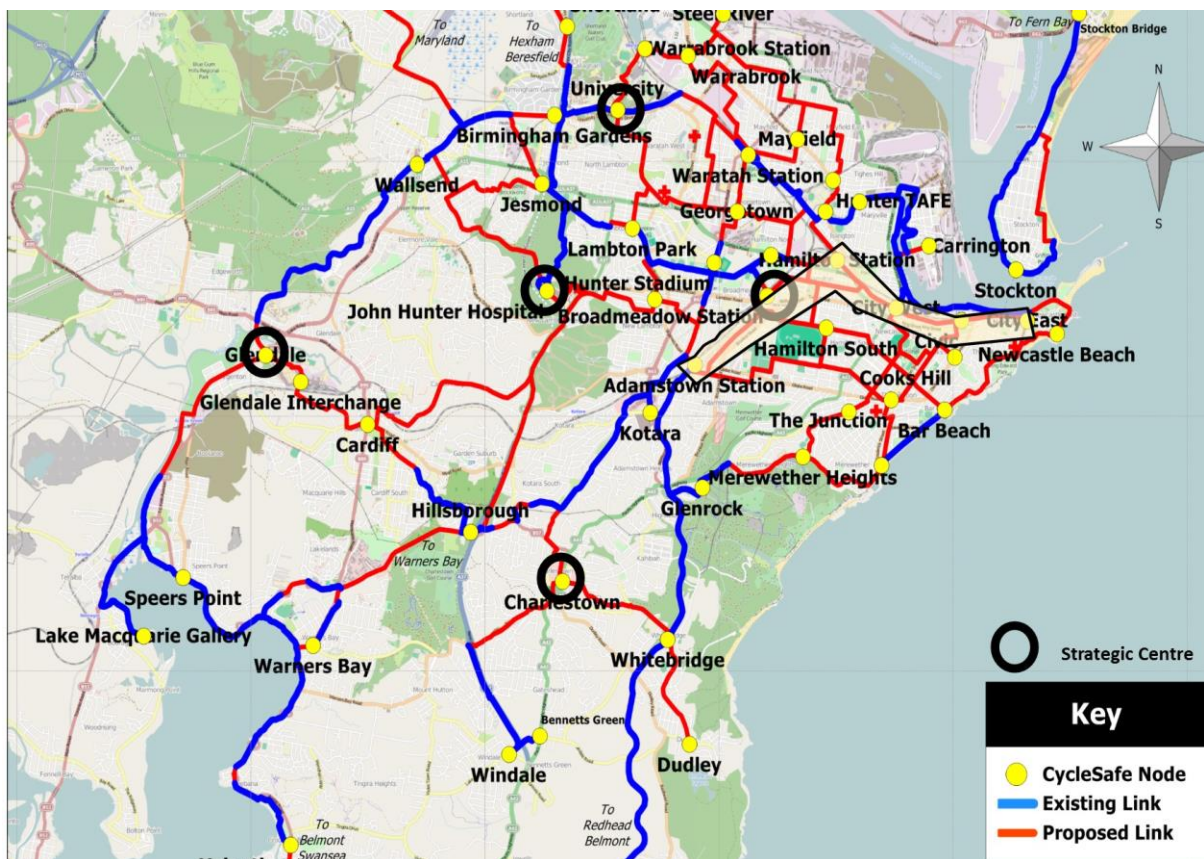
- The provision of active travel infrastructure as transport infrastructure and not purely recreational infrastructure.
- That active travel infrastructure be planned and developed as transport infrastructure and be considering during the designing in the same way as a road network with motor vehicles.
- The inclusion of the CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Network Project in the Draft Growing Hunter City Plan.
- Include strategic lines indicating the CSN Active Travel Infrastructure Network on the regional maps listed in figures throughout the *Draft Plan Growing Hunter City*.

References

Urban Growth (2015). Revitalising Newcastle – Engagement Outcomes Report. Available at: https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ehq-production-australia/4098e40d4e76f82c49a9614f20f87c1269881bc9/documents/attachments/000/030/155/original/URB0086_full_engagement_report_online.pdf?1449468032

Beeton, S. (2009) Cycling in Regional Communities: A Longitudinal Study of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, Victoria, Australia, Research Report, La Trobe University, Bundoora

Appendix 1 CycleSafe Network Map – August 2015 with Strategic Centres noted.



Appendix 2 CycleSafe Network Map – 300m catchment buffer

