



26 July 2018

Feedback on Hobart Transport Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Transport Strategy for Hobart.

Bicycle Network's key aim is to improve the health outcomes for Tasmanians by encouraging them to walk or ride to work, school or services, to embrace riding as a key part of their fitness, and to simply enjoy the physical and economic freedom riding a bike can deliver.

Bicycle Network recognises the importance of the Transport Strategy in guiding the City of Hobart's strategic and annual planning. The thorough consultation process and thought given to the issues is welcomed, as is the recognition of bicycle transport as a major theme in the strategy.

In writing this submission we recognise that the City has limited funds and would need state and federal government support to build the kind of infrastructure needed to get more people riding for transport. We would hope that the City Deal for Hobart is a mechanism through which funding can be allocated to do this.

Our submission is focussed on how the transport strategy could be made stronger to provide a clear way forward for the City of Hobart to embrace bicycle riding as a key transport mode for people aged 8–80.

This submission will outline the areas where we think the strategy could be strengthened and provide recommendations for changes and additions to the suggested actions.

Local government as a driver for change

Local government has a key role to play in providing bicycle infrastructure designed for a wide range of ages. This means a connected network of separated cycleways that can take children to school, commuters to work, students to university, and people of all ages and abilities to shopping and service districts.

The United Nations recommends that 20% of city transport budgets be spent on dedicated active transport infrastructure for walking and cycling. Hobart should be aspiring to this target if it does not already meet it.

While state governments can drive change, such as the Western Australian Government's recent commitment to cycleway funding, in many cases around Australia it's been local governments that have brought bicycle transport to where it is today.

The cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane have all variously pushed the envelope to get better networks of separated cycleways, bicycle end-of-trip facilities, and share bike schemes.

It's important as Tasmania's capital city for Hobart to set the bar high for bicycle transport, especially as the recent City Vision process found strong support for better cycling connections and to make Hobart a "rideable" city.

What other capital cities are doing

Hobart's transport strategy is being approved at the same time as Melbourne is refreshing its transport strategy and Sydney its cycling strategy.

Both cities are setting ambitious targets for what they want to achieve. Targets or goals are useful tools in strategies to guide future actions, especially strategies that span many years.

Hobart has set itself the broad goal of "supporting more people to ride bicycles" and proposes the position statement "The City of Hobart will develop a strong network of safe paths and streets where people regardless of age or ability can comfortably cycle."

Bicycle Network strongly supports both sentiments but there is nothing in the strategy to push the city to go further than it has in the past. How much is "more" people? What does a "strong" network look like?

Sydney and Melbourne are both setting themselves the goal of achieving 10% of trips in the city by bicycle. This represents a big jump in rider numbers for both cities and will require significant work to achieve.

Both cities have also committed to expansion of their separated bicycle infrastructure because they know it's the key to getting increased ridership.

Hobart's transport strategy would benefit from having a few goals that will keep pushing the city to do better. By not having explicit targets to work towards there is a danger that cycling infrastructure and programs will lose out in resourcing and priority decision-making.

Why not set a goal of doubling existing commutes by bicycle into the city, for example? Or a target for the number of students riding to schools in the local government area? The City of Sydney doubled its morning and evening peak hour bicycle commuter numbers in seven years. The Hobart Strategy spans 12 years so such a goal should be easily achievable and would ideally occur before 2030.

Separated cycleways

The council has done great work on developing the three cycling corridors into the city but the next big step must now be taken to connect these corridors and add new routes via best practice, separated on-road facilities.

Separated cycleways connected to schools, workplaces, tourism attractions, shops and other areas of interest have been shown to contribute to big increases in rider numbers in other cities where they've been implemented, such as Sydney, Vancouver, Portland, Washington, London and Seville.

This is because the majority of the population are interested in riding but are concerned about safety. Well-designed cycleways which separate riders from vehicle traffic and provide

clear intersection treatments encourage people to ride who wouldn't if there were just painted lanes.

When more people ride, it becomes safer for all riders.¹ Research has shown that when bicycle riding becomes more common drivers are more likely to look for bicycles and the number of crashes declines.

The strategy outlines the routes that have to be created to plug the gaps in Hobart's network, but what we don't want to see is just paint on the road. There is also the need to reconsider existing painted lanes to determine how they can be upgraded to fit into a separated cycleway network.

It is critical that the council commits to building separated cycleways to complete and enhance Hobart's bicycle network. The strategy is silent on how the connections to the network will be made, leaving them to the yet-to-be developed bike plan.

The transport strategy should clearly state that a new bike plan will have a network of separated cycleways at its core.

Bike Plan

A new bike plan is long overdue and a welcomed aspect of this strategy, but there is no firm timeline and the action items would benefit from more detail. More direction is needed to guide the work of the bike plan and for the council to show its commitment to resourcing and supporting active transport choices.

The strategy talks about developing a road user hierarchy through consultation with local area groups, similar to what it has done with its retail precinct upgrades in Lenah Valley and New Town. This has been a successful method of community involvement, but there is a danger that leaving the development of a city-wide bike plan to multiple local area consultation groups will drag the process out over years and deliver a disjointed approach.

Bicycle Network believes the bike plan should be developed first, mapping out a "minimum grid" network of separated cycleways and a timeline for completion of each route.

Local area consultation can then flesh out what communities may want for cycling on local roads and connections to schools, parks and shopping areas joining to the main separated cycling routes. In some cases they may want separated facilities to continue and in others they may prefer low-speed, traffic-calmed roads that are clearly signed as bicycle routes.

Local area consultation needs to be guided by a consistent city-wide plan as people ride beyond their local area. It makes sense to complete the central elements of a bike plan before such consultation takes place.

Riding to school

It is now common knowledge that when school holidays are on in Hobart, traffic congestion reduces.

The reasons why we have moved from a national average of 80% of children walking and riding to school in the 1970s to only 20% walking and riding now are complex. It includes

¹ European Cyclists' Federation, "Safety in Numbers" Factsheet, <https://ecf.com/sites/ecf.com/files/ECF_FACTSHEET4_V3_cterree_SafetyNumb.pdf>, accessed 23 July 2018.

perceptions of safety, different methods of raising children, stranger danger, convenience, living outside catchments and availability of bus services.

Hobart's average is better than the national figures, with about a 48% average in the local government area for children walking and riding to primary schools based on a yet to be completed report from Bicycle Network. There is still plenty of room to increase the average to get more children active and reduce traffic around schools.

Bicycle Network and the RACT have received four years of state government funding to conduct the Ride2School program in Tasmanian schools. While this can tackle culture, road safety and skills, there is a role for council to play in ensuring routes to schools are perceived to be safe.

While Tasmanians are permitted to ride on footpaths, separated cycleways and low-speed, traffic calmed roads which are designated bicycle routes can add to a journey's perceived safety. As can bicycle and pedestrian crossings at busier roads, bicycle traffic signals, raised intersections to slow cars, or wide median protection for riders waiting to cross.

Local streets that have been designed to calm traffic, have maximum speed limits of 30km and are clearly marked as bicycle routes have successfully been used in Vancouver and Portland to create a more comprehensive bicycle network. The speed limit is important as dropping it to 30km increases the risk of survival for a person hit by a car.²

Vancouver's rule of thumb for determining when a bicycle route could use a 30km street and when it should be a separated cycleway is based on the number of cars using that street. If a street has up to 500 cars a day then it can become a bicycle route, up to 1000 cars a day then a range of actions need to be implemented to bring car numbers down, over 1000 cars then cycleways should be separated from traffic.³

Such improvements to routes will also benefit other riders in the area, not just students and their parents.

Electric bicycles

The release of electric-assisted bicycles has the potential to get many more people riding bicycles for transport as they remove the challenge of hills and need for extensive end-of-trip facilities.

E-bikes have the potential to get people out of cars in the way ordinary bikes couldn't. You don't need to be super fit to ride them (but riding them will increase your fitness) and they will get you to your destination faster than a pushbike.

E-bikes are very popular in Asia and Europe and are slowly catching on in Australia, but are yet to really hit their straps. In Europe, city councils, state governments and some countries are providing residents with subsidies to buy e-bikes to improve traffic congestion and pollution.

² World Health Organisation, "Road Safety – Speed factsheet", http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/world_report/speed_en.pdf, accessed 25 July 2018.

³ City of Vancouver, "Transportation Design Guidelines: All Ages and Abilities Cycling Routes", <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/design-guidelines-for-all-ages-and-abilities-cycling-routes.pdf>, accessed 25 July 2018.

People who take up e-bikes are likely to want separated cycleways as they are likely to be people who don't currently ride for transport. They'll also want undercover parking with access to electricity points as more models are appearing where the battery can't be removed for charging.

Council taking the lead

Missing in the strategy is a commitment by the council to lead change through its own operations.

Educating its staff to better look out for vulnerable road users is a good action, but it should be supplemented by the council replacing some of its vehicle fleet with an electric bicycle fleet and providing bicycle rider training.

If staff are using bicycles to get around town it would help to focus their minds on what riders need, and would also reflect the strong desire in the City Vision for low-carbon transport modes.

The City may also be able to provide bicycle leasing and salary sacrificing to encourage more of its staff to commute by standard and electric bicycles.

Recommendations

Deletions and additions to action items are marked in red.

1. Clarify the Theme 4 Position Statement to make it clear that a strong network is one made primarily of separated cycleways

Bicycle riding has the potential to transform the City of Hobart's transport task by providing for short and medium distance trips. The City of Hobart will develop a **strong network of separated cycleways** and safe paths, **supplemented by traffic-calmed 30km** streets where people regardless of age or ability can comfortably cycle.

2. **Action 4.1** – Develop a user hierarchy (Theme 8 – Managing our traffic and movement network) to reinforce the need for cycling access and provision in our city centre and suburban neighbourhoods. **With the core network of separated cycleways and secondary low-speed streets clearly identified.**

3. **Action 4.2** – Complete and connect the initial city-wide bicycle network established in the past 10 years, with implementation priorities based upon the new bicycle plan's **separated cycleways network** (Action 4.3).

4. **Action 4.3** – Develop a detailed **ten-year** bicycle plan that **expands the contribution that cycling makes to the operation of the city and** encourages an increase in the number of **commuter** trips taken by bicycle **to 6%** and the number of **walking and bicycle** trips to **primary schools to an average of 60%**.

The plan will:

- identify the range of strategic actions to prioritise efforts to improve the cycling network
- focus our effort and resources on the completion of key cycling routes, completing **and connecting** the network already established **with separated cycleways**

- develop a network of neighbourhood routes, where appropriate on quiet back streets, supported with wayfinding and speed limits of 30km to supplement the core separated cycling network
 - recognise the importance of also providing for recreational, sporting and beginner (learner) cyclist facilities to strengthen cycling culture and family enjoyment of cycling
 - provide direction for capital works and street management such as vehicle speed, priority access for bicycles and safety measures
 - review planning scheme provisions to ensure the achievement of the high-quality cycling environment desired for the city, including end-of-trip facilities in private and public buildings and city streets
 - identify active routes to school and develop a works schedule to provide safety improvements on all routes, including separated cycleways and 30km local streets.
 - consider access to and around retail precincts, neighbourhood activity centres and tourism sites
 - outline programs to promote and encourage behaviour change for individuals and businesses, including the establishment of a Cycle Hobart program with dedicated staff and budget
 - use the pre-planning and scoping work undertaken by the City of Hobart Bicycle Advisory Committee in 2018 to guide the development of the new plan
 - provide input into future budgets and the City of Hobart's Long Term Financial Management Plan
 - Establish mechanisms for measuring the success of the plan that are publicly reported on annually.
5. **Action 4.5** – Establish a City of Hobart branded electric bicycle fleet for employee use to reduce the number of car trips. A training program in safe urban riding will be delivered for staff who regularly travel between city sites and for staff who want to use the bikes for lunch-time recreation or private errands.
 6. **Action 4.6** – Establish salary sacrificing and leasing arrangements for City of Hobart staff who want to purchase ordinary or electric bicycles for commuting or include them in their salary package.
 7. **Action 4.7** – Advocate for a permanent state and/or federal government cycling infrastructure fund that councils can apply to for help to build separated cycleways, either through the Hobart City Deal or independent of it.
 8. **Action 4.8** – The council commits to the UN target of 20% of its transport budget being spent on active transport infrastructure.
 9. **Action 4.9** – Advocate for bicycle lantern priority at intersections along cycleways to improve rider safety and speed of bicycle transport.
 10. **Action 5.6** – Actively partner with the University of Tasmania to establish a demonstration bicycle share and car share program at a major UTAS accommodation site. And investigate a council-supported electric bicycle share scheme for the city centre and major tourism sites in collaboration with commercial providers.
 11. **Action 6.1** – Develop a new parking plan ... The plan will continue to provide and expand the supply of bicycle and motorcycle parking, including undercover parking ...

The plan will build on the trial of electric vehicle charging facilities in the Hobart Central car park, and incorporate an e-vehicle charging set of actions to cater for cars, bicycles and mobility scooters ... **The plan will investigate the provision of public end-of-trip bicycle parking facilities in current off-street car park buildings or as stand-alone bicycle parking facilities.**

12. **Action 6.6** – Continue with efforts to provide a balance between on street car parking and vibrant streets for people by using some parking spaces for dining, trading, pedestrian crossing facilities, and other city functions where appropriate. **On selected streets on-street car parking on one side may be removed to make way for separated cycleways which will move more people through the area than parked cars.**



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