



RACT Mobility Vision submission

Proposal

A network of separated cycleways leading into and through Hobart's city centre to provide people aged 8 to 80 with safe pathways to ride.

This proposal would provide a genuine transport choice that could help ease traffic congestion, as well as providing people with active transport that would also keep them healthy.

Cities around the world are turning to separated cycleway networks as a way of reducing traffic congestion. In Vancouver over 10% of trips to work are by bikeⁱ and London now has more bikes than cars in its city centre in morning peak hour.ⁱⁱ

Seville in Spain has built a highly connected, separated network within just four years mostly by replacing one side of on-road parking with bi-directional bike lanes. Rider numbers increased from about 3 million bicycle trips in 2006 to 16 million in 2013, and the number of motor vehicle collisions per million bike trips declined from 15 to 6.ⁱⁱⁱ

New York has built more than 120km of separated cycleways since 2006, with more scheduled for coming years.^{iv} The cities of Austin, Portland, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington and Memphis are all following suit thanks to the Green Lane project which has been supporting cities across the US to install separated bicycle infrastructure

Melbourne^v and Sydney^{vi} have both set themselves the goal of getting 10% of trips into their city centre by bicycle and both cities recognise that the only way to get there is to provide a network of All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycleways.

Infrastructure Australia recently included a plan to build and connect 284km of cycleways in a 10km radius of the Sydney city centre in its annual priority list because of its potential to reduce traffic congestion.^{vii}

Problem

Bicycle transport takes up minimal space in roadways, allowing many more people to travel than if they were in cars. However, the majority of the population are concerned about riding on roads without separation from motor vehicles.

US research^{viii} has segmented the population and their propensity to ride for transport into these four groups, which has been echoed by local surveys:

<1% **Strong and Fearless:** will ride anywhere

7% **Enthusied and Confident:** will ride on painted bike lanes but would prefer protection

60% **Interested but Concerned:** will not ride on roads without physical separation from vehicles

33% **No Way, No How:** won't get on a bike, not matter how good the infrastructure

It's no wonder that Hobart is only getting 2.2% riding to work in the local government area and 1.5% across greater Hobart, considering the only separated cycleways we have finish at the edge of the city centre.

The key to getting more people riding for transport is to provide separated cycleways as part of a network that takes them to work, shops, services, and schools.

The rule of thumb is that the cycleways should feel so comfortable to ride in that you'd be happy for your 8-year-old child or your 80-year-old grandparent to ride in them.

And the separation needs to continue through intersections with protections from turning traffic. Melbourne has recently installed protected crossings at a roundabout in the inner city and has surveyed residents about their preference for intersections which provide wider turning areas with protected waiting areas for riders and traffic signals that give riders a head start.^{ix}

Separated cycleways leading into and through Hobart's city centre are also likely to be used by tourists, especially if the creation of a network attracts a bike share company to set up.

Even though the National Road Safety Strategy recommends separation of cyclists on roads with speed limits above 30 km/h, very few Tasmanian cities are doing so. The State Government should ensure the safe systems approach to road design is being adopted by councils across the state.

Proposed Costs/funding options

The City of Hobart has responsibility for most of the roads which need separated facilities or 30 km/h speed limits to create a safe cycling network.

The United Nations sets a goal of 20% of road funding to be spent on active transport – a group of academics has estimated Tasmania's spend to be about 1.5% in 2015–16.^x All Australian states underspend on active transport infrastructure, except for the ACT. However, Western Australia is bucking the trend with its commitment to spend \$129 million over four years for 95km of new cycling paths.^{xi}

The Hobart City Deal between the federal and state governments provides the ideal opportunity to commit the money needed to quickly build the core network, which local and state governments can then build upon.

The cost of the network will depend on the extent of its design. A total streetscape redevelopment that includes raised cycleways, street plantings and traffic calming will be more expensive than just putting in separating barriers or using parked cars as a barrier in existing roadways.

It also cheaper to use existing space in the roadway, such as car parking on one side of the road, to create new cycleways rather than extensive engineering works which move or remove existing infrastructure to make space.

Seville spent EUR\$32 million (AU\$51.7 million) on 80 kilometres of network over four years.^{xii} It's network is basic with fencing and bollards separating riders from traffic and on-road bi-directional lanes painted green. This contrasts with Sydney which is now delivering street plantings and safer pedestrian crossings alongside separated cycleways that are either raised to footpath level or on the existing roadway.

There is also the option of following Vancouver and Portland's examples of using a main network of separated cycleways connected by 30 km/h traffic-calmed local streets. The low-speed local streets will be much cheaper to deliver than the separated cycleways but must still be direct routes if they are going to be used.

Timelines and Priorities

The key to the success of any bicycle infrastructure is connectedness. Building a separated cycleway that doesn't connect to major destinations, or taking too long to connect separate sections will not result in immediate increases in rider numbers.

Directness is also important. Many people currently cycle for transport because it can be quicker and more convenient than other options. Sending riders down out-of-the-way back streets that aren't the quickest route to major destinations will not be appreciated or utilised.

The City of Hobart's Transport Strategy pledges to update its outdated bicycle plan with a new network map and priority projects.

A separated cycleway down Collins Street would effectively connect the Rivulet Path and Intercity Cycleway. Of importance to this route is good intersection treatments which see riders prioritised and protected.

Bathurst street is another immediate priority as the new pedestrian and cycling bridge that will land near the corner of Campbell and Bathurst streets is due to be finished next year. A bi-directional cycleway on Bathurst Street could deliver a more sympathetic connection for people riding.

At least two north-south cycleways through the city that connect to the northern and north-west suburbs should be considered.

Argyle and Campbell streets currently have painted bicycle lanes and consideration needs to be given to whether one or both could have separated lanes or whether another north-south connector at the western end of the city is needed, such as Harrington Street.

An obvious route is Elizabeth Street, connecting the waterfront to North Hobart, but there is the potential for it to be a 30 km/h zone rather than a separated cycleway because of the current slow speed of traffic and high pedestrian numbers. The council would also need to allow people to ride through the mall, which is currently banned.

The Battery Point connection to the Sandy Bay Road lanes should be taken off the backburner or a decision made to connect the Sandy Bay lanes to the city via another route. Once a network of separated and low-speed streets is established, current on-road painted lanes such as Sandy Bay Road need to be re-considered as separated facilities.

Eastern shore riders are currently disadvantaged by the narrow paths on the Tasman Bridge. These paths should be widened to provide a more comfortable riding option. A ferry service between Bellerive and Hobart may provide some riders with the option of taking the ferry for the last leg of their ride, but we don't yet know whether ferries will easily carry bicycles and whether they will be given access at peak hours.

Risks

1. Taking too long to design and deliver a network will risk it being seen as an under-used – The network needs to be added to in obvious ways that provide immediate benefits and reasons for using it.
2. Funding allocated for separated cycleways is not enough to build a quality network or runs out before the network is finished – A commitment to an adequate funding stream needs to be made from all relevant levels of government.
3. Public backlash spooks politicians into removing support or funding – Baseline research on traffic movements, parking availability, and shopping habits needs to be provided early to answer public concerns. Experiences from other cities where separated cycleways have been built should be communicated to the local community.
4. Businesses along routes where separated cycleways replace car parking can be understandably worried about impacts on their trade. But the experience in places like New York where cycleways have replaced car parking has been positive for businesses.^{xiii} Separated cycleways add to the attractiveness of streets and bring in more people than just bicycle riders.

Research has found that while bicycle riders spend less in businesses than people arriving by car, they shop more often so their long-term expenditure is greater.^{xiv}

Most businesses over-estimate the importance of car travel for their customers. One Austrian study found retailers thought about 58% of customers arrived by car but the reality was 32%, with the majority (44%) walking. Similar results have been found in research carried out in Scotland and New Zealand.^{xv}

Any plan for separated cycleways that replace on-street parking should begin with pedestrian surveys of the area to document how people arrive and how far they walk to their destination. The availability of car parking spaces within a standard walking radius of the area should also be mapped so businesses can see that losing a few car spaces directly outside their premises will not have a great impact.

By removing car parking on only one side of a street, it still leaves enough road space to provide loading zones, disability access parks and short-stay pick-up and drop-off parks.

Assumptions

That the lack of safe, separated cycling infrastructure is a barrier to some people riding a bicycle for transport.

That people in Hobart will use a network of separated cycleways if it's well designed and connected.

That there is enough off-street parking available in Hobart to enable the removal of small number of on-street car bays.

That local, state and federal governments want to provide adequate funding for active transport infrastructure that helps people get daily physical activity and gives more people more transport choices.

That the community will understand that to reduce traffic congestion we need to get people out of cars and onto other more space-efficient transport modes.

That using our current roads more efficiently to move people is preferred to the expense of building more roads.

On-road separated cycleway styles



Concrete dividers (Peltro Street, Glenorchy)



Bollard divide (San Francisco, USA)



Bollards and parked cars (Florida, USA)



Concrete divider/kerb (Sydney)



Bi-directional cycleway raised to footpath level (Sydney)



Cycleways raised to footpath level (Vancouver)



Cycleways raised to footpath level and separated by street plantings (Vancouver)



Planter boxer divide (Vancouver)

ⁱ Dale Bracewell, “From a Trickle to a Stream: Achieving a Major Bike Shift in Canada”, 29 June 2018, www.weride.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Dale_Bracewell-Australian_Bicycle_Summit-International_Keynote-2018-06-21.pdf

ⁱⁱ City of London, *Traffic in the City 2018*, February 2018, 8.

ⁱⁱⁱ Michael Andersen, *Places for Bikes*, 31 May 2017, <https://peopleforbikes.org/blog/landmark-study-from-seville-shows-immediate-results-from-a-bike-network>

^{iv} New York City Department of Transportation, *Safer Cycling: Bicycle Ridership and Safety in New York City*, 2017, 12.

^v City of Melbourne, *Bicycle Plan 2016–2020*, vi.

^{vi} City of Sydney, *Cycling Strategy and Action Plan for a more sustainable Sydney 2018–2030*, 7.

^{vii} Infrastructure Australia, “Infrastructure Priority List”, September 2018, <http://infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/projects/infrastructure-priority-list.aspx>

^{viii} Roger Geller, “Four Types of Cyclists”, 2009, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746>.

^{ix} Philip Boyle and Associates for City of Melbourne, “Increasing the Use of Bicycles for Transport”, May 2018, https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.com-participate.files/7815/2816/5741/Transport_Strategy_Refresh_-_Background_paper_-_Cycling_Accessible.pdf

^x Dorina Pojani, Anthony Kimpton, Jonathan Corcoran, Neil Sipe, “Cycling and walking are short-changed when it comes to transport funding in Australia”, *The Conversation*, 20 March 2018, <https://theconversation.com/cycling-and-walking-are-short-changed-when-it-comes-to-transport-funding-in-australia-92574>.

^{xi} Government of Western Australia, “Major Boost to Cycling for the Future”, 4 September 2017, <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2017/09/Major-boost-to-cycling-for-the-future.aspx>.

^{xii} Streetsblog USA, “Six Secrets From the Planner of Sevilla’s Lightning Bicycle Network”, 7 May 2018, <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2018/05/07/six-secrets-from-the-planner-of-sevillas-lightning-bike-network/>.

^{xiii} New York City Department of Transportation, “The Economic Benefits of Sustainable Streets”, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/dot-economic-benefits-of-sustainable-streets.pdf>, accessed 24 July 2018.

^{xiv} Eric Jaffe, “The Complete Business Case for Converting Street Parking into Bike Lanes”, CityLab, 13 March 2015, <https://www.citylab.com/solutions/2015/03/the-complete-business-case-for-converting-street-parking-into-bike-lanes/387595/>.

^{xv} Heart Foundation South Australia, *Good for Business*, 2011, 20–21.