

13 September 2023

joanne.hickman@hobartcity.com.au

North Hobart Neighbourhood Plan Discussion Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the discussion paper for the North Hobart Neighbourhood Plan, our comments relate to the cycling-specific opportunities identified.

The key to getting more people riding is to create All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling networks. This means physically separated on-road or off-road cycleways where traffic volumes are over 3000-4000 cars a day and speed limits over 30–40 km.

The Institute of Sensible Transport has created a useful matrix which shows the best-practice thinking around this infrastructure planning and was published in the 2021 Kingborough Cycling Strategy.

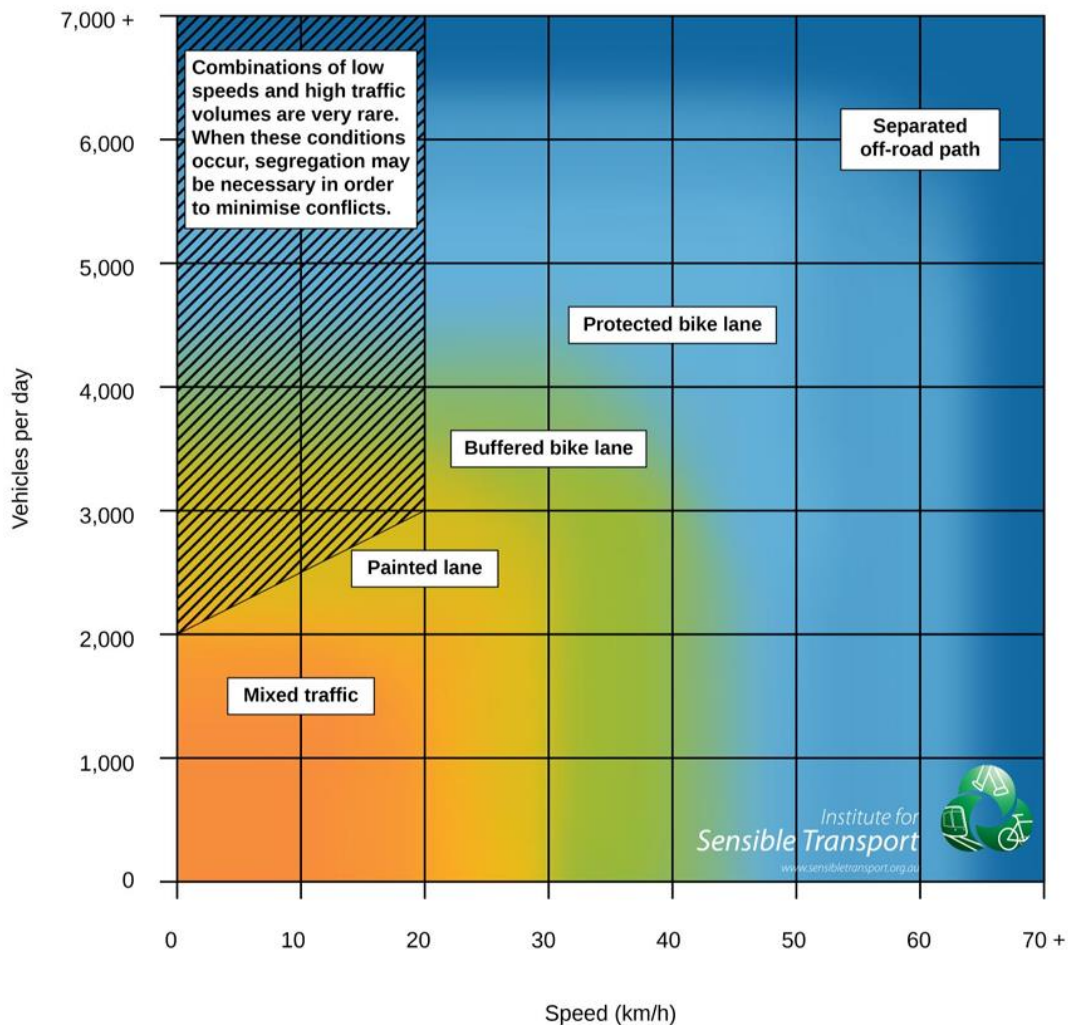


Figure 11 Choosing the right type of bicycle infrastructure

The Greater Hobart Cycling Plan has a useful summary for considering AAA treatment options:



Currently, the mix of painted lanes alongside parked cars or no treatment streets mean only a small percentage of people are likely to ride a bicycle in North Hobart. The majority of the population who are interested in riding don't ride unless there is AAA infrastructure because they are concerned about their safety.

There is also the need with the North Hobart plan to consider the broader network. One of the key recommendations from the 51-page North Hobart Access and Parking Plan released in March 2021 was that a complete cycling network plan be developed.

That hasn't happened and it means addressing some of the opportunities highlighted in the discussion paper is difficult because there isn't a broader context to place them in.

For instance, Elizabeth Street is part of a major corridor connecting Granton to Hobart. Direct cycling routes which bring people in and out of the city need to be considered as part of any suburb-specific planning.

The Neighbourhood Plan also needs to consider what the City of Hobart has already committed to, such as the Greater Hobart Cycling Plan. In this plan, Elizabeth Street is nominated as a AAA route from the waterfront though to Burnet Street, so it makes sense to match that standard into North Hobart instead of switching to narrow painted lanes next to parked cars.

We'd like to see the Neighbourhood Plan put any recommendations for cycling infrastructure into context with the broader region – how will cycling infrastructure in North Hobart connect to the city, Lenah Valley, New Town, West Hobart and Mt Stuart – and ensuring the standard of that infrastructure is consistent so we are not needlessly switching from single direction to bi-direction, to separated to painted, and so on.

Responses to cycling opportunities identified in the discussion paper follow.

- **Enhance safety of bicycle riders along Argyle Street by:**
 - **investigating the feasibility of raised bi-directional bicycle lanes adjacent to the footpath, which provides a physical separation from traffic and parking**
 - **ensuring bicycle movements are prioritised through intersections and consider raised continuous lanes at T-intersections.**

Some of the issues that would need to be addressed with a back-of-kerb bi-directional cycleway on Argyle Street are:

- The plans for single direction cycling lanes between Brisbane and Davey streets and how the bi-directional path would connect.
- The expense of moving kerbs and stormwater to build a raised path along a section of Argyle Street with limited demand and whether there is actually funding for such an ambition.
- Whether this location is the best place for such high-cost exercise when the preferred route is Elizabeth Street and it makes sense to invest the most money in the most used streets with higher demand.
- Why this route with a steep hill and pinchpoint under the pedestrian bridge has been chosen instead of streets with a gentler gradient like Elizabeth Street–New Town Road. If it's part of a plan to try and connect New Town and Lenah Valley riders via Argyle Street rather than Elizabeth Street–New Town Road, then that should be spelled out.

Raised continuous lanes are a good way to slow vehicles at intersections and show that riders have priority. Any cycleway crossings would need to be well signed and obvious to drivers as such treatments are not common in Tasmania and there would need to be signage for riders so they still looked before crossing. Sight lines and parked cars would also need to be considered for any crossing to ensure drivers and riders can easily see other on the approach to an intersection.

- **Continue the Elizabeth Street Midtown bicycle lane upgrade to Federal Street to allow connection onwards to Argyle Street bicycle lanes and the wider network. Investigate providing a protected bicycle path instead of painted on-road lanes.**

The painted bike lane on Elizabeth Street in midtown is not supported as it's too narrow and alongside parked cars, which increases the danger to riders of being struck by an opening car door. The street's traffic volumes are also too high for painted lanes.

The painted lanes in Midtown should be converted to separated lanes, as was recommended by the community Project Action Team in its May 2019 report. Removing parking on the eastern side of Elizabeth Street and building a separated uphill lane on the western side is the preferred option. It means people riding slowly uphill are protected from traffic and parked cars, and people riding downhill would not have to worry about parked car doors opening in front of them. Changing the speed limit to 30km/h would also help calm traffic for people riding on the downhill side.

The surface of Elizabeth Street through Midtown also needs to be fixed as sunken service accesses are a hazard.

- **Investigate providing protected bicycle lanes which cater for all ages and abilities on additional streets, such as Burnett Street, Federal Street, and Letitia Street, ensuring lanes are physically protected from traffic and parked cars.**

Creating a network of AAA infrastructure through North Hobart is the preferred outcome. If the plan to increase residential and commercial density in North Hobart eventuates then cycling and scooting will be the quickest ways for those residents and workers to move around but only if there are safe places for them.

- **Ensure bicycle lanes are continued within all intersections to improve safety of bicycle riders.**

The key with this is to ensure separation is continued to the intersection, and if space permits through the intersection. The City of Melbourne's research¹ found that bike separation that disappears at intersections turns some people off riding, even if there is mid-block protection. This is because intersections are where most conflict occurs. Having a separator up to the intersection means you can worry less about a turning car sideswiping you. Intersections with protected corners also help increase visibility of people riding and provide better sightlines for all users.

- **Explore opportunities to provide access for bicycles across Brooker Highway into Queens Domain, such as through installation of a signalised intersection with separated bicycle lanes at Brooker Highway and Park Street/ Letitia Street intersection, or Stoke Street, or grade separated crossing at Stoke Street and the new universally accessible compliant bridge.**

Such a connection has already been included in the Queens Domain Master Plan 2013–2033. This master plan recommended five grade separated crossings to the Domain and two have already been built: the Remembrance Bridge and the Rose Garden Bridge. One of the outstanding connections yet to be constructed is a link from North Hobart to Clearys Gates Road.

More people want to connect to North Hobart from the other side towards Lenah Valley, Mt Stuart and West Hobart, having clear connections from North Hobart to those areas in the plan would be useful. The recently released LAMP shows an All Ages and Abilities cycleway along Augusta Road so the Neighbourhood Plan should consider where the AAA connection to the start of that cycleway should go, and which streets should connect Elizabeth Street to Mt Stuart and West Hobart and what the treatments on those streets look like.

- **Increase provision of bicycle hoops at key destinations such as Elizabeth Street and retail and education destinations.**

This would be useful as there are only a few hoops where people can leave bicycles locked up along Elizabeth Street, although the decorative footpath fencing and plant guards can be used for this.

What is also missing is genuinely secure bicycle parking. Whether that's a cage system, bike lockers or electronic docks, there is nowhere secure for people to lock bicycles, which discourages the use of ebikes and others expensive bicycles for transport. The Bikeep electronic docks and lockers have recently launched in Australia via a company called emicro², finding a place for secure bike parking would be a good addition to the plan.

Kind Regards



Alison Hetherington
Public Affairs Manager Tasmania
210 Collins St Hobart 7000
p. (03) 8376 8804 m. 0475 817 435

¹ <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/transportstrategy/cycling>

² <https://emicro.com.au/>