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Newcastle CBD Taskforce Workshops

Report

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
1. WORKSHOP 1 REPORT	5
Industry Stakeholder Meeting	5
1. TIME/PLACE	5
2. ATTENDANCE	5
3. PROGRAM	5
4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY	5
5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY	5
5.1 Investment Challenges	5
5.2 Priority Infrastructure Projects	6
5.3 Suggestions	7
6. DOCUMENTATION OF DISCUSSION	7
2. WORKSHOP 2 REPORT	10
Options for Development / Redevelopment of Government Occupied Assets	10
1. TIME/PLACE	10
2. ATTENDANCE	10
3. PROGRAM	10
4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY	10
5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY	11
5.1 Key Indicators for Successful Assets	11
5.2 Group Discussions	12
3. WORKSHOP 3 REPORT	16
Public Meeting: Transport, The Public Domain and Connectivity	16
1. TIME/PLACE	16
2. ATTENDANCE	16
3. PROGRAM	16
4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY	17
5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY	18
5.1 List of Key Issues Summarised	18
6. DOCUMENTATION OF DISCUSSION	22
6.1 Small Group Reports	29
4. URBAN DESIGN WORKSHOP	33
1. TIME/PLACE	33
2. ATTENDANCE	33
3. PROGRAM	33
4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY	33
5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY	34
5.1 List of Key Issues Summarised	34
6. DOCUMENTATION OF DISCUSSION	35
APPENDIX 1	42
Additional Information From TAFE	42

APPENDIX 2.....44
Engineers Australia: Infrastructure Submission 44

APPENDIX 3..... 52
Save Our Rail Submission52

APPENDIX 4..... 60
Inner City Connectivity and Urban Renewal - Steffen Lehmann 60

APPENDIX 5..... 69
Discussion Paper: Newcastle City Centre Connectivity, Transportation and Urban Design..... 69

APPENDIX 6..... 83
John Richardson (Powerpoint Presentation) 97

INTRODUCTION

The Newcastle CBD Task Force is set to oversee the preparation of a strategy to build on existing momentum within the Newcastle CBD. The initial focus of the Task Force, as stated in the Office of the Coordinator General's Media Release (22/08/08) is to:

- **Identify means to support and facilitate private sector investment in the city centre;**
- **Identify and review options for development/redevelopment of Government occupied assets;**
- **Ensure a continued focus on transport, the public domain and connectivity outcomes as development projects are brought forward; and**
- **Provide a clear forum to enable community members, Council and Federal and State MPs to have a broader discussion about the future of the CBD and how to support this renewal.**

An early initiative of the Task Force was to facilitate a series of workshops involving key community, business and government stakeholders to inform a State Government submission to the Commonwealth's Major Cities Unit. These workshops were:

1. Workshop 1 - Developers and Investors

Key Question: What infrastructure improvements would encourage you to spend money in the CBD tomorrow?

2. Workshop 2 - Government Agencies / Institutions

Key Question: What are the options for development/redevelopment of government occupied assets in the CBD and what are the infrastructure implications?

3. Workshop 3 - Public Meeting; Transport, Connectivity and the Public Domain

Key question: What will make this City work better / be more "liveable" in terms of public domain, connectivity and transport?

4. Urban Designers Workshop

Key Questions: What are the urban design principles that should underpin the infrastructure projects under consideration by the Newcastle CBD Taskforce? Will the projects lead to an optimal outcome for the CBD or are there other strategies that urban designers would recommend? (Save Our Rail Submission and the notes of the previous 3 workshops were supplied as background for this workshop)

The final workshop to be held on December 11th is for all participants in the process to date and will be an advertised public meeting. It will be a briefing session from the CBD Taskforce to the public and will outline the research and analysis undertaken by the Taskforce and the position of the Taskforce on key potential infrastructure policies and projects for the CBD.

5. Workshop 4 - Public Meeting; Newcastle CBD Taskforce Presents its Intended Strategies

All participants to date have been invited to this forum where the Taskforce will report on its view of infrastructure priorities, cost benefit analysis and a SWOT of the priorities and policy position to be submitted to the Major Cities Unit.

1. WORKSHOP1 REPORT

INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER MEETING

1. TIME/PLACE

26th September, 2008, 3.00pm. - 4.00pm. Noah's on the Beach, Newcastle

2. ATTENDANCE

- Peter Shinnick & Karen Howard (Hunter Business Chamber), Bob Dupont (Dupont Valuers), Peter Dodds (Colliers International), Guy Robinson (Robinson Property), Bob Hawes & Kristen Keegan (Property Council of Australia), Hilton Grugeon (Hunter Land Pty Ltd), Rob Turchini (Mirvac), Darren Williams (Buildev Developments Pty Ltd), Lindy Hyam and Brent Knowles (Newcastle City Council), Dianne Leeson (Office of the Coordinator General), Phil Neat (GPT), Craig Norman, Gillian Foulcher & Luke Mellare (Hunter Development Corporation), Steve Edmonds (GHD)
- Key Insights staff - Ellen Davis-Meehan, Linda Vial

3. PROGRAM

1. Welcome and Introduction - Jodi McKay, Craig Norman
2. Terms of Reference
3. Planning Instruments/controls
4. Workshop: Ellen Davis - Meehan, Key Insights Pty Ltd

4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY

Workshop 1 sought to understand the infrastructure priorities and process changes that are of prime importance to investors and potential investors in the Newcastle CBD.

The meeting began with an opening introduction by Minister for the Hunter Jodi McKay followed by a Newcastle CBD Taskforce overview presentation by Craig Norman (HDC). A facilitated workshop session focused on key questions about impediments to investment and infrastructure priorities. Comments were recorded on a central whiteboard and supplemented by electronic note taking of meeting.

Comments have been documented and reported as discussed during the session - Key Insights has not undertaken any interpretation or analysis of findings.

5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Discussion was facilitated around two key questions:

- What are the challenges to investment in the Newcastle CBD?
- What are the priority infrastructure projects that will enable investment in the Newcastle CBD?

5.1 Investment Challenges

- Economic Challenges - economic wellbeing - maintaining a growing vibrant city with employment.

- Mine Subsidence.
- Infrastructure challenges - drainage, sewerage, power etc.
- Existing building fabric is obsolete, particularly in the West End - buildings need to be knocked over & redeveloped. Sites need to be amalgamated.
- What's the vision for Newcastle? Industrial vs. Leisure Port.
- Links - to Airport, the LGA, and the region are very important.
- Need a master plan - or more detail on the existing plan.
- Investors - the reception they receive; attitude and behaviour towards investors need to be more encouraging - especially towards local investors.
- The Assessment and Approval System
- Too many coordinating agencies
- Need a single dedicated coordinator to manage the process
- Timing - the process is slow.
- The regulatory bureaucracy.
- Lack of Government funding (investing in locating departments here and projects).
- Lack of flexibility - in assessing proposals against the DCP there is no flexibility.
- Image of Newcastle - How do we get Head Offices to settle in Newcastle? People will move to Brisbane, but not Newcastle.
- Creating demand through residential growth / employment / making the City and enjoyable place to live.
- NCC - poses a big challenge to new investment.

5.2 Priority Infrastructure Projects

1. The barrier that the railway line creates between Hunter Street and the harbour. This is the number one priority should include removal of heavy rail and:
 - Convert to light rail/parkway/cycle way
 - Relocate final train station to Wickham/Broadmeadow?
 - Connectivity (increase connectivity between CBD/Harbour)
 - Light rail loop to Merewether and beaches/The Junction/Hamilton

Note removal of heavy rail was unanimously agreed as the number one infrastructure priority.
2. Road transport (related to priority one) - fix Stewart Avenue etc.
3. Fundamental Infrastructure :
 - Mine Subsidence - the issue is basically systematic - it could be dealt with effectively through a coordinated approach.

- Power/Sewerage/Drainage
 - Prioritise the current Section 94 list.
4. Streamline / coordinate the assessment and approval process so that it is coordinated, clear, efficient, welcoming and timely.

5.3 Suggestions

- Create one point for information related to development investment / conduct an infrastructure audit so that investors don't have to "discover" requirements and infrastructure challenges sporadically over a long drawn out process.
- Employ a dedicated Economic Development Manager as Maitland City Council did some years ago - someone who will make things happen.
- Create a funded infrastructure plan - funded Federally (Major Cities Unit)
- Make NSW "open for business" - live up to the buy-line. Examine how we compete (on payroll tax for example).

6. DOCUMENTATION OF DISCUSSION

THEME	COMMENTS
RAILWAY LINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number 1 infrastructure challenge to Newcastle CBD • Convert to light rail/parkway/cycle way/public transport • Relocate final station to Wickham or Broadmeadow • Development in Hunter Street won't be sustainable until the railway is gone and CBD connected to the Harbour and Honeysuckle • Connectivity - increase connectivity between CBD and surrounding areas, especially the Harbour side • Light rail loop to the Beach/the Junction/Hamilton/City
ROAD TRANSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update - Around Stewart Avenue etc.
FUNDAMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mine Subsidence - a significant challenge to investment • Power/Sewerage/Drainage • Need a coordinated approach
GENERAL INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing fabric obsolete - needs to be knocked over & redeveloped • Better links to the airport and port needed - this consultation may focus on Newcastle CBD but part of the vibrancy and investment potential of the CBD rests with its connections to key facilities like the airport and other areas throughout the LGA and region. • Parking situation needs to be considered

THEME	COMMENTS
VISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial vs. Leisure port, what's our vision? (Response: the City Centre Vision does articulate our vision - but it needs more detail to support it) • Need to make Newcastle a target city where people would like to live and where investors can see more investment opportunities. • Retail - Make Newcastle CBD the retail centre of the Hunter region. However, a completely different approach is needed. <p><i>"Housewives living in Kotara or Warners Bay are NOT going to drive into Newcastle, find nowhere to park, muck around and do their shopping in town"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new, different, vibrant shopping experience is needed, combined with entertainment, dining etc where people will make the effort and come into town. Needs to be the designer/boutique shopping centre of the region. • Provide enjoyable activities like art galleries etc. to make the City a more attractive place to be in. • Connect CBD with Beach and Harbour, as water attracts people and more people generate growth. • Build on the positives: Major companies and industries are currently settling in the region. Why? We have the basic infrastructure, plenty of people and it is frequently considered a nice place to live in. Work in these areas should continue to ensure more companies come here and for the ones that are already here, make them stay and also encourage the top end of their business to relocate to the region.
SYSTEM / ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of flexibility in the regulatory bureaucracy <p><i>"Before investors will have confidence in Newcastle we need to see a total change in the political and bureaucratic side of the establishment which regulates investment"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a coordinated system for development proposals as current system often involves interaction with several agencies out of town - it should all be located here where the development is needed. • A development coordinator could solve a lot of problems with getting developments under way. A tried and proved method used for example in Victoria where the coordinator acts as a mediator between investors/developers and regulating agencies. It's an approach that is both time and cost effective and simplifies the process for prospective developers. We [developers] don't mind paying for it. • 1 point for information/infrastructure audit • A dedicated Economic Development Manager - there for the advocacy of economic development and growth

THEME	COMMENTS
ECONOMIC CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic well being is fundamental to future investment. • Growth is required: • Economic • Population, through increased employment opportunities and making the City an enjoyable place to live in. • Creating demand - requires residential growth. • Lack of government funding: The government can supply funding for infrastructure projects as well as providing employment opportunities. Research shows that for every public sector job created two additional employment opportunities are created in the private sector, leading to more employment and ultimately increasing opportunities for people to settle in the area.
INVESTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception/ attitude/behaviour towards investors need to be encouraging. Investors are currently poorly treated which makes them look elsewhere for other opportunities. • In regard to new big industry settling in the Newcastle region (e.g. mining), major companies should be encouraged to make a further commitment to the city by establishing their head offices here as well.
PLANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master plan - or more detail and prioritising of existing plans. • Need a coordinated approach to development in the City • Need a funded infrastructure plan

FEEDBACK

Participants were invited to contact Ellen Davis-Meehan if they had further contributions they would like to make to the consultation process.

2. WORKSHOP 2 REPORT

OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT OCCUPIED ASSETS

1. TIME/PLACE

9th October 2008, 2.00pm. - 5.00pm. Crowne Plaza, Honeysuckle

2. ATTENDANCE

- Kerry Marshall (Attorney General's Office), Martin McAlister (Ernst & Young), David Kirkby (TAFE NSW - Hunter Institute), Simon Furness (State Property Authority), Cr. Scott Sharpe, Cr Aaron Buman (NCC), Mathew Brewster (NCC), Sarah Cameron (NCC), Brent Knowles (NCC), Lindy Hyam (NCC), Cr Nuatali Nelmes (NCC), James Brown (Hunter New England Health), Barney Glover & Andrew Johnson (University of Newcastle), Jennifer Collinson (Department of Premier and Cabinet), Craig Norman, Luke Mellare & Jacob Whiting (Hunter Development Corporation), Lord Mayor John Tate, Catherine Henry (Newcastle Law Society), Rajeen Maini (Heritage Council)
- Key Insights staff - Ellen Davis-Meehan, Linda Vial & Lee Anne McDougall

3. PROGRAM

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Presentation on the current context (LEP) and location of government assets
3. "Where we are at: Snapshots from key Agencies"
4. General Comments
5. Asset Specific Comments
6. Plenary - presentation from each group
7. General Discussion
8. Close

4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY

Workshop 2 sought to identify priority government owned assets for which planning is required, identify ideal location, access and connectivity implications and identify key requirements for the facility. There was opportunity to discuss redevelopments, co-locations and synergy across agencies.

The meeting began with an opening introduction by Craig Norman (HDC), followed by an overview presentation of the current planning instruments and locations of government assets by Steve Edmonds of GHD. The following agencies gave presentations of their current status:

"Where we are at: Snapshots from key Agencies"

1. Kerry Marshall Attorney General's Department

2. Barney Glover Newcastle University
3. Brent Knowles Newcastle City Council
4. Simon Furness State Property

Key issues covered in the presentations were:

- The Justice Precinct - up to 5 possible sites (including the current site) within the CBD are being considered. Recent changes in the legislation decreases the link with Police. Our priority is a building that can function as a modern courthouse - the current site has constraints, including an outdated heritage building.
- The University already has a presence in the CBD through the Conservatorium and Nesca House. We too have challenges maintaining a heritage building. The prospect of co-locating a Law Faculty with the Justice Precinct is very exciting and we want to pursue it. One of the issues we would have to solve would be access to student housing. Access to transport is also important as is funding for creating a new Law School.
- NCC is about to release a vision statement for the CBD that includes new office buildings, updated retail, streetscapes and landscaping. We are in Year 1 of a 25 year plan. We are about to tender for a Transport Plan for the city and are interested in promoting connectivity, creating a public domain plan and responding to the GPT proposal.
- State Property manages the government's property assets and is interested in making the most efficient use of these properties and supporting government agencies through proper management of assets. We are currently considering our Bull Street site (as well as the Justice Precinct). Bull Street represents an excellent opportunity for redevelopment and yet it is a sound building that functions well and it is not necessarily good practice to demolish sound buildings.

A facilitated workshop session focused on consideration of location, usage and redevelopment options for government assets, and the key indicators that should drive decisions. (e.g. state of the asset/heritage value, access and public transport, user needs, demographic trends, community expectations ...) Interest groups were also asked to consider:

- Does the current asset meet the needs of the service and its users?
- How can the asset be improved? Is it in the right location? Is the building functional? Is there a potential for an increased return to government?
- List key requirements (e.g. needs to be in a particular socio-economic population centre / infrastructure implications)

Comments were recorded on a central whiteboard and supplemented by electronic note taking of meeting.

5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Participants were asked to identify key indicators that should drive decisions about the usage and re-development/development of government assets. The following list was promoted:

5.1 Key Indicators for Successful Assets

- public transport

- public parking (structured approach)
- West End - transport + parking
- long term future of the railway (barrier to linkages)
- heritage - establish an objective vision
- planning perspective - implement proper [sound] planning principles
- enhance sense of place (identity)
- good value for money
- student housing - affordable [availability]
- environmental performance [ESD]
- safety of public domain - lighting, policing
- activation of the streetscape
- community expectations/preferences [take into account the community views]
- amenities [access to shops, food, etc]
- adaptive re-use of current properties

5.2 Group Discussions

Education / Justice

A combination of Education and Legal interests formed a group to discuss the Justice Precinct. Key points raised were:

- It is clear that existing AGD facilities do not meet the needs of either users or the courts themselves.
- Final location and project definition will be first driven by the delivery of court services but will factor in all the external influences and relationships including the University, Commonwealth Courts, existing legal precinct, police etc - AGD to make sure it captures these influences and assesses them as part of site selection.
- Government agencies need to factor in the GPT development and their opinions about developing the CBD.
- Government agencies need to resolve what happens to their existing facilities if they leave - this is especially important for AGD.
- The University needs around 6000m² for its Law School which includes the law library, moot courts etc.
- Drivers for the University move are:
 1. Realising the opportunity that the redevelopment of the courts offers.
 2. Existing facilities at the main campus are in poor condition.

3. Recognising the general direction of supporting education in the Newcastle CBD, and
 4. Existing law faculty facilities / services are somewhat fragmented.
- Public transport to be considered at the micro level to connect precincts such as the existing legal precinct to a new courts site if this happens or to connect university campuses.
 - AGD to consider its development and whether we should allow for up to 7000m2 of space to allow for the relocation of government services and possible sale / rationalisation of other government assets.
 - The legal profession prefers the court house and Justice Precinct to remain in its current location.

As this group focused on the Justice Precinct and co-locating the University within the new precinct, TAFE was asked to specifically highlight its aspirations. TAFE stressed being interested in forming partnerships and being active in the CBD. It highlighted the valuable cultural role that the Arts School plays in the life of the city and TAFE's interest across a variety of industry sectors, particularly hospitality as it trains many of the workers active in the city's service economy. After the workshop TAFE provided a summary which appears at Appendix 1.

Public Domain

A group of agencies interested in the public domain discussed fundamental principles of planning for people within public spaces and encouraging accessibility and an engaging interface between the built form and open spaces. Key points raised were:

- The scale and modulation of new / expanded buildings needs to be compatible with adjacent streetscapes / buildings / heritage items.
- Develop a Newcastle "palette" of materials and colours.
- Create pedestrian priority over vehicles. Limit the number of vehicle crossings over footpaths - service ducks/cap park entries.
- Re-use existing buildings.
- Embody heritage interpretation in new / redeveloped buildings.
- Create a human scale at building entry / podium level - legible entries and signage.
- Maintain solar access and minimise micro climate impacts to spaces around buildings.
- Address climate change through green rooves and walls / lighter coloured materials - increase green star ratings for buildings.
- Maintain view corridors from sites to harbour / beaches / landmarks / heritage streetscapes.
- Activate buildings at the street level with dining / retail / entertainment (Safer by Design Principles)
- Connect key destinations with good public transport with linkages and accessibility for all users.

Community Services

Key points raised by a mixed group discussing a range of community services:

- Link the city together around community services. The issue is that certain changes and ramifications to one area can have an effect on the whole city.
- Gaps between services - need to connect appropriate services to fill gaps and make links.
- Put the right community services in the right location, linked to community needs.
- Graffiti issues - Newcastle is still a 9-5 city, it needs to be activated and alive to discourage out-of-hours vandalism.

Health

A Health Department participant made the following points on health services / facilities:

- Health can be a flexible component to fit around other services.
- Health is interested in looking at opportunities to possibly consolidate with other agencies and services.
- It has its major services outside the CBD. It might be possible to activate the gaps previously mentioned (see discussion above) by minor health services to suit varied population needs.
- Health is relocating and vacating part of James Fletcher Hospital.
- Health particularly needs to understand issues concerning access and transport needs around as well as to and from sites.

General Discussion

Participants were asked to identify priorities, opportunities and infrastructure implications. The following points were raised:

- There is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the legal precinct to join with the University (law school) and develop a united precinct.
- The interaction and energy that would come with having a uni-faculty located in this precinct is beneficial to the whole community.
- It is important to remember when considering adaptive re-use or relocation that the Court building will have to function the entire time during the relocation or redevelopment - this would be difficult.
- A good public transport system is essential - not just for the CBD but to regional services such as John Hunter Hospital.
- It's worth while discussing adaptive re-use of heritage buildings with the Heritage Council. It is often perceived as being too difficult to accomplish anything in this area but there are certainly possibilities to be explored here.
- Buildings - custom build for several agencies in one building. This will maximise building capacity and support more efficient use of the building space.
- Make efficient use of government assets - use environmentally sustainable practices.

- Look at the bigger picture and keep options open. Once we put constraints on what can and cannot be achieved we are much more likely to lose the opportunity we do have all together.

Infrastructure

- Public transport: enhance it; particularly around the public domain - consider for example light rail.
- Improve:
 - building infrastructure - up to speed with other developments
 - access to buildings and services.

3. WORKSHOP 3 REPORT

PUBLIC MEETING: TRANSPORT, THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND CONNECTIVITY

1. TIME/PLACE

13th October, 3.00pm. - 7.00pm. Crowne Plaza, Honeysuckle

2. ATTENDANCE

- Rick Banyard (CD Copy), Brian Bird (Villa Clone), Ray Bowen (Newcastle Airport), Susie Bradley (Throsby Forum - Islington Village Rep), Tony Brown, Joan Browning (Newcastle East Residents), Toni Cappello (Newcastle Port Corporation), Anne Creevey (Newcastle East Residents Group), Kate Elderton, Fred Elderton, Katherine Fielden, Brian Glendenning (Harris Wheeler), Judy Hart, David Hartman (Senior Transport Planner, NSW Ministry of Transport), Darrell Harris, John Heslop (Heslop Consulting Pty Ltd), David Heggart, Petra Hilsen (Newcastle Alliance Inc), Anthony Hughes J.P., Wendy Jurd-Hill (Program Manager, Castle Personnel Services Inc), Lyn Kilby (Throsby Forum), Adelle LeCussan (Newcastle Community Health Centre Facilities Manager), Greg McLeod (RailCorp), Chris McNaughton (Palmer Bruyn), Michael Micevski (Save Our Rail NSW inc), Yarry Netluch (Newcastle Buses & Ferries- Planning & Contracts Manager), Terry O'Donoghue, Mark Squires, Andy Sturt (RailCorp), Dennis Taylor, John Turnbull, Christine Warrington (Associate Director TAFE NSW - Hunter Institute), Marcus Westbury (Renewing Newcastle), David Witherdin (General Manger, Newcastle Buses & Ferries), Sue Wood, Allan Davidson (Tio Technology), Michael Leslie, Annette Leslie, Paul Humphreys (H Events), Raka Tierney (Newcastle Pharmacotherapy Services), Catherine Henry (Newcastle Law Society), Chris Bentley, Noelle Egeressy, Patricia Skelton (HNEAHS), Tim Bohlson (Resident), Steve Lawler (Surdevel), David Stuart (Institute of Engineers), Helen De-Bruin, Kevin Webster (RTA), Cr Bob Cook (NCC), Cr Aaron Buman, Lord Mayor John Tate, Brent Knowles (NCC), Lindy Hyam (NCC), Mathew Brewster (NCC), Dianne Leeson (OCG), Jennifer Collison (Dept of Premier and Cabinet), James Shelton (NSW Department of Planning),
- GPT representatives: Phil Heaney (Project Director), Joe Hruda (Principal, Civitas), Sam Jordon (Senior Development Manager), Amanda Pieriboni (Development Manager Retail), David Sleet (Development Manager), Samantha Taranto (The GPT Group), Phil Neat & Brian O'Heir (NeatCorp),
- Key Insight: Ellen Davis-Meehan (facilitator), Linda Vial, Lee McDougall, Nicole Wergeltoft, and Donna Bain.
- GHD: Steve Edmonds, Shane Cahill, Tegan Harris.
- HDC: Craig Norman, Luke Mellare.

3. PROGRAM

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Presentation on the current context (LEP etc) - Steve Edmonds GHD)
3. "What makes a good city - the GPT proposal and Newcastle" - GPT/Civitas

4. General Principles - What will make the city better:
 - For the people who live here
 - For the people who work here
 - For the people who visit here
5. Details and Infrastructure project priorities (in groups)
6. Close

4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY

Workshop 3 sought to explore with a broad cross-section of active community members issues relating to public transport, the public domain and connectivity. The key questions for the meeting was “What will make this City work better / be more “liveable” in terms of public domain, connectivity and transport?” Workshop 3 was advertised in the Newcastle Herald and invites were sent to local resident groups, community forums and special interest groups.

The meeting began with an opening introduction by Craig Norman (HDC), followed by an overview presentation by Steve Edmonds (GHD) of the current planning instruments and documents that form the starting point for discussion. The framework for considering more detailed infrastructure issues is contained with the City Centre Plan. The City Centre Plan references four components:

- City Centre Vision
- Newcastle LEP
- Development Control Plan (DCP)
- Community Infrastructure Plan

The Visions for the City Centre has been developed with extensive consultation by NCC and in summary includes:

- Growing City
- Living City
- Economic diversity
- Increasing commercial potential
- Revitalising the Mall
- Transport
- Enhance retail
- Define and promote Newcastle
- Learning Centre
- Improving safety / Public Domain

The Taskforce also invited GPT to present a brief summary of the planning work they have completed in preparing their \$650M project proposal to revitalise the Mall. There were two reasons for the invitation; firstly this was an opportunity for GPT to share its work publicly and many participants would be interested in hearing their plans, and secondly it is such a significant development for the region that if it were to proceed it would have a considerable influence over planning for the CBD. There was a mixed response to the GPT presentation with some participants indicating their objections to the GPT proposal and challenging their vision and the appropriateness / motivations of presenting at a Taskforce Workshop. However other participants welcomed the opportunity to see what GPT was proposing and responded positively to their vision and their proposal.

GPT's emphasis on the removal of heavy rail into the city as an essential prerequisite for the success of their project tended to skew the rest of the Workshop discussion towards the "rail debate". Eventually wide ranging discussion on infrastructure priorities for the CBD occurred and the discussion is summarised here.

5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY

5.1 List of Key Issues Summarised

The key Issues discussed during the workshop were:

- Accessibility
- Connectivity
- Transport
- Parking
- Importance of exports (Port usage and our contribution to the State economy)
- Decision-Making is cumbersome:
 - 3 levels of government; Local Council, State, Federal.
 - Transparent consultation is needed
- Social Infrastructure
 - Education facilities (schools) and resources need to be considered
- Where is the CBD? Hasn't it moved out to the suburbs - Kotara and Charlestown?
- Include youth
 - Opportunities for youth
 - Support and opportunities for young people in small business
- Maintain a concentrated legal precinct
 - Legal practitioners already have established premises - they want legal precinct to stay where it is
 - Ensuring the safety of people should be a priority in the legal precinct

- Rail
 - Is it a barrier?
 - Have a regular light tram (Port Melbourne example)
 - There are alternative transport possibilities
 - Consider the function of the main transport corridor
- Regional rail linkages
 - How does it all fit?
 - Integrated regional system
 - Freight railway
 - Fassifern to Hexham rail link
- Public transport
 - Clear targets
 - Achievable outcomes
 - 'Green' rail - heavy rail is not "green"
 - Integrated ticketing system needed
- Aesthetics of the development
 - Make it liveable
- Park and Ride - this is essential
- Park-Ride-Cycle-Walk
 - Safety of users important
- Longevity - plan for the future
- Linkages within the city - connections - how do people get from one place to another?
- Retail
 - Needs to be High class & Specialised
 - Different - must be a unique offering - not like the suburban shopping malls.
- Public Domain/Spaces
 - Usable
 - Involve property owners
 - Services and products
 - Shared responsibility

- Local authenticity
- Designated public area
 - Outdoor
 - 2,000-3,000 capacity
 - Events centre
- Building heights (maybe 90 metres isn't enough in areas not affected by mine subsidence)
- Newcastle as a Regional Centre
 - Transport/rail service/ light rail?
 - Major transport interchange
 - Government intervention
 - Parking
- Street Space
 - Pedestrian activity (European model)
- Who will occupy this space?
 - Retail
 - Night life
 - Leisure
- Cycle ways
 - Cycling events - Unique feature of the ability to close streets with minimal disturbance
 - Wider pathways/cycle ways
 - Clearly define cycle ways
 - Safety of adult and children cyclists
- Management of cars and parking
 - Consideration of commuters
- What about the city vision; is it a mismatch?
- Impact of land releases in Maitland
 - Convenience of rail for commuters to the city
- Extension of planned corridors
 - Connectivity
- Climate Change

- Commitment of Government to reducing greenhouse gases
 - Reducing cars on roads
 - Public transport targets of NCC
- Improving intersection capacity
 - Vision for Stewart Ave and Hunter St intersection
- Footpath obstacles
 - Move bus stops (bulb model)
- Where is the city centre in the context of the plan?
 - Have various core precincts
- What will be done with the unzoned land (indicated on the map along the beaches)? [Answer: Beach - use to be determined.]
- Stockton and Carrington
 - Vision and linkages
 - Infrastructure impacts
- Convention Centre is needed:
 - Conferences
 - Central location
- Additional ferry terminal at Wickham and for incoming tourist vessels.
- Availability of public toilets - there are none.
- Toddlers and child-friendly infrastructure
 - Playgrounds / parks / safe areas
- Exercise spaces
 - Allocated areas
 - Adult exercise spaces / pathways and exercise trails
- Safety and Security
 - CCTV/Privacy
 - Coping with the expansion and population increase
- Appropriate street lighting
 - Brightness
 - Location

6. DOCUMENTATION OF DISCUSSION

THEME	COMMENTS
THE PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the concepts moving us back to the earlier work done on planning - the City Centre Planning Workshops and the City Centre Plans (DCP and LEP)? Are we starting again? There was a process that we committed to - whether we like the City Centre Plan or not - and we should not over ride the outcomes of that process. • Three layers of government - e.g. Honeysuckle, Hospital (State), Nobbys (Commonwealth) - looks like an "Irish Jigsaw". • Need for total transparency and honesty in consultation • State Government departments don't talk to each other - e.g. what are the needs for the law courts, mental health facilities etc.? Government departments need to talk to each other and put the city first. [Facilitator comment: State Government departments have participated in an earlier workshop] • There should have been working papers for this Workshop.
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	<p>Rail: There was considerable debate about whether or not to remove heavy in rail into the city and discussion on the possible alternatives. Opinions were divided but the weight of the discussion supported finding viable transport alternatives to the heavy rail including the creation of a transport interchange at Wickham, Hamilton or Woodville. Those in favour of maintaining heavy rail into the city discussed level crossings and connectivity possibilities. There was strong agreement that Hunter Street from Newcastle East to the West End needed to be opened up to the Harbour and the connections made more easily accessible. Comments about public transport specific to the rail network included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to be encouraging public transport and rail into the city is an important feature of major cities. • We need to move people into the city in new ways in the future. • We shouldn't be driven by GPT's interests - e.g. Transport corridor / removal of rail. • Need to keep rail services so that people can come to the city • The GPT site has to be developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GPT has a great plan ○ What are the barriers to carrying out the GPT plan? ○ Seems that the rail is the key barrier. ○ Forty years ago Liverpool City in the UK was the most rundown city in England. Now it is a thriving city and has been redeveloped because people opened their minds. ○ Port of Melbourne used to be rundown and there was heavy rail link to the city. Now there is a light rail service that operates - this is a good

THEME	COMMENTS
	<p>model for Newcastle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to address the inconvenience caused by changing over modes of transport and the time taken to do this. • A lot of infrastructure would be needed at Wickham for it to become a transport hub. With the planned development of this area there is not enough room for an interchange - can't manage the cars around Wickham station. • Where is the evidence that the heavy rail into Newcastle is green? • Heavy rail cannot be defended on environmental grounds. • Regional rail is not green - we need indisputable data - meeting should call for indisputable data re the green house gases released on the peninsular by the heavy rail. • Level crossings will not be considered by Rail authorities - it is a safety issue. • Railway line is a barrier - but it is crossable. • More people would use the heavy rail line if there were more timetabled services. More people/better timetable may address environmental issues. • The Institute of Engineers has made a submission to Council about transport issues (see Appendix 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Buildings can be low (2/3 stories) or very high (with good foundations) ○ Newcastle as regional centre extends to Branxton and Singleton ○ Transport consists of car and regional rail ○ Necessary to terminate rail at Wickham and establish an interchange ○ Need a high level of Council and State Government intervention otherwise it won't work ○ Regional rail - could run as light rail into the city - e.g. Morisset, Singleton, Dungog through to Maitland ○ Car parking would be essential ○ Assume water/electricity would be provided ○ Need to pay more attention to pedestrians - more space for people such as the European models of piazzas and public places. <p><u>Broader Public Transport Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to think beyond the structure of three main roads. • How about park and ride? • We are attaching too much importance to the car. • The first question to answer is: what sort of city do we want? Are we planning for a car-free / pedestrian friendly / cycle and public transport capable city? The type of city we want will shape our planning and our infrastructure needs. • People want to come to Newcastle - we see the pressure of the traffic and the

THEME	COMMENTS
	<p>impact on corridors such as Maitland Road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not just about the bottom line. • We don't have the roads for bus transport. • Need park/ride/cycle • Linking the parts of the city is hard • Transport corridors need reconsidering (Heavy rail needs to be protected) • It is hard to create something which is user friendly (e.g. Harbour foreshore). For example while there was a lot of activity on the harbour foreshore for the Maritime Festival on the weekend [12 October 2008], there was very little activity on King and Hunter Streets. • We need Hunter and King Streets to be connected to the foreshore. • Need to think about Linwood and Merewether - linking inner city areas to the CBD. • Transport is the 3rd largest contributor to green house gases. • Reduce private vehicle use - cheaper to act now. • Reducing cars increases the road/intersection capacity. • There are numerous state government policies on pedestrians, bicycles, and public transport instead of cars - what targets have we set? • Public transport target usage of 30% has been set by Newcastle City Council - what has been done to achieve this target? • What is trying to be achieved in terms of transport - need for clear objectives. • Plan for reducing private car use. • Intersection of Stewart and Hunter Streets needs to be looked at as it is a very busy intersection. It will be more crowded if the plans go through for Wickham to be a transport hub. • We need for an integrated ticketing system - how hard can it be? • Buses need priority on Hunter Street. • Need bulb bus stops on Hunter Street. • How do you get to John Hunter Hospital from the Wickham Hub? John Hunter has 2,000 spaces for 8,000 cars. • We need an integrated regional transport plan. • Need to look at the rail network - how the line gets electrified to Rutherford

THEME	COMMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast links to the Airport and to Sydney are vital. • How will the transport infrastructure link across the harbour e.g. to Dykes Point • There have been calls to extend the railway to Stockton and the Airport. This would have a significant impact on the city and the GPT site. • Brent Knowles: Newcastle City Council has called for tenders to undertake a traffic and transport study (advertised on Saturday 11 October 2008). We need to have more detail about travel and connectivity as the City Centre Plan does not have this detail. Need to look at what the movements and issues will be in 25 years. Issues that will be looked at will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greater reliance on public transport; ○ Managing car traffic; ○ Limiting private vehicles; ○ Road system; ○ Parking; ○ Interconnectivity. • Question - what are the terms of reference for the study as the terms of reference will affect the outcome? • Answer from Brent Knowles - what NCC wants is a model. No specific outcome in mind. For example, need to look at timetabling, Honeysuckle. Need to look at the city now and what the city will look like in 25 years and explore a number of scenarios. • There is already a shortage of parking the CBD. • The land release at Thornton will add to pressure on parking - need the rail to link to the CBD from those growth areas.
CONNECTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths need to be wider: 7 - 8 m would accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. • We want to promote walk/park/ride • Need to extend vision and connections to Carrington and Stockton. • Could extend ferry to Wickham. • Need to look at north/south access - need for wide pedestrian footpaths for people and bikes/prams and cars travelling north/south. • Ability to cross road safely - particularly busy roads. • It is difficult to cross Wharf Road. • Need Cycleways that are safe for children and adults - Hannell Street is not safe for children on bikes.

THEME	COMMENTS
VISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to open up Hunter Street and King Streets to the harbour. • We need to take a holistic view of the city. • The CBD is not where people say it is - most of the business activity has moved westward - towards Kotara. Need to call the city area the harbour or peninsular district. • The LEP is in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who are the people and the businesses that will be in the CBD? ○ Who will occupy the spaces during: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business hours ▪ At night ▪ On the weekend • Brent Knowles : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are a number of centres including Civic, Union Street and Stewart Avenue/Hunter Street. ○ Wickham will be a major area for office development ○ Need to explore north/south corridors • Need to consider the aesthetics of what people are doing - if it is ugly people won't want it • Need to look at what people want holistically
PUBLIC DOMAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don't need public squares with palm trees. • We want something that will last for 100 years - relates to our heritage character. • We need to define what is meant by public domain - public spaces are now often privately owned land - but they need to be included in our discussion. • When planning is done for public spaces we need to know who owns the land and what will be the shared responsibility for that land. • Need to consult and involve the landowner on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Services they offer ○ The quality of the offer ○ Role of private land owners • The commercial offering needs to be authentic to Newcastle. • Public domain spaces need to be a high quality. • Need to remove obstacles on footpaths, for example, bus stops. Create bulb bus stops out into the street - this frees up the footpaths and reduces vandalism and violence. • Need for designated public areas in the summer time for activities such as

THEME	COMMENTS
	<p>open air cinemas and events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for great public spaces. • City is currently short on green/open space - wished the Foreshore Park had gone further. • More open space would be terrific. • Availability of public toilets is a huge issue in the city. • Tourist precinct has a lack of public toilets. • Need facilities for young children - playgrounds, equipment, open space and schools. • In Queensland there are parks set with exercise facilities that people can use (saves people using existing benches). • We need places especially set aside for adults to exercise. • We want people friendly and child friendly public spaces that are safe. • Eastern end of the city has narrow streets - street lighting needs to be appropriate so that it does not shine into people's houses. • Activate public spaces and make connections between places and buildings. • Make it easy to walk and cycle. • Previous planning documents planned for improving the streetscape and wider footpaths.
SAFETY AND SECURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security is important • Do we need CCTV on every corner? • Do we want police on every corner? • Plan for a safe city - lighting, design, activating areas. • The CBD needs to be safe - day and night.
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need public services in the city - particularly education (primary and secondary schools). • Newcastle East School is an asset - there is insufficient planning to accommodate children in educational facilities in the city. • We need social infrastructure.
THE LEGAL PRECINCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the moment the tribunals and courts are all at different places. We need to concentrate the facilities in one place (the current location) as the practices and facilities are well established. The facilities need to be safe for staff and

THEME	COMMENTS
	<p>for the public. (Solicitor's view)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve the legal district where it is. (Law Society). • A lot of things don't fit together [being said at the workshop] E.g. The court complex should be out of the peninsular and farther to the West - like John Hunter Hospital. (Resident).
RETAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a participant who has been a retailer in the upper end of Newcastle for 30 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Linking the parts of the city is hard ○ Transport corridors need reconsidering ○ Heavy rail needs to be protected ○ Hard to create something which is user friendly (e.g. Harbour foreshore). For example while there was a lot of activity on the harbour foreshore for the maritime festival on 12 October 2008, there was very little activity on King and Hunter Streets ○ GPT proposal looks really good. ○ Retail in Australia is boring ○ Need to differentiate it from other retail - like the Strand Arcade in Sydney and sites in Melbourne. ○ Want to create something special so that people will use it. ○ Structure needs to be open and provide differentiated retail. ○ Shouldn't be a fortress in the city.
EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need an Events Centre / Need for a significant convention centre that takes advantage of the city's natural attributes. Shame that a recent major event had to use a tent in the park. • The city has unique features which it make it possible to run sporting events in the city (cycling, running): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can close off the city at the extremities with minimal inconvenience to the residents/ businesses. ○ Footpaths need to be wider - 7 - 8 metres would accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. ○ There are many agencies/departments that need to be consulted/informed in order to gain approval/authority to run an event - one approval body would be easier. ○ Open public space needs to be good. There are usable spaces but there are things in the way that can't be removed and make some events difficult.
DEVELOPMENT AND YOUNG PEOPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development needs to include young people (not just as users of facilities such as the ones at Honeysuckle which are great), but as potential owners/managers of their own businesses. Young people need to have their own opportunities

THEME	COMMENTS
POLITICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to recognise that through Newcastle Port, Australia has exports of \$10billion p.a. - why isn't Newcastle getting a share of this income?

Following the main session of the Workshop special interest groups convened to further explore their area of interest. There was no whole of workshop sign-off on this input.

6.1 Small Group Reports

6.1.1 Cycle Group

This group consisted of people who regularly cycled and included a business owner who organised cycling events. The group identified 3 distinct cyclist groups:

1. Sports/Team Cyclists
2. Commuters
3. Recreational

For this discussion they concentrated on better cycling opportunities for commuters and recreational cyclists. "*Sport cyclists will find alternative places*". Their major points were:

- Cycle ways - promote cycling as a means of transport (commuting)
- Designated cycle ways - possibly with Rent- a- bike or similar scheme.
- One way traffic would be easier for cyclists, pedestrians, car traffic. It also has potential to provide better parking configurations.
- Safety - this is a major issue for cyclists who are regularly knocked off their bikes as a result of poorly designed Cycleways and inadequate facilities.
- Some employers already provide storage rooms for bikes/showers for their employees - this should be encouraged.
- Public bike racks are needed.
- Bikes on buses? This would encourage commuting with bikes.
- Encourage cyclists to commute within / to CBD
- Safe routes
- Safe storage
- Education - a lot of people feel scared and insecure cycling in town.
- Infrastructure - developers could include bike racks in new developments, incorporate bike racks in the public domain.
- Designated lane - is it possible to share bus-lane for cyclists/commuters?

- Pedestrians and slower recreational cyclists may co-exist on the same lane/footpath if width permits.
- Railway corridor - ideal place for cycleway, share with rail? Explore further opportunities in this area with or without heavy rail.

6.1.2 Transport

This group was predominantly “Save our Rail” members, local residents and a RailCorp staff person. Discussion focused on increasing connectivity across the rail line while maintain the heavy rail.

- Retention of existing heavy rail into current terminus; focus on:
 - Frequency.
 - Integrated ticketing/simplified.
 - Much faster e.g. Sydney to Newcastle i.e. current express services stop at Wickham.
 - Raising/drop line/ road (not at the same level as the road).
 - More pedestrian access.
 - Need to identify the market and their needs.
 - Minimise impact of cars.
 - Bus circuit around the CBD - good frequency.
 - Bus needs to be compatible with heavy rail e.g.: timetable and routes not at the expense of the suburban bus routes timetable.
 - Park/ride nodes need to be at new population clusters as earlier as possible e.g. Glendale, Branxton, Hexham. Thornton, Maitland: provide timetabled services and parking.
 - Adequate parking at outer train stations for cars and cycles.
 - Has to be secure.
 - Provide good cycle ways.
 - Community bus/buses in local areas local circuits.
 - Need more information about north - south access + routes.
 - Expand car parks and stations to meet demand e.g. at Maitland.
 - Park/ride must be a convenient, safe option (easy to access).
 - Park/ride on the road networks and create a congestion tax for the CBD to discourage cars entering it.

- Key Messages:

1. Heavy rail to stay
2. Lower/raise heavy rail as needed i.e. limited sections
3. Park/ride - more research about nodes, demand
4. Frequency - higher (don't want to rely on timetable)
5. Links with bus service
6. Synchronise train/bus timetable
7. Need to understand the profile of the people travelling to city - customer frequency, safety e.g. shift workers, low income, uni students
8. Review Stewart Ave/rail intersect e.g. raise road
9. Cost benefits analysis of making public transport free.
10. Extend Steel St
11. Look at level crossings
12. Congestion tax
13. Ferry services extended to Wickham increase frequency
14. Pedestrians - plan for them.\
15. 2nd Lane Bus Priority - far side Bulb Bus Stop

6.1.3 Planning Horizon

- Rail and 'Green'/environmental issues
 - Need indisputable data about the environmental impacts/emissions from the Heavy rail system within Newcastle.
 - Freight movement
 - Impacts of rail network on the CBD
 - Operating an alternative light rail system
- Will the development even occur?
- Considerations of the changing face of business
 - Movement/locations of businesses
 - Use of internet
 - Electronic Virtual Private Network (workers' remote internet access)
- Who are the targeted groups?
 - Retail Buyers
 - University students (education precinct)

- Office Workers
- Connectivity
 - Stockton and Carrington
 - Carrington grain silo lease is almost finished and there are rumours of the floating dock being moved.
 - Create an opening footbridge between Honeysuckle and Carrington or bridge over to Stockton so the rail network can continue north to Newcastle Airport and Port Stephens to capture incoming tourists.
 - Operate the ferry from Stockton to the Newcastle harbour wharf, and then continue it down to Honeysuckle and Wickham. Reduce people's use of land transport within the city; move these people off the road and rail.
- Bus Service
 - Management of the network and routes
 - Extensions of the service required
 - Remove set bus-stops (have 'moving/hailing' bus stops)
 - Down-size the buses; currently only average about 1.5 persons per kilometre.
 - Mini-buses/smaller buses will be more economically and environmental viable, and roads can handle these buses without requiring additional strengthening etc.
- Disabled Access
 - Creation and need for a specialised transport unit for disabled people. Reduce costs of disabled access to public transport systems and generation of a fleet of mini-buses and taxis only servicing disabled people throughout the city, servicing their public transport needs.

4. URBAN DESIGN WORKSHOP

1. TIME/PLACE

Thursday 13th November 2008, HDC Board Room

2. ATTENDANCE

- Prof Steffen Lehmann (Newcastle University), Prof Chris Johnson (DoP), Dianne Leeson (Office of the Coordinator General), John Richardson (Cox Richardson), David Rose (Suters), Glen Spicer (RAIA, Chair Newcastle Chapter), Brent Knowles (NCC)
- HDC - Craig Norman, Jenny Roberts, Julie Rich
- GHD - Steve Edmonds, Tegan Harris
- Key Insights - Ellen Davis-Meehan, Linda Vial

Apologies: Lindy Hyam (NCC)

3. PROGRAM

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Presentation on the current context - Steve Edmonds GHD
 - Planning Instruments
 - GPT proposal - a solution for with-or-without GPT
 - The Legal Precinct - and other Government asset issues
 - Draft Project List
3. Urban Design Discussion - Facilitated by EDM
4. Close

4. INTENTION AND METHODOLOGY

Urban design principles formed the base for discussion, comments and input to the possible projects emerging from the workshop process. Participants were supplied with the write-up of the previous 3 workshops as well as the Save Our Rail Submission to the Taskforce (attached) as working papers for this workshop. In addition three participants brought their own presentations to the workshop to speak to (Brent Knowles, Steffen Lehmann and John Richardson). These papers are attached.

The key question for discussion was:

- What are the Urban Design implications for the projects currently under consideration?

5. WORKSHOP SUMMARY

5.1 List of Key Issues Summarised

- Removal of rail line
 - Needs to be removed to generate connectivity in/around CBD
 - Support now stronger for moving the rail; it is the best options from an urban design point of view.
 - There is an option for staging the removal to test and improve the bus network
- Public Transport
 - Main priority
 - Need effective and attractive public transport
 - Simple, user friendly and accessible (disabled access, smart ticketing etc)
 - Bus traffic to be arranged around destinations - nodes within the city: Legal, Mall, Cultural, East End etc)
 - Buses to activate Hunter Street
 - Effective links to/from CBD and good localised transport within CBD
 - Ferry to extend its service to Wickham terminal
- Green Corridor
 - Opportunities for park/cycleway and perhaps buses
 - Important that corridor remain public space
- Wickham
 - Wickham has potential and capacity to become an effective train station with bus-interchange and sufficient car parking opportunities
 - Wickham area has capacity for further development
 - It is the most realistic option
- University
 - There are certainly possibilities for some university faculties to move into CBD; discussions already underway about relocating the Law School to the legal precinct
- Old train station
 - Explore options to re-use the old train station as a convention centre, cruise ship terminal, fish market etc.
- Cruise ship terminal/convention centre

- A combined cruise ship terminal/convention centre would be ideal at the old Newcastle train station, as bigger cruises have difficulty at the current site.
- Cruising industry growing
- Potential for Newcastle to become a viable option as a regular visiting port for cruises
- There is also a need for a better convention centre
- Vision
 - Short term process - need to identify interesting and achievable projects
 - Focus on primary opportunities. Long term plans are positive but we need to start something soon to kick start the process
 - Need guidelines; a master plan and strong leadership
- GPT
 - Catalyst for these discussions and a significant project and injection of investment dollars into the city.
- Further issues/discussions
 - Connectivity - Major issue
 - Funding - what can be achieved with/without appropriate funding?

6. DOCUMENTATION OF DISCUSSION

THEME	COMMENTS
WICKHAM (The proposed site for a new train station/ bus-interchange)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wickham has the capacity to become the gateway to the city/peninsula. To get to Wickham via Rail/Bus/Car we need a bus interchange and major car parking • Wickham has potential for further development • Appropriate place, close to harbour, city etc. • Water is an asset that should be taken into account, Wickham is close to the harbour • Wickham can become a dense location of buildings and has the capacity for further development. • Wickham station - can see significant growth/development east of the proposed site but what about the western side? • A Plaza adjacent to the new train station would be a good option. People need to feel that they have arrived at the harbour • Pedestrian and public spaces need to be open and safe with appropriate street connections. New station surrounds need to have as many access

THEME	COMMENTS
	<p>points as possible (Knowles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail station still needs to be close to the city. Hamilton and other suggested areas are therefore not an option. Difficult access. Other options might not be close enough to the city or haven't got the surrounding requirements for a train station with bus interchange and sufficient parking • Wickham has the surrounding opportunities and is so far the most realistic option • To be considered: Wickham- Why would you invest in Wickham - Do we need a trigger for the western part of the city? • TAFE is already a good anchor point for this area
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport is a major issue and should be our priority. User friendly, simple and accessible. Many places around the world have their rail terminals at the edge of the city. We need good localised transport in the city. • Transport planning is crucial • There is a need to replace outmoded rail with something new - perhaps rapid bus system. Also, catching the bus has to become an acceptable and attractive option. 2 types of buses might be the best option. Main priority here is to adjust the bus system to be user friendly for everyone, including older people, prams, wheelchairs etc. • There might be a possibility for a rapid bus system within the corridor • Buses need to stop outside shops, cafes etc. Hunter Street is good enough for increasing/improving bus traffic. • Public Transport need to become interesting and efficient. • Allow for train/bus ticket combination • Through traffic by car should be discouraged through the city centre. • Bus traffic need to be arranged around destinations • Hunter Street is not ideal for more bus traffic. Corridor close to both Hunter Street as well as honeysuckle. Need new connections to harbour. • Build up layers and connectivity around nodes • Ferry service to go to terminal at Wickham • A transport expert could look at best options for a bus station/interchange and make a plan to be looked at • Staging the rail withdrawal - Trial where the bus network will be used and

THEME	COMMENTS
	<p>improved for a period of time before fully removing the rail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nodes forming the spine of Newcastle. Replacement option might be more likely to attract funding • Test bus fleet ability • Public transport - put into context and to be considered and improved over time • Loss of train + running cost for buses = positive net value of replacing train with buses • Transport - perhaps a private/public partnership could work. Federal funding will not be enough. Port Corp should be included in this discussion. Benefits private economic interest as well as generating money for public use (for transport etc) • Public transport to be able to manage a big population increase • Increasing service / accessibility • Airport link - rail link from Hexham is currently under discussion. Buses in the interim • Links to CBD - Airport, Maitland, John Hunter Hospital, Glendale, Central Coast. All need good links to CBD
<p>REMOVING HEAVY RAIL LINE WITHIN THE CBD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a strong shift in regard to the rail line. People can now see the vision • Need to promote the issue of Wickham station being moved as a better service option: replacing something old with something new and more effective • There is now more support for removing the rail, however concerns from the small but strong lobby group that opposes the removal need to be considered • Removing the rail in the CBD might actually be a good option for RailCorp (the heavy rail is expensive).
<p>CORRIDOR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once we gain the (Rail) Corridor - it needs to be kept and landscaped for public use and should remain a public space. Bikes and walking need to be encouraged • The corridor is a huge area and the cost of landscaping will be massive. Money is an issue. Corridor could be retained for public use with an underground rail line, but the population density here cannot support this expense • Discuss the use of corridor for buses - it will be important for the buses to

THEME	COMMENTS
	<p>travel along Hunter Street so that people can get off there and use the shops and services - this will activate Hunter Street. (Alternate view: use the rail corridor for buses - Hunter street isn't wide enough)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues in the corridor: The suggestion of a green corridor might pose a problem with crime etc. Suggesting a dedicated bus line in the corridor. • Buses might destroy the feeling of a green corridor. • Parkland is needed in the corridor but can also be used for modern, smaller development • It is important to keep the corridor a public space • Rail could then be possible either over or under the corridor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bus/cycle/parkland all possible within the corridor ○ Green necklace : We might not have all the beads on straight away but it can be worked on over time
OPTIONS FOR NEWCASTLE TRAIN STATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcastle station - re-use as conference centre, fish market etc. • There is also opportunity for the existing station to become a new cruise ship terminal
UNIVERSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to move Uni? • The University is limited in its current location and need to consider other options to excel and go forward, discussions already underway regarding moving some faculties to the CBD • There are possibilities for the University (law school) to relocate to the legal precinct. Then perhaps the business faculty. • Student housing needed if Uni moves. More affordable housing
POSSIBILITY OF A CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL / CONVENTION CENTRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cruise ship terminal at the old station perhaps including a convention centre. This would suit bigger cruise ships as the current location does not have the capacity to handle the bigger ships. • We currently have around 6-7 cruise ships per annum, however industry is growing - potential for Newcastle to become a viable option • Cruise terminal issue - far between cruisers but considerable money generated while they are here • Cruise ships can be a difficult and fickle industry • Newcastle Port Corp. Have discussion with them. There is pressure on the Port Corp from the cruise industry as it is currently hard to get in/out of the port • Need to develop new terminal just off old rail station

THEME	COMMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current issue is getting people on/off the ships • Current issue is getting people on/off the ships • Investment opportunity for the private sector to develop cruise ship terminal • Need to consider whether cruises should be visiting only (as is today) or for Newcastle to become a homeport. Visiting port would be preferable and achievable • Combination cruise ship terminal/convention centre could definitely be a working solution • It would be good to have a new location for a convention centre as the current location has problems with noise • Also need to consider parking options for visitors to convention centre. What is the current/future market for a convention centre? Further research into this area may be required. Need to think about accommodation/hotel in the vicinity as well • Waterfront location for a new convention centre would be ideal • Definitely a project option that needs to be explored further
GPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPT has been a catalyst for this discussion, they are still very interested but are also considering the general financial situation at this time • Newcastle has the commitment already; we need to discuss what happens with/without GPT? • The GPT proposal is sound and attractive - we need to consider the possibility of a step-down version of the GPT option
VISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term process - selection of interesting, achievable projects • Identify what we want from our City • Need a clever plan that works for our city • We need a walkable City • Slow vehicle access through the Mall • Link Stewart Avenue to Honeysuckle area • Darby Street could go all the way to honeysuckle (if rail line is removed) • Economic series of nodes through the CBD would be a positive direction • The Port - Newcastle Port Corp could become a major player as port land becomes available

THEME	COMMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a story behind our proposal • And description of opportunities • We need a Health strategy, Education strategy, Retail strategy and a Justice strategy for this city • Government agencies working together, is it feasible? • Aim for linear sequence which opens up for infrastructure improvements and other opportunities, including economy. Replacing the rail is essential • New train station/interchange will need to kick start this process • Newcastle is a destination, not a pass through town. Need potential to create a master plan. We can't rely on removing rail only • Need guidelines, master plan and strong leadership • Focus on primary opportunities. Long term plans are positive but we need to start something soon to kick-start process • Open up waterfront • Need to make good use of Government funds. That might lead to other investments and follow on projects. • Need a commercial driver to encourage residential growth
FURTHER ISSUES/DISCUSSIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity - Major issue • People /space ratio needs to be considered • Focus activity/investment in a specific area rather than spreading out and losing connectivity • City is not moving anywhere at the moment • Climate issues? Storm, flooding, sea rise. Might be good to have a management plan to address these issues. Will it impact on investment? Possibility of platform above rail • We have to learn how to live with floods and try to avoid problems as much as possible • Need to have a think about night time in town • Funding is an issue. • Need to consider how realistic plan to develop is if there is no funding • Increasing workforce needs further discussion. Government departments needed in Newcastle

THEME	COMMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcastle is relying on a large catchment. CIP - not a lot of change in the area regarding development. Limited development opportunities unless consolidating sites • Need to know more about government funding • New courthouse has been discussed before. Where could it go and what will happen to existing building? • The Minister for the Hunter needs to be briefed • Opportunity to brief Minister McKay regarding train options and discussion around tourism in the area

Ω

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM TAFE

David Kirkby (TAFE Hunter Institute) supplied the following notes via e-mail:

1. Precinct Boundary - suggested amendment:

The precinct boundary as currently drawn falls just short of the block which contains the Hamilton Campus of Hunter TAFE, in Parry St. It is suggested that consideration be given to a minor redrawing of the boundary for the purpose of including the Campus, on the grounds that:

- The Campus is a substantial contributor to activity in the western CBD. With an annual enrolment of over 3,600 students, Hamilton Campus is one of the most significant destinations for people who travel to the western CBD. Arguably, it is one of the few sites maintaining significant "life" and vitality west of Market Town shopping centre. Student and staff presence in the area help to maintain the viability of Market Town and the presence of Hamilton Campus does much to alleviate the general air of "die back" in Parry Street.
- There are flow-on issues related to transport to and from the zone.
- Likewise there are flow-on issues for pedestrian transit across the zone from bus stops on Hunter St and from Wickham Station.
- Most significantly, Hunter TAFE's Hamilton Campus is overwhelmingly the Hunter's largest provider of training for Tourism and Hospitality - including Commercial Cooking and Food and Beverage Services. The industry category of Accommodation, Cafes, and Restaurants is a key employer and growth sector in Newcastle CBD. The training activities centred at Hamilton Campus have a major bearing on the ability of that sector to obtain trained staff, and to expand.

2. Hamilton Campus - Institute Intentions:

- Hunter TAFE, with funding support through the NSW State Government, has committed to a major multi-million dollar refurbishment of Hamilton Block A - including complete rebuilding of Kitchen and Bakery facilities on the Ground Floor and Level one. Design work is in progress, with construction scheduled for 2009/10.
- Hamilton Block C will be vacated late in 2009, following the relocation of Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Teaching Sections to refurbished premises on the Newcastle (Tighes Hill) Campus. The Institute is currently reviewing options for further use of Block C, and would consider lease arrangements to other public sector agencies or to the private sector.
- Hamilton Block B - the heritage listed former Brewery building - is in use for General Education purposes.

3. Hunter Street Campus:

- The Hunter St Campus is a substantial site, incorporating the heritage listed 1894 building, (originally constructed as Newcastle's Museum and School of Mines), plus modern additions and the adjoining former Newcastle West Post Office, which is leased to Hunter TAFE and has been refurbished as an Art Gallery.

- Hunter TAFE intends to remain on site. The Hunter St Campus has an annual enrolment of over 550 students and, like Hamilton Campus, is therefore a major contributor to the life of the adjoining area. For much of the past decade it has been the only significant site of serious activity and vibrancy west of Union St.
- The Hunter St Campus plays a major role in the cultural life of Newcastle CBD - a role which continues to grow. Students and staff of the Campus have created many of the public art installations around Newcastle. e.g. The Birdwood Park sculptures; the children's playground at Linwood near Throsby Ck, plus various murals around town. The Faculty of Arts and Media also has extensive delivery in music industry courses, digital arts, film and multimedia - and arranges Newcastle Music Week. Hunter TAFE commends NCC for its ongoing support of the arts, and for its support for youth culture. Hunter St Campus, and the wider Faculty of Arts and Media can be important catalysts in growing a creative community which balances economic development, demographic growth and a vibrant, imaginative environment.

4. Partnerships:

- Partnership activities exist with local business. Crown Plaza, Honeysuckle, is a major business partner of Hunter TAFE through its links to the Hamilton Campus and the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality. Hunter TAFE is always keen to explore training partnerships with local business in Newcastle CBD - both existing and new. The GPT proposal is obviously of interest from that perspective.
- Partnership with NCC has been a reality for a long time. The Together Today partnership embodies the mutual interest of NCC and Hunter TAFE in an environmentally sustainable city. We are improving our own environmental performance - but we also deliver a range of relevant environmental programs of potential benefit to local industry and business.
- The proposed Legal Precinct, possibly incorporating the University of Newcastle's Law School, is of interest. More particularly, UoN has considered moving its Business School into the CBD as well. If that proceeds - there may be options for a joint TAFE/UoN development. Aspects of Institute Business Mgt and ICT training could fit in well. The recent expansion of the national Education Infrastructure Fund to include funding for both Higher Education and TAFE could make this a practical reality. The funding program is likely to favour joint University/TAFE cross sectoral projects. Other options may exist in Arts, Media and Performance - if the University expands its presence in the CBD in that area.

5. Public Transport:

- Clearly an issue of immense interest to Hunter TAFE. Regular, efficient and safe public transport are of extreme importance to our students and the viability of our service delivery.
- Safe, pleasant pedestrian access throughout the CBD was mentioned as important at the workshop. We would also like to emphasize the importance of safe, unobstructed cycle ways.

6. Public Space and Amenity:

- Institute facilities play a part in the appearance of the CBD. As mentioned - there may be "value adding" options for the Hunter St Campus to play a part in public art, street design, performance etc.

APPENDIX 2

ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA: INFRASTRUCTURE SUBMISSION

David Stewart
0417841525



ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007

Comments by Engineers Australia Newcastle Division

March 2007

Handed to Forum 13/10/07

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007 Comments by Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division

Summary

Engineers Australia recommends that:

The Newcastle City Centre Plan (NCCP) must be read in a regional context with the proposed precinct at Wickham as the major regional transport hub.

1. The NCCP should take a very long term view forward, with a planning horizon of 50 years, to ensure that this is a visionary plan to support the whole region.
2. The Wickham Precinct of the City Centre should be expanded to approximately Throsby Street in the north to include the full extent possible on ground less disturbed from mine under-workings. The concept for this City West commercial precinct should be expanded to include Hamilton North and Islington East.
3. Amalgamation of sites, including by a State Authority such as Honeysuckle Development Corporation, will provide the most cost effective means of treating poor ground and of stimulating building development.

A Hunter Transport Authority should be established to provide intensive re-focus on transport at the local and regional level. The next stages of plan development need to provide early comprehensive analysis of and planning for transport and for utilities infrastructure. The plan must have a strong focus on service by public transport, walking and cycles.

1. Sydney train services should terminate at the new interchange at Wickham Commercial Precinct.
2. Regional train services should continue into Newcastle Station operating under traffic signal control with, eventually, new LRT style rolling stock and two new short-platform stops constructed at Honeysuckle and Queens Wharf.
3. These regional rail services, inter-mingled with traffic at some locations, could eventually operate again on the Fassifern-Toronto Line and on the South Maitland-Cessnock Line.
4. The long-distance coach terminus should be relocated to the transport hub at Wickham Precinct, and also provide services to the Airport.
5. An additional ferry pier should be built at Wickham, with additional harbour services planned
6. An inner suburban loop bus service should operate to bring the inner suburbs into the new centres.
7. The arterial road network to be developed as traffic requires. Car parking will be required for anticipated demand (70% of trips will still be by car), in the Centre Precincts, and in surrounding areas for park-and-ride.

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007

Comments by Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division

Introduction

The State Government and the City of Newcastle have prepared a concept plan for Newcastle City Centre as part of long term planning for the whole State. Some excerpts from the plan documents are given in Attachment B.

The Institution of Engineers (Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division) set up a working group in January 2007 to examine the concepts presented in the plan documents and to make comments on a range of engineering issues raised by the plans. The areas covered by these comments are: transport system planning, transport & traffic engineering, structural & geotechnical engineering aspects of the built infrastructure.

The expertise and experience of the Working Group allows certain judgements regarding infrastructure and system operations to be made with considerable confidence in spite of the lack of detail and the brief time available. These are presented here and do not obviate in any way the necessity for rigorous engineering, economic and financial analysis as concepts and visions become developed to plans and proposals.

The group recognises that comprehensive transport/land use system analysis could not be completed prior to government and the community making commitment to the principle structure of the plan. This does not negate the absolute essential need to carry out such analyses at the earliest possible time.

Sustainability issues of the Plan have not yet been considered. This is a major area of planning and the various professions and agencies responsible are only now beginning to understand what this will mean and what scope it must cover. More and urgent work needs to be done on assessing the Plan against sustainability criteria and on planning for sustainability.

Regional Context

The Plans must be read in the context of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. The Plan mentions the regional context but does not recognise the commercial and transport implications of the role of Newcastle in the Region.

Engineers Australia recommends that:

- i. The City centre Plan must be read in a regional context with the proposed precinct at Wickham as the major regional transport hub.

Comments on the Vision

The Plans are substantially land-use zoning and architectural built form in their content. They do not address infrastructure in any comprehensive manner. They deal with what activities people conduct on land parcels but not how transport is arranged to serve these activities, how they move from place to place to carry out these activities.

A key part of the Plan is expansion of the CBD westwards and creation of a new Commercial Precinct within Wickham where high density and building heights to 90m (30 storeys) will be permitted. This precinct is the zone targeted for the major growth in employment and expansion here will have an impact on the existing commercial and old industrial areas of Hamilton North and Islington. The Newcastle City Centre Plan needs to

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007 Comments by Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division

take in an expanded area. To cater for employment and to achieve another target of increased public transport use this new Precinct must be well served by public transport.

The Plan has taken a 20 to 25 year forward view. Though this is a sufficiently long time for considering immediate actions it is not long enough for a broad Vision Plan and will limit the ability of strategies and action plans to fully support the Vision. The Plan needs at least a 50 year forward view. Most built infrastructure (buildings, services and transport systems) will have an economic life of at least this duration.

Engineers Australia recommends that:

- ii. The Commercial Precinct proposed at Wickham should become also the major regional transport hub.
- iii. The NCCP should take a very long term view forward, with a planning horizon of 50 years, to ensure that this is a visionary plan to support the whole region.
- iv. The concept for a new commercial precinct at City West should be expanded to include Hamilton North, Islington East and the full extent of Wickham possible on ground less disturbed from mine under-workings.

Buildings

Mine Subsidence Issues

Mine subsidence is a significant issue for building structures but it can be resolved within economically and financially feasible building development if the base planning system is sensitive to the requirements for foundation design and construction.

Lower buildings below three storeys can be accommodated with traditional foundations and minimal investigation for and treatment of mine under-workings. As building height increases there is a greater need for investigation and the costs of foundations increases. For buildings above 3 storeys the mine under-workings are required to be at least partially filled at a substantial cost (\$0.5 Mn to \$1.0 Mn per Lot) and the foundations can become so extensive that they could support very large buildings. This is the point at which 30 storey buildings as envisaged in the Vision has considerable merit. The extensive foundations for large buildings become more economical as the height increases.

Boundary of high development land should be defined by ground conditions. The zone of old mine workings which can allow buildings up to 30 storeys is more extensive than shown on the City Vision and extends north to about Throsby Street and west to the eastern edge of Wickham Park.

The Concept for the high-rise commercial precinct at Newcastle West should be reviewed to allow an increased extent for this high-rise Precinct. Where the very high cost of treating mine under-workings is, or has been incurred, the 4% levy should be offset by the costs of that mine workings treatment.

Foundation Treatment for Sites

The treatment required for foundations in areas of old mine under workings will result in a secure zone for building extending outside the specific building site. Thus the first builder in an area will pay for extensive and costly mine remediation works which will benefit neighbours who build at a later time. Schemes to stabilise ground over a wide area will be

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007 Comments by Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division

much more cost effective and equitable than leaving each site owner to do this as a separate exercise. A plan to amalgamate sites, including by a State Authority such as Honeysuckle Development Corporation will provide the most cost effective way of stimulating building development.

Engineers Australia recommends that:

- v. The Wickham Precinct of the City Centre should be expanded to approximately Throsby Street in the north to include the full extent possible on ground less disturbed from mine under-workings.
- vi. Amalgamation of sites, including by a State Authority such as Honeysuckle Development Corporation, will provide the most cost effective way of treating poor ground and to stimulating building development.
- vii. 3% levy should be dropped or offset where mine under-workings remediation has been carried out or is required.

Communications Systems

Communications Systems connect activity nodes at these centres which can only function with such inter-connection. The communication system includes both physical transport and telecommunications networks. These systems must be specified and their provision shown to be feasible within the next stage of development of these Plans.

Utilities are necessary for the functioning of all centres and comprise potable water, gas, waste and storm water systems. The financial and physical feasibility of providing these to the proposed new centre needs to be proven at the next stage of plan development.

As the Plan is developed the above infrastructure systems require feasibility investigation and inclusion to ensure the long term development is not compromised by lack of provision as is currently the case in Newcastle and more so in Newcastle.

Engineers Australia recommends that:

- viii. The next stages need to provide early planning for transport and utilities infrastructure.

Transport Planning and Management

Operation of passenger transport systems will be more effective and efficient if it is coordinated, managed, and administered by a single authority based in the region. A new Hunter Transport Corporation on the model of the Hunter Water Corporation should be established to do this.

Within Cities of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie person travel is at present predominantly (approximately 85-90 %) by private car. Walk and cycle trips make up about 5% of travel; rail trips are about 2% and bus transport about 5%. The target recommended on a national basis for providing greatest economic, financial and social equity is to have 20% to 25% of person travel on public transport and increased walk and cycle travel. This requires a three-fold increase in public transport in the Lower Hunter Region! The proposed new Commercial and Transport Precinct at Wickham (Newcastle West) is a very strong catalyst to achieving this.

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007 Comments by Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division

Freight transport is essential to the economy of the City and the Region. However freight transport can be intrusive to urban precincts and can be in conflict with other urban transport systems. Planning and infrastructure for freight must be included in the Plans. When freight is considered in the context of urban intensification and increased public transport usage the pressure to build an outer freight line from Hexham to Awaba/Fassifern/Teralba will be realised.

Comprehensive transport/land use system analyses have not been carried out prior to government and the community committing to the principle structure of the plan. This does not negate the absolute essential need to carry out such analysis at the earliest possible time. Without this it would be akin to designing the structural form of a building without deriving the loads to be carried. Without recognising the necessity of assessing the transport load, the Plan is at risk of the failing of many previous plans – in wanting to build monuments instead of developing a system of land use and transport for use by the people of the city and the region.

Engineers Australia recommends that:

- ix. The next stages need to provide early comprehensive analysis of and planning for transport
- x. The plan must have a strong focus on service by public transport, walking and cycles.
- xi. Rail, coach and bus services need to be restructured, with a focus on a new transport hub at the proposed Wickham Precinct
- xii. A Hunter Transport Authority should be established to provide intensive re-focus on transport at the local and regional level.

Transport Infrastructure

The major sub-systems which should be referenced in the next stage of developing the Plans are:

Dedicated Right of Way Systems

1. Freight rail system – A new Awaba/Minmi/Hexham rail link to provide capacity on the inner system for passenger rail
2. Intercity passenger rail system – New Terminus Station at Hamilton/Wickham for Sydney trains and to receive Northern XPT services
3. A new rail interchange station at Glendale for North Lake Macquarie.
4. Regional passenger rail system – services lines to Morisset, Fassifern/Toronto, Maitland, Telarah/Dungog, Branxton/Singleton, Cessnock; as well as local services within Newcastle City.
 - operates Hamilton to Newcastle Station under traffic signal control (<40 km/hr, responsive to pedestrians and road traffic controls)
 - two additional LRT stations at Honeysuckle (Worth Place) and Queens Wharf (Perkins/Brown Street).
5. Dedicated off-road systems in specific locations (Ausrail or similar) - within Newcastle University, and to John Hunter Hospital.

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007 Comments by Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division

Master Plan Management

Engineers Australia recommends that:

- xxiii. A Master plan process be commenced for the Wickham Precinct to ensure that small sites are not developed at low economic feasibility or in a way that frustrates the overall vision
- xxiv. An infrastructure audit is carried out as part of the planning process to allow a reasonable and equitable levy schedule.

ATTACHMENT 1

Recommendations from Engineers Australia 2003 NSW Infrastructure Report Card.

The infrastructure Report Card is an initiative by Engineers Australia to provide to the wide community and to governments a concise and critical examination of the condition of each State's infrastructure, prepared with the knowledge and expertise of the profession of engineering. The last NSW one is from 2003. The recommendations from that report are all relevant to the microcosm of transport and urban development in Newcastle, in particular recommendations 1, 2, 5 and 7. These are as follows.

"Engineers Australia recommends the following to ensure that NSW's infrastructure meets the requirements of the community and business.

1. The planning and provision of infrastructure should become a true partnership between the three spheres of government, business and the community.
2. The planning and provision of infrastructure should be based on integrated land use planning and cost-reflective pricing.
3. The Commonwealth government should directly support the funding and planning of urban infrastructure.
4. Infrastructure owners and operators must incorporate the threat of malicious attack into their management approach to dealing with other hazards and risks, and a biannual State of NSW Infrastructure Security Report should be produced to report to the people of NSW on the security of their infrastructure.
5. The NSW government should reconstitute the Infrastructure Advisory Council so that it can provide detailed infrastructure research, assessments, prioritisation and funding recommendations. It should report directly to Cabinet.
6. The quantum of funding on infrastructure should increase to overcome the backlog of maintenance and new infrastructure. A commission of inquiry should examine the optimal sources of the new funding including hypothecated taxes, user charges and infrastructure bonds.
7. Substantial reform of infrastructure policy, regulation and taxation must occur in all spheres of government to maximise the effectiveness of planning and provision of Infrastructure."

End

Newcastle City Centre Plans 2007 **Comments by Engineers Australia, Newcastle Division**

6. Ferry Systems – An additional ferry pier at Wickham to serve the new Wickham Centre; services to run to Stockton, Queens Wharf, Newcastle Foreshore, Wickham, Throsby Creek. Smaller ferries may be warranted to give more frequent services.

Road Transport Systems

1. Primary Road Network – F3 Pacific Freeway (Beresfield to Grahamstown), New England Expressway (West Wallsend to Singleton), SH23 (Swansea to Tomago), MR 302 (Hexham to Williamstown Airport).
2. Regional Arterial Network - MR 108/517 (Raymond Terrace & Newcastle to Nelson Bay), other links and capacity upgrading to be identified.
3. Newcastle inner suburban Bus Loop – Newcastle Station, the beaches, Glebe Road/ Parkway Avenue, Kotara Shopping Centre, Broadmeadow/Entertainment Centre, Hamilton, New Wickham CBD, Hunter Street, Newcastle Station; to operate in clock and counter-clock directions.
4. Urban Bus Routes to be re-planned to serve the new Centres Structure; integrated ticketing and auto-ticketing to provide efficiency, to speed up loading and to give equity to travellers. Bus Shelters to be increased in number, and bus and rail stations to be equipped with real-time transport information.
5. Major District and Local Bus station relocated to Hamilton/Wickham Rail Interchange. Major Long Distance Coach Station shifted to Hamilton/Wickham Rail Interchange
6. Car parking to be provided for requirements – note that at least 70% of all person travel will still be by private car.

Engineers Australia recommends that:

- xiii. A Newcastle Central Transport Interchange (NCTI) be developed at the Commercial Precinct at Wickham to become the major regional transport hub
- xiv. Sydney train services to terminate at the NCTI at Wickham Commercial Precinct
- xv. Regional train services will continue into Newcastle Station operating under traffic signal control with, eventually, new LRT style rolling stock
- xvi. Two new short-platform stops be constructed at Honeysuckle Point and Brown/Perkin Street
- xvii. These regional rail services, inter-mingled with traffic at some locations, could eventually operate on the Fassifern-Toronto Line (again), and on the South Maitland-Cessnock Line.
- xviii. An inner suburban loop bus service should operate to bring the inner suburbs into the new centres.
- xix. The long-distance coach terminus be relocated to the Wickham Precinct, also with services to the Airport
- xx. An additional ferry pier built at Wickham, with additional harbour services planned
- xxi. The arterial; road network developed as traffic requires
- xxii. Car parking required for anticipated demand, in the Centre Precincts, and in surrounding areas for park-and-ride.

APPENDIX 3

SAVE OUR RAIL SUBMISSION

PROMOTING CONNECTIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

NEWCASTLE – A Sustainable and Vibrant City

Prepared by Save Our Rail NSW Inc. for
NSW Taskforce (Transport Connectivity)
Compiled by J. Dawson, D. Harris, M. Micevski, M. Nickerson

The Vision – A Thriving and Sustainable Newcastle

A vibrant and sustainable place, with the arc of the city, enfolding old and new developments, held together by the keystones that are the rail crossings.

“The passenger rail services in the Hunter region are a high quality feature of the region's public transport system. Many cities of substantially greater size than Newcastle lack rail services and would covet the opportunity for such a substantive resource as a means for providing sustainable transport into the future.”

– Prof Graham Currie, 2006

Future Needs

Projected increases in population including a greater aged component, the reality of global warming and the contribution of greenhouse gas emissions along with rising petrol costs due to oil shortage create an imperative for more emphasis on limiting private car use. This implies the need to retain and improve Newcastle's rail service to meet community travel needs, for reduction of our ecological footprint and for reasons of fiscal responsibility.

Heavy rail is recognised by world planning authorities as the most ecologically sustainable transport option with its capacity to move the greatest number of passengers.

“Rail transport into cities is seen as crucial to their futures because of the need for sustainability. Cities are shaped by their transport infrastructure. Successful cities equals less car use”

– Prof Peter Newman, 2004

“Strong rail cities have much less emissions, greenhouse gases, road accidents and traffic congestion.”

– Prof Peter Newman, 2005

New developments at Honeysuckle and areas of the foreshore are largely disconnected from the potential catchment of customers working and living in parts central Newcastle.

This raises the issue of connectivity.

Our proposal addresses access solutions and builds on existing infrastructure to integrate, not only transport modes, but the city centre while providing improved regional connections.

The following is a summary of our latest proposal “Promoting Connectivity and Sustainable Transport: Newcastle, A Sustainable and Vibrant City”:

Enhancing Connectivity ~ An Accessible City

Arches and Keystones

- Crossings signified by arches, a symbolic link to city's heritage
- Arches proclaim "I can cross here"
- Crossings are the "keystone" of a newly-integrated Newcastle

<p>CBD West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steel St - Worth Pl - Cottage Creek ** 	<p>CBD Civic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civic Station - Darby / Argyle Sts 	<p>CBD East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crown St - Perkins St - Wolfe St - Market St
---	---	--

** Wickham rail viaduct would eliminate *these* crossings

Provide Additional Pedestrian Level Crossings

Relocate Civic Station

- Relocate to the west
- Landscaped concourse linking Cultural Precinct

Improve Access to Nc1e Stn

- Bolton St (reopen access)
- Newcomen St (for GPT)
- Wharf Rd (for Queens Wharf)

Improve Station Access and Connectivity

Rail Viaduct at Wickham

- Rail elevated over Stewart Avenue
- Rail elevated over Railway Street

Wickham Station

- Redeveloped as elevated station
- Upgraded for surrounding high-rise development
- Opportunities under station & viaduct

Grade-Separated Pedestrian Access

- Stewart Av **
- Railway St **
- Cottage Creek **
- Hannell St
- Cooper St

** Wickham rail viaduct eliminates any need for *these* level crossings

Construct Rail Viaduct at Wickham

Enhancing Sustainable Transport – Building on Existing Infrastructure

<p>New Suburban Stations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farley / Rutherford - Oakhampton - Aberglasslyn 	<p>Upgrade Suburban Stations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metford / Thornton North - Branxton / Huntlee
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Initiatives to Increase Rail Use

- Park and Ride at city outskirts
- Integrated ticketing for all public transport modes

Improve Suburban Infrastructure

<p>Rail Line Beautification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscaping of all visible CBD rail corridor 	<p>Newcastle Station Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sympathetic development - 20 unused bedrooms and silver-service dining room
---	--

New Crown St CBD Station

- Midway between Civic & Newcastle
- Local services only
- Day station only

Resignalling

- Provides ongoing savings

Improve CBD Infrastructure

Provide Additional Pedestrian Crossings

Arches are an appropriate symbolic link to Newcastle's heritage:

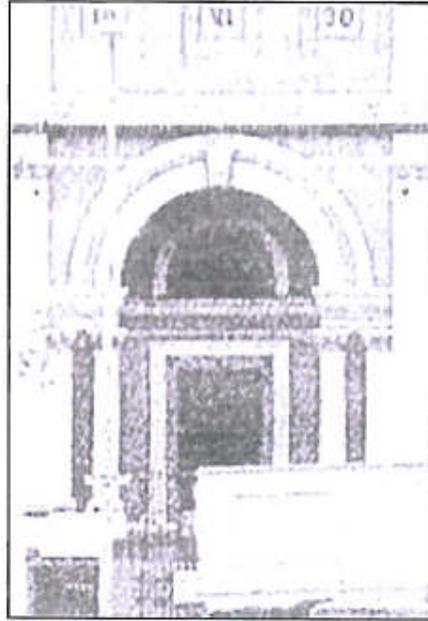


Figure 1: Archway from Newcastle Courthouse

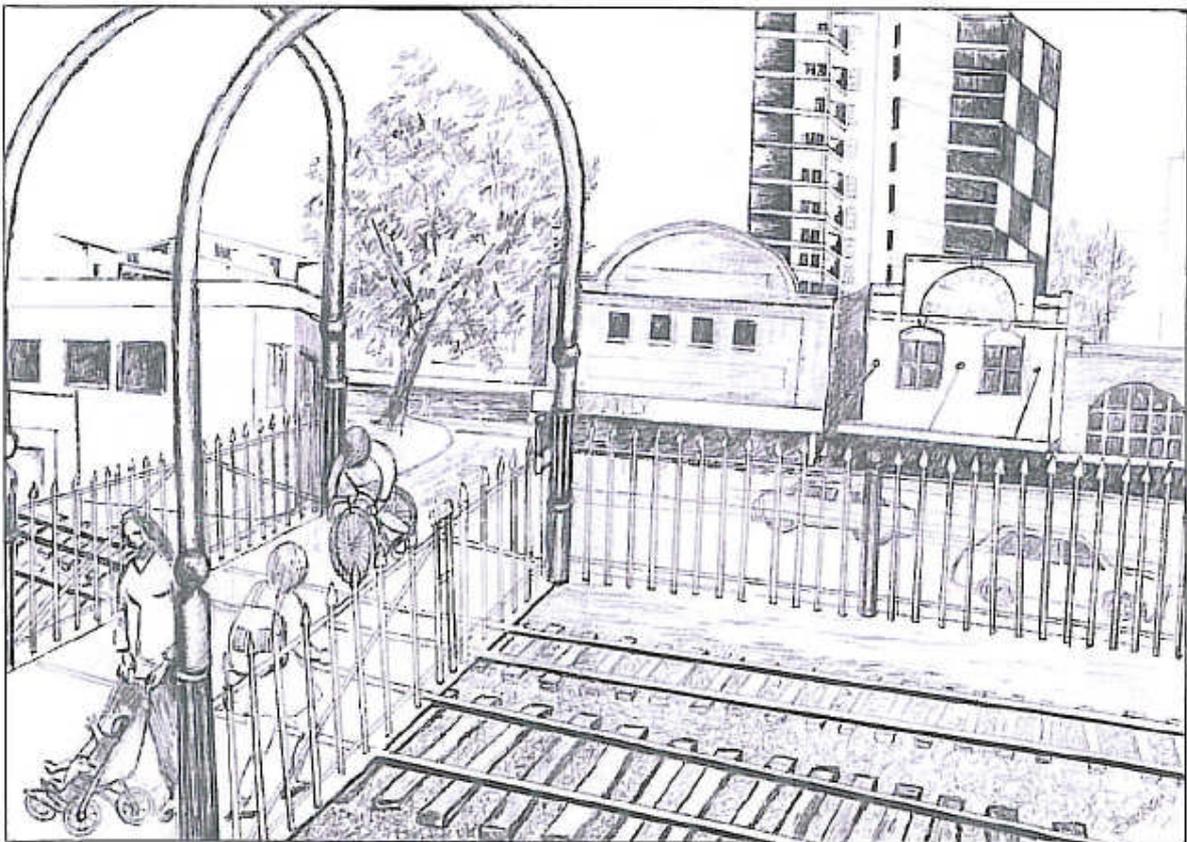


Figure 2: Concept drawing of "archway" pedestrian crossing at Worth Place

Improve Station Access and Connectivity

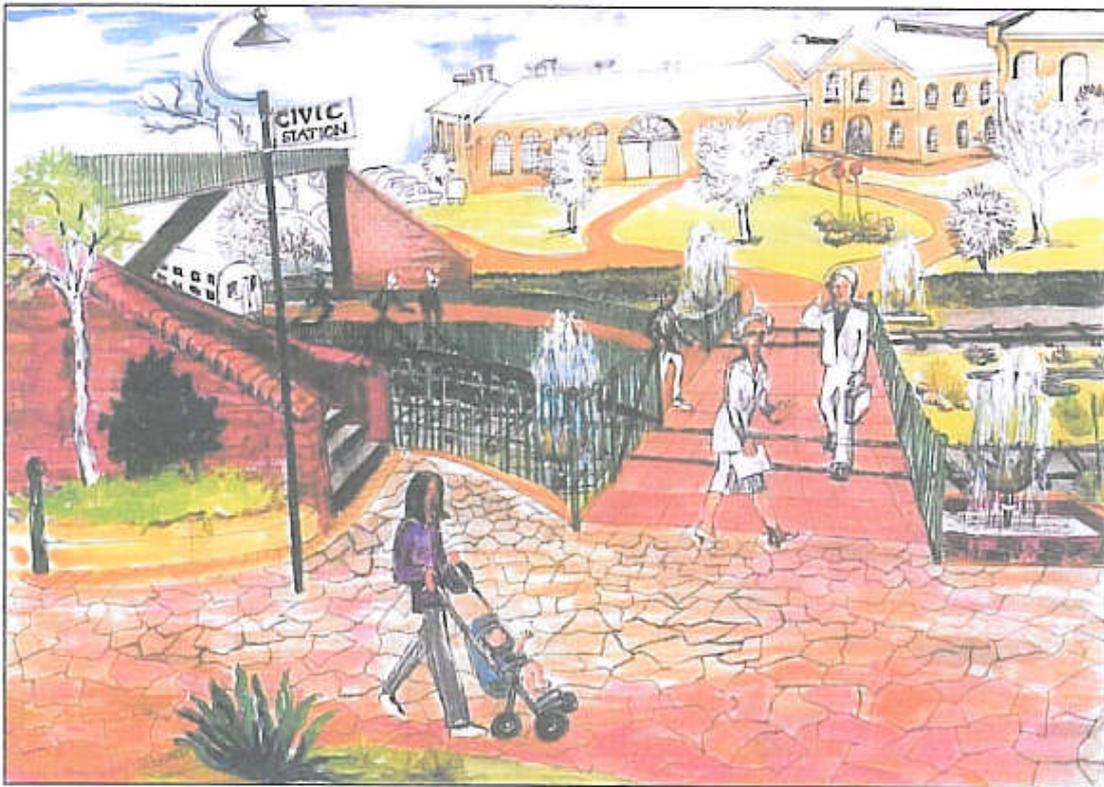


Figure 3: Relocated Civic Station allows connection of Cultural Precinct

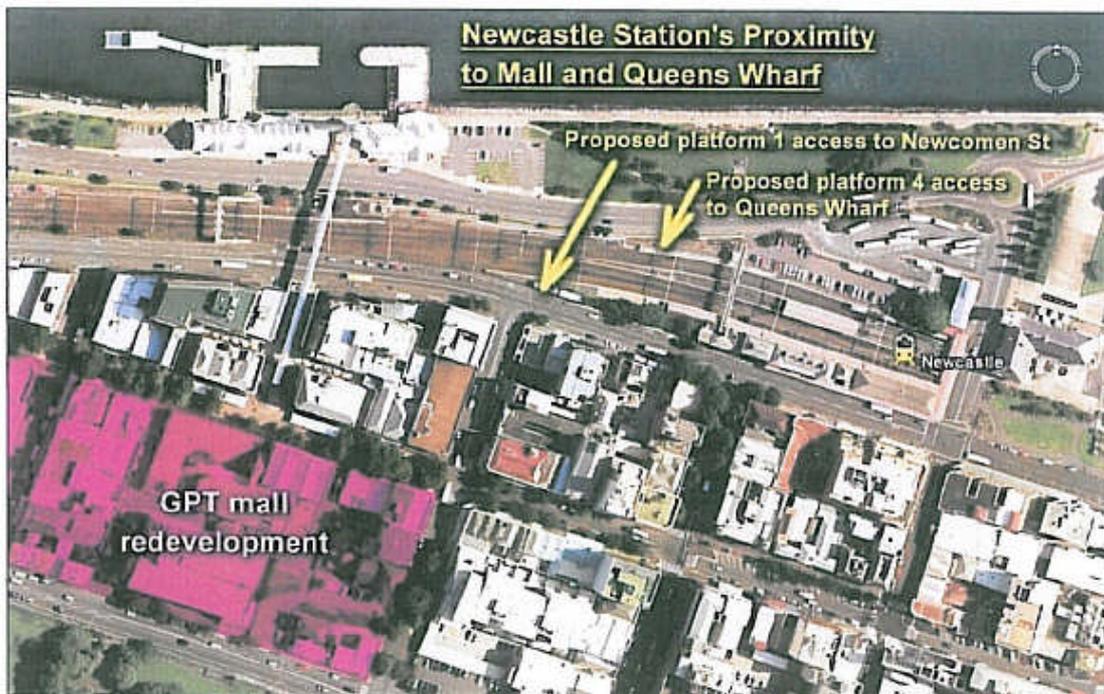


Figure 4: Newcastle Station's proximity to Hunter St Mall and Queens Wharf

Construct Rail Viaduct at Wickham

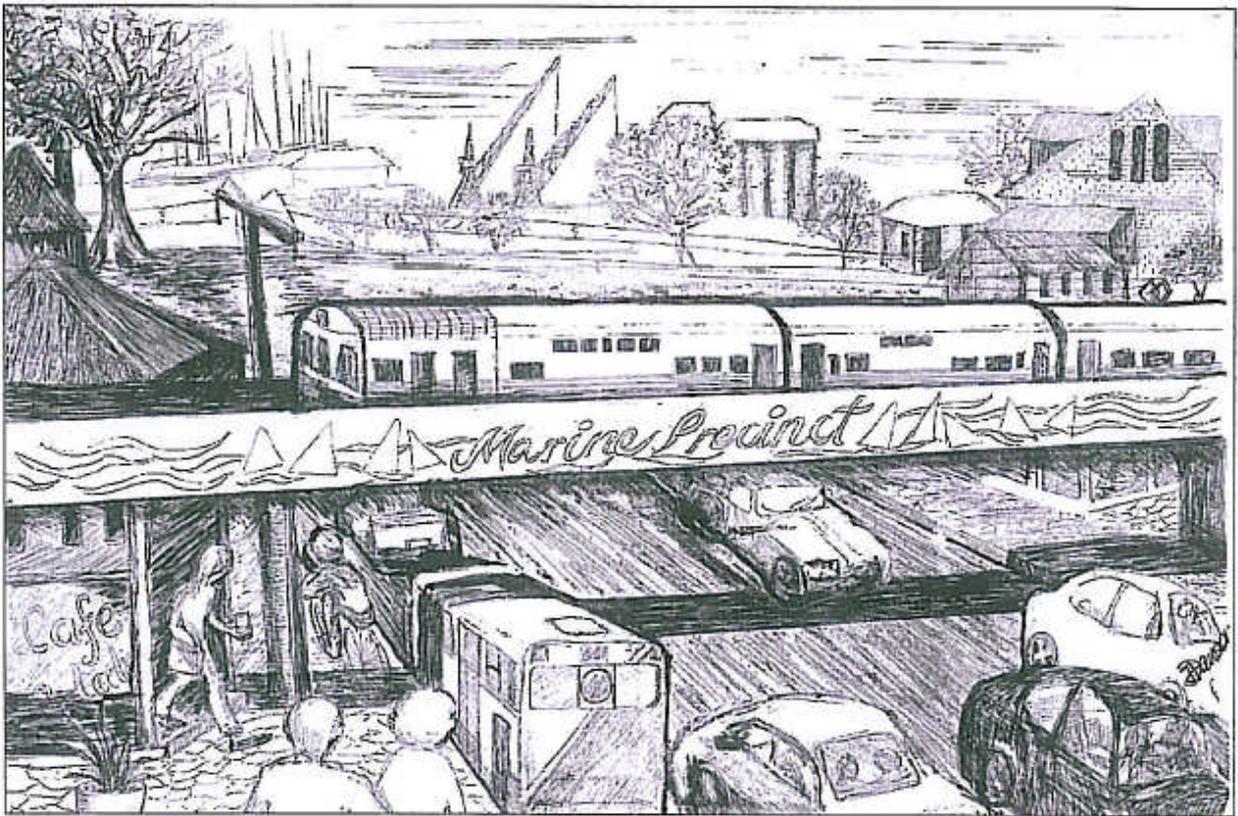


Figure 5: Rail viaduct eliminates vehicle level crossing at Stewart Avenue



Figure 6: Vancouver "SkyTrain" station at Brentwood Town Centre

Improve Suburban Infrastructure



Figure 7: More stations needed for new land releases

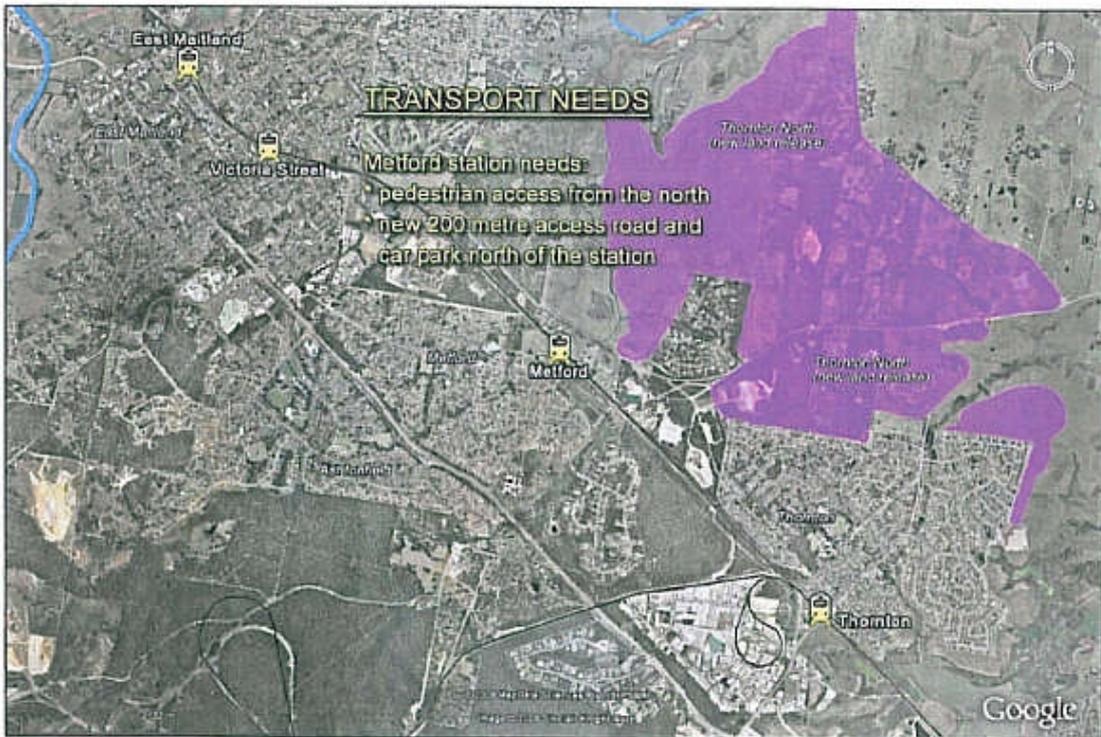


Figure 8: Large Thornton North area has no access to Metford Station

Improve CBD Infrastructure

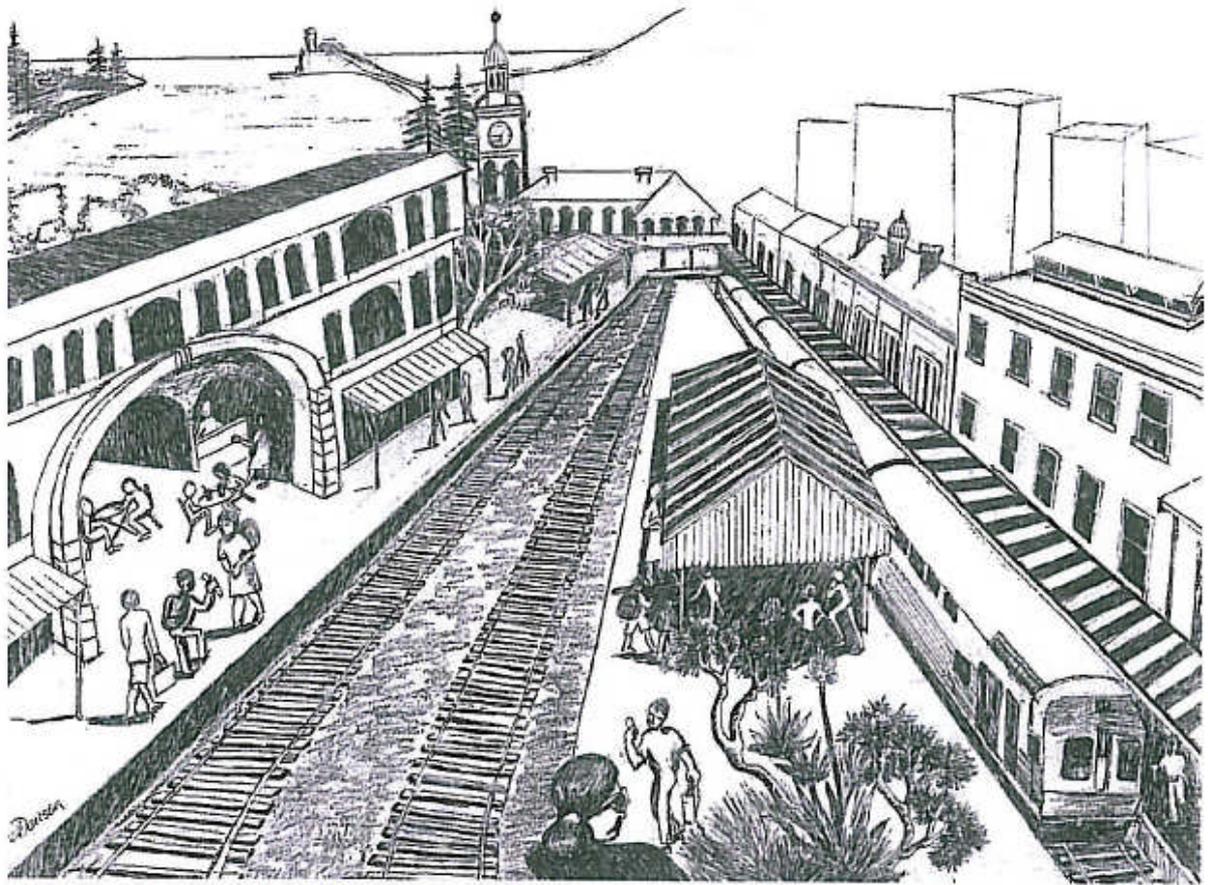


Figure 9: Sympathetic development at Newcastle Station



Figure 10: San Diego “water sculpture” incorporated into railway crossing

6 November 2008

<http://savecourrail.org.au/>

page 7 of 8

Estimated Costs (2004)

Resignalling

- Cost: \$23 million
- Estimated savings: over \$1.3 million annually

Level Crossings

- Vary crossings including approaches, signals, landscape, and arches: \$2.5 - \$3.5 million each
- Assumes crossings can be done in conjunction with other “possession” (“possession” is scheduled closure of track for track work)
- Contingency for additional possession: \$1 million
- Arches design and engineering: \$500,000
- Relocate points at Market St: \$500,000

Contingency Allowance

- \$5 million cost overrun contingency for: Signal boxes – Newcastle (including terminating impact), Wickham, Hamilton (including access to Hamilton Region Northern rail depot), Woodville – control southern access to Newcastle line, North line, up and down relief line

Wickham Viaduct

- Established to 5m clearance: \$15 – 20 million per km (includes possession)
- Redevelopment of 1.3km section and widen for station

Wickham Station

- \$25 million for Wickham station:
- 2 lifts (1 each side of Stewart Av) + stairs and ramps (easy access standard)
- Old Wickham Station buildings below viaduct can be re-used, (c.g. newsagent, florist, café, dry cleaners, etc)

Level crossings

- Review with RailCorp
- Use of Darks siding (opposite Brown St) can fit 2 K-sets between crossings during day
- New siding at Broadmeadow: \$4 million

Crown St

- Island platform between current down line and stabling line
- Day station for 4 cars
- Overhead work, etc: \$4 – 5 million

Figures 2, 3, 5, 9: Concept artwork by Joan Dawson

Figures 4, 7, 8, 10: Images from Google Earth / Google Maps with annotations by Save Our Rail

APPENDIX 4

INNER CITY CONNECTIVITY AND URBAN RENEWAL - STEFFEN LEHMANN

Inner-City Connectivity and Urban Renewal 16 November 2008, Discussion Paper

Dr. Steffen Lehmann

www.slab.com.au

A city centre on the water

The city of Newcastle has the potential to be a truly great post-industrial city, and we are currently at a crucial point in the city's urban development. Clearly, a long-term strategy for the urban future of the city centre is required. And with forecasts predicting that we will see up to 30,000 more people in Newcastle in the next 25 years, our decisions of today will determine the urban development of the city centre for the next few decades. It is important that we avoid further deterioration of our city and, instead, develop its unique characteristics ('City Centre on the Water'). It should not be overlooked that smaller cities can sometimes lead innovation, so if we are to improve infrastructure, perhaps we could also consider new types of infrastructure to build.

An opportunity for us to consider options for urban development is afforded by the barrier created by the city's railway line, which is hindering inner-city pedestrian connectivity. A remodeling process for the centre and re-connection with the waterfront is now possible. I am very pleased to see that we are discussing this complex issue with a clear mind, respect, and with a holistic view.

Pedestrian connectivity is a major issue, and no city is able to neglect it. By resolving the connectivity problem in the city centre, Newcastle can become a more competitive city and an attractive one for knowledge workers and for financial investment. Unfortunately, the Hunter Region has been left behind by the NSW State Government's failure to invest sufficiently in regional infrastructure in the area. The challenges we face go far beyond some of the narrow thinking that has characterized the debate over the years. Transforming the city is based on a clear recognition that remaining with the dis-connected 'status quo' is not an option. However, by connecting the city centre with the harbour and waterfront renewal developments, we provide a huge catalyst for further transformation, with positive flow-on effects generated from it.

The city centre occupies a large area of around 250ha, while any predicted growth could probably be accommodated on a further 30 to 50ha. We cannot spread this growth too thinly, therefore we need to be clear where we want higher density to occur and what kind of public transport system we would like to see implemented. More than ever, the coordination of the different parts of the city is important; they cannot be looked at as isolated elements.

Removing the heavy rail line to remodel access and connectivity

In this context, just offering a couple more crossing points and keeping the rail line would not make much of a difference to the city, and it is only a half-hearted attempt, at best, as to how to solve the problem. It could, in fact, create even more disruptions and does nothing to unleash the city's full potential.

It has become clear that development in Hunter Street won't be sustainable until the CBD has a better connectivity to the harbour and to Honeysuckle. Our favoured solution would be the removal of the last kilometre of heavy (industrial) rail line, stopping trains at a new transport hub in Wickham rather than at Civic, as this is where the necessary land would be available and where we find fewer issues with mine subsidence.

This new arrival point to the city requires the design of a new city terminus, the Wickham Transport Hub, with a public plaza connecting to the water, where visitors can immediately feel that they have arrived at Newcastle. Wickham, as a TOD (Transit Oriented Development), would be a **'gateway to the city'**. The existing Newcastle terminus can easily be adaptively re-used (e.g. as a flower or fish market; or a conference facility).

What form of public transport should replace heavy rail?

I would like to suggest two prerequisites for taking out the railway line:

1. With a clear focus on the public domain and connectivity, the gained open land (after removal of the heavy rail) needs to be kept open and used for safe biking, with good landscaping and cycle paths; with only a few areas where new buildings are integrated, in areas where the corridor is wide enough. This linear space could be developed into a cultural ribbon walk with very easy accessibility. (A long public stripe like this can be found, for instance, in other great waterfront cities, like Copenhagen and Stockholm). The land should remain as high-quality public space and become part of the larger network of inter-connected public spaces, accommodating pavilions and having various other community functions.
2. An efficient bus system needs to be put in place. We cannot afford to find ourselves, later, where we have lost the last kilometre of heavy rail, without having improved the public transport system. A **Rapid Bus Transit System (RBTS)** with modern hybrid buses using, for instance, electric + diesel is the solution, especially for small cities that cannot afford light rail. This needs to be done in a way that does not add significantly to travelling times and has quick transfer modes between bus and rail. Having the bus bring you close to where you want to be saves travel time (and activates retail along Hunter Street).

As long as a high frequency of buses is guaranteed (e.g. operating every 10 minutes), the modern RBTS presents a comfortable and affordable solution.

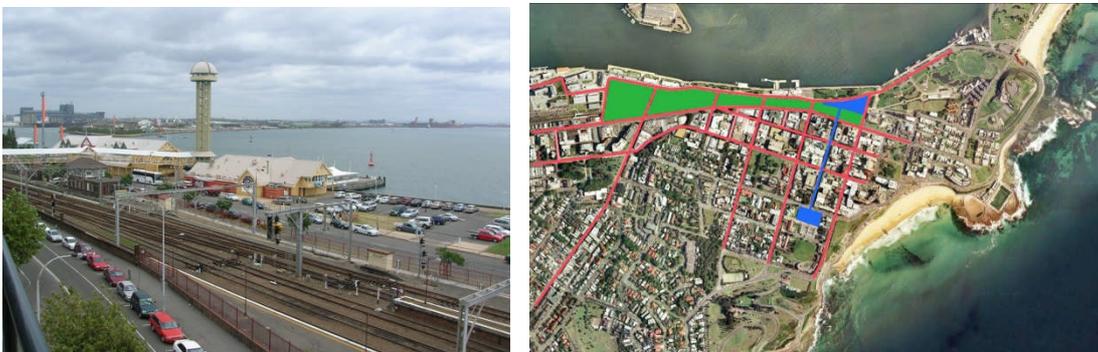


Image 1 a/b: The heavy railway line creates an impermeable, fenced-off barrier. This proposal is not about taking away public transport, but about improving it! It is about replacing an outmoded, 19th Century heavy rail system with a better, more efficient and future-proof system. Unfortunately, there is always a natural tendency to hang on to the

old, as long as the future remains uncertain with regard to something better and more efficient.

An efficient bus system has many advantages

Newcastle City Council's target usage for public transport has been set at a modest 30%, but so far little has been done to achieve it. There are two options that could resolve this problem.

I usually advocate a light railway system. However, it is not feasible for Newcastle, as it lacks the population density to justify such an investment. Light railway is very expensive and would take resources away from other needs.

An alternative solution for the city is a high quality bus-based system, one that can comfortably service all areas, is clean and attractive and makes travel by bus a positive experience. A Rapid Bus Transit System (with modern hybrid buses; mini buses are highly economical) is a particularly good solution for small cities that cannot afford light railway – something innovative traffic planners worldwide agree on.

Therefore, a clear investment strategy for buses is necessary, together with the promotion of bus travel, for instance, free buses (for under 18s and over 65s) looping around, connecting Newcastle East with The Junction and back to Wickham. Bus and rail services need to be able to share the same ticket. Access should be at grade into buses waiting in front of the station (modern bus stops are raised that you can enter at grade), and buses should run frequently. The high frequency of buses needs to be guaranteed, and two types of buses could be in service: Express buses and smaller buses stopping in a finer grain, making two different loops. Such hybrid buses (using diesel + electric: low emission vehicles, like in Freiburg, Seoul, Singapore, etc) will become part of the new reality of a low carbon future.

Modern bus systems are the most affordable form of public transport. It is important to understand that public transport does not necessarily need to make profit; it is part of a public service in any civic society. A democratic city should charge the same fare for long or short distances. It is probably fair to say that short distance public transport commuters usually subsidize long distance users. And it is even fairer to say that the car user subsidizes public transport (as we can see happening in Singapore and London, with congestion charging schemes, this is especially useful for large cities).

There are some impressive examples: The 'TransMilenio' bus systems in Bogota and Curitiba are now moving more passengers per hour and kilometre than 90% of rail systems, and this is done at 5 to 10% of the cost (and at similar speed). Express buses on roads without traffic lights (on a dedicated bus lane) are faster than non-express light railways. Rapid Bus Transit Systems can compete with light railway and other systems at a much lower cost, but need modern infrastructure and good management. This is why over 83 cities worldwide have already introduced an RBTS.

Buses have many more advantages, for instance, buses do not have to stay on track and can minimize time-consuming transfers. Hunter Street is wide enough to run a dedicated bus lane, maybe even one lane in each direction, giving a priority lane to buses in the morning and afternoon peak hours. Bus travelers would further help activate Hunter Street. Road space should be allocated first to public transport (giving a priority over private interests) as the automobile carries fewer people, takes lots of space and requires more infrastructure.

In summary:

- Reorganize the bus routes (two loops, with express buses and mini buses);
- Develop a new overall **Transport Plan** for the CBD, which incorporates pedestrian connectivity, bike paths and public domain connectivity (with a clear pedestrian priority over vehicles);
- Integrate transport fare system (rail to bus transfer, free or discounted), with coordinated timetables;
- Initiate IT-based high tech management (BMS with GPS, Smart-Card), coordinated with train schedule, reducing waiting times;
- Create a new Operation System (joint revenue management);
- Allocate a dedicated bus lane in Hunter Street and run free high-frequency buses (larger express buses, smaller short distance).

We need to make ‘taking the bus’ more popular. Buses were for a long time perceived as transport for the poor. It is time to refer to them as ‘Rapid Transit Systems’ or ‘TransExpress’ or similar, and not simply as ‘the bus’.

This ‘green fleet’ of buses would be operating from Wickham throughout the city, connecting the important precincts and major destinations:

Administration / cultural hub – retail (redeveloped mall) – health (polyclinic) – education (city campus) – living + working – justice (legal precinct) – leisure (beaches).



Image 2 a/b: RBTS: A dedicated bus lane will give public transport priority. Modern bus stops contribute to the better image of ‘taking the green bus’.

Consumption Patterns and Climate Change: Reducing car dependency

There is convincing evidence that urban form and quality density (compactness) combined with environmentally-friendly public transport systems strongly influence energy consumption at the city level. Cities that are more compact, focus on pedestrians and cyclists, use more clean energy and are less dependent on motorized transport are not only more energy-efficient but offer a better lifestyle and contribute less to greenhouse gas emissions.

Thus a necessary aim is to reduce our dependency on the car. The ‘car is king’ mentality has to stop and must be replaced by a clear commitment to modern and efficient public transport. Singapore and Seoul have for years invested 5 times more in buses and light railways than in roads and both cities have gradually built some of the world’s best public transport systems.

‘Green corridor’: The rail corridor could be retained for ‘non-development uses’. Step by step, we will see the building facades facing the new landscaped stripe getting changed to relate to this new public frontage.

A strong public space network that encourages walking and cycling – and make walking and cycling more safe and pleasant – in a generally more compact city is the way forward. Of course, we want to connect with the beautiful harbour edge as well! This will bring people back into the Mall and Hunter Street and would also encourage people to live close to where they work, preferable to within walking distance of their workplace..

Here are some other ‘urban design lessons’ we have learnt over the years:

- Urban form affects a city’s productivity.
- There is a multiplicity of forces that form a city.
- Revitalising the city’s dilapidated buildings represents sustainable development.
- Close inter-connections between the different systems are good (e.g. bringing working and living together again).
- ‘Best practice’ planning anticipates the infrastructure needs of the future.
- Economic modeling of urban development scenarios is required.

So, while we need to continue building infrastructure, we need to think about new kinds of future-proofing infrastructures, and we need to rethink public transport, the role of the car, new types of decentralization, local energy production, water and waste management.

Who should pay for the line's removal and the remodeling of connectivity?

As long as the railway barrier is not removed and the CBD remains disconnected to the harbour and Honeysuckle, there won’t be much revitalization in Hunter Street. The economy dictates the pace of urban growth, and there are huge infrastructure deficits in Newcastle and the Hunter region. Firstly, State and Federal Governments are responsible for funding transport infrastructure. However, since the NSW State government is under financial pressure, it would seem that **Public–Private Partnerships (PPP)** are the way forward. If you look at the most successful projects worldwide, it is obvious that PPPs, have been the enabling force. Many creative PPP financing models have been developed recently, which we could learn from. One such model being that local governments having more responsibility. However, this requires excellent public policies and political leadership. Additional funding for projects could come from Federal Government via the Major Cities Unit, Infrastructure Australia, and the Regional Planning portfolio.

Developer GPT should contribute to support public transport via Section 94 development contributions. More funding could come from revenue made with parking meters. Furthermore, according to Rail Corp, they are currently losing over \$4mill. per year on the last kilometre of the inner-city rail line (not including running costs). This is a significant amount of money that Rail Corp will save as a consequence of the removal of the rail line, money that can be reinvested in a future-proof system. In addition, Newcastle Port Corporation has had another record earning year and might even agree that it’s time to support the centre of the city, where funds for other places have been generated for decades. For instance, a coal levy from mining companies could easily generate large amounts to be invested in our city centre. Now, that we almost reached the end of the last great coal boom,

which is estimated to peak in 2025 to 2030, it would be highly appropriate to fund local initiatives through the global coal export profits.

Is the line's retention still justified by passenger usage?

The use of this last kilometer of heavy rail has slowly declined over the last ten years. Figures in the recent RailCorp report shows that the last section of the railway line gets very little usage and fails to adequately get people from where they are to where they want to go. Given the hard figures – it is clear that there has been, for a long time, the *'terror of a minority over the majority'* (Brecht). Based on the real usage frequency, it is unjustifiable to argue for retention of the last kilometer of heavy rail; this rail section is a throw-back to industrial times when ships were loaded in Wharf Road.

In effect, we carry 21st Century traffic on infrastructure that was put in place in the 19th century. This is entirely inappropriate for the contemporary city where connectivity, easy access and pedestrian linkages are everything!



Image 3 a/b/c: The comfort and safety which a Rapid Bus Transit System RBTS would deliver, including displays to see when the next bus is arriving and high-tech waiting areas.

The city centre’s remodeling will re-connect the city with the harbour and the foreshore

Urban waterfront renewal can only happen when these developments are strongly connected with the rest of the CBD (see other successfully remodeled post-industrial waterfront cities, such as Boston, Vancouver, Barcelona, Hamburg, Shanghai, Bilbao, etc). The waterfront provides possibilities for an ‘urban stage’ to the city.

Today, Newcastle city centre is still disconnected from the major urban waterfront development (Honeysuckle). The Mall is suffering and shops are closing down in numbers. The intensive and close connection between water and the city is crucial and needs to be rejuvenated; this is what I call ‘knitting the waterfront project back to the city centre’. There is clearly no point of having urban renewal projects if you cannot get to them. The ‘City Centre on the Water’ is a great, powerful image to aspire to.

Successful, sustainable cities have built strong connectivity and have always focused on pedestrian movement and cycling. The upper-level crossing points over the heavy railway line are a civic insult to the citizens of Newcastle, and are unacceptable for older people, people with shopping bags, etc. The developer, GPT, is looking at the wider city centre development. It is commendable that GPT is looking beyond their site and are spending time investigating the best outcomes in revitalizing the city centre. However, it is not only about the GPT project but about many developers, and others, willing to invest in our city, some bigger some smaller, all contributing within a coordinated framework.



Image 4 a/b: The linear landscape: About 2.5km long (after removal of the heavy rail), needs ideally to be kept open and used for safe biking with good landscaping and cycle paths. (courtesy: GPT masterplan, Civitas 2008)

A new independent ‘authority’ to drive the city’s transition?

Does it need, on the municipality/government side, a single, independent “authority” to oversee and drive the complex development of the city, based on a long-term strategy that goes beyond the cycle of elections and political mandates? It would seem so. An independent, integer entity following best practice, engaging and incorporating various stakeholder and community groups (the Business Chamber and the University would have a role in this) would seem to be the preferred vehicle to manage and forge the necessary PPPs. The entity would need to be based on expertise in transport projects, and to operate independently of daily party politics, short mandates and hidden agendas. Such a single dedicated coordinating body could deliver many advantages in managing the process.

We need a far-reaching and comprehensive *Vision 2020 Masterplan* for Newcastle (with a strong focus on the public domain, connectivity and public transport), which nourishes optimism and helps us form the right sort of framework for Newcastle’s urban development. The masterplan would need to offer a staging, so it can be realized step-by-step as funding becomes available.

There is now a huge majority in Newcastle that wants the city to progress, would like to see a better city centre, and the heavy rail barrier to be removed. Of course, passenger numbers are a very important factor. Average loadings are as low as between 25 and 27 passengers on a train, making the current heavy rail service questionable on economic and environmental grounds. The choice is between running an outmoded heavy rail system that carries less than 27 passengers per train and unleashing the potential of a remodeled CBD. The city can be improved in less than 3 years. To make it happen, we need to propose the best scenario, get the priorities right, and identify 3 to 5 catalyst projects to bring the city forward (e.g. a convention centre with hotel facilities, to benefit from the increase of conference tourism). Clearly, there is work that needs to be done. This is the beginning.

Footnote

The City rail data supplied by RailCorp and published in *The Herald* on 27/10/08 show 4890 entries and exits for stations past Hamilton, or 2,445 each way per day. These passengers are carried on 89 trains, giving an average loading of only 27 passengers per train. On average, 2 passengers get off at Wickham, 10 at Civic and 15 at Newcastle. Previous data from Lower Hunter Transport Working Group, First Report 2003 show the average loading past Hamilton in 1997 to be 33 and in 2003 to be 29. That is (courtesy: G. Essex):

Year	Average passengers per train Hamilton-Newcastle
1997	33

Year	Average passengers per train Hamilton-Newcastle
2003	29
2008	27

There are only an average of 25 passengers per train that would be affected by shortening the railway line to a terminus at Wickham.



Image 5 a: The legal profession prefers the new Justice Precinct to remain in its current location, and there are good reasons for this. The legal precinct could be expanded with a court house on the current parking lot at Wharf Road.



Image 5 b: The legal profession prefers the new Justice Precinct to remain in its current location, and there are good reasons for this. The legal precinct could be expanded with a court house on the current parking lot at Wharf Road (proposal R. Bradley, student School of Architecture and Built Environment, 2008). Alternatively, this could be the location for a new Cruise Terminal.



Images 6 a/b: The David Madison Building is a building too good and precious to be demolished; it could easily be reused for the legal precinct. One court house could be accommodated as adaptive reuse of the David Madison Building, next to the Royal development (proposal D. Troyanovsky and S. O’Donoghue, students School of Architecture and Built Environment, 2008).

APPENDIX 5

DISCUSSION PAPER: NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE CONNECTIVITY, TRANSPORTATION AND URBAN DESIGN - BRENT KNOWLES.

BACKGROUND

This discussion paper seeks to provide Council with information about the existing movement systems and connectivity within the City Centre. The paper identifies opportunities that could form the basis of providing improved infrastructure that would lead to an integrated sustainable transportation and people movement system.

This information could be used as a starting point for preparing a submission to the Newcastle CBD Taskforce.

Why review movement systems within the City Centre?

Newcastle is Australia's largest regional city and the sixth largest urban area in Australia. It is the capital city of the Hunter region whose population exceeds 650,000 people. In recognition of its role as a regional City, the Newcastle City Centre has been part of the Cities Taskforce strategic planning process developed by the NSW government's Department of Planning and Newcastle City Council. This planning process produced a City Centre Vision, Local Environmental Plan, Development Control Plan and Civic Improvement Plan.

The intention of these planning documents is to ensure the continued growth of the Newcastle City Centre. The Newcastle City Centre Local Environment Plan 2008 provides for significantly increased levels of commercial, residential and retail development within the City Centre. It is anticipated that there will be an extra 10,000 jobs and 6,500 residents located in the City Centre within the next 25 years. A key challenge arising from this scenario will be how to sustainably and efficiently move the increased numbers of people who will need to access and circulate around the City Centre as residents, workers and visitors.

City Centre Planning

Connectivity between the Newcastle CBD and the harbour became an issue in the late 1980s / early 1990s as development began to occur along the waterfront. Before that time there were no "two cities" as north of the rail was disused port land.

The Newcastle Central Area Strategy was prepared in 1992 for Council with a set of objectives designed to revitalize the City centre after the 1989 earthquake and several decades of decline. In the same year the NSW and Commonwealth governments signed the building Better Cities (BBC) agreement for the Honeysuckle redevelopment. Amongst the objectives of the Strategy was better links between the Newcastle CBD and the Foreshore.

In 1998 Kinhill Pty Ltd prepared a Newcastle CBD and Honeysuckle status paper which concluded that there had been limited progress during the intervening six years in

integrating transport and improving parking facilities or improving links and accessibility between the City Centre and foreshore. A significant impediment is the unwillingness of the relevant authorities to countenance additional level crossings of the rail line between Wickham and Newcastle Stations. This remains the case today.

The City Centre Plan Vision

The Newcastle City Centre Plan Vision (Section 2) states;

“As the regional capital, Newcastle will be a globally competitive and sustainable city serving the Lower and Upper Hunter, parts of the Central Coast, and the major city in the northern part of an integrated Greater Metropolitan region.”

The Vision identifies a number of key statements defining what Newcastle should become over the 25 year life of the Plan. These include;

- Creating a Living City
- Increasing Economic Diversity
- Revitalizing the Retail Sector
- Increasing Commercial Investment
- Strengthening Public Transport
- Revitalising the Hunter St Mall
- Enhancing Community Use of the Waterfront
- Emergence as a Tourist Destination
- Celebrating the Special Character of Newcastle
- Establishing Newcastle as a Learning Centre
- Improving the Natural Environment
- Improving Safety Throughout the City Centre
- Improving the Quality of the Public Domain
- Improving the Quality of New Buildings
- Ensuring Human Scale Development at the Pedestrian Level

Most of the Vision statements have some connection or reliance on movement systems in the City Centre and that is why it is necessary to take a holistic view to this issue.

The City Centre Plan Vision (Section 11 – Future Actions) also specifically identifies the need to achieve the following outcomes in relation to Transport and Movement Systems:

ACTION 5

“determine revitalization options for the Hunter St Mall”

ACTION 8

“Improve transport management facilities near Wickham Station for future growth”

ACTION 14

“Work with the State Government to provide a world class integrated public transport system into and within the Newcastle City Centre

ACTION 15

“Develop a Public Domain Plan for the Newcastle City Centre”

ACTION 16

“Work with the State Government to provide additional pedestrian/vehicular crossings across the rail corridor”

ACTION 19

“Develop a traffic model for the City Centre”

As a number of these actions are co dependent, to be effective it will be necessary to take an integrated approach to ensure that whatever solutions are progressed they will be sustainable. Work has commenced on developing a Public Domain Plan and Traffic Model for the City Centre

The GPT Proposal

More recently, the need to address connectivity, movement systems and urban design improvements within the City Centre has been brought to the fore by General Property Trust (GPT) which has foreshadowed a major \$650 million retail / mixed use development project to be located in an area of the City Centre bounded by Perkins St to the west, Hunter St to the north, King St to the South and Newcomen St to the east.

As part of the vision for this project GPT have stated that:

“GPT’s Newcastle CBD Project is an opportunity to push thinking, creativity and boundaries in order to deliver outcomes that create new benchmarks for environmental, heritage and historical interpretation, community engagement and partnership. Importantly the project will seek to establish and/or reinforce readily accessible connections to the rest of the City. It will provide opportunities and motivation for increased pedestrian movement throughout the City. Newcastle CBD – A New Story – Concept newcbd.gpt.com.au

GPT is advocating for improved connectivity amenity and access within the City Centre. The proposal by GPT has served as a catalyst to raise community awareness and debate on the future of the Newcastle City Centre its movement systems and the merits of retaining or removing the heavy rail line between Wickham and Newcastle Stations and what might be the future mode of public transport in the City Centre.

Newcastle Council

Council most recently responded to the issue of closing the railway line at its meeting of the

21 February 2006 where it resolved;

“That Newcastle City Council congratulates the NSW Premier, the Hon Morris Iemma on the decision to retain the rail line and the services into Newcastle CBD, and thank him and his government on behalf of the people of Newcastle.”

This resolution predates the gazettal of the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008, the establishment of the Newcastle City Centre Taskforce and the subsequent GPT development proposal and concept for the City Centre.

In recognition of the changed circumstances of the present day and the reemergence of debate about the future of the City Centre including the heavy rail issue within the community, Council resolved at its meeting on 14 October 2008 that:

“The General Manager facilitate a workshop with Council Officers on the issues for consideration arising from the GPT proposal.”

This workshop was held on 4 November 2008. At the conclusion of the workshop the Councilors requested the preparation of a discussion paper to assist them in forming a view about current and potential transportation and connectivity issues within the City Centre.

AN OVERVIEW OF MOVEMENT SYSTEMS

Movement Systems in a Modern City

Movement systems are the life blood of the city. Integrated movement infrastructure connects people and places utilizing:

- Rail
- Road
- Pedestrian paths and,
- Cycle-ways.

Increased permeability through the City Centre is a feature of good urban design. A successful city centre is one that is easy to approach and move through. Places should connect to their surroundings, a successful place gives people the maximum amount of choice on how to make a journey. Permeability should be a prime consideration in the early stages of any planning and needs to take into account the various modes of travel, the suitability and safety of routes, and both the interface and potential conflicts within the overall movement system.

The Newcastle City Centre Plan contemplates these issues and the City is now at a time when its movement system needs to be resolved.

What are the characteristics of a good contemporary City Centre Movement System?

Public Transport

Europe is credited with having the best public transport systems in the world although elements of good public transport can be found throughout the world. If a checklist

was to be developed it might include the following features;

- Rapid transit metro rail and light rail
- Metro trains at 5-10 min intervals
- Buses and light rail at 5-15 min intervals
- Integrated bus, light rail, metro rail & inter city services
- Auto ticketing – Use of smart cards
- Clear route information (eg real time LED technology)
- Clean accessible transport interchanges with customer support
- Weather protected stops within walking distance (400m ped shed)
- Direct connection to key nodes (eg airport, university, hospitals etc)
- Use of clean technology and fuels (hydrogen fuel cell, CNG, electric)

While the combination of these features will vary dependent on the size of the city, population and density, it is clear that if public transport is to be sustainable and supported by the public it should include as many of the above features as possible.

People in Newcastle and the Hunter have a high dependency on private motor vehicles for their transport needs, well above the national average. In a low carbon future it will be essential that public transport plays a more significant role than it does currently.



Pedestrian Friendly Interchange

Regular and Reliable Service



Smart Card Ticketing – Clear Signage

Road Transport

The road system has and is likely to continue to have a significant role in the movement of people around the City Centre. However there are examples around the world where road traffic can not be easily accommodated due to historic land use patterns, increased pollution, lack of parking and insufficient road capacity.

In many European cities, vehicles are prohibited from the city centre or have restrictions which only allow access by public transport. In London a congestion charge applies which effectively provides a tax for traveling into the city centre.

While the road system contributes to the movement system of the city centre it must be seen as part of an integrated approach. Key aspects of a road system might include the following;

- Through traffic to be diverted around the periphery of the City Centre
- Parking stations to be at the city edge accessible to public transport

- The road system to be permeable avoiding circuitous travel
- Road intersections to have capacity to avoid unreasonable delay
- Where possible priority should be given to public transport



Flexible Local Transport

Low Emission CNG Buses



Tomorrows Technology – Zero Emissions

Pedestrian Movement

Cities are very much about people, how they use spaces and how they move between spaces including public domain, work places, public transport nodes, parking areas and living spaces. To ensure that pedestrian systems are designed to meet a wide range of needs, an understanding of the community and its use of places and spaces is required. However some of the basic principles may include;

- Spaces that are safe and well lit
- Connecting routes that are direct and well maintained
- Creating a sense of place or locality
- Seamless connectivity with and access to public transport

- Avoidance of difficult access such as stairs, steps and the like
- Avoidance of circuitous routes
- Needs of specific groups (aged, physically impaired and children)
- Separation of road traffic and pedestrian traffic where possible

Personal People Movers – Cycles, Segways, & Electric Vehicles



Cyclists

Many cities have a tradition of cycling as a principal means of transport. This has not been the case in Australian cities which have had a strong dependence on the motor vehicle. However Australian cities generally have a good climate and being placed along the coast usually have a topography which makes cycling an ideal means of travel.

In a low carbon future, cycling will have a growing role in city centre movement for both business and pleasure. In recent years a noticeable trend has emerged where medium to large organisations are installing cycling and change facilities in the work place. To plan for a cycling future the following features might be considered;

- Designated routes for commuter cyclists
- Designated recreational cycle ways
- Separation of cyclists and road traffic where possible
- Separation of cyclists from pedestrian traffic where possible

How do Transport Modes interface in International Cities

The best transport systems and particularly those found in Europe have a structure with the elements that make up that system having a sense of order and purpose.

For instance, inter city and regional train services usually come to the edge of, rather than through, the city centre and are then supported by regular and reliable local and rapid metro services which might comprise of various modes such as underground rail, light rail, buses and variations of these depending on the size of the city.

European examples can be found in Paris, London, Rome, Bordeaux, and Florence. For instance, Paris has six rail /metro /bus terminals around the edge of the city centre. The centre of Paris is well serviced by metro rail and bus services which connect to these inter city terminals and allow visitors and residents to permeate through the city centre by way of regular and reliable local public transport. **(Diagram 1 & 2)**

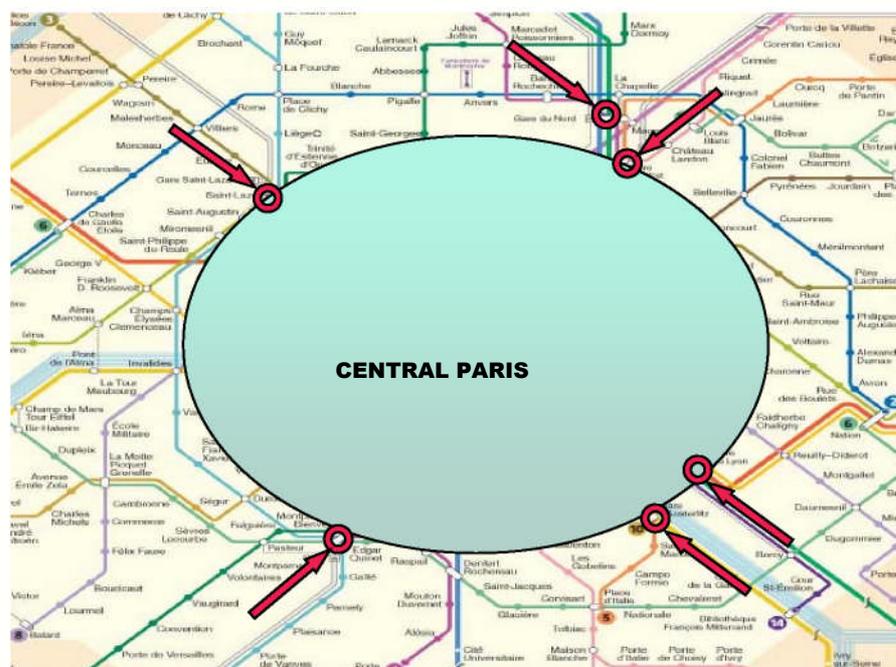


Diagram 1. Central Paris – Rail Terminals and City Centre Local Transport Routes

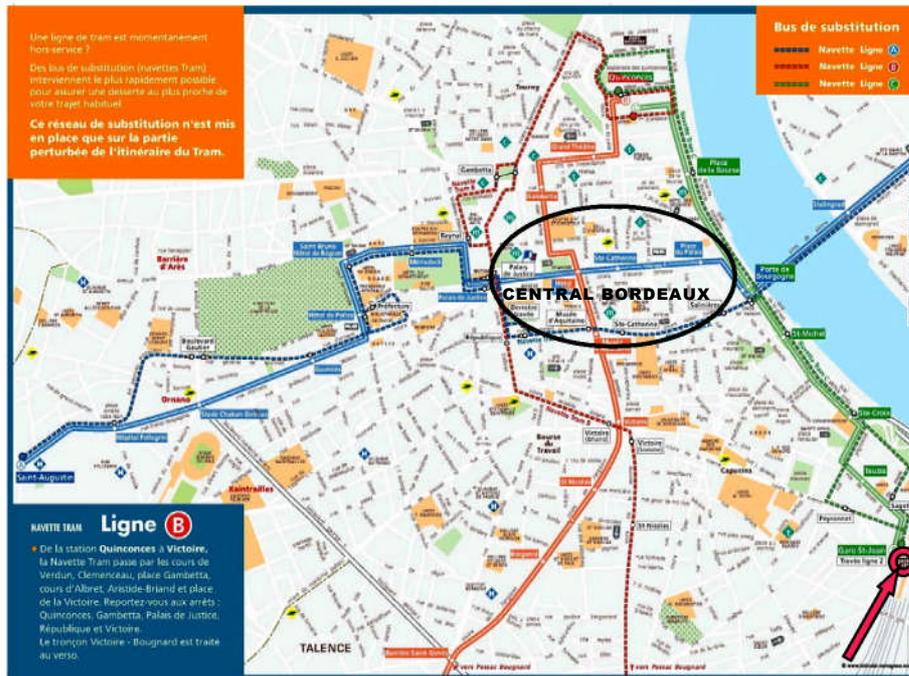


Diagram 2. Central Bordeaux – Rail Terminal and Local Light Rail / Bus System Serving the City Centre

NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE

What are the Issues for Newcastle?

Much can be drawn from international experience, particularly from those countries that have well defined integrated movement systems. If Newcastle is to aspire to a sustainable future then it needs to plan for the future. A sustainable Newcastle City Centre should contemplate the following;

- Increased permeability within and through the City Centre
- Maintaining a free flowing road network
- Developing an integrated public transport system that serves the City Centre
- Lower passenger vehicle kms traveled
- Increasing density around transport nodes
- Provision of well defined public spaces with high amenity
- Connection of places with pedestrian / cycle network

The GPT Vision

The principles of the GPT proposal have been well researched and are based on world best practice. Some of the features proposed by GPT include;

- The termination of the heavy rail line at Wickham

- Shift Wickham Station and create a transport interchange (west side of Stewart Ave)
- Convert the rail corridor to a green corridor (Wickham–Newcastle) with extensive landscape works and associated pedestrian paths and cycle ways.
- Increase north/south vehicular/pedestrian access to enhance connectivity between Hunter St. and the Foreshore
- Shift the Legal Precinct to the vicinity of the existing Newcastle Station
- Improved landscaping and pedestrian environment in Hunter St.

However much of the community debate on the issues raised by GPT have focused on the termination of the heavy rail line. This debate has avoided discussion on whether Newcastle City Centre has the basis for a sustainable movement system that will service future growth and its long term needs.

While the GPT vision has opened up community debate the questions to be asked include;

- *Does the GPT proposal adequately address Newcastle's long term needs? and;*
- *What are the underlying issues?*

Does Heavy Rail provide an Accessible Level of Service within the Newcastle City Centre?

The heavy rail line does not provide an accessible level of service within the City Centre in its own right. Stations located at Wickham, Civic and Newcastle are approximately 1.2 kilometres apart and therefore do not service significant parts of the City Centre within a desirable 400m walking distance.

This means that at least some users of the heavy rail service would need to change transport modes within the City Centre irrespective of where the heavy rail line terminates.

Diagram 3 shows that the commercial core at Union St, part of the GPT site, and areas outside of these core nodes such as the Legal Precinct, Newcastle Beach and Nobby's/Fort Scratchley are not well served by heavy rail.

Therefore if the heavy rail line is to remain between Wickham and Newcastle it is quite clear that it needs to be supplemented by other modes of public transport.

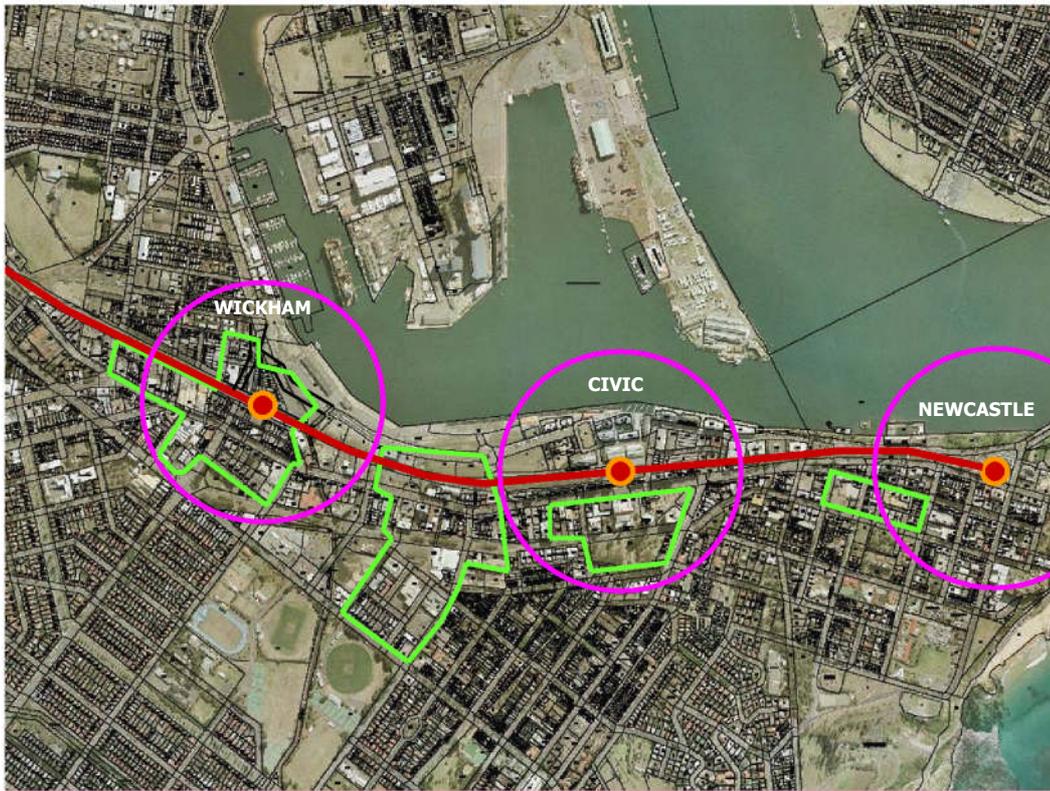


Diagram 3. Newcastle City Centre – Rail Corridor, Core Nodes and Ped Sheds (400m dia.)

Bus services currently supplement the heavy rail system however the level of service needs to be improved and the connection with the rail service needs to be seamless, regular and reliable. An improved bus service is required irrespective of where the rail line terminates.

Given the City Centre's current dependence on more than one mode of public transport, the question that arises, is;

“Should there be continued investment in the heavy rail line between Wickham and Newcastle Stations or should that investment be directed to a much improved bus system which has greater capacity to service the City Centre and provide a greater connectivity to the suburbs and key locations distant to the rail corridor?”

Some would argue that there should be investment to improve both the rail and bus system, however given that there is likely to be limited funds to do so, the issue for consideration then is what other impacts does the heavy rail line have on other movement systems (ie road and pedestrians) within the City Centre.

North–South Connectivity (Linking Hunter St with the Harbour)

There are three vehicular crossing points along a 2.3 km length of City Centre rail corridor between Wickham Station and Newcastle Station, (Stewart Ave, Merewether St and Watt St) two of which are level crossings. A fourth crossing, (Railway St Wickham level crossing) provides additional local access. **(Diagram 4)**

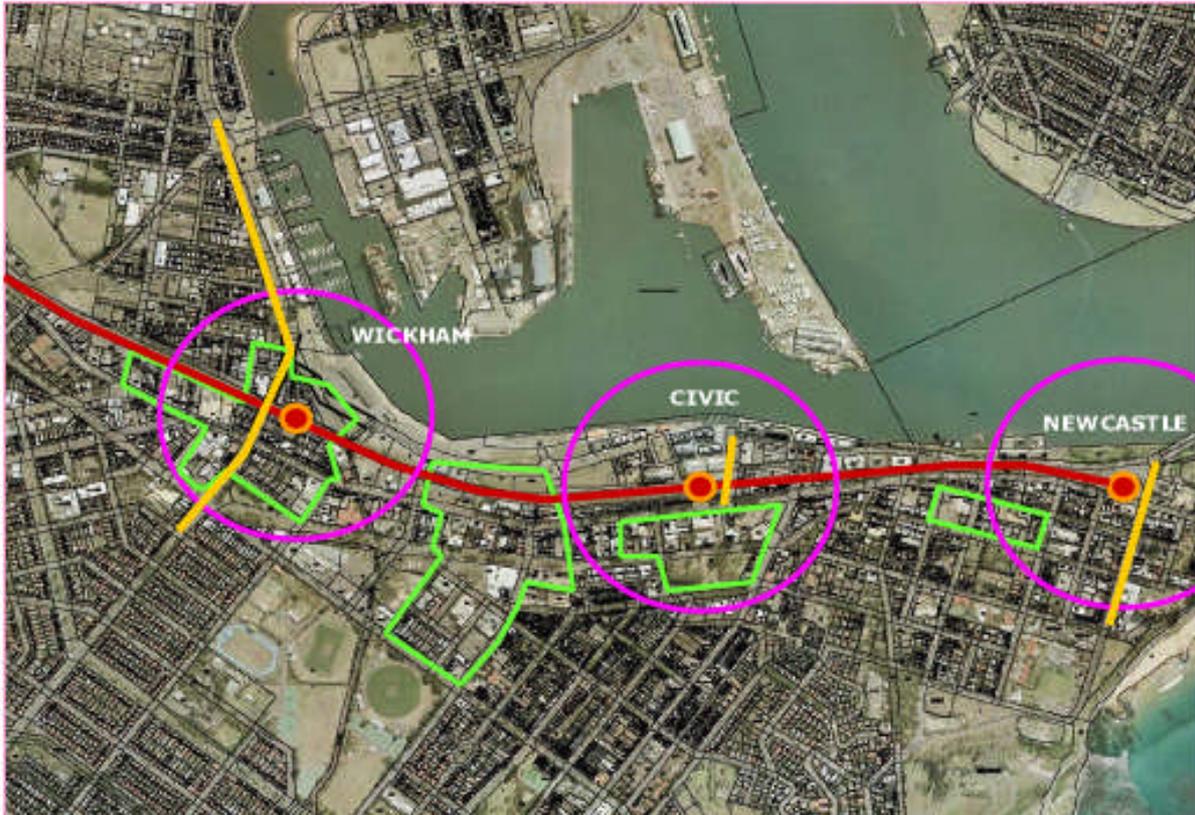


Diagram 4. Newcastle City Centre – Rail Corridor and Existing Vehicular Access Linking Hunter St to the Foreshore

Notwithstanding recent improvements, the level crossings at Merewether St and Stewart Avenue create extended waiting times and congestion in surrounding streets and intersections due to the priorities given to train movements at peak travel times.

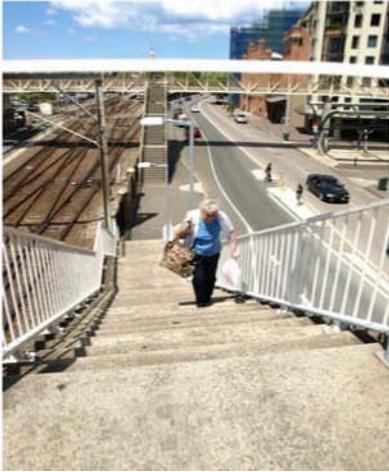


Traffic Delays due to Level Crossings and Limited Crossing Points

This situation is particularly so at Stewart Ave, being the gateway to the Newcastle peninsula and having a number of major intersections including Stewart Ave / Honeysuckle Drive, Stewart Ave / Hunter St and Stewart Ave / King St. in close proximity. These intersections at various times operate at a less than satisfactory service level and combined with train movements cause unreasonable traffic delays which will be compounded as further development occurs in the Newcastle City Centre.

This situation is particularly so at Stewart Ave, being the gateway to the Newcastle peninsula and having a number of major intersections including Stewart Ave / Honeysuckle Drive, Stewart Ave / Hunter St and Stewart Ave / King St. in close proximity. These intersections at various times operate at a less than satisfactory service level and combined with train movements cause unreasonable traffic delays which will be compounded as further development occurs in the Newcastle City Centre.

Seven Stepped Pedestrian Crossings
Between Wickham and Newcastle



It has long been recognised (Kinchill, DCP 40) that additional vehicle / pedestrian connections are required across the rail corridor. Road connections already abut the rail corridor at Steel St and Worth Place but can not connect across the rail line due to safety concerns by State Rail. These concerns have been again reinforced following the State Government’s recent review of the Hunter Business Chamber’s local rail proposal.

More recently, Action 16 of the City Centre Plan Vision and the Newcastle DCP also recognise the need for additional crossings across the rail corridor.

The additional crossings are essential to improve City Centre traffic flow, pedestrian access and to connect the centres of economic activity to encourage revitalisation. The rail corridor acts as a barrier to the free flow of activities and land uses from the Foreshore to the City Centre.

Rail Corridor Acts as a Barrier to the Foreshore



While it does not appear possible to provide additional level crossings across the rail line, some suggestions to overcome this include elevating or undergrounding the rail line.

Both of these options have difficulties. Elevating the rail line would be at a considerable cost and would create a visual barrier which is not an ideal urban design outcome. There have been long standing calls to remove the Cahill expressway in Sydney which creates a visual barrier between the city and Sydney Harbour.

Likewise, placing the rail line underground would be at a considerable cost with a number of physical difficulties to be dealt with including a high water table, keeping flood waters out and potential mine subsidence issues.

Again the question to be considered, is whether this level of investment would be better directed to a significantly improved bus service which has greater capacity to provide service within the City Centre.

What are the opportunities for improved connectivity within Newcastle City Centre?

There are a number of opportunities to improve connectivity and permeability from Hunter St to the Foreshore. However unless the rail line is elevated, placed underground or safety considerations are revisited then most of these new connections can only be achieved if the heavy rail line terminates at the edge of the City Centre ie Wickham.

New road / pedestrian access points connecting Hunter St with the Foreshore could be provided at Bellevue St (Old Hannell St), Steel St, Worth Place, Darby St / Argyle St and Perkins St. This would supplement existing access points at Merewether St and Watt St.

Diagram 5

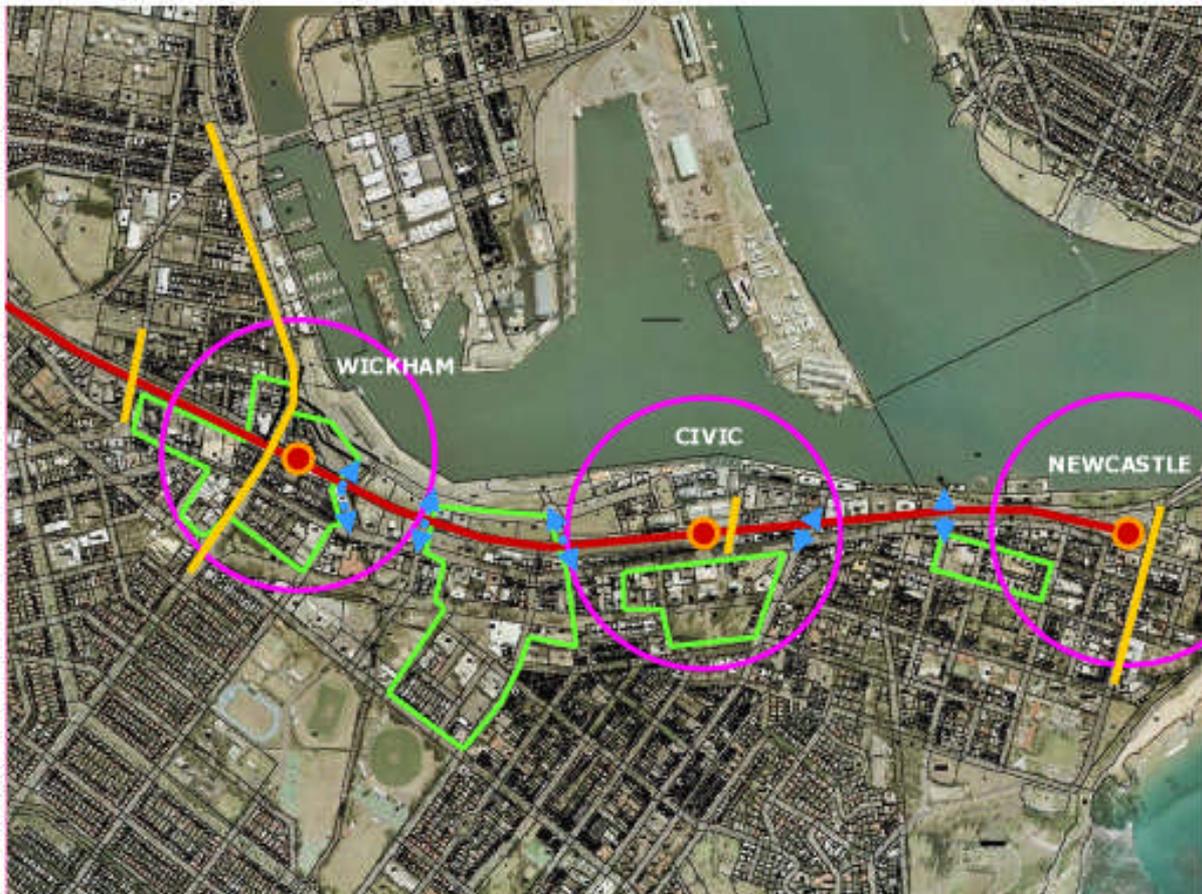


Diagram5. Newcastle City Centre – New Road / Pedestrian Connections to Improve Traffic Flow and Connectivity Between Hunter St and the Foreshore

Road access at Stewart Ave is likely to continue to be a problem into the future particularly as city redevelopment strengthens in the commercial core around Wickham Station. Stewart Ave currently accommodates north / south through traffic as well as local traffic into the City Centre. Traffic management in this general locality is problematic at the present time with a number of major road intersections and the rail crossing all in close proximity. Most cities seek to divert through traffic around the edge of the centre or have had to resort to arterial freeways through the centre which become visual intrusions and further divide the city.

There is an option which may address this concern. This would involve the closure of Stewart Ave at the rail corridor, with an alternate route for north / south through traffic along a newly constructed road and over bridge connecting the Cowper St roundabout with the Hunter St/Selma St intersection. This is the old Bullock Island rail corridor which has been identified as a possible future transport corridor in the Newcastle City Centre Plan. **Diagram 6**

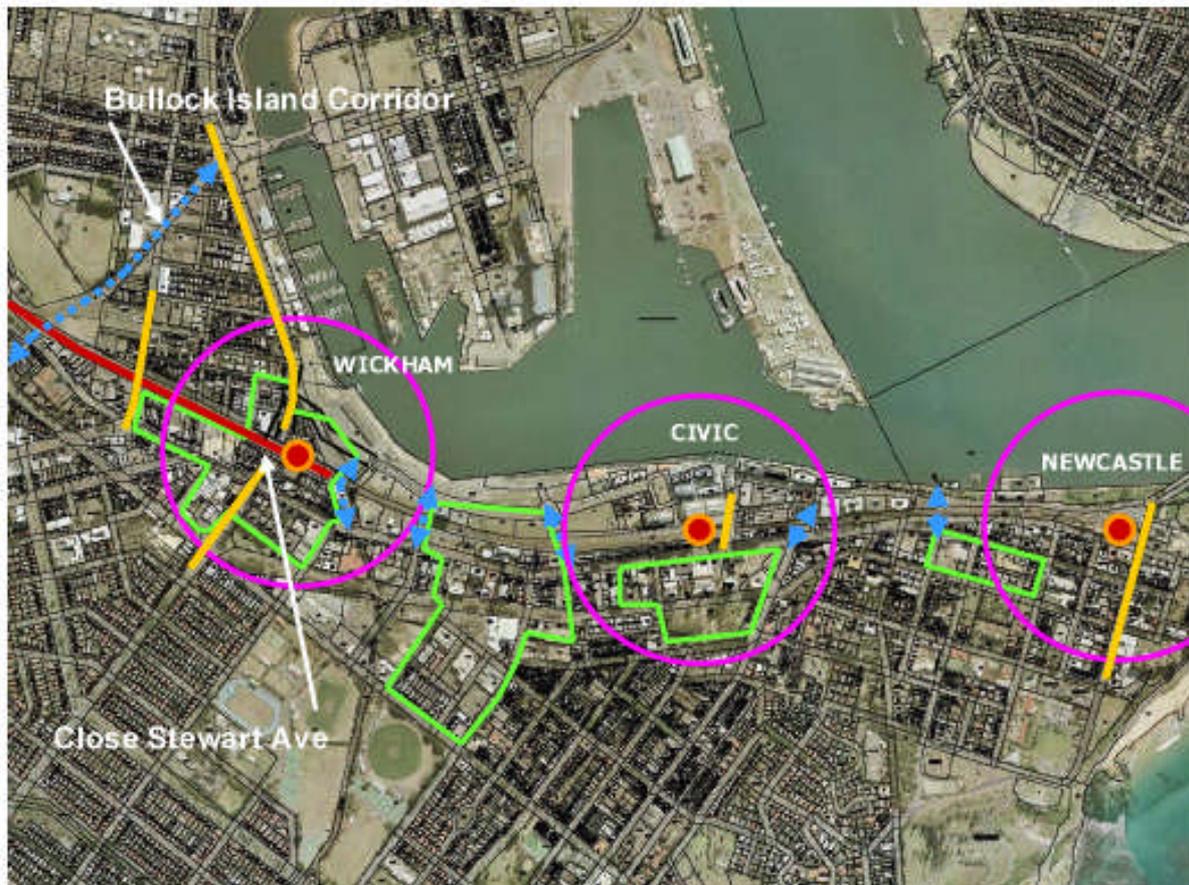


Diagram 6. Newcastle City Centre – Termination of Rail Line at Wickham, Closure of Stewart Ave and New Road and Over Bridge along Bullock Island Corridor

Sense of Place, Public Domain and Public Transport

The Hunter Street strip is in need of revitalisation. A recent Hunter Valley Research Foundation omnibus survey has identified that the most important issue facing the Newcastle City Centre was;

- Vehicular Access, Circulation and Parking – 34%
- Enhancing the Visual Appearance of Streetscapes, Beaches, and Parks – 25%

There are a number of new developments emerging along Hunter Street and increased connectivity with the Foreshore will further assist in encouraging revitalisation. Notwithstanding this emerging activity it must be said that Hunter Street lacks a sense of place. There are very few clear destination points along the Hunter Street strip compounded by existing rail and bus infrastructure which does not add to the sense of arrival or being.

Existing Bus Stops – No Sense of Arrival



Hunter St. – Lacks a Sense of Place

However there is a real opportunity to address this problem. By identifying key locations through the City Centre, improving links to the Foreshore and supporting these locations with regular and reliable public transport within reasonable walking distance then the fundamental framework starts taking shape. These locations for example will also require;

- Public domain improvements to strengthen the sense of identity,
- New public transport infrastructure to make the public transport experience more enjoyable
- Improved signage and communication using real time technologies
- Improved landscaping to soften the environment and increase amenity

Locating Bus Stations with Activity Nodes



Real Time LED Technology



Simple Public Transport Shelters

Key City Centre destination points should be in the order of 400 metres apart and suggested locations could include Wickham Station, Polyclinic, Union St, Civic, Mall (Gateway) Mall (Market St) and Newcastle. These are all locations which identify with major people attractors, access points to the Foreshore or the commercial cores identified in the Newcastle City Centre Plan. The ped sheds shown in **Diagram 7** also demonstrate that if these locations are aligned with public transport stops, then pedestrians wishing to move through out the City Centre can either walk or take a bus with ease.



Creating Spaces and Places

Public Transport Serving the City



Activation of Streets for People

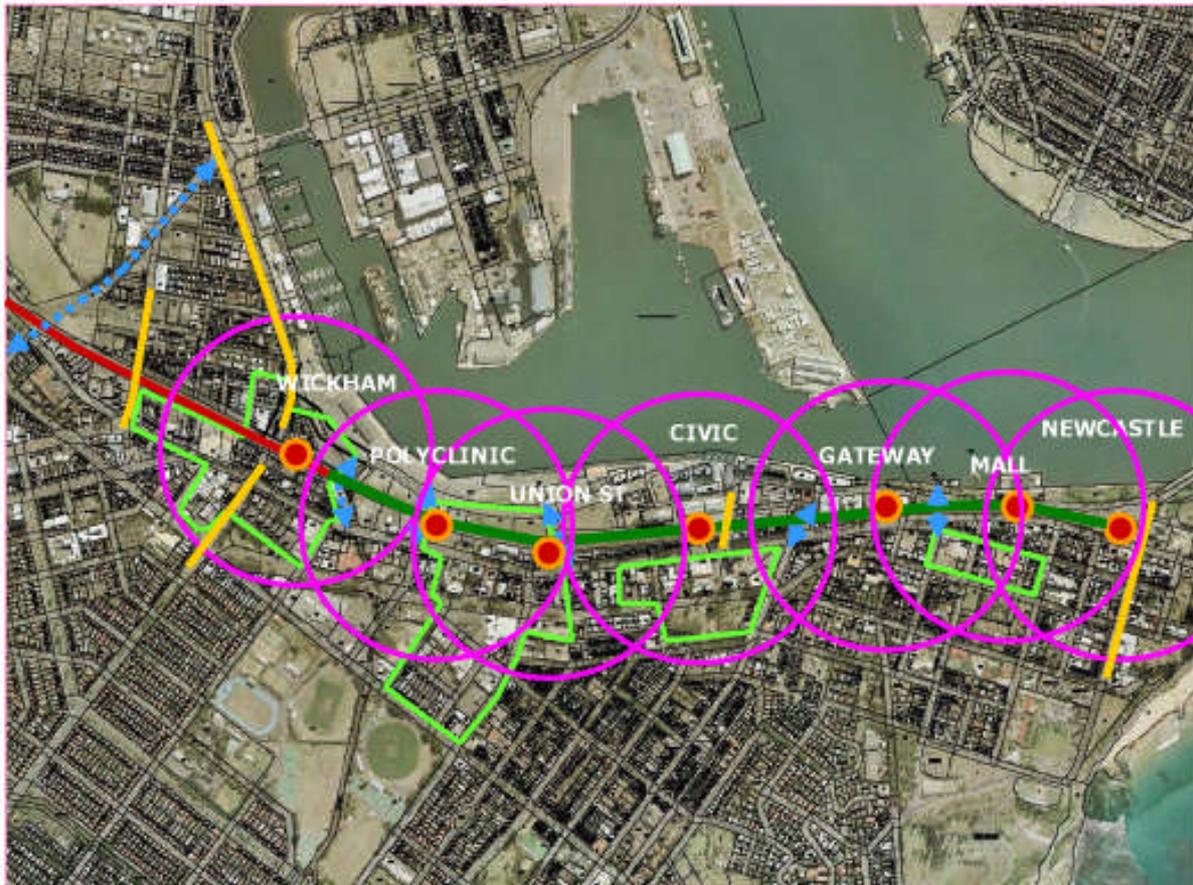


Diagram 8. Newcastle City Centre – Destination Points adjacent to and Beyond the City Centre need to be Connected

The Green Corridor

If the heavy rail line is terminated at Wickham, then the question arises as to what happens to the rail corridor between Wickham and Newcastle. The prevailing view seems to be that the corridor should remain in public ownership and still contribute to connectivity within the City while at the same time providing a vastly improved amenity for the City Centre.

The GPT vision promotes the concept of a green corridor with a cycleway, pedestrian pathway, landscaping and furnishings. While this concept has considerable merit it also raises the issue of public safety and whether there would be sufficient activity and surveillance for the broader community to feel comfortable using such a space. In fact the concept runs counter to the argument articulated for opening up pedestrian malls.

Concern has been raised that pedestrian malls do not have sufficient activity and surveillance at various times of the day, particularly in the evening and therefore there has been a movement to introduce vehicular traffic back into pedestrian malls to improve the comfort level of users. This issue needs to be considered carefully as there are parts of the rail corridor that do not have a high level of surveillance.

A better alternative would be to include all of the features outlined above but also include a dedicated bus way within the corridor. Buses currently using Hunter Street have a significant impact on the amenity of Newcastle's main street requiring significant space for bus stops and lead in and out lanes which could otherwise be used

for additional parking, landscaping and improving pedestrian amenity. As traffic movement increases along Hunter St in the future, delays might be expected to bus movement, therefore it would make some sense to have a dedicated bus route to avoid delays and further encourage the use of public transport.

As indicated earlier a number of new bus stations would be required along the route at critical connectivity points. It is also likely that some existing rail infrastructure could be upgraded and used to accommodate bus transport. The corridor is ideally located to both Hunter St and the Foreshore.

The corridor is approximately 15 metres wide at its narrowest but widens out considerably at various locations. Along the rail corridor and behind the Hunter St shops is a series of laneways and car parking areas which have the potential to be formalised and add further to parking infrastructure.

Wickham Station

If the heavy rail line is to terminate at Wickham it is evident that a major redevelopment of Wickham Station and its immediate environment will be required. Wickham Station would be the major public transport interchange in Newcastle providing an interface between rail, buses pedestrians and possibly ferries. The area would need to be master planned to consider both public and private investment opportunities, however some preliminary thought has been given to this issue.

The GPT vision has suggested that Wickham Station be relocated to the western side of Stewart Ave and that Stewart Ave remain open to traffic. A preliminary assessment of this site would indicate that access around the proposed station site is likely to be constrained without acquiring some private properties to improve access and infrastructure.

However of greater significance is the impact of flooding in this location. There is a natural low spot and flow way through this area with the 100 year flood estimated to be approximately 0.7m deep. On the other hand the current Wickham station site is minimally affected by flooding. **(Diagram 9)**

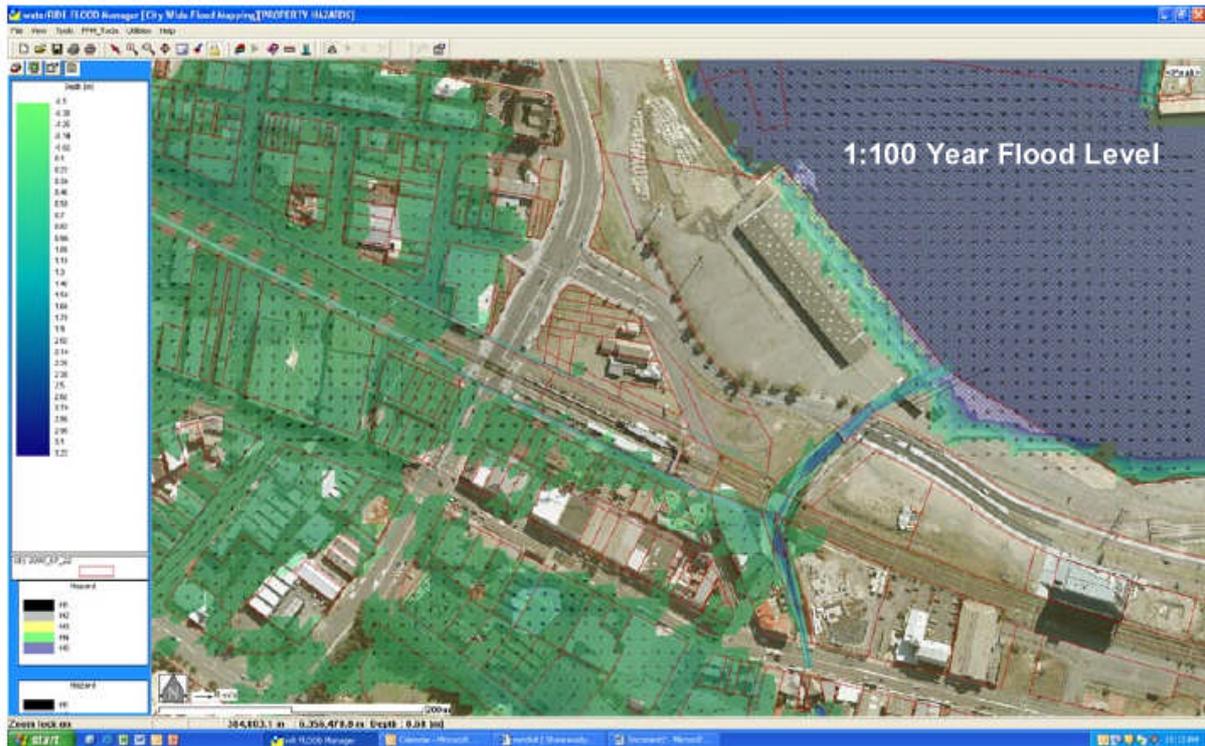


Diagram 9 – The Existing Wickham Station and Adjacent Lands Provide an Ideal Site for a Transport Interchange

If Wickham Station was to be redeveloped at its current location, there would be a number of significant advantages. These include:

- Access to the station is relatively easy for connecting public transport
- The surrounding land is in public ownership
- There is some existing basic infrastructure which could be utilised
- The site is relatively flood free
- The site is close to the harbour thereby having the possibility of connecting to a future ferry service
- There could be a strong focus on pedestrian spaces and connection

A Wickham Interchange Concept Plan has been prepared to indicate how the development of this precinct might proceed. **(Diagram 10)**

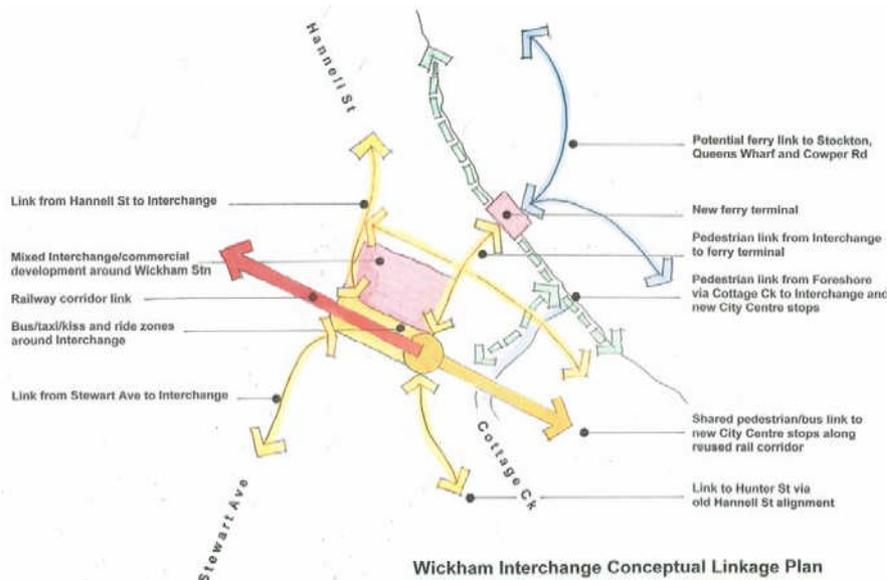


Diagram 10. Wickham Station Interchange Concept Plan

Other Opportunities

There are many opportunities that may flow from a significant investment in City Centre infrastructure, however there are a couple that require specific comment. These include:

New Parking Stations

The Newcastle City Centre Plan acknowledges the need for additional parking stations and nominally indicates the need for additional parking stations in the vicinity of Wickham and Civic Stations. The location of a parking station at Wickham needs to be considered in the future.

Newcastle Station

If the heavy rail line is terminated at Wickham then consideration needs to be given to the future of the State Heritage listed Newcastle railway station and the adjacent terminal site. This site could be redeveloped with an iconic land use activity.

The GPT vision suggests that this site could be utilised as the City's legal precinct. Both the Commonwealth and State Attorneys General are considering options within the City Centre for the establishment of new court facilities.

In addition to the above, the emerging Newcastle cruise industry is considering long term opportunities for berthing facilities in the Newcastle Port. Given the changing nature of cruise ships entering the Port (up to 300m in length), the likely location for berthing cruise ships will be in the vicinity of the Queens Wharf / Newcastle rail station precinct. Accommodating land side facilities may also lead to related opportunities including exhibition and conference type facilities.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Council is currently identifying vehicular movement issues within the City Centre through the preparation of a City Centre Traffic Study. The Study will develop and assess various vehicle connectivity options through the City Centre using several development scenarios.

Council is also preparing a Public Domain Plan which will highlight existing pedestrian connectivity issues including the need to activate public spaces through the revitalisation of transport nodes and identifying opportunities to better connect people with key City Centre destinations.

The proposals by GPT are now continuing the ongoing process of review and debate about movement systems in the City Centre by the community, business and Government. While it is clear that Council has a strong role to play in advocating the provision of a sustainable, integrated and holistic movement system for the City Centre, it needs to work and advocate with other levels of government as well as business who have a direct responsibility for the delivery of movement infrastructure and services.

The issues are complex in the sense that apparent solutions, often interface and conflict to the extent that traditional values and views will be challenged. The most significant point that emerges is that there is no one solution which will sustainably resolve Newcastle's movement systems, connectivity issues and urban design improvements.

The recently convened Newcastle CBD Taskforce being coordinated through the Hunter Development Corporation is a cross government, business and community mechanism to identify priority infrastructure needs for the Newcastle City Centre. The intention of the Newcastle CBD Taskforce is to make application to the Major Cities Unit within the Commonwealth's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

Council currently has the opportunity to prepare a submission to the Newcastle CBD Taskforce to present its views on the need to improve City Centre infrastructure including existing movement systems within the City Centre.

Therefore it is recommended that Council take a position which deals with these matters as a holistic proposal for negotiation with other levels of government and funding authorities. The submission should include the following project elements:

Wickham

Key elements:

- Terminate the heavy rail line between Wickham and Newcastle Stations.
- Construct a bus/rail/pedestrian Interchange incorporating mixed use development at the existing Wickham Station site.
- Close Stewart Avenue at the railway corridor eliminating the existing level crossing.

- Construct a vehicular road link along the Bullock Island corridor with overpass ensuring uninterrupted north / south vehicle connectivity for through traffic between Hannell St and Parry St.
- Construct a new Wickham ferry terminal to expand the existing harbour ferry service available from Queens Wharf and Stockton and potentially to the Cowper St Marina.
- Construct a major pedestrian link from the Wickham Ferry to the Wickham Station Interchange as well as integrate the Terminal with the adjacent Foreshore promenade.

Dedicated City Centre “Greenway” (bus and cycleway corridor)

Key elements:

- Construct a dedicated bus way and cycleway along the former railway corridor from Wickham Interchange through to Newcastle Station.
- Convert Civic and Newcastle Stations and associated infrastructure to dedicated bus stations with improved connectivity and activity nodes to Hunter St, Scott St, Honeysuckle Drive and Wharf Rd frontages.
- Construct new stylized bus stations at the Polyclinic, Union St, Darby St and Gateway sites to meet pedshed requirements within the areas of concentrated development and pedestrian activity.
- Improve / extend existing parking areas between the corridor and Hunter St buildings.
- Landscape the balance of the corridor.

Reconnect Hunter St with the Harbour and Newcastle Beach

Key elements:

- Construct new road connections from Hunter St across the rail corridor at Bellevue St, Steel St, Union St, Argyle St and Perkins St to Honeysuckle Drive and Wharf Rd.
- Provide new pedestrian connections with new road connections or as identified by the Public Domain Plan.

Hunter Street

Key Elements:

- Relocate existing bus infrastructure along Hunter St to the “Greenway”.
- Increase parking spaces.
- Increase landscaping and pedestrian amenity as per the Public Domain Plan.
- Redesign Hunter St to create identity and activity nodes for “Greenway” bus stations, improve parking and pedestrian connectivity and create opportunities for landscaping.
- Reopen Hunter St Mall to calmed traffic flow.
- Strengthen the link between Hunter St and Newcastle Beach.

Provide an Integrated Public Transport System

Key elements:

- Ensure frequent “Greenway” bus route service eg every 5 to 10 minutes to service the City Centre.
- Coordinate train, bus and ferry timetables.
- Install LED signage at bus stations to provide real time information to passengers.
- Provide route signage boards to identify intersecting routes and interchanges.
- Improve ticketing services.
- Consider introducing rapid metro bus services connecting key destination points with the City Centre.

Provide Additional Parking in the City Centre

Key elements:

- Create parking stations at Wickham and Civic.
- Create opportunities to increase parking in Hunter St and to edges of the “Greenway”.

Reactivate Heritage Buildings and Railway Infrastructure Key elements:

- Explore opportunities to apply adaptive reuse principles to Newcastle Station for use as a convention/exhibition space. Activate Scott St frontage as a priority.
- Develop and implement an interpretation strategy for the railway corridor that may include adaptation of signal boxes and sheds as amenity elements for the “Greenway”.

APPENDIX 6

JOHN RICHARDSON (POWERPOINT PRESENTATION)

Newcastle

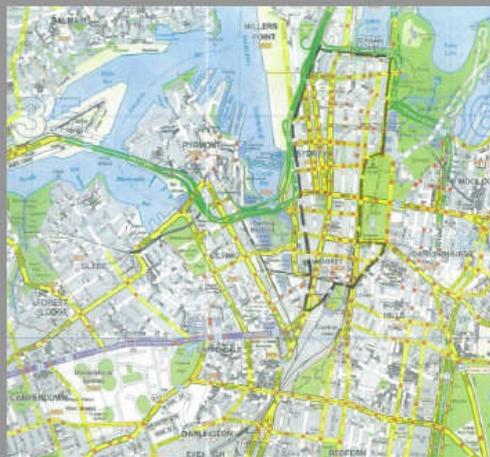


Area: 255 ha

COX Richardson Architects and Planners



Sydney CBD



Area: 135 ha

COX Richardson Architects and Planners



Wollongong



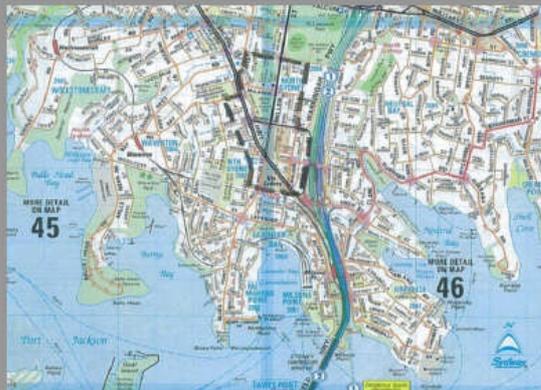
Area: 120 ha

3

COX Richardson Architects and Planners



North Sydney



Area: 40 ha

4

COX Richardson Architects and Planners



Parramatta



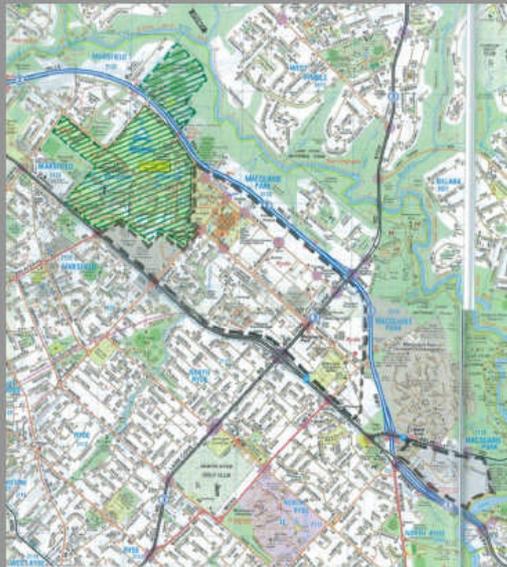
Area: 160 ha

B

COX Richardson Architects and Planners



Macquarie Park



Area: 240 ha

364 ha including Macquarie University

B

COX Richardson Architects and Planners



Newcastle Centre	
2006 employment	22,000
2031 employment	32,000
Area	255 ha* (about 4km x 1/2km)

* Area includes Nobbys Beach

Sydney CBD	
2001 employment	264,000
2031 employment	300,000 - 350,000
Area	135 ha (about 2km x 1/2km)

Circular Quay to Central Railway

The equivalent of Newcastle Area (i.e. 4km x 1/2km) would be Circular Quay to Moore Park, or Sydney University, or Eveleigh

Wollongong Centre	
2001 jobs	22,000
Additional (2001-2031)	10,000
Total 2031	32,000
Plus the northern extension (university, TAFE, and Innovation Campus)	8,000
Area	40,000
Area	120 ha **

** The Wollongong CBD measures 423 ha, however the commercial centre measures 120ha. This area does not include the Innovation Campus.

Sydney Centres Between 15,000 - 50,000 (2001)

Centre	Employment (2001)	Area
North Sydney	49,000	40 ha
Parramatta	41,500	160 ha
Macquarie Park	32,200	240 ha***
Chatswood	23,000	40 ha
Liverpool	15,500	75 ha^
Penrith	19,000	70 ha^^

(employment figures derived from the draft subregional strategies)

*** Macquarie University is an additional 124 ha

^ Includes Liverpool Hospital and Westfield Shopping Centre

^^ Includes Westfield Shopping Centre

Comparison of the Lower Hunter, West Central Subregion of Sydney and the Illawarra Region

	Lower Hunter 2031*		West Central 2006		Illawarra Region 2031	
Population	675,000		653,430		328,600	
Workforce (47%)	317,000		307,000		154,500	
Employment	317,000		308,500		130,765	
LGAs	Lake Macquarie Newcastle Cessnock Maitland Port Stephens		Auburn Barkstown Fairfield Holroyd Parramatta		Wollongong Shellharbour Kiama	
Centres	Centre	Employ 2031	Centre	Employ 2001	Centre	Employ 2031
Regional City	Newcastle	32,000	Parramatta	42,000	Wollongong	32,000
Major Regional Centres	Glendale / Cardiff Maitland Morriset Raymond Terrace Cessnock		Barkstown Fairfield Cabramatta	10,000 4,500 4,000	Innovation campus Dapto Shellharbour Corrimal	8,000
	Sub total		Sub total	60,500	Fairy Meadow	
Specialised Centres	Airport John Hunter University Pokolbin Nelsons Bay Kotaru Green Hills		Barkstown Aero Olympic Park Westmead	16,300 13,700 13,000	Figtree Manderra Warrilla Albion Park Kiama	
	Sub total		Sub total	43,000	Subtotal	
	Total		Total	103,500**	Total	

* The Hunter Region has a population of 634,000 in 2001 and is expected to reach 779,000 in 2031

** 34% of total employment

Employment

Newcastle City Centre 2001 22,000
 Employment growth to 2031 10,000 (average 333pa)

Assume all accommodated in new development
 Assume say **30 sqm pw**, average for office, retail, etc.
 GFA 300,000 sqm, average 12,000 sqm pa

Residential

Residents in Newcastle City Centre (2006) 3,000 people (Discover Newcastle)
Dwellings in Newcastle City Centre (2006) 2,000 (ABS)

Note average of 1.5 persons per dwelling
Resident growth to 2031 6,500 (average 325 pa)

Assume all accommodated in new development

Assume say **1.8** persons per dwelling

Assume say **3,600** dwellings

Assume say **85** sqm per dwelling GFA

GFA **300,000 sqm**, average 15,000 sqm

11

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Land Area Implications

Total GFA, 600,000 sqm

Gross FSR of 1:1, 60 ha

Gross FSR of 2:1, 30ha

Assume 50% public domain, streets, parks etc

Net FSR of 2:1, 30 ha

Net FSR of 4:1, 15 ha

12

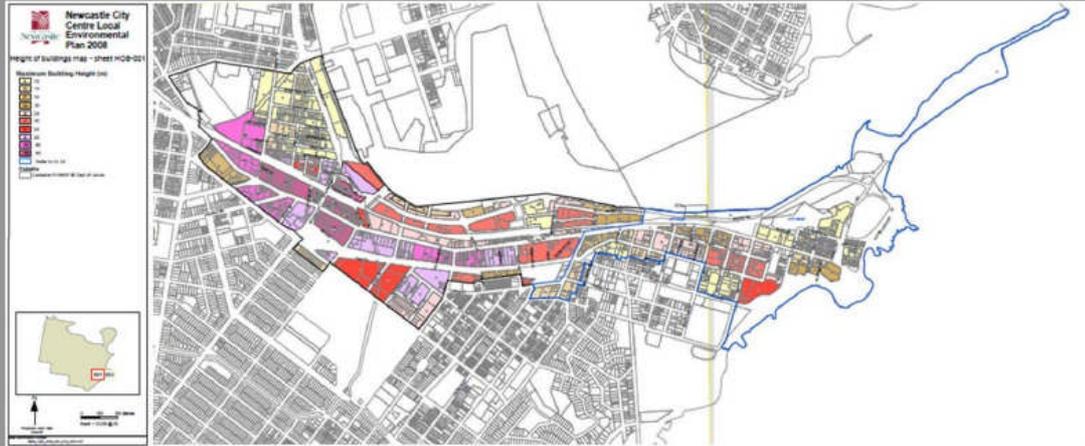
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Building Heights

Note max average DCP floor plate 1,400 sqm above street frontage height
Average street frontage height say 15m

Assume say site coverage 60% averaging employment and residential
Net FSR of 2:1, 3.3 floors average
Net FSR of 5:1, 6.6 floors average



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