



5th December 2008

General Manager
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RE: SHELLHARBOUR SHARED USE PATH STRATEGY 2008

The Illawarra Active Transport Taskforce (IATT) represents the interests of cyclists and pedestrians in the Illawarra, and our members include local Councils, the Roads and Traffic Authority, Healthy Cities Illawarra, the Heart Foundation, NSW Health, bike businesses and bicycle user groups. The IATT is an important forum and we very much appreciate Shellharbour City Council's continuing commitment to the Taskforce.

We congratulate Shellharbour City Council on the production of the Shared Use Path Strategy 2008. This document demonstrates a commitment to active and sustainable transport within the local government area.

The IATT has found that the major things which discourage people from cycling are the lack of carefully-constructed, integrated, well-signposted pathways, and fears about safety from vehicular traffic.

We therefore encourage Council to work towards providing pathways which are safe to use, are integrated with roadways or other pathways throughout their length and which are well-marked and signposted to allow users to find their way throughout the city. Signposting, especially where shared paths intersect with roadways, improves people's sense of safety and familiarity with new routes.

Well-planned linkages between major trip generators and most population centres are vital to allow for active travel for daily needs such as shopping, work or study.

There is also a need for driver education on sharing the road with cyclists where the cycle-path forms part of an existing roadway. We encourage Council to carry out a publicity campaign to this effect in conjunction with its launch of the shared use path strategy.

Better Health For All

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There has been recent discussion about the problems of shared bicycle/pedestrian pathways, and the risks to pedestrians from cyclists. For this reason we support a longer-term objective of providing separated bicycle and pedestrian pathways where traffic is more intense. This could be achieved by dedicating one road lane, or parking lane, as a separate cycleway. Not only will this provide a safe separation of the two modes of active transport, it also sends a strong message of changing priorities away from motor vehicles and towards active transport.

While recognising Council's budgetary constraints on building and maintaining infrastructure, we would urge you to prioritise the planned pathways highly. The health and environmental benefits of people taking up active transport have been found to pay off in the long-term.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important strategy. The Illawarra Active Transport Taskforce is happy to take part in any future planning needs to help further its implementation.

Yours sincerely

Jill Merrin
Community Environmental Health Officer