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## HERVEY BAY LIVING STREETS - THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A WALK AND CYCLE PLAN

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# HERVEY BAY LIVING STREETS

## THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A WALK AND CYCLE PLAN

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### Abstract

The paper describes the project and the process undertaken to develop the “Hervey Bay Living Streets Strategy-A Walk and Cycle Plan”. The Living Streets Strategy not only focuses on the planning and prioritisation of infrastructure improvements, but strategies to encourage people to use walking and cycling as a means of social interaction, recreation and transport. The paper outlines the Living Streets Strategy with particular emphasis on the community engagement and partnerships established to both develop and implement the strategies including:-

- Project Sponsorship.
- Community Engagement.
- Client and Consultant Interaction.
- Partnership Approach to Strategy Implementation.

The above process has ensured a strategy with ownership by all key agencies involved in its development. The paper emphasises that “working together” can significantly improve and benefit a project’s outcomes and implementation.

**Key Words: pedestrian, walking, cycling, planning, partnerships, infrastructure, education and encouragement**

### Introduction

This paper describes the project and the process undertaken to develop and implement the Hervey Bay Living Streets Strategy – A Walk and Cycle Plan. Living Streets is a vision of streets and parks in the city becoming alive with people and reducing the predominance of motor vehicles. It is an opportunity to recognise all the opportunities that Hervey Bay has to offer, and encourage greater participation in walking and cycling through a number of strategies targeting

education, enforcement, encouragement and the provision of infrastructure. This paper outlines the Living Streets Strategy with particular emphasis on the community engagement and partnerships established to both develop and implement the strategy.

Hervey Bay has developed as a series of seaside communities that over time have grown together to form the now more densely populated urban area between Point Vernon and Urangan. This is where the majority of the population is centred. Other seaside and

inland communities complete the urban areas of Hervey Bay City. Since the 1990's Hervey Bay has experienced a population boom. Whereas newly developed urban areas have been provided with infrastructure to Council requirements, the older city areas are still lacking footpaths, and new infrastructure also lacks connectivity to the remainder of the network. There is currently a big demand to upgrade infrastructure in the older parts of the City and improve connectivity within the network.

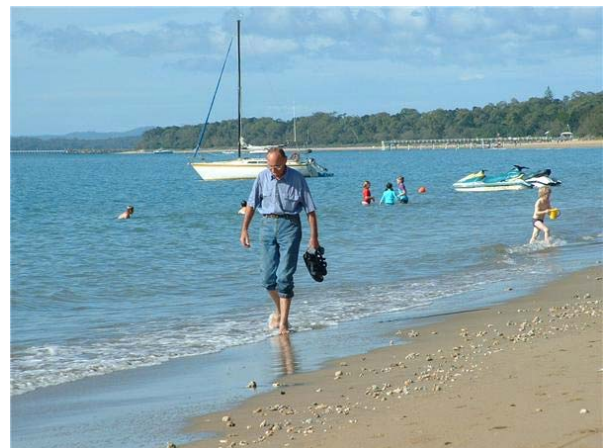
The development of Living Streets was aligned with previous state and local strategic planning initiatives including the Wide Bay Integrated Transport Plan, Hervey Bay Access Tourism Strategy and the Hervey Bay Recreation and Open Space Strategy Action Plan (draft). The Wide Bay Integrated Transport Plan contains a number of actions including recommendations to major regional cities to develop Walk and Cycle Plans. Hervey Bay's Access Tourism Strategy aims to develop a standard of infrastructure, both public and private, amenable to disabled tourists and thus attract a significant share of this niche tourism market. Hervey Bay's Recreation and Open Space Strategy Action Plan identifies the network of open space nominating seven categories with specific characteristics that meet a diverse range of community recreation needs. Part of the strategy surveyed community participation in recreation, identifying walking and cycling as the top two recreation and physical activities of the population.



**Figure 1** Location Map

(Source: [www.herveybaytourism.com.au](http://www.herveybaytourism.com.au))

The natural attractions of Hervey Bay including its climate, coastline, Fraser Island and whale watching makes the City a prime tourist destination. The beach itself is one of the busiest walking tracks in the City with a parallel shared path behind the foredune. A lot of recreation walking and cycling trips are orientated towards the beach.



The project was initiated within Council by key staff within the Roads Infrastructure and Community and Recreation Departments who could see the benefits of developing a strategy to increase participation in walking and cycling through both the provision of infrastructure and encouragement to participate in walk and cycle activities. Sport and Recreation Queensland was approached to assist with funding the project and provide a State perspective. The partnership was

complete with the engagement of Eppell Olsen to develop the walk and cycle plan. Living Streets is unique because it focuses on both walk and cycle activities (often considered separately by other agencies yet intrinsically linked) and an all encompassing approach focusing on infrastructure, education, enforcement and encouragement.

## Plan Components

The strategy is founded on a vision and guiding principles, which are based on the views and priorities of the community and stakeholders consulted during its development. The vision and guiding principles directed the development of the strategies and actions and assisted the project team in developing a system of prioritising these actions and works. The vision developed for the Hervey Bay Living Streets Strategy is:-

*“Hervey Bay streets and parks will be vibrant with pedestrian and cycle activity as people enthusiastically use these facilities for social, recreation and transport purposes”*

This vision is supported by the guiding principles:-

### Safety

“Walking and Cycling is encouraged by an environment where people feel secure and all facilities provide safe and consistent walking and cycling conditions”

### Connectivity

“The pedestrian and cycle network will connect people to where they want to go”

### Accessibility

“The pedestrian and cycle network and environment provides equity of access and mobility for all users”

### Amenity and vitality

“Streets and parks are an attractive environment for the engagement of all

activities. Social interaction comes naturally in this pleasant environment”

### Cost effectiveness

“Pedestrian and cycle improvements and facilities will assist in improving the economic development of the City”

The integrated strategy provides a series of actions which Council and other key stakeholders, consulted during the project, can undertake to encourage more walking and cycling in Hervey Bay. Specifically it encompasses the following:-

- a walk and cycle infrastructure network plan, including detailed actions on safety, maintenance and infrastructure standards;
- consideration of support facilities such as seating, bicycle parking, lighting, drinking fountains and signs;
- supporting programs which will encourage walking and cycling in the City such as education, encouragement and enforcement;
- strategies to ensure walking and cycling are integrated with planning processes; and
- development of an implementation and monitoring plan, including a recommended works program.

## Opportunities and Constraints

Living Streets aims to create better urban environments where people will be encouraged to walk and cycle more often. There are a number of identified barriers to walking and cycling which Living Streets aims to address. These include a lack of connectivity, safety (at intersections, related to speed and volume of traffic, personal safety), attitudes and behaviours towards sharing the road and paths, lack of convenience and comfort, delays, limited supporting facilities, maintenance of facilities and an unfriendly car dominated environment.

Conversely, Hervey Bay has many features which make opportunities for walking and cycling more attractive, such as a beautiful coastline and environmental features, weather which is conducive to outdoor activities, and relatively flat topography with wide roads. There is also a high proportion of people who are more likely to walk and cycle, such as older people, young people and low income earners as well as a high number of tourists. Tourists are also attracted to walking and cycling along the beach and foredune. The strategies developed have therefore aimed to focus on removing these barriers and take advantage of the opportunities in Hervey Bay.



### ***Education and Enforcement***

Education is an important factor in ensuring safe use of facilities by pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicle drivers. Enforcement of appropriate behaviour was raised as an important issue by the community.

A particular issue in Hervey Bay, and in many local government areas, is the use of shared paths. Shared paths are usually the most cost effective facility, but cause conflict with the actual usage patterns of the various users. For example, the variances in speeds between the elderly pedestrian versus the higher speed sport or commuter cyclist. Actions have therefore been proposed to manage this issue and other issues relating to bikes on the road through programs of

enforcement, signage and education to improve pathway and street safety.

### ***Encouragement***

Encouragement strategies are proposed, promoting walking and cycling and aimed at getting the whole community involved. Many actions such as facilitating development of a community based Bicycle User Group and Community Pedestrian Group, aim to encourage community participation in the planning and encouragement of walking and cycling. The Hervey Bay community is already an active and inclusive community and opportunities to become further involved are therefore proposed. Promotional material and activities are also recommended to increase awareness of existing facilities and the benefits of walking and cycling, targeting both residents and tourists.

A number of existing programs have been identified and a number of new programs proposed. Just Walk It is already well established in the Hervey Bay and the feasibility of introducing 10,000 steps is being investigated. A strong emphasis has been placed on targeting schools with practices taken up at school hopefully being transferred into later life. The introduction of the walking school bus is currently being investigated with keen interest being expressed by some schools.

### ***Integrated Planning***

Another key strategy in Living Streets is the integration of walking and cycling with other programs and planning to ensure cost effectiveness in implementation but also to ensure better planning outcomes. The strategy makes recommendations on how the new Integrated Planning Act planning scheme can better integrate walking and cycling in new developments, including proposals for training programs for Council staff and the developers regarding best practice planning and design for liveable communities. A concentration on the future development of pedestrian and cycle friendly communities is a key to encouraging more walking and cycling and consequently a more healthy and socially connected community.

An important issue raised during the project is the coordination of new development to allow more cost effective supply of infrastructure. For example, there has been a number of public and private schools that have recently developed on the edges of the main urban area. Currently, the schools are only required to provide pedestrian and cycle facilities along their property boundary, and consequently the onus is on Council to provide such infrastructure to the schools, often through areas of undeveloped land.

classified according to their primary purpose i.e. recreation, education or transport.

### ***Infrastructure***

Hervey Bay has a good base of facilities from which to begin planning. Key major infrastructure includes shared paths along the foreshore and the Links corridor (formerly a rail corridor) that runs from Pialba to Urangan. The infrastructure network plan developed for Living Streets has been developed around these facilities and includes extensions as well as connections between them. A third major east west link is proposed along the southern fringe of the central city to serve a number of schools and sports grounds. One of the major impediments to the connectivity of key infrastructure is Boat Harbour Drive, an urban arterial that carries 15,000vpd in the busiest sections and splits the City along an east west line. Crossing points at Boat Harbour Drive are proposed at several locations and include pedestrian refuges and traffic lights.

### ***Figure 2 Proposed Walk and Cycle Network Plan – Hervey Bay Urban Area***

To determine the nature and extent of new infrastructure a map illustrating major attractors and generators was produced. These included employment centres, shopping centres, schools, community facilities, corner stores, sports facilities, transit centres, backpacker hostels and aged care/retirement facilities. The intention was not to provide infrastructure on every street, but instead by focusing on the generators and attractors a higher order of infrastructure was developed that distinguished longer distance recreation and commuter routes from local routes. Routes have also been

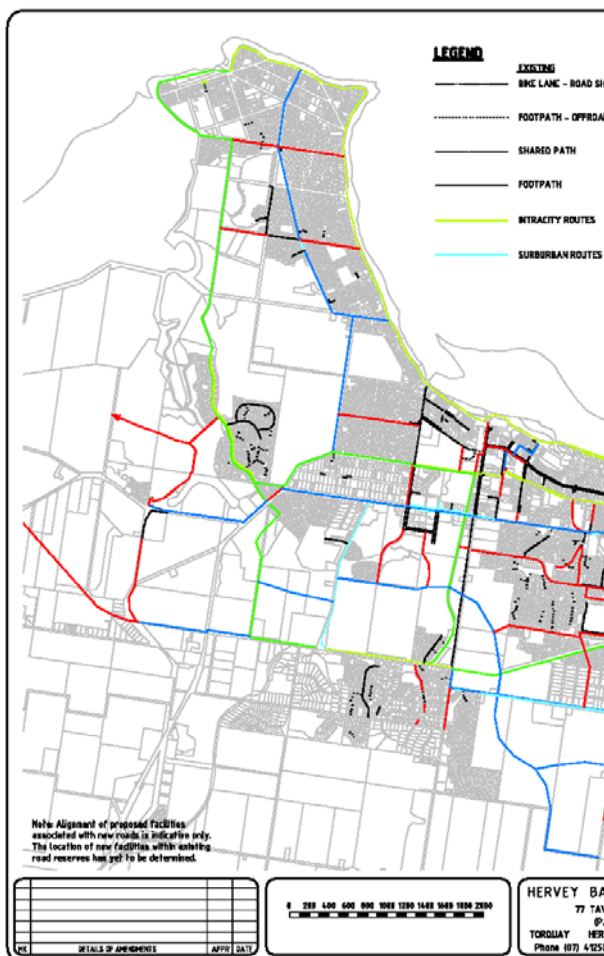
Facility types for these network routes range from footpaths for local streets to shared paths for suburban and intracity routes. Bike lanes and yellow bike advisory markings in conjunction with an edgeline treatment are also included.

Segregated paths for cyclists and pedestrians was considered but not recommended because of the additional cost and difficulties ensuring users were confined to the appropriate facility.

The total cost of infrastructure proposed in the network plan is \$17.8 million. It is unlikely that all proposed infrastructure will be constructed within the next 15 years. A priority assessment has been made for each project and a project priority determined ranging from very low to very high. This assists Council to select projects when reviewing the 5 Year Works Program. The priority assessment has been based on a number of factors each given a weighting. The factors and weighting are:-

**Table 1 Priority Criteria and Weightings**

Factor	Considerations	Weight
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recorded pedestrian or cycle related crash history</li> <li>Traffic volumes</li> <li>Posted speed limit</li> <li>% vulnerable users likely to use the facility</li> </ul>	25%
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a direct link to attractors and generators</li> <li>Enhances the network by filling a gap</li> </ul>	15%
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total population within the adjacent catchment</li> <li>Potential users e.g. schools</li> <li>Expressed community demand</li> </ul>	20%
Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demand in relation to the cost</li> </ul>	15%



Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for alternate funding source</li> <li>• Incorporation into other upgrading works happening at the site</li> </ul>	25%
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## Process and Partnerships

The above strategies and actions were developed cooperatively between the consultant, Council and stakeholders. The interactive development process has included a close working relationship between the consultants and Council, ongoing interaction with other potential implementing agencies such as Queensland Health, Sport and Recreation Queensland, Department of Main Roads, Queensland Transport and departments within Council. The process has also included a community engagement and consultation program.

The cooperative process utilised has ensured that Living Streets addresses the internal processes of Council and other implementing agencies as well as drawing on the expertise of the consultant regarding best practice and experiences elsewhere. Consequently a strategy which is innovative, realistic and able to be implemented has evolved.

The project team identified at the outset of the project the benefits of developing a consultation plan detailing internal and external stakeholders, partners and specific target groups in the community, as well as the most appropriate and effective ways of engaging these people in developing the strategy. The process developed was used as an education tool in itself to increase awareness and motivate the community to analyse its perceptions of walking, cycling and motor vehicle use, thus encouraging more worthwhile input.

Consultation workshops were coordinated at two key phases in the development of the strategy i.e. after preparation of the Discussion Paper and Draft for Consultation. A consultation list' containing contact details for organisations and individuals that had raised issues or lodged a complaint to Council regarding pedestrian and cycling

matters was used to send targeted invitations attracting attendance at public meetings. In addition a series of meetings with state government agencies, outlying community progress associations, school principals and key staff, council officers, and councillors occurred.

The effectiveness of community consultation and engagement can be demonstrated by consultation that occurred with the Toogoom Progress Association. Toogoom is a holiday village with unique characteristics such as unkerbed streets with mature trees and grassed verges. Infrastructure was proposed along the foreshore, however there was widespread opposition to this proposal. An alternate proposal offered by the project team to use local streets was also seen as compromising the characteristics of Toogoom's streets. The community accepted that no infrastructure would be provided except for new developments at more inland locations of the township.

In addition to the Strategy development, data from the community consultation was specifically used to develop the Vision and Guiding Principles which were consequently transferred into the formula developed to determine priorities for infrastructure projects. The priority criteria and weightings given to the criteria was directly influenced by community input.

### ***Partnerships Formed for Implementation***

The focus of Living Streets is not solely on the provision of new infrastructure. The Education, Enforcement and Encouragement Strategies highlight other means of increasing the number of walking and cycling trips within the City. A partnership with the State Government and the community is required to encourage and co-ordinate the implementation of these non infrastructure strategies.



For instance the implementation of the walking school bus concept will require input from Council, Queensland Transport and Education Queensland with a community sponsor likely to be sought.

For a number of years a Road Safety Watch Forum has been operating in Hervey Bay and this included representation from state government agencies including Queensland Transport, Queensland Police, Department of Main Roads, as well as members of the community. The membership and role of the Road Safety Watch Forum has been expanded to include overview of the Living Streets Strategy. The Road Safety Partnership (as it is now known) has increased membership to include Sport and Recreation Queensland and Queensland Health.

Council staff will project manage the implementation phase of Living Streets and work closely with the community and state government agencies. Ongoing community consultation links will be established by encouraging the formation of a Bicycle User Group and Community Pedestrian Group with some representation from these groups within the Road Safety Partnership.

Living Streets was formally adopted by Council in August 2003. A formal report on implementation progress is to be presented to Council every 12 months. The Strategy is proposed to be reviewed every 5 years with an intended life of 15 years.



All the immediate priority non infrastructure actions are already in progress and the short term actions are currently being assessed to determine what can realistically be implemented in the next 12 months.

## Conclusion

The paper has described the project and the process undertaken to develop the “Hervey Bay Living Streets Strategy”, with particular emphasis on the community engagement and partnerships established to both develop and implement the strategies including:-

- Project Sponsorship. The development of Living Streets was jointly funded by Sport and Recreation Queensland and the Hervey Bay City Council. The project was a joint

initiative of the Roads Infrastructure and Community and Recreation Departments within Council;

- **Community Engagement.** The interactive community consultation process undertaken for the project ensured that the strategy outcomes more closely echoed the community's needs and desires. It also served a double purpose – educating, promoting, and encouraging walking and cycling in the local community;
- **Client and Consultant Interaction.** The strategy was developed jointly through constant interaction between Consultant and Client. The Consultants expertise in the development of walk and cycle initiatives and strategies was complimented by the local knowledge provided by the Client;
- **Partnership Approach to Strategy Implementation.** The strategy recommends a partnership approach to implementation as there are many agencies that will have a role in the implementation of the strategy. Partnerships are proposed with internal Council officers, state government agencies, schools and

the local community, all of whom were involved in the strategy development.

The above process has ensured a strategy with ownership by all key agencies involved in its development. The paper emphasises that “working together” can significantly improve and benefit a project's outcomes and implementation.

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## Author Biography

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The paper is authored jointly by Craig Thompson, Helen Carroll and Jerryn Zwart. Craig is Principal Engineer Roads Assets at Hervey Bay City Council and is the Project Manager responsible for the development and implementation of the Living Streets Strategy. Helen is Recreation Officer at Hervey Bay City Council and was responsible for the management of the community consultation phase. Subsequently, Helen has been involved in the implementation of the education and encouragement strategies. Jerryn manages the mobility and integrated transport section at Eppell Olsen & Partners and was responsible for the strategy development. She continues to take a role in the implementation phase providing specialist advice and services as required.

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