



Point Lonsdale Civic Association Inc.

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Representing Point Lonsdale Residents since 1910

19/2/2022

To. BoQ Mayor – Cr. Ross Ebbels;
CC. BoQ Councillors - Cr. Michael Grout, Cr. Susan Salter, Cr. Fleur Hewitt, Cr. Donnie Grigau.
CC. CEO BoQ - Mr. Martin Gill;
CC. Johann Rajaratnam - General Manager Planning & Infrastructure;

BOROUGH ACTIVE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Association understands the initial Active Transport Plan (ATS) process is about ideas and issues associated with walking, cycling, scooting and wheeling – i.e. alternative transport modes in the Borough. The strategy includes a recent pathway audit/strategy that identifies gaps in the pathways network. The ATS being developed by Ratio Consultants will amongst other things identify what infrastructure is needed and what level of community support there is for an approved network. Ratio are using a number of tools including a Council sponsored “crowdspot” website to help community members identify issues and ideas. This community platform will be available until 20th of February. Other consultation included a recent Council zoom meeting to explain the process. A Council Project Group has been established and local and regional expertise is also being used to get the project to the next phase.

Background

The Association understand that a Transport Plan was actually part of the previous Council Plan 2017-2021 and supporting documents, and is part of the current 4 year Council Plan 2021-25. Provision for the ATS has been included in the Council Budget.

An Active Transport Plan is also part of Queenscliffe Borough Council’s current Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) 2021-2031 refer page 52, Pillar 4. Sustainable Transport - Action 1 Active Transport Strategy “Develop an Integrated Transport Plan to facilitate uptake of sustainable modes of transport and the long-term reduction of private car use.”

The CERP estimates a cost of \$40,000 with a short time frame i.e. 1-4 years to develop.

Borough of Queenscliff Pathway Strategy, has resulted in a consultant’s audit which identifies gaps in the Borough’s pathway network and applies weightings and priorities for building footpaths in our Borough. Some cost estimates have been provided by Ratio which seem beyond Council’s limited resources.

PLCA Response to ATS Ideas and Issues.

Given the limited resources of the Borough perhaps the best strategy to improve the Borough’s roads and pathways is to better utilise the network - i.e. in the absence of significant government funds needed to make major changes the most effective strategy may be to make simple improvements to our existing network of roads, footpaths and cycle tracks. These treatments could include improved pathway surfaces and intersection crossings to improve safety for pedestrians and reduced speed limits in residential streets where speeding is a problem or Borough-wide.

The Borough is generally well served with transport infrastructure – particularly Queenscliff township with long established network of roads and footpaths of varying degrees of quality. There are only a few unmade roads and

footpaths (Fraser Street) and virtually no bridges for the Council to maintain. Our level of maintenance spending on transport infrastructure compared to other much larger rural shires is minuscule. The existing off road walking/cycling track should be linked to the Bellarine Rail Trail via a shared road arrangement along Murray Road and ultimately to a regional Ocean Grove to Queenscliff walking/cycling trail via Shell Road or Creswell Road possibly linking through the Moremac canal development open parkland area (50 hectares along Shell Road).

Point Lonsdale

Attributes

- Ability to link/extend the existing walking/cycling network
- Aged but healthy population
- Good scenic walking track along the coast (Lonsdale Bay to the Lighthouse and beyond)
- A good sealed road system and car parking (mainly Point Lonsdale Road and Rip View Lookout)
- Public parklands and reserves and wetlands surround the township
 - Most services are within easy access including child care, primary school, sporting oval, main street shops, parks, and the beaches
 - Fairly recent road calming/safety features e.g. pedestrian cross overs and all of which seem to work well.
 - Ability to provide a Bike Park venue in the Springs

Existing and Future Problems

- New housing estates (Golf Club and Moremac) will add thousands of new residents to the population.
- Increasing traffic volumes and car parking in the holiday period
- Environmental damage from bike riders in Bunny Wood and Rip View woodland
 - Tourist visitation increasing and CoGG residents from west of Fellows Road using all the services without paying.
- Lack of a footpath in dangerous spots such as Fellows Road (Golf Club Hill).
- BP Service Station intersection – will only get busier and more congested (new developments, access to the beach and school etc)
- Students must travel once they have completed Primary School.

Ideas

Point Lonsdale's urban character is informal with narrower streetscapes, well vegetated/treed verges and few hard surface footpaths, if any all. This may mean that Point Lonsdale should be treated differently to Queenscliff in terms of future transport and infrastructure needs. Some of Point Lonsdale's roads/streets might be suitable and adaptable to the "Shared Roads" or "Green Roads" concepts however Council should firstly ask the question why – many of the streets in "Old Point Lonsdale" (Williams Road southward) have relatively few permanent residents for the greater part of the year and only come alive during holiday periods. Walking, cycling and scooting aren't a problem especially where there are interconnecting laneways which thankfully Point Lonsdale, unlike Queenscliff, has preserved.

Point Lonsdale however does need some pathways along major roads – these do not have to be hard surfaces. In particular, Fellows Road (Golf Club Hill) is dangerous for young families and needs a safety footpath especially for those with a pram. It could connect to existing informal footpaths along Kirk Road allowing walking access for those who live in the newer part of Lonsdale west of Fellows Road to the shopping centre in Point Lonsdale Road.

Ocean Road has enough concrete and does not need a lot more infrastructure however if some of the trees along the grass verge could be trimmed pedestrians could use the road reserve verge without having to step onto the side of the road. The road shoulder in Point Lonsdale Road from the Cemetery to Loch Street needs improving/widening for cyclists competing with cars and the Promenade in places needs some surface improvements for walkers and cyclists. Some consideration of speed limits for electric vehicles (scooters, bikes

and skateboards) is needed. The walkway linkage between Point Lonsdale main shopping area and the Lighthouse Reserve could also be improved as could the walking/cycling access to scenic Rip View Car Park.

The Association believes the missing piece of the ATS puzzle for Point Lonsdale is the Bike Park concept plan for the Springs. Plans for this key piece of the transport infrastructure in Borough, which is especially important for young bike riders in Point Lonsdale, have not been released and it does not feature in the ATS information to date. Apparently, the plan is to upgrade the existing Skate Park and toilets and expand to the facility which is located next to the existing walking cycling track to include a new Bike Park, once funding can be secured.

Queenscliff

Queenscliff is characterised by wide formal streets in a grid pattern layout with concrete footpaths either side and curb and channel guttering. The main arterial road network in Queenscliff is essentially the Bellarine Highway through the Narrows and scenic Swan Bay to Flinders, Bethune, King, Hesse Street and Wharf Street to the car ferry. Other well used north/south running roads are Gellibrand Street and South Hesse Street.

Attributes

- Ability to link/extend the existing walking/cycling network
- Aged but healthy population
- Good walking tracks (sealed track/Lovers Walk/Beach)
- A good sealed road system and car parking
- Public green belt (parklands and reserves) and waterways surround the township
- Queenscliff is the only coastal town on the Bellarine with a rail link. Rail reserve still exists to South Geelong via Drysdale.
- Queenscliff also has a car and passenger ferry service to the Mornington Peninsula (largest in Australia)
- Most services are within walking distance including kindergarten, primary schools, sporting oval, main street shops, parks, harbour and the beach.
- Heritage attractions including Fort and Hesse Street are easily accessible.
- Fairly recent road calming/safety features e.g. roundabouts, pedestrian cross overs and Narrows traffic lights all of which seem to work well.

Existing and Future Problems

- Increasing traffic volumes into a relatively small area - annual ferry traffic 250,000 vehicles, 900,000 people plus annual events e.g. Hot Rods etc.
- Increasing Boat Ramp Traffic numbers – only 90 spaces for ever increasing boat numbers resulting in overspill parking in streets/reserves
- Harbour traffic – car parking
 - Tourist visitation increasing and CoGG residents from west of Fellows Road using all the services without paying.
- Ageing infrastructure including stormwater/footpaths/public toilets/roads
- Links to Bellarine Rail Trail – Murray Road connection need to be resolved. A simple shared road solution may be best.
- Students must travel once they have completed Primary School.
- Most car/bike fatalities in the Queenscliff have occurred along the Bellarine Highway (through the Narrows) between the western end of the high school site and MAFRI. At least 3 fatalities with many serious accidents.
 - Bus service to Geelong takes an hour - 60 years ago it took 30 -35 minutes. Elderly people wanting to go to Ocean Grove say to get a new hearing aid battery often have to take 2 buses – a normal 15 minute car journey takes most of the day.

Ideas

Extension of the Footpath over the railway lines in North Hesse Street – currently quite dangerous for pedestrians walking to the boat ramp and connecting to the walking/cycling track to the harbour. Council is working on this but it not easy.

Extension of the walking/cycling track from the eastern end of the harbour would be worth improving however the parklands should be preserved and mainly kept for pedestrian use. The Commonwealth have to date shown little enthusiasm for a coastal trail around the seaward side of the Fort.

There are currently 2 long established walking/cycling trails in the Narrows (Swan Bay side) that are not used (one sealed and the other not). The most scenic and pleasant walking/cycling track in the Borough is along the MAFRI/Swan Bay frontage which unfortunately goes nowhere. Users who walk or pedal along the Swan Bay shoreline must turn around and go back. As part of the original construction of MAFRI, on the former Queenscliff tip site, it was agreed there would be a community path along the Swan Bay frontage of the building – the idea of providing a bridge or walking path across the rail line at the western end of MAFRI linking back to the Narrows walking/cycling track and creating a scenic loop was floated with the community but never eventuated. The whole concept could be linked to existing Marine Discovery Centre (great for children) on site.

Yours sincerely,

David Kenwood – on behalf of Committee & members

President PLCA

Ref: 19022022ATSBOQ
