

General Manager
Bega Valley Shire Council
PO Box 492
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13th August 2021

Dear Bega Valley Shire Council,

RE: review of the CSP - Towards 2042

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the review process for **Towards 2042**, Bega Valley's Community Strategic Plan (CSP). Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group now in NSW for over forty-five years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups.

Our mission is to make cycling better for everyone in NSW, and we support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. We advocate for new cycling routes that incorporate dedicated paths within both green corridors and the road environment, to provide connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips.

Concerns:

A review of the 2017 iteration of the CSP reveals some intent to encourage more active travel in the LGA. Outcome 1 aims for Active and Healthy Communities by increasing access to opportunities for physical activity. Outcome 5 seeks to create Connected Communities by improving the pedestrian amenity of town centres, providing more public transport and developing a network of shared paths linking towns and villages throughout the shire. However, there **is a lack of benchmarks** for expanding cycling infrastructure or increasing the uptake of active and public transport.

Opportunities:

The new CSP should be developed with regard to other relevant plans for Cumberland LGA to ensure it maximises opportunities to improve the active transport network. These plans include:

Bega Valley Shire 2040 Local Strategic Planning Statementⁱ which outlines plans to grow cycling facilities under Planning Priority 7: Tourism and Planning Priority 8: Transport and an intention to implement the new NSW Movement and Place Framework to create vibrant town centres which prioritise walking and cycling. Again, no numerical targets or benchmarks are included.

The Bega Valley Bike Planⁱⁱ which identifies cycling as increasingly important in developing healthier, safer and more sustainable communities and endeavours to promote cycling as a legitimate and necessary mode of transport and recreation. The bike plan committed to a series of projects between 2014 and 2018. Note that the bike plan was due to be revised by 2019.

A commitment to new cycling infrastructure would help deliver all outcomes of the revised CSP and should be front and centre of Towards 2042:

Outcome 1: Active and healthy communities

Improved walking and cycling paths will ensure better access to beaches, reserves and recreation facilities, helping to establish healthy lifestyles. High-quality shared paths through town and village centres will support access by pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities, reducing dependency on private cars.

Outcome 2: Employment and learning opportunities

Cycling facilities are proven to attract tourist and support the visitor economy. New businesses will be needed to support eco-, active and adventure tourism while existing businesses benefit from increased passing trade and foot trafficⁱⁱⁱ.

Outcome 3: Sustainable Living

When high-quality active travel infrastructure is provided, a modal shift can occur. An increase in the take up of people walking, cycling and catching public transport will ultimately reduce the number of people choosing to drive, helping to limit air and noise pollution.

Outcome 4: Liveable places

Increased active travel leads to less congestion, noise and car parking pressures. Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure developed through the lens of the Movement and Place Framework will create more space for trees and landscaping, slow traffic and allow a more compact urban form.

Outcome 5: Connected communities

A well-designed network of shared paths would link towns and villages to reduce social and physical isolation and support public transport use by providing safe access to bus routes.

Outcome 6: Strong, consultative leadership

Cycling infrastructure has a low cost per km, offering better value than road projects and supporting Council's financial sustainability. Over 100km of bike path can be delivered for the cost of 1km of new road^{iv}.

Recommendations:

- 1. Include clear numerical targets and timeframes for increasing active travel and expanding the cycling and walking network.**

There has never been a better time to build for bike riding and active transport, as evidenced in the new Transport for NSW policies that require State projects to prioritize road space for active transport (Figure 1):

- Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001^v
- Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{vi}

The expansion of cycling facilities must be a focus of Bega Valley's short-term transport planning. Safe cycling provision gives people travel choices that decongest roads, public transport and parking, that don't contribute to environmental pollution, and people who ride bikes can easily stop at local shops en-route, benefiting local businesses^{vii}.

Order of Road User Space Considerations



Figure 1:
Diagram expressing Transport for NSW's road user priority.
(Source: Transport for NSW)

2. Provide cycling infrastructure that is segregated from vehicles

Bicycle NSW supports cycling infrastructure that is completely separated from vehicles and caters for riders of all ages and abilities. According to the best practice 'cycling segmentation' model, developed in Portland USA to identify the type and needs of existing and potential bike riders^{viii}, such cycle paths will allow 70% of local residents to consider journeys by bike (Figure 2). The area has some steep inclines but the increasing use of e-bikes and other micromobility devices will ensure that active transport options are accessible to all residents.

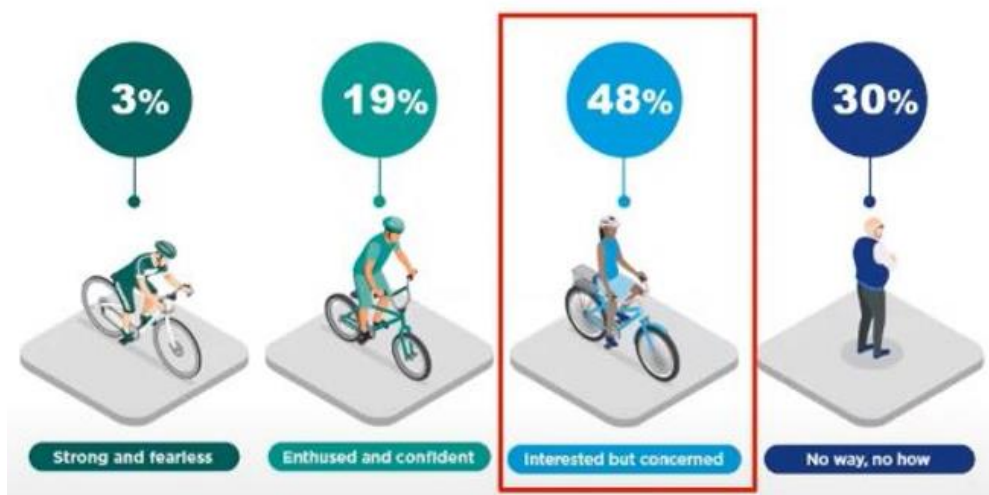


Figure 2:
Four general categories of comfort levels for cycling as transportation.
Source: North Sydney Council

The Bicycle NSW *Build it for Everyone* policy pillar^{ix} sets a standard that cycling infrastructure should be fit for eight year old children or elders to ride on. Door zone bike lanes, bike stencils on the road and dangerous intersections will continue to deter the 48%^x of people who are 'interested but concerned', from making the switch to cycling

3. Reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets with on-road cycle routes

30 km/h limit streets reduce the need for separate bicycle infrastructure on local residential roads. 30 km/h has been shown as an optimal speed limit to allow people driving and cycling to share the road safely^{xi} and is becoming a standard speed limit in many parts of the world. All single lane roads in Spain have been under a 30km/h limit since May 2021 and 30% of UK residents live in 20mph areas^{xii}.

Lower speed limits are an important building block for Vision Zero, an approach to road safety that was launched in Sweden in 1994 with the simple premise that no loss of life is acceptable. The Vision Zero approach has been highly successful and has spread to many other countries. The key policies include prioritizing low urban speed limits, pedestrian zones, physical separation between bicycle and car traffic, data-based traffic enforcement and behaviour-change education^{xiii}.

4. Develop facilities for cycle tourism

Cycle tourism has enormous potential to attract visitors to regional areas and provide business opportunities for local residents. Bega Valley is close to the Victorian network of rail trails and the developing routes linking the Snowy Mountains to Canberra. The area could become an important hub for cycling tourism by establishing a series of waymarked routes on shared paths and scenic back roads. The Tumbarumba to Rosewood trail has brought a constant flow of visitors to small villages in the area since it opened in 2020, supporting 9 new businesses^{xiv}. The Central West Trail near Dubbo provides a 400km waymarked loop that has revitalised several country towns since April 2020^{xv}. Mountain biking is also very popular. The Blue Derby trails in north-eastern Tasmania provide an excellent example of bike tourism bringing economic benefits for local communities. \$3.1 million was invested in mountain bike trails in 2015. Now, more than 30,000 tourists visit the trails each year, injecting more than \$30 million back into the Tasmanian economy^{xvi}. Share bike rental hubs should be provided in tourist centres to ensure access to the trails for all visitors.

5. Maintain a focus on the important details of the cycle network

While creating a regional network is essential, it is the detailed design of cycle routes, end of trip facilities and wayfinding that will encourage the uptake of cycling and reduce dependence on private vehicles.

It is essential to ensure that popular daily destinations such as town centres, schools and stations are easy to reach by bicycle for all residents of all ages and abilities. In particular, safe connections with all education facilities along the routes must be incorporated. Cycling infrastructure needs to be safe and continuous to increase the mode share of cycling and reduce congestion associated with school journeys. Without proper separation from vehicles and safe intersections, parents will still feel driving their children to school and activities is the only way to keep them safe from being hit by cars.

Prioritising safe cycling for short trips to centres, transport interchanges and local services such as schools and health services will free capacity for people who need to travel further by road and public transport.

Integration of the routes with bus stops is essential to ensure easy access by bike and foot. All public transport journeys start and finish with a walk or cycle. Providing high-quality, safe conditions for active travel to bus routes will break down the first/last mile barrier which can inhibit take-up of public transport

Parking and other end of trip facilities should be provided at journey end locations to further support riders and encourage participation. Wayfinding supports visitors to vibrant centres by clearly articulating and communicating the most efficient and safest route. Signage style for wayfinding should be consistent throughout the LGA.

Conclusion:

Bicycle NSW encourages Bega Valley Shire to plan for game-changing upgrades to the active transport network in the LGA. Safe infrastructure to support walking and cycling will benefit everyone in the community, reducing congestion and pollution while improving public health, providing more equitable access to employment, services and public transport and attracting tourism.

We look forward to working with Bega Valley Shire Council to progress the delivery of active transport infrastructure in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Bickford

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Bicycle NSW

ⁱ Bega Valley Shire 2040 – Local Strategic Planning Statement <https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-KGD-42-36-17>

ⁱⁱ Bega Valley Bike Plan. 2014. <https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-XZV-27-12-83>

ⁱⁱⁱ Jerome N Rachele. Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good for business, The Conversation [Online as at 24/2/2021] [Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good business \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/do-the-sums-bicycle-friendly-changes-are-good-business)

^{iv} PIA. 2013, Sept 3. <https://www.planning.org.au/documents/item/5578>

^v NSW Government, Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001, [Online as at 19/2/2021] www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf

^{vi} NSW Government, Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000, [Online as at 19/2/2021] www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/road-user-space-allocation-policy.pdf

^{vii} Jerome N Rachele. Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good for business, The Conversation [Online as at 24/2/2021] [Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good business \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/do-the-sums-bicycle-friendly-changes-are-good-business)

^{xvi} Roger Geller. (2009). Four types of cyclists. Portland Bureau of Transportation. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746>

^{ix} Bicycle NSW (2018) Our Policy, [online as at 24/2/2021] <https://bicyclensw.org.au/our-policy/>

^x 70% of people when surveyed said they would ride more if they felt safe
NSW Government, Sydney's Cycling Future (2013) [Online as at 24/2/2021] <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/sydneys-cycling-future-web.pdf>

^{xi} City of Yarra - 30km/h speed limit: pre-trial final report, 2017. <https://thanksfor30.com.au/sites/default/files/2018-08/City-of-Yarra-Pre-Trial-Report-Aug-2017-FINAL%5B1%5D.pdf>

^{xii} O'Sullivan, F. (2020, November). Why Europe is slowing down. Bloomberg CityLab. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-18/speed-limits-are-dropping-in-europe-and-the-u-k>

^{xiii} Vision Zero Network. (2015, April 13). European Cities Lead the Way Toward Vision Zero. <https://visionzeronetwork.org/european-cities-lead-the-way-toward-vision-zero/>

^{xiv} Railtrails Australia. 2021, April 18. Local economy thrives since the opening of the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail. <https://www.railtrails.org.au/2021/897-local-economy-thrives-since-the-opening-of-the-tumbarumba-to-rosewood-rail-trail>

^{xv} Central West Cycle Trail. <https://centralwestcycletrail.com.au/>

^{xvi} AMB Magazine. 2021, July 29. Riding to the edge. <https://www.ambmag.com.au/feature/riding-to-the-edge---understanding-logging-around-blue-derby-trails-568005/page3>