

Hexham Cycling Opportunities
Proposals to Newcastle City Council
by Newcastle Cycleways Movement Inc.

Proposal 1 – NCC to acquire private road

Recent news reports have suggested that the Sandvik business in Hexham may move some, or all of its work off shore. The property occupied by Sandvik is shown on the photo below on the south eastern side of the Hexham Bridge. The item of significance for this proposal is the private road (marked in yellow) that passes through the property which is also shared by a number of other businesses.



Recommendation

It is Newcastle Cycleways Movement's opinion that Newcastle City Council should take this opportunity to acquire this private road and open it up for general use by the community.

Our reasons for this are as follows:

- It provides a substantially safer link for cyclists travelling eastbound on the New England and Pacific Highways. The blue marking on the map below shows the eastbound predominantly 80kph section of the highway where there is no shoulder lane for bicycles and traffic occupies the three eastbound lanes. This is quite a high risk area for cyclists in a high volume/high speed zone.



- By opening up this private road, it would provide an easy and safe access for cyclists to utilise the quiet Old Maitland Road through to the intersection near the Hexham Bowling Club.
- Residents and businesses in the area would also find this additional access beneficial as it would provide them with an easy traffic signalised entry onto the New England Highway at its northern end. Currently, neither of the ends of Old Maitland Road are signal controlled.

Proposal 2 – Complete westbound off loader cycleway for New England Highway

The yellow line below shows the incomplete cycleway that was built to enable cyclists travelling through this intersection to safely negotiate the interchange and continue along the New England Highway. The cycleway has poor access from the Pacific Highway, is very poorly signposted and ends in an area of loose gravel to the south of the access road into Hungry Jacks on the western side of the New England Highway. Due to these factors it is unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

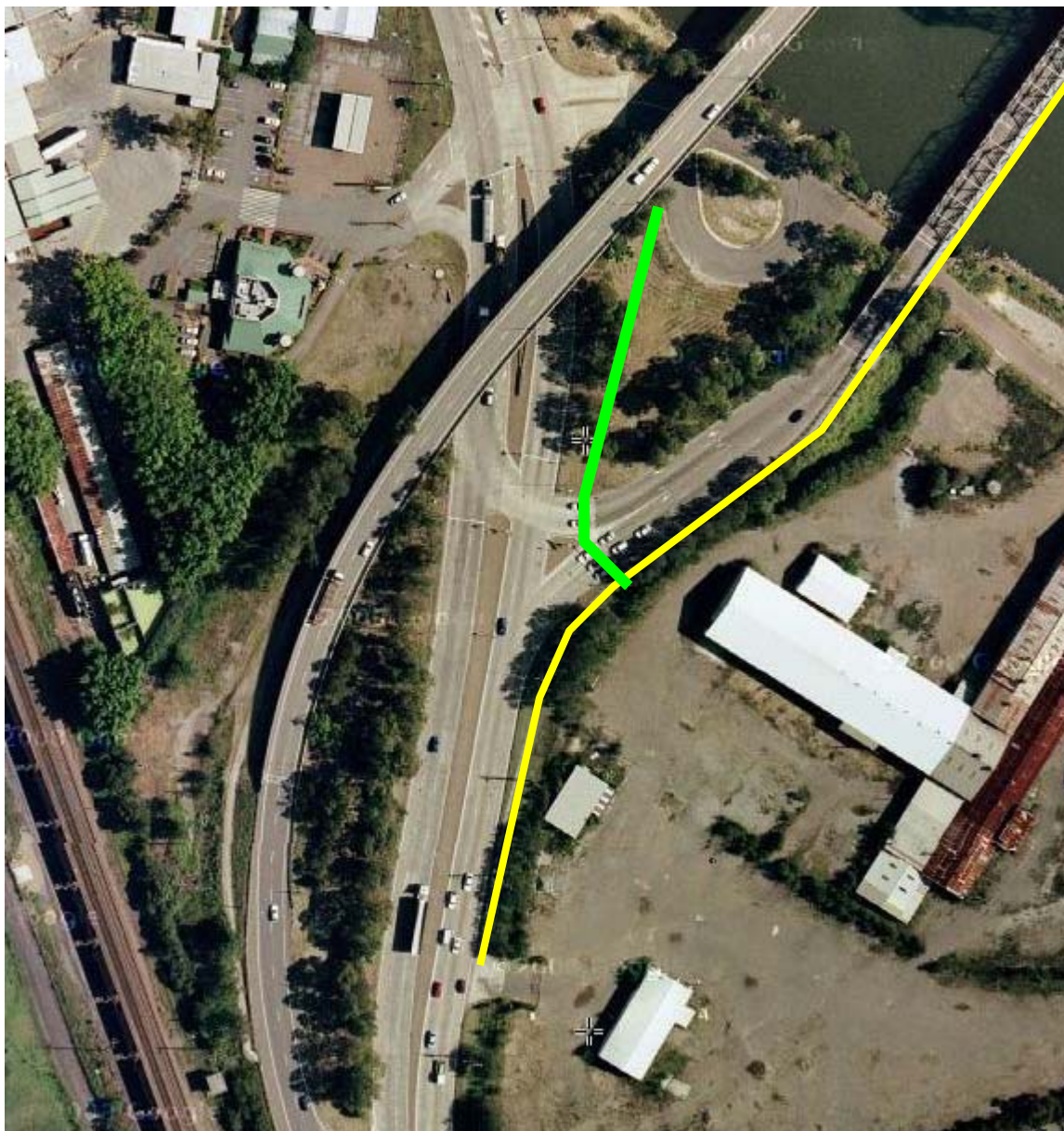


Recommendation

It is Newcastle Cycleways Movement's recommendation that the remaining 10-20 metres of cycleway (shown in green) be completed to allow cyclists safe access across the Hungry Jacks road and out onto the New England Highway beyond that intersection by the construction of a short cycleway slip lane, similar to those under the railway bridge along Main Road Cardiff. The onload location (shown in green) should also be moved further towards the intersection of the Pacific and New England Highways, and adequate signage installed to advise cyclists of this safer route. This will help to eliminate the crossing of a number of lanes of high volume/fast flowing traffic that may be taking the Pacific Highway. The current access point is a sharp turn off the Pacific Highway over rough some poor quality concreting.

Proposal 3 – Provide cycle access to the former private road for those using Hexham Bridge cycleway

The yellow line on the image below shows the existing cycleway across the Hexham Bridge for southbound cyclists.



Recommendation

Newcastle Cycleways Movement proposes that a pedestrian crossing at the southern end of the old Hexham Bridge be utilised to provide a link to a new short section of cycleway (shown in green) to enable cyclists to safely travel along the Old Maitland Road towards Newcastle, or alternatively, utilise the safer traffic lights at the New England Highway and Hungry Jacks to travel west along the New England Highway. Signage on the northern end of the old Hexham Bridge cycleway should be installed to indicate these routes for cyclists travelling to Maitland or Newcastle.

Proposal 4 – Provide eastbound cycle access from the New England Highway to the former private road

When the RTA constructed the new Hexham Bridge, they made no provision for eastbound cyclists to safely cross the slip lane of fast flowing traffic travelling from Maitland direction then over the Hexham bridge and north to Raymond Terrace and beyond. The volume and speed of traffic using this bridge feeder lane make it a hazardous crossing for cyclists.



Recommendation

We believe that a short section of cycleway (as marked in green) needs to be constructed on the river side of the bridge on-ramp to allow eastbound New England Highway cyclists to safely traverse this section of road. It should sweep around between the ramp and the river, then underneath the ramp to link with the current private road to join Old Maitland Road.