

ITEM-24 LMM 10/12/2018 - Richmond Vale Rail Trail Working Party

MOTION:

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes that the Richmond Vale Rail Trail is a proposed 32-kilometre cycling and walking track along the former Richmond Vale rail line between Kurri Kurri and Hexham, along the former Chichester to Newcastle water pipeline between Shortland and Tarro, and through the Hunter Wetlands National Park;
2. Acknowledges the significant body of work already completed by the City of Newcastle, City of Cessnock and City of Lake Macquarie towards the realisation of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail;
3. Notes the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Strategy 12 'Enhance the Blue and Green Grid and the urban tree canopy' encourages the completion of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail as an opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles, extend recreation opportunities and contribute to expanding the Blue and Green Networks;
4. Establishes a Richmond Vale Rail Trail Working Party comprising Councillors, Council Officers and community members from City of Newcastle, City of Cessnock and City of Lake Macquarie, aimed at delivering what will be a truly iconic infrastructure project for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area.

Background:

The Richmond Vale Rail Trail is a proposed 32-kilometre cycling and walking track along the former Richmond Vale rail line between Kurri Kurri and Hexham, along the former Chichester to Newcastle water pipeline between Shortland and Tarro, and through the Hunter Wetlands National Park.

The shared pathway would provide a link for cyclists between Kurri Kurri, Tarro, Minmi and Shortland that would enable them to undertake journeys without having to ride on the Pacific Motorway, Hunter Expressway or New England Highway.

It would provide a great active transport choice for locals and visitors, passing through old railway tunnels and over bridges, amongst wildlife habitats and linking to Hunter Wetlands Centre.

It would also open up the Western section of the Hunter Wetlands National Park to the public and provide opportunities in the key growth areas of transport, tourism, recreation, heritage, and economic and social development.

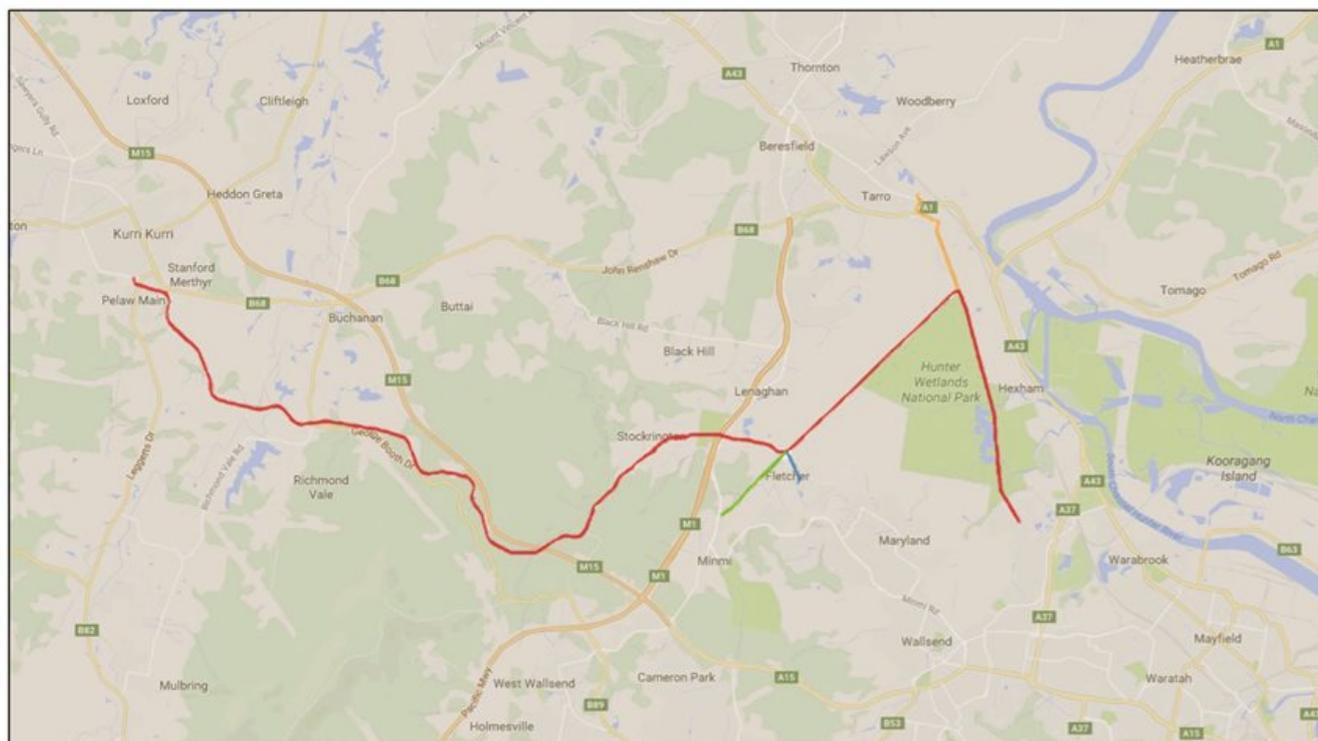
The proposal is being put forward by Cessnock, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils, with funding contributions from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Donaldson Conservation Trust, and project management through City Of Newcastle.

Most of the project requires an internal approvals process known as a review of environmental factors (REF). The section that travels through the Hunter Wetlands National Park requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) which is assessed by the Department of Planning and Environment, due to environmental sensitivities in that location.

Completion of the environmental assessment and concept design of the trail will be used to position Council, and its partner councils, to secure future funding for detailed investigation, design and construction.

Proposed Route:

The following image shows the concept design for the location of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail.



- PATH01
- PATH02
- PATH03
- PATH04

1:144,448
0 1 2 4 mi
0 1.25 2.5 5 km
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey.

Trail Heads:

The Richmond Vale Rail Trail proposed start/end points:

- Shortland** along King Street starting at Mort Lane near Akuna Avenue and heading north.
- Tarro** behind Anderson Avenue at the south-east end of Tarro Park near the Tarro Interchange.
- Fletcher** at the north-west corner of Kural Crescent.
- Minmi** behind the northern end of the McInnes Street cul-de-sac east of Woodford Street.
- Kurri Kurri** south of the Allworth Street and Mulbring Street intersection. It will then travel along the length of Pokolbin Street on the northern side.

Project Staging:

To progress the design and the relevant environmental approvals, the project has been divided into two sections: Shortland to Tarro and Hexham to Kurri Kurri. The staging of each section is slightly different.

Section 1: Shortland to Tarro

The stages for Shortland to Tarro are as follows:

Stage 1: Prepare concept design

Stage 2: Complete detailed design and prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) supported by the required environmental investigations.

Stage 3: Submit the design and EIS to the Department of Planning and Environment.

Stage 4: Public exhibition of EIS and acceptance of public submissions (minimum 30 days)

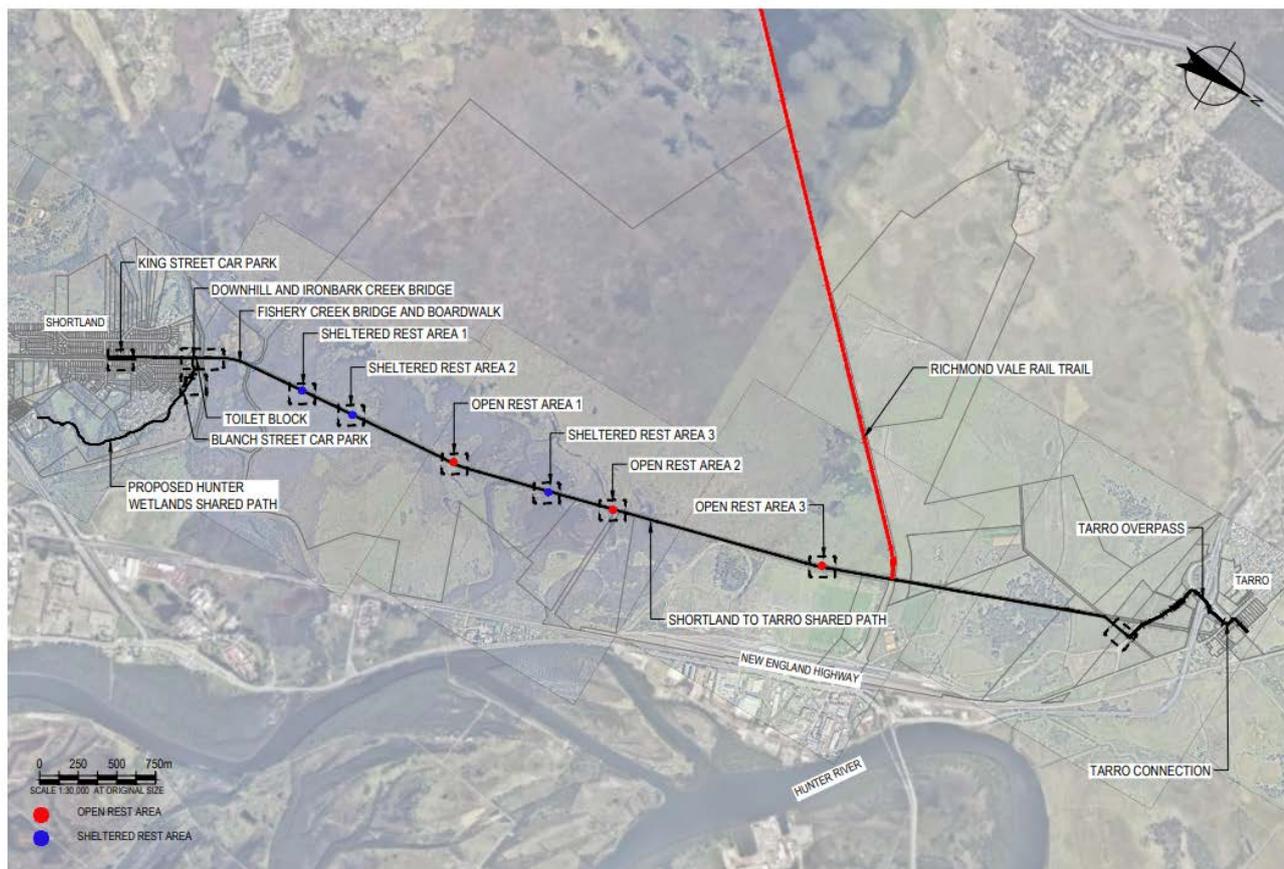
Stage 5: Review submissions and prepare submissions report

Stage 6: Determination by the Department

Stage 7: Design review

Stage 8: Construction

Stage 2 will be completed in the near future. Documentation is complete and is being reviewed by Cessnock, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils.



Shortland to Tarro

Shortland to Tarro detailed design and EIS

The detailed design has progressed and is complete for the majority of this section. Crossing the New England Highway is the major portion of design outstanding. The field work, investigations and report writing for the EIS is complete and is currently being reviewed. City of Newcastle expects to release these documents for public exhibition in the second half of 2018.

Originally, the path started at the intersection of King Street and Mort Street in Shortland, moving north west along King Street, going down the hill at the end of King Street to enter the wetlands via a bridge across Ironbark Creek. The design has been revised to include universal access in Blanch Street. The path from the Blanch Street car park is for pedestrian and disabled use only, it gives the pedestrian the choice of entering the Shortland Wetlands Centre or

continuing along the path to join the main Shortland to Tarro shared path.



Blanch Street connection & Car park

The following concept image shows the proposed pedestrian approach to Ironbark Creek with segregated path for cyclists and pedestrians.



Section 2: Hexham to Kurri Kurri

The stages for Hexham to Kurri Kurri are as follows:

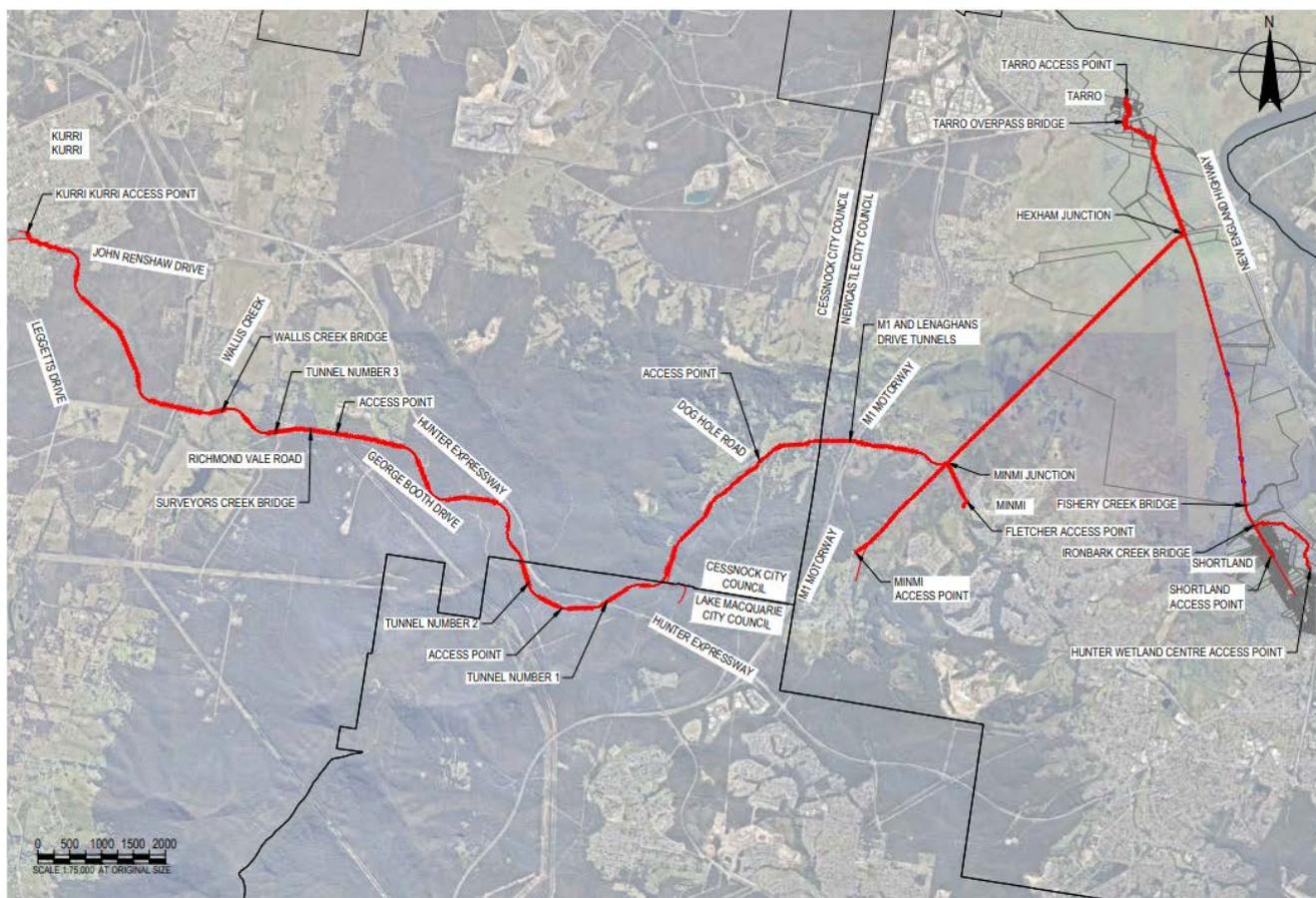
Stage 1: Prepare concept design and prepare the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) supported by the required environmental investigations.

Stage 2: Assessment of the design and REF by Cessnock and Lake Macquarie councils.

Stage 3: Detailed design phase

Stage 4: Construction

Stage 1 will be completed in the near future. Documentation is complete and is being reviewed by Cessnock, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils.



Hexham to Kurri Kurri

Hexham to Kurri Kurri concept design and REF

The concept design has progressed and is complete for the majority of this section. The access point at Dog Hole Road, a road crossing and crossing Wallis and Surveyors creeks are the outstanding design issues.

There is a significant overlap between the documentation for the REF and the EIS.

The field work, investigations and report writing for the EIS is complete and is currently being reviewed.