



8th October 2015

I write to you regarding a recent (07/10/2015) discussion with engineering works team leader Tony Webb. I met Tony as he was marking out the pathway along Main St, from Bullwinkle Park to the top of the hill (level with 21 Main St). Tony plans to carry out the works next week. This is the first any of the residents of Main Street had heard of this action.

In consultation with a number of other Main St. Residents, we would request an opportunity to discuss existing issues which will be exacerbated by this pathway construction.

Local residents acknowledge the need for safe road and pedestrian access, however appropriate consideration should be given to existing real risks and problems.

Issues for consideration include

1. Water drainage/ runoff

- The north-eastern (NE) side of the above mentioned section of Main St only has curb and guttering on the lower half of the road (from 12 Main St- 2 Main St). Even moderate rainfall results in runoff towards the police paddock, directly causing damage and flooding through our house (12 Main St).
- At the bottom of the hill on the NE side, 2 Main St experiences flooding into their house from over burdened curb and guttering flooding down their driveway.
- The south-western (SW) side of the road has a pre-existing grassed ditch running parallel with the road. This form of drainage is woefully ineffective and in a state of disrepair. This causes extra runoff to cross the NE side, greatly exacerbating the afore mentioned flooding issues even in modest rainfall

2. Safety

- The majority of this section of Main St. is a narrow road, not permitting bidirectional traffic. When cars meet, one is forced off the road onto the grass/ proposed pathway.
- Due to the narrow road width people use the grass/ proposed pathway to park their cars so as not to block the already restricted roadway.
- There are a substantial number of bike/ skateboard/ scooter crashes regularly on the hill. We question whether the proposed pathway will increase the likelihood of more numerous and significant collisions due to a funnelling of pedestrian and bicycle traffic into this 2 meter wide pathway.

3. Maintaining aesthetics of the street

- The street is well regarded as an attractive street owing to its natural environment including well maintained leafy and grassed areas. This wide concrete pathway won't be in keeping with the feel of the street.
- There will be removal of established trees and extensive trimming.
- A large portion of the proposed area has been maintained by one resident in particular for over 30 years. He has established gardens, planted trees and mown the grass that is council owned land in front of the council paddock. This has certainly been much appreciated by us and, I'm sure, by all out enjoying a scenic walk. It doesn't seem fair or right that this can be so vastly transformed without fair consultation to local residents.
- The street is commonly used by families with young children as an enjoyable walk to Bullwinkle Park. It will be a shame for kids to no longer enjoy running down the hill on the grass.

11.2 Main Street Proposed Footpath Construction.DOC

I am one of the main pedestrian users of the street and local resident. I am a mother of 3 children and we walk this section at least twice a day for drop off and pick up at the Alstonville Primary School. I am also a jogger, as is my husband. I have never considered a pathway as a need for the street and I'm not convinced the need exists.

I believe the water drainage and safety issues could be resolved by widening the road to include a marked cycle lane and extending curb and guttering along the remaining section of the street. This would solve the issue whilst maintaining the aesthetics of the street.

I believe the existing issues need to be addressed first before adding a further 300m² of hard surface to this street.

Why must a beautiful street be turned into a Gold Coast styled concrete landscape?

Why must tax payers' money be spent on something for which there is no need?

Thank you for your time and considerations. I anticipate hearing from you in regards to this matter.



13/10/2015

To the General Manager
Ballina Shire Council
40 Cherry Street
BALLINA NSW 2478

**Complaint to Ballina Shire Council 13/10/2015
Council path construction in lower Main Street, Alstonville**

On 7th October 2015 we were first told that the Council proposed to construct a 2 metre wide shared foot/bicycle path in Main Street in front of our home. Council's actions have provoked protest, which we support, from residents on the street. There are several important issues we want council planning and engineering staff to consider before a final decision to construct the path is made.

Failure to consult and advise residents in a timely manner

All residents in the street we have talked to expressed disappointment with council staff. We experienced their inability to inform residents of the paving plans in advance; the brief visit of the works supervisor on 7/10 whose only intention was to tell us how the work would change our driveway and that work would start in one week; then for us to discover the next morning work was starting now, a week early, with no notice. We believe these shortcomings are regrettable and disrespectful to residents.

Street drainage problems not given priority

A far higher priority than footpath construction, in the minds of residents of lower Main Street, is the deteriorated street drainage on the western side.

In the recent heavy downpour the 4 homes on the east side of the street, Nos 6, 8, 10 and 12 were affected by stormwater. In all cases floodwater entered houses. In our case there was also extensive scouring of gravel bed paths around the house. It took days to repair. The lawns are still scarred.

Much of the water flooded across Main Street from the silted up gutter on its western side. Not only road runoff crosses the street; all the overland flow from blocks on the western side of lower Main Street contribute. The inlets and outlets to the pipes under the driveway crossings on the west side clearly show the extent to which the gutter invert has been raised by deposition of silt and turf growth.

All residents we talked to on lower Main Street feel the Council should repair and restore these grassed spoon drains to protect residents' houses before spending time and money providing a footpath.

Observed usage of the street.

Over the past 3 years I have observed that mostly pedestrians and local residents cars use the street. Many of the pedestrians are out walking with prams, small children and pets on leads. There is little vehicle traffic because this end of Main Street is a dead-end so there is no through traffic. Not many cars come to Bullwinkle Park. Bicycle traffic is a few school children and a few people riding for exercise and recreation. The bicycle traffic is light. The existing road and path layout copes easily with the usage

Higher speed bicycle traffic down the hill

All cyclists riding on Main Street between Bugden Avenue and Perry Street find they have to ride on the road (as they should) because of fencing and narrow paved paths each side. Cyclists stay on the bitumen street as they ride north toward the hill down to Bullwinkle Park. Residents are always on the watch for high-speed cyclists who coast down the hill towards the creek crossing.

If a new shared foot/cycle path is built, this minor conflict is going to get worse. There will be an increased risk of collision for the residents living on the footpath side of the road. Cyclists using a new cycleway will be crossing their driveways a few metres from the property boundary. There will still be some cyclists coming down the bitumen road to be avoided too.

Pedestrians on the shared path will be at risk from fast cyclists. Particularly those pedestrians distracted by small children or pets on leashes

Effect on the streetscape. Loss of amenity

We moved to this address 3 years ago. Having lived in the village and visiting it countless times, we considered lower Main Street one of the most attractive parts of the village. The aspect, the park, the quality and range of the homes and especially the streetscape are so appealing. We were delighted to be able to buy a home in the street when we

The proposed 2 metre wide concrete path will put a permanent, eye-drawing scar on the streetscape, destroying its visual integrity. At 2 metres wide, light coloured, straight and sharp edged, it will dominate and split the streetscape.

Many major street trees will have to be removed or have their canopies severely cut back, further reducing amenity.

Lack of landscape designer input into design

I know from the brief conversation that we had with the works supervisor that there was no input of a landscape architect in routing the path. He said he decided where the path was to go.

I find this disappointing, considering the effort past councils have made to professionally design streetscape upgrades in Ballina. I wonder why a heritage streetscape in Alstonville has not had the same careful consideration that Ballina appears to warrant.

I'm sure a landscape designer and planner could produce a design with far less impact on streetscape amenity

What type of path would best suit the community?

If council is determined to change Main Street between Perry Street and Bullwinkle Park, in our opinion the construction of a 1.2/1.3 metre wide footpath would be a much better solution than a 2 metre shared foot/cycle path because of:

- More than adequate for the pedestrian traffic
- Keeps the bicyclists on the road , where they already are as they pass the primary school and Catholic Church
- Reduced visual impact and less destruction of existing trees in the streetscape
- Reduced risk of collisions between residents cars and cyclists speeding down the hill
- Reduced risk of collisions between pedestrians (many with prams and pets on leads) and cyclists speeding down the hill
- Landscape architects should contribute to the plan to ensure the visual impact of the path is minimised
- Reduced cost of the path.

We trust you will receive this complaint and suggestions as a constructive contribution.