



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

CBD BUG

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Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan Review Feedback
Department of Infrastructure,
Local Government and Planning
Via email: SEQRegionalPlan@dilgp.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam

The follow comprises the Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) submission on *ShapingSEQ - Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan*.

As background on the Brisbane CBD BUG, we are a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 800 members, representing the interests of the very large number of residents who ride bicycles to, from and within the city of Brisbane. The Brisbane CBD BUG actively seeks policy decisions at all levels of government that support cycling. In particular CBD BUG seeks improved infrastructure, end-of trip facilities, integration of cycling with other transport modes and a cyclist-friendly regulatory environment.

In line with our normal approach this submission is confined to commenting on transport matters.

We welcome the approach that *ShapingSEQ* is “placing greater emphasis on public and active transport to move people around the region”. In this light the three strategies articulated on page 58 of the document to ensure “active transport is a favoured, practical option for a range of trips” are also viewed as appropriate.

Within this context it is then disappointing that the priority region-shaping infrastructure listed in Table 11 does not include any of the much talked about and long overdue additional green crossings of the Brisbane River required to enable more people to walk or ride bikes.

With 10,000 cyclists and pedestrians using the Goodwill Bridge every day such infrastructure has already proven to be “game changers” in terms of enabling thousands more people to ride bikes every day and reducing road congestion and pressure on public transport services.

The need for this infrastructure was pointed to when the Smart State Council provided its *Smart Cities: rethinking the city centre report* to the Queensland Government in 2007 - recommending that additional cyclist and pedestrian bridges be built spanning the river between Edward Street and Kangaroo Point, Kangaroo Point to New Farm and Teneriffe to Bulimba/Hawthorne. A new Toowong to West End green bridge was also indicated to be investigated in the Queensland Government’s draft long term transport plan - *Connecting SEQ 2031*. Still another new green river crossing is also needed in the western suburbs to connect River Hills and Bellbowrie, to address the more than 20 kilometres of riverfront between the Moggill Ferry and Centenary Bridge without any form of river crossing.

In terms of measuring the progress on increasing the usage of active transport more frequent measurement and reporting against targets is required. Five-yearly intervals are indicated in Table 23 on p133 of the *ShapingSEQ* document – but such an interval; is far too infrequent. Measurement on at least an annual basis would be more useful. Furthermore, data on cycling levels needs to be collected beyond Brisbane to reveal the level of active transport utilisation across SEQ.

Real progress on enabling increased usage of active transport needs strong support and equitable funding to meet targets. According to the *ShapingSEQ* document active transport's modal share decreased between 2004 to 2011, while car-based travel increased its share. Massive growth in cycling is needed immediately to meet *Connecting SEQ* cycling target of 11% by 2031.

At present, many cycling advocates see the relatively small amounts of funding directed annually towards cycling projects as the “crumbs that fall from the table” after the major part of each annual transport budget is put to the futile exercise of dealing with traffic congestion by expanding the road network. Instead, what is actually needed is for the active transport budget to be set based on x% of the overall transport budget in order to achieve an x% modal share target.

We can only reverse the trend of increasing car dependency by making people feel safe when cycling - "encouragement" has been shown not to work. Government agencies can hand out glossy brochures all they like, develop websites, offer coffee discounts along and free merchandise e.g. TravelSmart backpacks etc. – but only "enabling" will work. Actually meeting specified active transport targets requires major funding and a total 180 degree turnabout in approach.

Local governments own and control the majority of the road network in SEQ and without their co-operation the aspirations in *ShapingSEQ* for active transport will not be achieved. A carrot and stick approach is required to ensure local councils adhere to design guidelines like *Technical Note 128: Selection and Design of Cycle Tracks* and the provision of active transport infrastructure.

Finally, we would point out the inherent car-centric bias in the apparent concern expressed at page 13 of the *ShapingSEQ Background Paper 3: Connect* in relation to the need to reduce “general taxpayer subsidies for, public transport services”. In fact all transport modes are subsidised from general government funds, with private motor vehicle transport the most heavily subsidised transport mode of all. If there is to be any reductions in subsidies these should in the first instance be directed to reducing usage on the least sustainable mode of transport – being the private motor vehicle.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on *ShapingSEQ - Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan*.

Yours faithfully

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