A BRIDGE CONNECTING ST LUCIA TO WEST END

Making a connection

A river crossing bridge between St Lucia and West End is by no means a new idea. When the Dornoch Terrace Bridge was built in West End in 1941, it was part of a bigger plan to build a bridge from West End to the University. It was previously identified in the original Hennessy, Hennessy and Co plan in 1936. Since then, there have been numerous plans and strategies that have included this river crossing link, with some of the key initiatives listed below.

The idea surrounding a bridge connection between West End and St Lucia has been canvassed in numerous Brisbane City Council and State Government initiatives, and identified in previous University planning strategies.

A 21st Century Briztram Light Rail Network 1989 (State Government)
Premier Rob Borbidge released details of the preferred route for Brisbane’s 21st Century Briztram light rail network, which was to link Fortitude Valley, Newstead, West End, the city centre, South Bank, the Royal Brisbane Hospital, Roma Street, and the University of Queensland.

B Western Brisbane Transport Network Strategy 2009 (State Government)
Developed by State Government, this strategy proposed the Uni River Link, a high-quality pedestrian and cycle bridge that would provide an important connection from St Lucia to the CBD.

C River City Blueprint 2010 (BCC and State Government)
River City Blueprint was an overarching strategic plan for the inner 5km of Brisbane, prepared in partnership between the Brisbane City Council and the State Government.

D SEQ2031 Regional Transport Plan 2011 (State Government)
This plan identified the need for new bridges to be investigated throughout the city to provide more river crossings for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. The focus for the new infrastructure was on the Brisbane CBD, inner activity centres and other outer and specialty activity centres, including UQ.

E Brisbane River’s Edge Strategy 2013 (BCC)
The River’s Edge Strategy is Council’s plan to improve access and activity on and alongside the inner-city reaches of the Brisbane River, stretching from Hamilton and Bulimba to St Lucia and Yeronga. The strategy identified the potential for a new bridge from Boundary Street, West End to the campus.

F Brisbane City Plan 2014 (BCC)
The Bicycle Network planning overlay within Brisbane City Council’s City Plan 2014 identifies a future bridge connection between Orleigh Park and Guyatt Park. A bridge connection to St Lucia is shown to form part of the Primary Cycle Route network.

G SEQ Principal Cycle Network Plan 2016 (State Government)
The SEQ PCNP identifies a bridge between St Lucia at UQ and West End at Boundary Street as well as a route along Boundary Street.

H St Lucia Campus Draft Master Plan 2015 (UQ)
The Draft Master Plan identified a pedestrian and cycling bridge between Boundary Street and the campus, highlighting the investigation zone as per the River’s Edge Strategy.

I Key Directions Paper 2016 (UQ)
The Key Directions Paper was an initial site analysis and framework completed prior to beginning the master planning process. The paper identified two options for bridge alignment.
Benefiting the local community

A bridge between St Lucia and West End would deliver a number of benefits to local communities, the University and the city in general. Key benefits are listed below.

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE BRIDGE

The University of Queensland has identified active transport as one of its priorities for improving accessibility for staff, students and visitors to the St Lucia campus.

One way of achieving this is to encourage more environmentally sustainable behaviour by providing high quality walking and cycling infrastructure and supporting facilities to increase the attractiveness of active travel and reduce the reliance on cars.

The Draft Master Plan identified a pedestrian and cycling bridge between St Lucia and West End as part of a package of key transport initiatives. Although the Draft Master Plan suggested that the bridge be considered for future public transport, the current intent is that the bridge only caters for pedestrians and cyclists.

BENEFITS OF THE BRIDGE LINK

- Significantly enhances the connections between the University, the city centre and neighbouring suburbs.
- Connecting park to park will deliver more local amenity to both sides of the river.
- Existing high-use active transport routes would be connected, resulting in a greater shift to walking and cycling, and mitigation of traffic impacts within the St Lucia peninsula.
- Increased recreational activity for St Lucia residents, UQ students and staff, the greater Brisbane community and visitors to Brisbane.
- Enhanced connectivity to public transport, parks, markets and other local recreational or commercial facilities.
- Activation of streets and parklands in the vicinity of the bridge landing points, which will result in increased passive surveillance and safety, and create more vibrant precincts and open spaces.
- Provides an alternative route for pedestrians and cyclists.

99,200 trips to and from the campus on an average day

Public transport and active transport account for 63% of all trips
Considering the options

Two bridge alignments have been considered in the master planning process for the St Lucia campus. Both alignments are currently identified within Brisbane City Council planning documents.

Option 1 spans from Guyatt Park to Orleigh Park, and is identified within the Bicycle Network planning overlay in BCC City Plan 2014. Option 2 spans from Boundary Street to the St Lucia campus, adjacent to the playing fields. This option has been identified in the Council’s River’s Edge Strategy 2013.

**Pros**
- Fewer conflict points with motorised vehicles, and level grades on both sides of the river. A safer and more equitable walking and cycling environment for people of all ages and abilities.
- Connects two active parklands with good lighting, increased activity and passive surveillance.
- Direct links to a low-stress and existing cycling network.
- Provides opportunity for park and amenity upgrades.
- Located adjacent to existing high-frequency public transport.
- Aligns with the West End growth corridor;
- More attractive for riverside recreational uses on both sides of the river.

**Cons**
- Much wider part of the river and therefore more expensive to construct.
- Design challenges relating to grades and achieving required clearances above the boat channel.

**Pros**
- More cost-effective due to the shorter river span.
- Direct connection to UQ campus, increasing the walkable catchment.
- Proximity from the campus to the city centre.

**Cons**
- Steep grades near the bridge landing in West End will be challenging for some pedestrians and cyclists, particularly those with mobility constraints.
- Reduced activity during the evening and less surveillance.
- Lands within a low density residential area and will have a greater impact on local amenity.
- Limited connectivity to public transport.

**CRITICAL ISSUES FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF WORK**
- Improved understanding of Brisbane City Council’s future plans for Guyatt Park and Orleigh Park.
- Engagement with community and existing user groups to establish how Avalon Theatre Precinct work could improve their park experience.
- Engagement with West End community stakeholders.
- Further feasibility and funding investigations.
- Interface with Toowong and Brisbane Boys College rowing clubs current and future plans for their facilities.
What happens next?

The University acknowledges that further studies are required before settling on a final bridge location or design. A significant consultation process with key stakeholders and the St Lucia and West End communities would also be required.

The level of assessment completed as part of the master planning process is appropriate for a comparison of the bridge locations only.

Further detailed investigation and studies would be required to fully understand the strategic benefits, costs and impacts of a preferred bridge option.

These studies would address:

- Potential benefits for reducing the reliance on private vehicle use to/from the University of Queensland campus and the St Lucia residential area;
- Impact on current public transport services demand/use and efficient public transport network planning;
- Potential shift in the residential distribution of UQ students and staff as a result of a new bridge;
- Understanding local environmental impacts;
- Impacts on river use and activation;
- Funding sources likely to include contributions from various levels of government and UQ.

**DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIONS**

- Development of bridge options;
- Further technical and background research where required;
- Option testing with key stakeholders.

**CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING**

- Refine concept option and preferred bridge location;
- Prepare complementary transport strategies (walking, cycling, public transport and parking) to optimise the benefits;
- Assess connectivity with existing and potential future public transport networks;
- Stakeholder and community engagement on preferred option.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

- Discussions with Council and the State regarding design development, implementation process, consultation and funding;
- Statutory planning process for preferred option;
- Stakeholder and community communications.

**CONTACT US**

Tim Sweeney, Project Manager
E masterplan@pf.uq.edu.au
W uq.edu.au/about/st-lucia/masterplan

**TO PROVIDE COMMENT**

Complete an online survey or submission by Thursday 14 April 2017