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New options for Brisbane's transport future

The State Government has ruled out building a road bypass west of Brisbane.

But Acting Premier Paul Lucas today said it would continue to investigate a range of projects including new tunnels, new public transport options and new roads on preserved corridors as part of its Western Brisbane Transport Network Investigation.

Launching the next stage of the study with Minister for Transport John Mickel, Mr Lucas said the State Government had ruled out two surface road options for any western bypass because of low traffic volumes but would investigate a tunnel closer to the city as part of a long-term alternative.

Mr Lucas said while none of the projects had been committed to by the State Government and most would be long-term, it was important to talk to the community and begin proper planning as soon as possible.

“The State Government is planning improvements for 2026 and beyond and this is an important opportunity for communities to have their say about western Brisbane's transport future,” Mr Lucas said.

“The numbers for a western bypass simply do not stack up but we are actively looking at a range of options that will make a significant difference to traffic and public transport in South East Queensland in the future.

“Keeping Queensland moving is important to the State Government, which is why we're spending \$100 million a week on building and maintaining our roads, railways, busways and ports.

“That funding is delivering projects like the Gateway upgrade, the Tugun Bypass and the Inner Northern Busway.

“But if we're going to adequately deal with the extra 1000 people a week coming to South East Queensland, we need to look at options for the longer term.”

Major options in the study that would now be considered further include:

- A future tunnel from Toowong to Everton Park (between the Western Fwy and Stafford Rd),
- A future road link from Stafford to Aspley (Trouts Rd Corridor) that would connect with the Toowong to Everton Park tunnel,
- Upgrading Stafford Rd between Everton Park and Kedron, including constructing a tunnel for private vehicles while public transport priority would use Stafford Road, and

- Protecting road corridors already preserved and planning future road upgrades to service Samford Valley and Moggill.

"I want to make it clear that these are long-term options and will be subject to further analysis of traffic volumes, engineering and environmental considerations, costings and public consultation," Mr Lucas said.

"This investigation consolidates many studies done in the past which have identified transport corridors, some of which, including the 8km corridor between Gympie Road at Carseldine and Stafford Road at Everton Park; the 13km corridor from Ferny Grove to Samford; and 19km corridor between the Warrego Highway, North Tivoli and the Centenary Highway at Fig Tree Pocket, are already preserved."

"Connecting people to where they live, work, study and play is central to our options planning for western Brisbane. We are considering all types of transport options – walking, cycling, public transport, roads and freight," Mr Lucas said.

Mr Lucas said work already done by study consultants Connect West showed neither of the surface road western bypass options was viable because of low traffic volumes and constraints from the regional plan.

"Even in 20 years – with the expected growth it would only carry from as low as 5000 vehicles a day on one option to 25,000 vehicles on another.

"But given that's only a quarter of the number of vehicles using roads like the Ipswich Motorway and the Gateway every day, it's just not feasible."

"And in terms of vehicles using the road as an actual bypass – ie travelling its entire distance – the numbers range from as low as 1200 a day to a maximum of 6000 a day."

Mr Lucas said the State Government had also ruled out further study into a public transport tunnel link from Indooroopilly to Dutton Park given a full busway link from the city to the university would be complete by 2010, despite the option being canvassed in some newsletters.

Minister for Transport John Mickel asked for the public to help shape the vision for future transport in Brisbane's west.

"It is vital that local residents give feedback on the transport options being investigated during April and May. Public comment helps us to plan for the future and to determine the best combination of transport options for this area."

Mr Mickel said advertisements signalling the start of community consultation would begin late next week. These will include details of the transport options for western Brisbane under consideration, and where the public can find further information.

"Details of the options will also be available online, and I encourage everyone, but particularly residents of western Brisbane, to give us your feedback," Mr Mickel said.

The public consultation ends on May 31, 2008, for more details visit www.wbtnti.net.au or phone the Western Brisbane Transport Network Investigation hotline on 1800 636 896.

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