

## Cycling for the Environment, for Health, for Pleasure

### 30 Year Plan Update, 2016

Submission of the Bicycle Institute of South Australia

The Bicycle Institute of South Australia is a cyclist advocacy group that has existed since 1974. Originally formed as the Cyclist Protection Association, we exist to explain to governments the need to create good cycling conditions and to oppose measures that will make conditions more dangerous.

Cycling has the potential to significantly advance the seven strategic priorities of South Australia's Strategic Plan. The Planning Strategy for South Australia is the main implement by which the Strategic Plan is realised, and thus has a critical role in allowing cycling to achieve its potential. In this regard, we find the proposed 30 Year Plan Update somewhat underwhelming.

The Bicycle Institute notes that despite the Government's zoning of more land on the urban fringe to allow more urban sprawl, market forces have preferred to develop in the city and inner suburbs as well as fringe developments at a higher density than was planned. This was mentioned in the recent Lord Mayor's Bikeways Summit as being a global trend governments can accept or fight against, but which will occur anyway. We are therefore glad to note that the draft Update accepts this reality, maintaining the 2010 population targets for the inner metropolitan area despite expected lower population growth overall. However, the implications for transport seem to have been overlooked or misunderstood.

Firstly, a mathematical point: as the inner, middle and outer metro areas have different mode shares, differential population levels and increases in those levels means that a 25% increase in mode share in each area won't give you a 25% mode share for metropolitan Adelaide overall. Indeed, if, for example the inner metro has a population and population growth that's higher than the outer, and also a mode share that's higher, a 25% increase in mode share for metropolitan Adelaide implies that the mode share for active travel would have to decrease in the middle or outer areas – which we hope isn't your target.

On a related point, the predicted inner metro population growth would result in traffic conditions best characterised as intolerable under either a mode-share-as-usual approach or the Plan's target to "increase the share of work trips made by active transport modes by 25% by 2045". This is because the traffic levels on arterial roads in the inner suburbs are already so close to capacity that a small increase in the absolute amount of car traffic will push traffic into an area where traffic flow becomes unstable. So if even a minority of the predicted increase in population travels by car, and there is no reduction in car travel from the existing population, the result would be high variability in travel times, high likelihood of unstable traffic flow and any disruptions to traffic producing major impacts. (In unstable flow conditions, disruptions propagate through traffic in a similar way to a shock wave).

There are few locations within the inner area where road capacity could be increased, and where this is achievable, it is in direct opposition to creating more pleasant, walkable neighbourhoods that encourage active travel – hence leading to a feedback loop exacerbating poor traffic conditions.

We are therefore disappointed that the target for active travel for the inner suburbs is not more ambitious.

Here, the levels of cycling are already higher than for metropolitan Adelaide, for example Norwood Payneham St Peters had 3.5% and 6.6% of its residents cycling and walking to work respectively. A 25% increase in modal share would see these numbers rise to 4.4% and 8.2% - still very modest levels.

The 30 Year Plan chooses to include public transport as part of “active travel”, which results in a slightly more significant 6% increase in the share of commuting that is not by car for the inner metro area. The share of those travelling by car will presumably drop by about the same amount, but with 25% more people living in the area, traffic will be much worse than it is now, especially as most of the so-called active travellers will be in buses and trams and caught in traffic and as those in the middle and outer areas also use inner suburban roads to move into and around the city centre.

In fact, it is likely that as traffic conditions worsen, proposals to reduce road capacity will become politically more fraught and priority for buses and trams will become more expensive and difficult to achieve (just look at the grumbling over the O-Bahn project). Without such priority, commuters will probably find the inconveniences of using public transport on a par with driving.

Overall, the roads will become more full of cars, and the hospitals and morgues of the metro area as a whole more full of old and not-so-old people due to obesity-related illnesses.

We call for much higher targets, and for these to be more realistically set. For example, a 1997 survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>1</sup> found the following results for distances commuters travelled by motor vehicle in the Adelaide Statistical Division:

<b>Trip Distance</b>	<b>% of Trips</b>
<1-3km	22
3-5km	13
5-10km	26
>10km	39
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

While this information is now dated (no more current information is available), at the time some 60% of trips in the Adelaide Statistical Division were of distances that could easily be cycled, and over a fifth a distance that could be walked. While not all of these trips would lend themselves to walking or cycling, active travel targets phrased in terms of trips of less than 1km, 3km or 5km would be politically easier to commit to, and provide some degree of reality check. It is difficult to assess how feasible a “25% increase in active travel to work” really is; “active travel is used for 25% of commuter trips of less than 5km” is much easier to assess and harder to consider as being unreasonable.

For commuting, this information could be derived from cross-tabs of journey to work data at relatively low cost, though at least one repeat of the 1997 exercise would be valuable information for professionals working in transport and land use planning<sup>2</sup>.

It is also not easy to identify contrarian effects from the active travel target adopted. In particular, the proposed active travel target risks focusing implementation efforts only on commuter travel. However,

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<sup>1</sup> *Travel to place of work and education: Adelaide Statistical Division*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 9201.4, October 1997

<sup>2</sup> This would similarly be the case for a study into how much of the city’s traffic is caused by people cruising for free or low-cost on-street parking, which has been found to account for up to 30% in congested city environments (such as Gouger Street on Friday evening) and where the congestion is then used as a reason to not provide bicycle facilities when it could best be managed by parking controls.

the amount of traffic related to the journey to work compared to other trip purposes has been decreasing. Already, clearway times are being lengthened as traffic is less dominated by a commuter peak, and traffic around commercial/ recreational destinations (including shopping centres) is approaching similar levels in some out-of-hours and weekend periods as in weekday peaks. As the baby boomers retire and their travel patterns cease to be dominated by commuting, more of their travel will be for non-commuter reasons and an active travel target for this demographic should focus on utility and recreational trips.

Nor does the target focus on the benefits that individual members of the community would see from achieving the target, much less explain why this particular target has been chosen. For example, the difference in traffic levels between school times and non-school times is only five percent. An active travel target phrased around reducing traffic levels to those experienced out of school times would have a greater visceral impact than a nominal increase in something most people can't point to. (This example also highlights the impact of car-based travel to schools – again, not captured in an active travel target based on commuter trips.)

Instead, the fine words about walkable suburbs and a nominal value per kilometre for cycling are welcome, but fail to make the target relevant, urgent or compelling.

Further, there is no implementation plan associated with the 30 Year Plan target. This is a significant omission when there are forces beyond the planning system that will undermine walking, cycling and public transport goals while pursuing other priorities. Examples are the Education Department's consolidation of schools and DPTI's road "improvements" that are designed to make driving more convenient – and in the process further intimidate cyclists and discourage cycling on our roads.

It appears that even the Planning Minister is a force undermining the targets of the 30 Year Plan. Despite the Plan's target of increasing the amount of cycling in the inner metropolitan area, Minister Rau is currently sponsoring a DPA to allow a reduction in the amount of bicycle parking required of developments.

With forces such as these arraigned against the 30 Year Plan, perhaps it is no wonder that the targets are so modest!

In summary, as it stands, the Bicycle Institute sees the 30 Year Plan update as being a continuation of the state of land use planning in relation to active travel – progressive in name, mouthing the motherhood statements of a bureaucracy that understands the imperatives, and bound by the inertia of business-as-usual to be a mundane exercise that achieves less than it promises and does so despite, rather than because of, the influence of the Department of Planning.

We would very much appreciate it if you were to take our comments on board and prove us entirely wrong.

Yours sincerely,



Fay Patterson  
Chair, Bicycle Institute of South Australia  
21 October 2016.

PS We are pleased to see the planned reduction in the requirements for car parking. Indeed any minimum levels of car parking run counter to the Plan's goals for more active transport and liveable communities. As you have long known.