



The Future of Montague Road

How will we move in an ever-crowded Kurilpa?

April 2019

Kurilpa Futures is a local community group, contributing a vision for sustainable and liveable development in the South Brisbane, West End and Highgate Hill neighbourhoods that make up the Kurilpa Peninsula.

Our approach to Kurilpa is to develop a peninsula-wide, strategic vision that puts residents first ahead of external, commercial and political interests.

Our vision for Kurilpa is a community of well-connected and diverse neighbourhoods – with the aim of becoming **Australia's Most Walkable and Rideable Community**. A community where active transport modes dominate a safer (and slower) public realm. Where a network of tree-lined boulevards and public green spaces, not only cool our urban landscape, but foster walking and riding in our increasingly tropical climate. We see a Kurilpa with diverse land uses, providing local amenity, services and employment opportunities to those living within and around our community and where development is governed by a set of strategic, integrated planning principles and policy.

Some of our campaign priorities include:

- Boundary Street, protecting independence and diversity in our high street
- Planning and Development, including our calls for integrated planning solutions
- Greening and Open Space
- Pedestrian Comfort and Safety

Some key documents produced by Kurilpa Futures include:

- [The Green Space Strategy](#) for Kurilpa – which identifies Montague Road as a Travel-Way Boulevard.
- [Montague Road Village Green](#) proposal
- [Toward an Integrated Planning Strategy](#) for the Kurilpa Peninsula
- Many more examples of what we do can be found on our website, kurilpafutures.org

The Kurilpa Context

Faced with sustained urban development and population growth, the Kurilpa Peninsula has experienced rapid change in recent years. This change is driving heavy losses in land use diversity, with small scale manufacturing, retail and other industries being replaced by a monoculture of high-density residential development. Population increases are outpacing infrastructure and service delivery, while a lack of planning regulation continues to facilitate the approval of large-scale development, without adequate contribution to local infrastructure.

As outlined in our [previous document](#), the South Brisbane Riverside Neighbourhood Plan (SBRNP) is not capable of providing the planning framework required to support the needs of the Kurilpa Peninsula, as our neighbourhoods become increasingly crowded.

Population Projections – Inner Brisbane to 2041

	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Brisbane Inner						
Brisbane City	11,036	11,889	14,466	16,930	18,884	20,826
Fortitude Valley	7,622	10,700	13,746	16,188	18,208	20,070
Highgate Hill	6,705	6,934	7,071	7,262	7,460	7,670
Kangaroo Point	8,847	10,258	11,206	11,774	12,889	14,039
New Farm	13,578	13,874	14,017	14,186	14,318	14,558
South Brisbane	7,777	13,729	18,933	24,797	28,877	31,127
Spring Hill	6,468	7,530	8,831	9,767	10,645	11,874
West End	10,211	13,590	17,227	21,432	24,650	28,345

Source: Queensland Government population projections, 2018 edition; Australian Bureau of Statistics

Montague Road – A Vision for Sustainable Growth

The primary question that needs to be asked, with regard to the future of the Kurilpa community is;

What role will the private motor vehicle continue to play in the planning of our transport network?

Before answering this question, there are some key considerations that need to be addressed:

1. **We live on a peninsula.** Geographically, there is very little capacity to sustain our current transport behaviour, as our community increases over the medium term by around 40,000.
2. **Our climate is changing.** The 2018-19 summer is just another example in a long line of evidence that suggests our environment will remain hotter for longer. We need strategies to cool our urban landscape, while reducing carbon emissions and changing our behaviour around how we move in and around our community. Additionally, increased pollution and air-quality impacts affect the quality of life for residents living along Montague Road. How do we create cleaner cities and neighbourhoods, built around environmentally responsible vehicles?
3. **Global exemplars.** We need to look far and wide to investigate better transport solutions for our community. Best Practice examples of integrated transport networks, active transport and people-first solutions can be seen from the separated bike lanes of Copenhagen, to the low-cost Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) systems of South America, or inner-city congestion charging, seen in cities like Singapore.
4. **An active community is a healthy community.** There is growing evidence that the effects of our sedentary, convenience-fuelled contemporary lifestyles are contributing to lower rates of physical activity and a decrease in health and well-being. Fostering active transport solutions can have far wider benefits than simply reducing our reliance on cars.
5. **New Bridge or Tunnel Connections.** Should new bridge or tunnel access be considered for the Kurilpa Peninsula and should motor vehicles (public or private) be permitted to use new access points? How do we find the right balance between connecting communities and protecting local character?

There is no doubt that Montague Road is an important part of Kurilpa's local road network. Servicing the rapidly growing 'West of Montague' neighbourhood, this road presently sees heavy use by private motor vehicles, increasingly sustained outside of the traditional peak periods. Brisbane City Council [data](#) supporting the recent intersection upgrade at Montague Road and Vulture Street, states the intersection was seeing 13,000 vehicle movements per day, prior to June 2018.

The corridor also supports major public transport services, including the *Blue* CityGlider which is Brisbane's second highest patronised bus service (*Brisbane Time, 18 June 2018*), with 2.8 million passenger trips annually. The 192 bus service to The University of Queensland also uses Montague Rd.

Allowing Montague Road's existing traffic demand to grow at pace with development and population increase is not only unsustainable, but simply unachievable.

Density on a Scale Not Yet Seen in Brisbane

With a current population of between 17,000 and 22,000 (see above table), the area surrounding the Montague Road corridor is experiencing sustained development pressure. This trend is not expected to decrease, with a recent [study](#) of dwelling approvals in the area showing that as many as 8,000 approved dwellings in the South Brisbane and West End statistical areas are not yet constructed. This approved development alone has the potential to raise the population along the Montague Road corridor by 50%.

At 3.9 km², the South Brisbane (2.0 km²) and West End (1.9 km²) statistical areas had a 2016 population density of approximately 4,600 persons / km². This is forecast to double to over 9,200 persons / km² by 2026 and further increase above 13,700 persons / km² by 2036.

These are population density figures that would be more commonly found in cities such as [Tokyo](#), or [Beijing](#).

With this data in mind, it is clear that the future for Montague Road needs to be far more considered than simply adding a bike lane or pedestrian crossing.

A Case for Light Rail

Montague Road neighbourhoods are rapidly approaching the density required to support a light rail or other high-capacity transit system, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or underground [metro-style](#) railway system.

A 2015 [study](#) by Canberra Urban and Regional Futures and the University of Canberra, investigated the viability of Light Rail in mid-sized cities, of around 500,000 inhabitants, showing such systems can be highly beneficial. Although Brisbane's uniquely broad municipal boundary supports far greater number of inhabitants, the inner-city neighbourhoods of Brisbane are of a similar size to those cited in the study. Coupled with population increases, the case for a viable, small-scale light rail system would be easily supported.

Implementation of such a system could initially service Montague Rd, before expanding to provide a loop through West End's high-street (Boundary Street) and along Melbourne St, connecting to the broader network adjacent to the existing transport hub at the Cultural Centre and South Brisbane railway station.

Moving Forward - Key Recommendations

For far too long Montague Road has been put under increasing pressure from land-use changes and urban densification, without a true strategic plan. With consideration of the forecast population increase, existing limited greenspace in the surrounding neighbourhood, Brisbane's tropical climate and allowing for future liveability, Kurilpa Futures proposes the following Key Recommendations for the future planning of Montague Road:

1. Active Transport Should Be the Primary Focus for Montague Road

The geographic constraints of the Kurilpa Peninsula coupled with anticipated population increases make the continued reliance on private motor vehicle use unfeasible. Providing infrastructure suited to pedestrians, cyclists and other **active** road users must be the primary focus. To reinforce this, all future developments, should include reductions in car parking requirements, to reduce the reliance of private vehicles in Kurilpa.

2. Speed Limit Reduction

The densification of the neighbourhoods surrounding Montague Road has created a heavily congested and increasingly dangerous road corridor. A **peninsula-wide** reduction of speed limits to 40km/h should be implemented to increase safety and foster a walkable, rideable community.

3. Transport Plan

Although the SBRNP has facilitated rapid growth along the Montague Road corridor, there has been no work undertaken to produce a Transport Plan, linked to land use planning. As part of a full review of the SBRNP, a Transport Plan for the Kurilpa Peninsula should be developed. Without a Transport Plan, including high-capacity public transport, invariably, pressure will increase to provide vehicular bridges to ease congestion.

4. Boulevard Corridor

Montague Road should be transformed into a living street, lined with large shade trees and vegetation. On-street car parking should be removed to allow the installation of mode-separated cycling lanes and broad, shaded footpaths. Regular seating, drinking fountains and pedestrian crossings should be installed to encourage pedestrian activity. Land use planning should encourage neighbouring properties to enhance the boulevard through the addition of publicly accessible greenspace and user-friendly amenities.

5. Feasibility Study for Light Rail or Other High-Capacity Public Transport

The short-medium term forecast population increases in the West End and South Brisbane neighbourhoods will achieve population densities capable of sustaining a Light Rail system. Investigation of system types and feasibility should be undertaken within the next term of government. The Terms of Reference for any study should not exclude other high-capacity transport systems, including BRT or underground metro-style railway.

6. Accurate Population Data and User Surveys

With such rapid growth, the 5-year census period is unable to provide up-to-date population data. Information pertaining to transport modal split, trip origin and destination surveys and development approval impacts on local neighbourhoods should be regularly collected on a 12-24 month basis.

7. Accurate Traffic Data to be Publicly Released

It is acknowledged that traffic analysis data has been collected by Brisbane City Council. However, such data is not publicly accessible. To aid public debate around Montague Road, all existing data should be released, with the opportunity to identify areas of data that require further analysis.