

Creating healthy and active communities

Have your say to make Queensland communities more walkable



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Queensland
Government

The problem

As a society, we have become physically inactive and heavily reliant on private motor vehicles. Physical inactivity and obesity are major contributors to chronic diseases (e.g. type II diabetes, coronary heart disease and many cancers). Daily physical activity has been proven to reduce the risk of contracting many of these diseases. Regular walking, which is accessible to almost everyone at little to no cost, can make a great contribution to the health and well-being of Queenslanders.



Queensland Health 2018

Many Queenslanders are living in established communities which are unwalkable with few footpaths, unconnected street layouts and few street trees to provide shade and shelter. Modern subdivisions with a lack of walking infrastructure continue to reinforce the dependency on private motor vehicles.

It is far more cost effective to provide the infrastructure upfront in new residential subdivisions than it is to retrofit existing suburbs. For example, building a concrete footpath in a new greenfield subdivision costs around \$70 per square metre while retrofitting existing urban areas is around \$140 per square metre or more depending on the local circumstances.





What does this mean for you?

Movement networks, including streets and pathways, are the building blocks of every residential neighbourhood. The layout of streets and pathways has a major influence on how residents move within, or to and from, their neighbourhoods.

Our planning system is about developing Queensland in ways that are good for communities. The design of our neighbourhoods can increase daily physical activity, by providing opportunities to make healthy and active choices. We can create healthier communities by making sure new residential neighbourhoods are comfortable and safe for walking and cycling and endowed with accessible and convenient parks and community spaces.

A step in the right direction

The Queensland Government has released a model code for neighbourhood design, which amongst other things encourages the development of healthier and more active communities across the state.

The model code is about getting the fundamentals of development right, to ensure Queenslanders are able to live in an environment that makes active choices easier.

It promotes a grid-like street layout, with fewer cul-de-sacs for better connectivity, footpaths with street trees for shading and better access to parks and public open space.

The model code, which is voluntary, provides clear direction to local government and developers on how to achieve well-designed residential developments and ensure communities grow in a sustainable and healthy way.

This first step allows councils to make amendments to their local planning schemes to adapt the provisions to suit their local context.



What's next

Rather than just relying on developers and councils to ensure new developments encourage healthier choices, the Queensland Government is proposing to make some elements of the model code mandatory. This will set a minimum standard for new development to advance healthy and active communities for all Queenslanders.

Walkable neighbourhoods cater for and respond to the needs of all members of our communities, from the moment they leave their front door. Walkable neighbourhoods will typically:

- be structured on grid-like street networks
- have minimal cul-de-sacs
- have footpaths complemented by street trees on both sides of most streets
- have street blocks no longer than 130 metres with longer blocks having mid-block pedestrian links
- have parks and open spaces within comfortable walking distance of every dwelling.



A good example of incorporating walkable elements



A bad example lacking all walkable elements



All these elements, not just a few, are essential in creating walkable neighbourhoods. This is why it is proposed to make these requirements mandatory.

The proposed mandatory elements of the code provide certainty for the community and development industry of the expectations for new developments—ones that prioritise walkability and support healthier, more active communities. These factors also play a pivotal role in shaping where people choose to live.

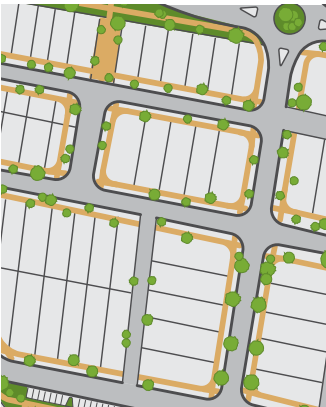
If made mandatory, these provisions will give the necessary support for walking to be considered first in the planning and development of new neighbourhoods. This will promote the benefits of walkable environments to the development industry and ensure local government has the authority to set stronger conditions to create walkable communities.

Proposed mandatory provisions

The table below identifies the proposed mandatory components of the current model code.



Illustrative example only. Not to scale.



1 **PROVISION**
The street network is based on a grid-like structure to encourage ease of movement and walkability

RATIONALE
Neighbourhoods should be designed to prioritise walking, cycling and access to public transport, parks and other uses. The way streets are designed can influence these outcomes. Therefore streets should be designed to be connected, easy to get around and logical to navigate.

PROPOSAL

- Street blocks are provided as a grid pattern.



2 **PROVISION**
Limit the use of cul-de-sac streets. Where cul-de-sac streets exist cul-de-sac heads allow through access for pedestrians and cyclists

RATIONALE
Design promotes the continuance of the grid layout and enables connections to existing and future developments, parks and open spaces.

PROPOSAL

- No more than 20 per cent of new allotments are to be accessed off cul-de-sacs.
- Cul-de-sacs enable future connections to adjoining land and development and provide for through pedestrian and cycle access.



3

PROVISION

Have footpaths complemented by street trees on both sides of most streets

RATIONALE

Movement networks, including streets and pathways, are the key building blocks of every residential neighbourhood. This infrastructure must facilitate walking.

With Queensland's climate we also need to provide shade and shelter.

PROPOSAL

- Minimum 1.5 metre wide footpaths on one side of every street (including cul-de-sacs).
- Minimum 1.5 metre wide footpaths on both sides of:
 - main streets (connector or collector streets)
 - every street within 800 metres distance of a school (e.g. 10 minute walk)
 - every street within 400 metres distance of a park (e.g. 5 minute walk)
 - every street within 200 metres distance of local shops /services/ facilities (e.g. 2 minute walk)
 - every street where the net residential density is greater than 20 dwellings/hectare
- Street trees provided in association with footpaths:
 - one tree per lot where allotment frontage is less than 15 metres
 - two trees per lot where allotment frontage is between 15-25 metres
 - on lot frontages greater than 25 metres—trees to be spaced so that canopies interlock at maturity
 - for footpaths not associated with residential frontages—trees to be spaced so that canopies interlock at maturity.



4

PROVISION

Have blocks no longer than 130 metres with longer blocks having mid-block pedestrian links

RATIONALE

Large blocks of land (e.g. over 130 metres) can be a barrier to street connectivity which make places harder to move around.

Provide safe, comfortable and convenient walking environments.

PROPOSAL

- No street blocks are to be longer than 200 metres.
- Any block greater than 130 metres shall incorporate a mid-block pedestrian link.



5

PROVISION

Have parks and open spaces within comfortable walking distance of every dwelling

RATIONALE

Ensure neighbourhoods have open spaces that are sized, located and embellished to support the needs of their communities.

PROPOSAL

- Local recreation parks are provided at a maximum distance of 400 metres from the residents they serve (e.g. 5 minute walk).

Next steps



21 July 2019

- Model neighbourhood code released
- Consultation on proposed mandatory elements of the code for six weeks



1 September 2019

- Community consultation ends
- Queensland Government considers community feedback



October/November 2019

- Confirm results of consultation and proposed approach



We want to hear from you.

Have your say to make Queensland communities more walkable.

qld.gov.au/healthycommunities

1. Have you faced any challenges when trying to be more active in your area? If so, what?
2. What do you want to see in new neighbourhoods to encourage walkability and promote healthier lifestyles?
3. Do you agree with the proposed mandatory provisions?
4. Which of the provisions should be made mandatory? Some or all and why?
5. Are there other aspects in the model code that should also be made mandatory? Why?
6. Do you have any other examples or ideas that are not captured by the proposed mandatory provisions that would make a neighbourhood more walkable?

Find out how we're invested in planning for healthy and active communities at qld.gov.au/healthycommunities

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