

25 September 2020

Ms Melva Hobson  
President  
OSCAR  
PO Box 105  
COOLUM BEACH QLD 4573

Dear Ms Hobson

I refer to your letter of 4 September 2020 in relation to the community engagement process that is to be undertaken for the Sunshine Coast Mass Transit project.

Council is presently scoping the community engagement process for the Options Analysis phase of the mass transit project, based on the framework endorsed at the Special Meeting held on 27 August 2020.

At an appropriate point in time, Council will be seeking the views of a representative range of community, business and environment groups about how the engagement process for the Options Analysis phase of the business case process could proceed in the context of the key planning initiatives for the future of the Sunshine Coast. A number of organisations, including OSCAR, will be consulted as part of that process.

I would also like to respond to some of the inaccurate statements in your correspondence.

Firstly, I would like to point out that the Strategic Business Case produced by Council in July 2019 presents a mass transit system for the entire Sunshine Coast - not just the coastal corridor. That system incorporates the existing North Coast Rail Line from Beerwah to Nambour; a regional rail connection linking Beerwah to Caloundra, Kawana and Maroochydore; a local mass transit system along the coastal corridor; and a high frequency bus network connecting to other key destinations.

The Strategic Business Case tested the various elements of this system and concluded that the delivery of local mass transit between Maroochydore City Centre and the Sunshine Coast University Hospital is of the highest priority as a first stage in a broader solution. This part of the coastal corridor is already experiencing some of the most congested traffic conditions on the Sunshine Coast and has the greatest concentration of activities that would benefit from access to a high quality public transport network.

The business case process for the mass transit project is continuing to consider a range of potential mass transit technologies, including various bus-based alternatives, and is not biased towards light rail. At the present time, there are some promising advances being made in bus rapid transit (BRT) technologies, but as yet, none of these advanced BRT technologies have been approved for operation in Australia. The progress of BRT technologies will continue to be monitored and BRT will remain an option for consideration throughout the full business case process.

Should the business case process proceed to the Detailed Business Case phase and produce a positive outcome, the first stage of a Sunshine Coast Mass Transit system will become eligible for State and Commonwealth Government funding. At that time, Council will consider whether - and to what extent - it will offer to make any contribution to the capital cost of delivering the project. No such decision or commitment has yet been made by Council.

I note you have stated in your letter that “...*the Gold Coast City Council (GCCC) has been required to make a significant financial contribution to Stages 1 through 3*” of the Gold Coast Light Rail project. This claim has been brought to the attention of the Gold Coast City Council and rejected as incorrect. The advice received from representatives of the City of the Gold Coast is that that Council was never required to contribute to the capital costs of the existing stages of the project. I am advised the decision to contribute to the capital costs of the Gold Coast Light Rail project was made entirely by that Council on the basis that it was fundamental to the well-being of that City and the ability to reduce traffic congestion.

Finally, I note that your statement “*We also believe that the operation of the Gold Coast Light Rail requires on-going subsidisation for the GCCC*” (a comment which is also reflected on OSCAR’s website) is also erroneous. Representatives of the City of the Gold Coast have confirmed that that Council does not make any contribution to the operating costs of the Gold Coast Light Rail network. Further, it is our position that - as is the case with the City of the Gold Coast and the Gold Coast Light Rail - the operational cost of any Sunshine Coast Mass Transit system will not be subsidised by the Sunshine Coast Council.

If you have any further questions about the mass transit project, James Coutts, Program Director of Urban Growth would be pleased to assist and can be contacted on 5420 8095 or at [james.coutts@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:james.coutts@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**MAYOR MARK JAMIESON**

cc. All Councillors, Sunshine Coast Council  
Warren Bunker, Acting Chief Executive Officer