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Cr Mark Jamieson, Mayor of Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC)
Mr Warren Bunker, A/CEO SCRC

cc Councillors Divisions 1-10 SCRC

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Dear Mayor Jamieson, Mr Bunker and SCRC Councillors

RE: Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Community Engagement Framework

OSCAR welcomes the decision at the 20 August 2020 Ordinary Meeting of the Council to support the Notice of Motion by Cr Joe Natoli by majority vote. We also welcome the unanimous vote at the 27 August 2020 Special Meeting to endorse the community engagement framework contained in Appendix A of the meeting agenda.

At our monthly meeting on Thursday 20 August members moved that *“That OSCAR write to SCRC Mayor, the A/CEO, and cc all Councillors, requesting details of the Planned Community Consultation and asking that we as an Organisation have an input into that Plan.*

We would like to remind Council that OSCAR has never opposed the Mass Transit Project or indeed light rail per se. We have also never advocated a “do nothing” option in relation to a mass transit solution for the region. We recognise the urgent need for a better public transport system on the coast but remain unconvinced a focus on the enterprise corridor will deliver that outcome for the majority of residents across the whole of the LGA.

We have consistently, however, made the following points in representations to the Council and the State Government:

- Our concern that there has, and continues to be, a focus on, and a preference for, light rail without an adequate analysis of alternative technologies. We believe light rail needs to be subject to a more rigorous analysis than has been the case so far.
- Our concern about the potential cost of light rail; even if the majority of funding was to come from the State and/or Federal Governments the experience of the Gold Coast Light Rail project is that the Gold Coast City Council (GCCC) has been required to make a significant financial contribution to Stages 1 through 3 (of the order of \$250 million plus based on publically available information). We also believe that the operation of the Gold Coast Light Rail requires on-going subsidisation for the GCCC.
- As with every major project undertaken by the SCRC, the need for extensive and genuine community consultation.

We acknowledge that the decision at the Special Meeting gives us hope that there will be appropriate consultation on this project even if it only came about because of the determination of Cr Natoli to ensure this happens at this stage of the project rather than later, if at all.

The community engagement framework endorsed at the 27 August meeting is a broad and aspirational document that we welcome but OSCAR would like to offer to assist the Council to turn this document into a specific plan for community engagement.

We note that the Council has several excellent strategic documents on community engagement including the policy itself, an Engagement Framework and Engagement Toolkit which could be applied to meaningful community consultation on this Project.

The Council has proven in the past that it can conduct meaningful community engagement. An excellent example was the Maroochy Groyne Field Renewal project which led to the formation of the Maroochy River Estuary Consultation Group (MRECG). The Council even received the 2019 Australian Coastal Award for Community Engagement for its Maroochy Groyne Field Renewal Project.

The Maroochy River Mouth Coastal Infrastructure Renewal Community Consultation Plan, Attachment 1 Maroochy River Estuary Community Consultation and Communication Strategy (Item 8.2.1, Ordinary Meeting, 20 April 2017) would provide a good model to adapt for the consultation intended for the Mass Transit Project in OSCAR's view.

We would recommend that the Council, as a first step, holds a workshop involving Councillors, Council staff, and business and community representatives to "flesh out" the detail of the community engagement framework intended for this project. The idea of such a workshop was first suggested to a representative of OSCAR by Cr Christian Dickson and we think it is a very worthy proposition.

OSCAR would be very willing to take part in such a workshop and would seek to be involved in any on-going consultation around this project.

The Council must be aware that no matter how robust the final Detailed Business Case is, and how persuasive our collective advocacy is, it will be difficult to get funding for any proposed solution to the region's mass transport needs given the political reality that applies on the Sunshine Coast (ie one political party holding all the state and federal seats affords us with very limited political leverage to win the funds the region deserves).

Therefore, it is essential that the Council brings the community with it and can clearly demonstrate to the State that it has engaged the community in effective consultation when it presents its Detailed Business Case to stakeholders. Without such a robust consultative process being an integral component of the business case development a satisfactory outcome will be doomed to failure. This is most certainly not a conclusion OSCAR wishes to see.

Yours sincerely



Melva Hobson PSM
President, OSCAR