

3 June 2021

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By email: masstransitsc@gmail.com

Dear Rachael, Melva and Tracey

Thank you for your letter of 25 May 2021 to Emma Thomas, the Chief Executive Officer of Sunshine Coast Council, requesting answers to a range of questions about the mass transit project following the Active Interest Group Roundtable on 19 May 2021. Ms Thomas has referred your correspondence to myself to respond on her behalf.

- (1) *Is Density the underpinning driver in the whole Mass Transit Business Case process? If so, should that topic be considered initially as part of the Planning Scheme 2024 development and any decision concerning Mass Transit options analysis deferred until Council's urban land use planning proposals have been released for public comment?*

Enabling urban consolidation is not the driver of the mass transit business case process. The business case process is considering how to provide improved public transport for the Sunshine Coast in the form that will most effectively provide for the future growth of the region, focussing on the northern part of the urban corridor, which contains the region's greatest concentration of the population, jobs, facilities and services.

Given that a business case has to determine the extent to which any mass transit option has the ability to attract passengers, most of whom will come from or be heading to the areas around the stops or stations, the numbers of people living and working in those areas at the present time and over the decades ahead must be taken into account.

Accordingly, the consideration of future land use and development outcomes in the urban corridor from Maroochydore to Caloundra is a necessary part of the business case process but is not driving the process.

The current engagement process is therefore seeking the views of the community about how best to accommodate the 25,000 dwellings that the Queensland Government Statistician's Office projects will be needed in the urban corridor over the next 20 years by way of the land use scenarios contained in the survey.

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The community's views about the land use scenarios will inform the preparation of the new planning scheme.

- (2) *Is the first stage of 13.6 km along the urban corridor from Maroochydore to Birtinya the stage that will be most effective in addressing congestion issues? From all our community feedback and data we believe it won't be.*

The draft Options Analysis report presents an evaluation of the basis for Maroochydore to Sunshine Coast University Hospital being determined as the highest priority area for the provision of a mass transit system, in the *"Investment Staging Priorities"* chapter. This includes the outcomes of an analysis and an assessment of the potential for each of the priority areas to address traffic congestion.

If your groups have any data that could be taken into account in the analysis of the performance of various options, Council would be grateful to receive this data so it can be examined as a basis for informing the content of the final Options Analysis report.

- (3) *The multimodal corridor (CAMCOS) supported by a flexible green bus system feeding into it, is seen by many in the community as a preferred starting point because of the greater connectivity to the whole region it offers in the short term. During discussion around this topic, James Coutts asked a question about community knowledge of densification along this corridor. We ask council to clarify this comment. What are the densities proposed for various components of the CAMCOS?*

James was referring to the *North Coast Connect* proposal, which was the subject of a business case evaluated by Infrastructure Australia in December 2020. The aim of *North Coast Connect* was to reduce rail journey times between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast by providing a new rail track along the existing North Coast Line and a new rail corridor to connect coastal population centres including Maroochydore, Kawana and Caloundra.

In its Project Business Case Evaluation of *North Coast Connect*, Infrastructure Australia identified the service needs that would be addressed by the project including the future growth of the region and the realisation of urban growth and land use objectives, including infill opportunities identified in *ShapingSEQ*.

Infrastructure Australia also noted that *North Coast Connect* aligned with state plans and priorities such as *ShapingSEQ* by supporting growth through encouraging the development of housing diversity, connecting residents to employment nodes, integrating with the region's existing rail network and unlocking identified infill and urban growth fronts in the northern corridor.

- (4) *If there are other options preferred by the community such as 3 above, we believe these options should be included in the main options in the recommendations presented by council to the State Government.*

The final Options Analysis will recommend the options that have the ability to provide improved public transport for the Sunshine Coast in a form that will most effectively provide for the future growth of the region, focussing on the northern part of the urban

corridor, which contains the region's greatest concentration of the population, jobs, facilities and services.

Other options that may emerge with significant community support during the engagement process for the mass transit project will be subject to evaluation as part of the process of finalising the Options Analysis report.

In relation to the question asked by Rachel Birmingham about whether the options that Council takes to the State are going to be the top three most popular options from the community, I understand the direct response provided by James Coutts was that Council's intention is to understand how the community responds to the survey and that the engagement process is not a vote or a popularity contest because a business case has to put forward proposals that actually make sense.

In answer to a further question along the same lines, I understand James reiterated that the options included in the final Options Analysis report will reflect the community's views, but the report must present a suite of options that are able to deliver the service requirement.

The service requirement is to deliver improved public transport for the Sunshine Coast in a form that will most effectively provide for the future growth of the region, focussing on the northern part of the urban corridor, which contains the region's greatest concentration of the population, jobs, facilities and services.

I have responded separately to MTAG's request for advice about how the feedback received during the current engagement process for the mass transit project will be incorporated in the final Options Analysis report.

Thank you again for contacting Council about this matter. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me further.

Yours sincerely



Warren Bunker
GROUP EXECUTIVE LIVEABILITY AND NATURAL ASSETS