



Caloundra Residents Association

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Sunshine Coast Regional Council

Maroochydore QLD

18 June 2021

References:

A. Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Draft Options Analysis

<https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/sunshine-coast-mass-transit-how-will-you-make-your-way>

B. Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Draft Options Analysis - Survey

https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/sunshine-coast-mass-transit-how-will-you-make-your-way/survey_tools/mass-transit-survey

Sunshine Coast Council – Mass Transit Project

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am Graeme Smith the Secretary / Treasurer of the Caloundra Residents Association. On behalf of our Association, I offer the following comments about Sunshine Coast Council Mass Transit Project as detailed in at References A and B.

Our initial remarks reflect appreciation of the public consultation, including a survey, and applaud in general the Sunshine Coast Council (SSC) endeavours to address major transport issues, those that have emerged and those that will emerge as population increases, as forecast.

A comment about Transport in general on the Sunshine Coast and in other Australia areas that are suffering significant population growth, we build the houses, we build the Industrial areas then sometime later worry about the massive inefficiencies that the lack of an integrated transport system, without appropriate prior planning, injects into our way of life. While plans are great and the adage that Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance, in the case of the Sunshine Coast, while some reasonable long-term planning has occurred for the transport needs of the Sunshine Coast, the products of that planning have not yet caught up with our recent growth and, now more especially, predicted growth. Accordingly, we are now at a stage where most business centres are loaded with cars, trucks and buses with insufficient parking and inefficient road systems which lead to generally taking a long time to go not very far. There are many examples as we are sure the SCC is fully aware. While the current Road network is underdone in relation to the number of vehicles, the Public Transport system is near defunct.

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Mass Transit Project Comments

Our methodology for our Review of the 358 pages of Reference A, involved listing the topics we wish to make comment, they are as follows:

Route

Selection of appropriate vehicles

Demographics

Integration

Recent History

Timing

2032 Olympics

Route

There is little doubt about the requirement to provide an efficient (fast) public transport system along the near coast between Maroochydore and the fastest growing area on the Coast, Caloundra. Along the way, take links into the Kawana Industrial area and the Sunshine Coast Hospital at Birtinya. The Options Analysis looks at 'Urbanisation' to help decide the route for this transport corridor and has used that to help convince the public that it would be quite sound to increase urbanisation with high density areas along the proposed route using up to 8 floor buildings. In other words, create high density communities along the near coastal fringe for the population explosion the Sunshine Coast is expected to endure. While this urbanisation should help to support the proposed Mass Transit approach, the demographics provided in Ref A state that for every family there is an average of 1.9 cars. The number of seats on a train, tram or bus does not equate to the predicted number of cars that will be taken off the road. Those that live in that high density area will still need to get to work outside that area plus children and young adults will need to get to school and other educational facilities. Accordingly, there are many demographic issues that need to be assessed, investigated prior to making that prediction. There are many examples where insufficient demographic projections have been wrong in relation to public transport.

The route of the Mass Transit Corridor would probably help take folks to nearby work and close entertainment and restaurants but will not help in any way transiting to, other near locations e.g. The Hinterland or indeed the M1, the Airport. The urbanisation, or more accurately described high density population centres along some of the proposed route; would in some way help support the Mass Transit, however the theory contradicts the outcomes when the entire demographics are discussed. Moreover, if the Mass Transit project decreases the number of vehicles that could be carried on the current road network, the current transport situation would rapidly deteriorate creating unforgiveable inefficiencies. We need to look at Public Transport Integration as we will later in this summary.

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Accordingly, the Route needs to be reassessed using up-to-date, broad range of demographics in conjunction with an integrated approach to not only transport but urbanisation. There is the possibility that a lot of the 'new population' will not want or afford to live at the most expensive areas near or on the coast. Saying that, we understand the Ref A theory that the planned high-density housing in centres along the planned route would help to provide lower cost housing – there is little history to protect that theory.

Selection of appropriate vehicles

Ref A provides assessment and prefers fixed rail and or line and overhead power/battery power options. While these options provide a fixed path and would most likely be able to be time efficient, they are inflexible. Additionally, if the plan at Ref A, as it seems it would, take some of the current road or capacity from the current road network, would prove succinctly unsuccessful. Appropriate, more detailed demographic study is required to better understand that while we all might want less cars trucks and busses on our roads, with the proposed increase in population, no matter the public transport scenarios that could or might be installed, the demographics used in the analysis do not support a realistic situation for 2041. By then, we will have far more cars on the road than we do now, (population increase).

The Mass Transit vehicle then should look to be efficient with a mostly dedicated path, not affected by traffic lights, crossroads etc.

- The vehicle should be fast.
- Have dedicated stops, but only stop when required.
- Flexible in that the route could be changed without massive infrastructure costs, with the ability to transverse city streets, if necessary and if that makes sense.
- The vehicle should be powered by Hydrogen.

No matter the type of vehicle, train, tram, bus it should be powered by locally made hydrogen produced using locally sourced solar energy and we note that was dismissed as an option in Ref A. The massive investment in technology would pay off in many ways for future generations while protecting the environment.

Demographics

We have mentioned Demographics several times. Our review has determined that some of the demographic information has appeared to contradict areas in the Options Analysis. E.g., The number of seats on public transport used to take so many cars off the road, is superficial. Additionally, the assumptions about the number of cars that families have on average and how that number may be affected by both the high density living and integrated public transport is not clear. There seems little demographic analysis completed in relation to Schools, other education campuses, medical facilities, industrial areas, agricultural areas, tourist activities and attractions. The deductions in the Options Analysis could be fine if indeed we better understood the type of high-density housing and the integrated public transport (inclusive of a Mass Transit route

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between Maroochydhore and Caloundra) we do not have and is not planned, for some time later. The Options Analysis timeline does not detail anything regarding Integrated transport until post 2027 and more likely out to 2041. As mentioned previously, far more in-depth demographic investigation is required to support the current Plans at Ref A

Integration

Integration of the Sunshine Coast Transport is mentioned many times in the Options Analysis and we understand and applaud those integration plans. However, CAMCOS has been proposed now for 20 years or so. Several maps within the Options Analysis document depicts other integrated plans. The Options analysis provides a single timeline called Delivery Timeframes on Page 343. This diagram provides delivery of the Mass Transit Stage 1 – out to 2027 when the operations begin for the route from Maroochydhore to Kawana. No other timelines are mentioned, (or we could not locate them). To then look at the population growth mentioned in the Options Analysis and consider the timeline as currently depicted, there seems to be a realistic and quite massive gap in the capability of the Sunshine Coast transport system to manage that increase in population. In fact, the situation, if not addressed soon with positive intervention in relation to the transport integration timeline delivery, will have deleterious effects on Sunshine Coast liveability.

Noted in Ref A are plans to build; New Kawana Arterial Road and New Sunshine Coast Motorway connection South from Maroochydhore. These plans are also applauded and should be given extremely high priority.

Recent History

Recent Mass Transit Projects in Australia currently provide significant examples where the Plans for their Project approval, associated budgeting and finance have all missed planned outcomes. The current Options Analysis does not provide confidence that our Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Project would be any different. While there are 'estimates' in relation to costs, everchanging building and infrastructure safety, requisitioned property and environmental costs are extremely hard to estimate and, could as has been seen elsewhere, make 'current estimates' seem quite imprudent. The Business Case, when produced no doubt will have a significant Risk Analysis (we note the risk analysis in Ref A) that will address these and other issues in advance, to allow the public to better understand the costs and risks to those costs, of whatever is proposed in the Business Case for the Mass Transport Project.

Timing

The Delivery timeframe in Reference A is deficient in many ways. The Caloundra connection timing is not mentioned. There are no timeframes provided for other integrated/associated

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transport plans and does not allow us to determine whether the Integration plans (mentioned many times in Reference A), are applicable and or prudent to or with the Mass Transit Project. If we are to look at the projected increase in population and take a cold hard look at the current infrastructure that seemingly will not change until after 2027, the liveability of the Region must be questioned yet Camcos sits, waiting to happen.

2032 Olympics

While we understand that the 2032 Olympics, just 11 years away, was not mentioned in the Options Analysis. This event, if Brisbane is chosen which will be confirmed within the next months, should be considered as part of an integrated transport plan for the Sunshine Coast. There stands an opportunity to fast-track infrastructure if indeed we want the Sunshine Coast to be a component of delivery for any of the Games activities. This would open the opportunity for the Olympics organisation to use the Sunshine Coast for Olympics training and possible secondary competition.

One can easily imagine:

- a fast train service from Maroochydore to Beerwah via Kawana and Caloundra
- A Fast train service from the Sunshine Coast Airport to Nambour and Maroochydore
- an integrated Mass Transit system linked to the fast train service.
- Duplication of Nicklin Way (the new Kawana arterial)
- completed M1 connection via Bells Creek to Caloundra.
- Improved road connections to the Hinterland for Agriculture and Tourism
- duplication of the Sunshine Coast Motorway to Noosa via Coolumbia and
- We are not forgetting the Hydrogen generating facility using Sunshine Coast Solar Energy.

Summary

Route

Yes, there is a need for an efficient mass transit system between Maroochydore and Caloundra via Kawana and Birtinya. However, the Route needs to be reassessed following further analysis of the entire demographics for the area and possible population growth, possible vehicle increases and uses. Most importantly, following an updated Integrated transport plan and associated schedule, integrated urbanisation, the route must come with the flexibility to change at least parts of the routes it can travel without major infrastructure change requirements.

Selection of appropriate vehicles

This is probably the most difficult of questions given mass transit vehicle history and environmental issues. We must however look forward and take the best technological and environmental approach with the most efficient system that can serve economically for the duration. The use of Hydrogen as

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the means of fuel for the system should be mandatory with the production facility/capability built on the Sunshine Coast using solar energy.

Demographics

We found that while a range of demographics were used to support some assumptions, their use also contradicted other assumptions/deductions. We understand the use of accurate demography is paramount to present the most accurate assumptions. We recommend that more detailed, broader demographic use must be a component of the Options Analysis. The same ethic should be applied to, in the future, the Business Case to ensure the Public can support the plan by observation of complete and clear project assumptions.

Integration

The Options Analysis rightly mentions Integration many times. However, while it is great to have a plan for integration it is quite another matter to put it all in place in a timely and meaningful way. If we investigate the timing of any integration that is mentioned in Reference A then we are then left with nothing. There is no timeline around any of the Integration mentioned other than the Kawana Arterial. Accordingly, it is difficult to discuss an Integrated Transport plan. We consider that integration of the transport plan must be created with:

- a possible schedule of implementation for the entire Plan
- with detailed study of all the demographics and
- detailed risk analysis

This activity would be the foundations of a plan which is currently imperative and urgent. This could most likely lead to a different emphasis in relation to transport priorities.

Recent History

There is a need to reflect on recent Australian Mass Transit projects and some that are underway in Australia and overseas. We are aware that there has been some analysis of overseas projects and that information has made its way into Reference A. There are positive outcomes from all but there are also negatives and the project needs to ensure the negatives are listed to ensure a completed and appropriate risk analysis has been conducted and recorded.

Timing

While we have addressed delivery timing in Integration above, there is the need to reassess the current public transport system in and around the Sunshine Coast on an urgent basis. The reassessment and delivery of any projects cannot afford any delay as this will have grave effects on the liveability on the Sunshine Coast, in the near and long term.

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2032 Olympics

There is an opportunity, if Brisbane is selected as the location for 2032 Olympics, that our transport needs should not miss. This is the opportunity to reassess all our near- and long-term transport requirements and see what can fit into an integrated plan that can be delivered for that activity. This plan would also include a long-term integrated plan that while may not be able to be completed/delivered for the Olympics timeframe, could be integrated and delivered later to serve the ever-increasing population. We should not miss this opportunity.

Overall

As mentioned previously, we consider that the development of the Mass Transit Option Analysis is noteworthy and warranted however, more detail around demographics, delivery, technology and the Olympics is required prior to any Business case being developed. This activity could possibly lead to a different integrated model than what is now iterated in Reference A. Whatever the outcome of the current survey and draft Option Analysis, we need to move positively as soon as we can on delivery of an Integrated Transport Plan.

Because of the urgency required prior to the possible 2032 Olympic Games and to help cater for the rapid increase in population, so we do not become grid locked within the next 10 years especially around Caloundra, we recommend that a Sunshine Coast Integrated Transport Task Force be set up by the SCC, to include representatives from the associated State and Federal seats.

Please note:

Cars, community service vehicles and cargo movement/delivery will remain as flexible, door to door transport for the foreseeable future irrespective of what Public Transport is developed. Accordingly, the Task Force should be set up as soon as practical and fund the Task Force to develop, over a three-to-six-month period, three outcomes:

1. Integrated Transport overview for the Sunshine Coast with a timeframe that serves short term outcomes – to be delivered by 2032 and longer-term outcomes to be delivered by no later than 2050
2. In consideration of 1. above, liveability should be the primary driver with sufficient and appropriate evidence to support high density and medium density urbanisation clusters for any new developments that will be required for the doubling of the current population
3. The possible transport outcomes should involve the selection of vehicles (a range of vehicles is likely to be required) that are designed to use emerging technologies, for speed, passenger comfort, ease of use, ongoing system maintenance, operating power and affordable infrastructure requirements
4. The integration of public transport with the current and future road network is vital and while public transport, together with an integrated active transport system will drive what our communities will enjoy in the future. The same communities need to be serviced and

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allowances made for interconnection with transport modes external to the Sunshine Coast is just as vital.

5. driven by efficiency of both, the road user, (Cars and trucks etc) and Public Transport for without both we will not succeed.

Yours Sincerely

Graeme Smith

Secretary /Treasurer

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