

Subject **Mass Transit**
From Cr Mark Jamieson <Mark.Jamieson@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au>
To mail@oscar.org.au <mail@oscar.org.au>
Date 2021-10-20 03:53



19 October 2021

Ms Melva Hobson
President
Organisation of Sunshine Coast Association of Residents Incorporated
PO Box 105
COOLUM BEACH QLD 4573

Dear Melva

I refer to your letter of 15 October 2021 about the Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Options Analysis and related community engagement process. Your letter has only been brought to my attention yesterday (18 October).

In my view, the community engagement process for the Mass Transit Project was extensive and broad ranging and I am satisfied with the work of Council officers in reporting on the process and its outcomes.

Given my current schedule of commitments between now and the Special Meeting on 20 October 2021, I do not now have time to meet with you. However, I have considered your questions, made enquiries with Council officers and offer the responses below.

Question 1:

Why the submissions from 30 organisations (Appendix 1) were deemed to be "outside of these engagement activities" and appear only to be reflected in the revised OA in the form of summary dot points (pp 36-39)? Why were these submissions (with one exception) not published in full?

Answer:

I am advised that while the submissions summarised in Appendix 1 of the Engagement Report were received outside of the formal engagement activities undertaken by Council, the feedback provided in these submissions was considered as part of the finalisation of the Options Analysis.

Question 2:

Why the 1015 submissions (with names, addresses and signature of submitters) presented to Council by MTAG appear not to have been considered despite assurances from Council staff, verbally and in writing (from James Coutts), that all submissions, irrespective of their format, would be considered in the community consultation evaluation? Note: These are not pro-forma submissions and even if they were, they should not be ignored. Were you aware of these and have you sighted them?

Answer:

I am advised the MTAG feedback forms were reviewed by Council officers and the themes referenced in the engagement reporting. Although it was not possible to determine conclusively how many people completed both Council's survey and MTAG's feedback form, it appears that many completed both. An audit of the completed MTAG forms revealed duplicates.

The analysis of MTAG's submission is included in Appendix 1 of the Engagement Report.

Question 3:

Were there other submissions about which the community is not aware, that the Council has not accounted for/reported on?

Answer:

I am advised that Council officers have reported on all the submissions from organisations received outside of the formal engagement process.

Question 4:

Are you aware that there were 3859 signatories to 3 e-petitions to the State Government opposing light rail? Are you aware Minister Bailey's response to these petitions said in part: "SCC committed to undertaking a meaningful community engagement process as part of delivering the options analysis before more detailed investigations are undertaken during development of a detailed business case. ... I look forward to being updated by the SCC on the outcomes of the community consultation which will consider the community's feedback and the outcomes from the broader options analysis that will be followed by the development of a business case."?

Answer:

No.

Question 5:

Have you read the Sunshine Coast stories (Appendix 13, drawn from Q20 from the Council's Survey)?

Answer:

Yes.

Question 6:

Have you ever explained to your constituents the likely cost to ratepayers of the Council's contribution to the 5 preferred transport options and how this will be funded? Do you know what % contribution to capital the Council may be asked to contribute?

(The Gold Coast provides good evidence of the amount involved for each of its light rail stages and how their Transport levy increased dramatically to fund these.)

Answer:

As there is significant work required to be undertaken in the next phase – Detailed Business Case – prior to any decisions being made by other tiers of government to invest in delivering a mass transit solution for the Sunshine Coast, there is no basis on which to determine whether a capital contribution from Council would be required. Should such a proposition be made in the future, it would need to be properly considered at that time. At this point in time, neither Council nor the other tiers of government are at a point in the business case development process where a capital investment decision is being sought.

I am advised the Council of the City of the Gold Coast based its decisions on the contribution it would make to the cost of the various stages of the Gold Coast light rail when the overall cost of each stage was known.

Question 7:

Why has nothing substantial changed in the revised Options Analysis report - same five options, same route, and same timeframe – despite the community consultation?

Answer:

I am advised the Options Analysis has been substantially reviewed, with changes made throughout to reflect the feedback received during the community engagement process. The feedback has not provided a basis for changing the recommended options or the business case timeframe, but the recommendations point to the benefit of some matters (such as the route between Maroochydore City Centre and Mooloolaba) being subject to further consideration during the preparation of the Detailed Business Case.

Question 8:

Why is light rail the least preferred mode in the Survey results yet remains in the mix and gets the highest ratings on Council's multi criteria assessment and economic appraisal results (including key Tables 47, 49 and 99)?

Answer:

I am advised that Questions 9 to 13 of Council's Mass Transit survey sought the views of respondents about the benefits or impacts of each of the five mass transit options – Bus Rapid Transit, Trackless Tram, Light Rail, Wireless Light Rail and Quality Bus Corridor.

The responses to these questions were open-ended in nature, so the reporting converts the answers into measures of sentiment – positive, negative, or neutral. No option drew an absolute majority of positive or negative sentiments.

By the time survey respondents arrived at question 14, which asked how satisfied they were that the five recommended options were the best options to be considered in the Detailed Business Case, the neutrality and uncertainty had almost entirely disappeared (together representing only 9% of the respondents' views) and the satisfied and unsatisfied represented 45% and 46% of respondents respectively.

Notably, neither group of respondents represents an absolute majority so it cannot be said the community has overwhelmingly endorsed or overwhelmingly rejected the five options being considered, based on the survey conducted by Council.

Question 9:

What is the urgency for progressing this without the questions above been answered?

Answer:

Ever since the Mass Transit engagement process concluded, many in the community have been asking for the results of the engagement process and the associated changes to the Options Analysis to be made available. Council officers have therefore, ensured this progressed as soon as possible. As you can see, the questions above have been addressed.

Question 10:

Why are the requirements of Infrastructure Australia dictating the timing and quality of the OA? What is the problem if a post 31 December 2021 IA submission would need to comply with the requirements of IA's new business case framework, particularly if these are more rigorous and therefore more likely to lead to a robust evaluation of the costs and benefits of the MT project relative to IA assessment criteria? Is a rigorous assessment not in the best interests of Council and ratepayers given our responsibility for meeting some proportion of the project costs should it proceed?

Answer:

I am advised the Options Analysis was produced as soon as practicable following the analysis and reporting of the community engagement process and based on the feedback received during the process.

The advice in the Council report about the impending refresh of Infrastructure Australia's Assessment Framework has nothing to do with the timing of Council's consideration of the Options Analysis. I understand it simply draws attention to the potential for the refreshed framework to necessitate rework if the Options Analysis is provided to Infrastructure Australia after the end of 2021.

I don't accept the suggestion that Council officers have not engaged in a robust and rigorous analysis of the options and note that further analysis and consideration of the options will also take place as part of the detailed business case development process. The report which Council is considering on 20 October 2021 does not require a determination of the final mass transit solution.

Question 11:

Can you identify, during the 2020 Council elections, where you campaigned on, or supported, the Council's MT project generally and/or light rail in particular?

Answer:

I refer you to my website www.markjamieson.com.au which lists my extensive election commitments from both the 2016 and 2020 election campaigns. The first item listed in my 2020 campaign commitments is as follows:

Making it easier for our community to move around

I will continue to push for the completion of the detailed business case for a mass transit solution. I will advocate for State and Federal Government investment in the preferred public transport solution that will link our suburbs and is in line with what our growing region needs and deserves. I will also work collaboratively with the Federal Members to push for funding for a fast rail solution that will better connect our Sunshine Coast with Brisbane and the rest of South East Queensland.

Question 12:

If you support, and therefore endorse, this version of the OA, do you think you will be able, in conscience, to make any criticism of components of the project into the future?

Answer:

I think this question suggests a lack of understanding of the business case development process. Approval of the Options Analysis does not commit Council to any single transport solution, route or many other aspects of the project that will need to be explored further during the detailed business case process, with further refinements likely in the detailed planning and design for any public transport solution if it secures investment by the other tiers of government.

Accordingly, I would not feel in any way constrained to raise issues with future aspects of the process or the project itself in subsequent stages, should the Options Analysis be approved by Council and should there be a need in the future to raise such concerns on behalf of the Sunshine Coast region.

Yours sincerely

MAYOR MARK JAMIESON

Sent from my iPad



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