



Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

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SUNSHINE COAST NEW ACTIVE TRANSPORT PLAN CONSULTATION

OSCAR

The Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents Inc. (OSCAR) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit umbrella/peak organisation covering resident and community organisations on the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Local Government Areas (LGAs) in South East Queensland.

The OSCAR overarching Vision states: “The residents of this region enjoy being part of a connected and engaged community living in an area of outstanding natural beauty. They recognise that they are custodians of the unique and abundant biodiversity, beaches and green spaces of the region.”

OSCAR aims to support member organisations by:

- 1 Advocating to local and state government and the public on policy issues that are of regional significance and of concern to our members;
- 2 Acting to resolve issues of strategic or region-wide relevance that are referred by member organisations;
- 3 Representing the member organisations on region-wide matters of interest to the community;
- 4 Maintaining awareness and responsiveness through frequent and regular ordinary meetings and dialogue with member organisations; and
- 5 Practising professional, honest, and ethical conduct.

Further information about OSCAR can be found on our website at:

<https://www.oscar.org.au/>

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to Council in response to the May 2024 call for feedback to inform its intended formulation of a New Active Transport Plan (<https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/sunshine-coast-new-active-transport-plan>)

A NEW ACTIVE TRANSPORT PLAN

A new Active Transport Plan is needed to achieve the targets to increase active transport use and reduce car travel, as set out in Council's Corporate Strategy and Council's Integrated Transport Strategy.

OSCAR is mindful of Council's Refreshed Community Strategy which aims to achieve 5 key outcomes:

- Healthy, active communities – information, services and programs support physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- Vibrant communities - Community places and spaces, transport and housing provide the fundamental building blocks for a vibrant community
- Inclusive communities - Opportunities are available for everyone to participate and be involved
- Connected, resilient communities – communities are connected, resilient and safe where people work collaboratively to achieve shared goals
- Creative, innovative communities – creativity, heritage and First Nations culture is a source of connection, learning and pride.

Further Council's Community Action Plan which is incorporated in the Strategy reads:

5. Action Plan 2024-2029

Council Actions	Council Role
Outcome 2. Vibrant Communities	
2.2 Transport	
Continue to invest, plan and advocate for identified priority transport projects and road infrastructure to support future growth.	Direct Action Collaborate / Partner Advocacy
Prioritise investment in new active transport network connections and supporting infrastructure.	Direct Action Collaborate / Partner
Promote active and public transport options and encourage behaviour change away from private vehicle use.	Direct Action Collaborate / Partner
Expand community transport services to improve convenience and access to additional locations and services.	Direct Action Collaborate / Partner

OSCAR gives strong support to Council's intentions to prioritise Active Transport and Public Transport options to encourage behaviour change away from private vehicle use. Council is confronted with the need to sustainably manage the projected population growth on the Sunshine Coast (an additional 219,100 people are expected to call the Sunshine Coast home by 2046). It is almost inevitable that there will not be sufficient funding available to construct the extra road space that would be needed if private vehicle usage continues its unwelcome rapid and comprehensive growth and predominance.

There is also a pressing need to upgrade the Active Transport standards being pursued on the Sunshine Coast. Too many of the attempts by both Council and the State to date to accommodate Active Transport options on the Coast are almost half hearted and in too many instances potentially too dangerous for most potential users. (The poor and dangerous cycle lanes – where there are any – on Yandina-Coolum Rd are a sad example of current deficiencies.)

OSCAR is also cognisant that the Sunshine Coast is confronted with need to deliver transport legacy infrastructure to support the delivery of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. OSCAR urges Council (and the State) to proactively pursue Active Transport and Public transport options in preference to what will probably be futile efforts to accommodate Olympic mobility demands via private vehicle use.

In particular, OSCAR urges Council to pursue bus services, bus priorities and an active transport corridor near Kawana Stadium and at Alexandra Headlands, and between Nambour Rail Station and the Olympic Mountain Biking venue at Parklands.

WHAT MIGHT BE STOPPING RESIDENTS FROM CHOOSING ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Without doubt the most outstanding active transport facility on the Sunshine Coast is the Coastal Trail. But even that much vaunted corridor, which has been progressively constructed over many years, has obvious missing links and deficiencies. For example the linkage in Yaroomba from Coolum to Warragah Pde is of poor standard – if not totally missing in parts. Further, the construction standards are extremely variable. For example the link from Coolum Central to the High School along David Low Way is too narrow and lacks pedestrian-bicycle separation.

In our experience our Community generally perceives the impediments to using active transport options on the Sunshine Coast as being:

- Lack of availability, or limited and substandard availability of trails and routes
- Difficulties to access the limited facilities available
- Safety issues with using active transport. Lack of separation from fast moving vehicles. Pedestrian vs cycle conflicts.
- In many cases there are no suitable end of journey facilities

WAYS TO IMPROVE ACTIVE TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

There are a number of ways that the Sunshine Coast's active transport can be improved. And the exciting part of this is that, by comparison with motor vehicle improvement projects, active transport improvement projects are far less costly.

Improving Sunshine Coast active transport may include:

- upgrading walking and riding path networks
- building new infrastructure where connections are missing
- prioritising user safety
- encouraging behaviour change.

Particular priority is urged on establishing an attractive west to east Active Transport corridor – potentially from Nambour to the beach suburbs in the east.

Providing this much needed west to east Active Transport Link from Nambour to the Beaches must strengthen connection, inclusion and opportunity. It would provide an enormous boost to the struggling Nambour economy demonstrably improving its resilience. And surely no-one could deny that a Nambour to Coolum Trail is a very creative and innovative way of strengthening our coastal community?

In pursuit of significant improvements to the Sunshine Coast's active transport infrastructure Council's Infrastructure Plans need to urgently incorporate a firm program to build walking and bike paths:

- i. To every bus stop, train station, school, child care facility, sports facility and shopping centre from the surrounding residences;
- ii. Between major centres, the hospitals and to the Airport and Sunshine Coast University;
- iii. To and between major tourist and recreational attractions and national parks in the hinterland and across the Coast.

Clearly such an increase in the emphasis on Active Transport provision will require Council to review and re-orient some of its current infrastructure funding arrangements and to seek new funding sources. For example, Council should consider:

- i. Including a specific development contribution for new developments, particularly in existing urban areas where densities are being increased via the pursuit of 'Gentle Density'.
- ii. Increasing the Transport Levy. It may be desirable that it is also made more progressive and more equitable by changing it to a rate in the dollar instead of the existing flat fee.
- iii. Restructuring the Transport Levy to recognise and separately fund each of its component aims – (a) Active Transport provision, (b) Public Transport provision, and (c) Transport Planning and Research – each with a dedicated budget.
- iv. Aggressive lobbying for more specific purpose grants from the State and Commonwealth.

ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Council already has in place two reference groups relating to the provision of Active Transport:

- i. The **Sunshine Coast Active Transport Advisory Committee (SCATAC)** is an advisory body which brings together strong active travel advocates with varying experiences in an open and collegiate atmosphere. The committee was established on 28 September 2021 by Council and the Queensland Government. SCATAC aims to strengthen the collaborative working relationships between Council, the Queensland Government and the community. It aims to provide members with an opportunity to learn from each other and share their ideas to increase the uptake of walking, cycling and other active travel modes across the Sunshine Coast. As an advisory body, SCATAC has no authority for policy determination or decision making.

- ii. **Transport community reference group**

The transport community group helps council achieve its vision to reduce car travel, reliance on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions.

Council's vision to be Australia's most sustainable region, healthy, smart and creative, relies on efficient travel using extensive, integrated transport networks.

Purpose

Council's transport vision is "in 2041, the Sunshine Coast community is connected by a smart, integrated, safe and efficient transport system. This transport system is embraced by the community, enhances the quality of life, contributes to the economic viability and adds to the sustainability of the region".

To help achieve this vision, and to reduce car travel, reliance on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions, the transport community reference group provides input and community feedback on all aspects of achieving a sustainable, integrated transport system for the region.

The group feedback will help council adopt policies and a strategic direction on integrated transport systems for the region that reflect the views and needs of the community.

Objectives

The group will play a key role in discussions which will help guide the implementation and delivery of council's [integrated transport strategy](#).

Other roles include:

- creating a partnership between community and council representatives to obtain a balanced view with input from a wide cross-section of stakeholders
- discussing transport initiatives to benefit the travelling community in the short and longer term
- enabling council advocacy efforts to reflect community views
- raising awareness of the range of transport related strategies and projects and ensure they reflect community needs
- representatives to advocate for sustainable transport in the community either individually or through their organisation.

OSCAR understands that this reference group is currently inactive and has not met since the 2024 council election.

OSCAR questions whether Council has to date been taking adequate advantage of these Reference Groups? OSCAR recommends to Council that it take steps to elevate the role of, and fully operationalise, these Groups and more actively involve them in a revitalised ongoing campaign to make Sunshine Coast's active transport programme widely admired and appreciated.

SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO COUNCIL'S SURVEY

MEANING OF 'ACTIVE TRANSPORT' – We see Active transport as embracing all the relevant modes – walking, jogging, skate boarding, horse riding and cycling.

WHY WALK – The desirability of promoting for our community more active lifestyles like walking, jogging and cycling is beyond dispute. More and better active transport would provide such attractive and enjoyable opportunities.

BIKE OR E-BIKE USERS – Would be very welcome.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – Would find good active transport facilities extremely attractive and usable. Those well-constructed facilities should/would be relatively level, safe and healthy.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

OSCAR commends Council for initiating the formulation of a new Active Transport Plan and urges that Council closely consults with the community and community organisations as its work progresses. OSCAR is interested in hosting a forum for our member groups on the next version of the Strategy.

Yours sincerely



President OSCAR

