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Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Draft Options Analysis

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback into the Draft Options Analysis for the Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Strategy.

The property sector accounts for 18.9% of all jobs within the Sunshine Coast, with the industry supporting 21,947 direct jobs. In total, the industry delivers over \$2.8 billion to the local economy annually. The Property Council's Sunshine Coast Committee is comprised of a diverse range of property professionals who represent a broad spectrum of sectors across the Sunshine Coast's property sector. Together our committee is committed to providing ongoing feedback into the development of the Sunshine Coast's Mass Transit Strategy and how it may support sustainable growth on the Sunshine Coast.

As the draft options analysis articulates, the Sunshine Coast is undergoing a rapid period of population growth that is unlikely to abate over the next two decades with the majority of this growth focused in the southern part of the Sunshine Coast. To balance this growth and preserve the amenity and lifestyle of the region, developing an integrated transport solution is a crucial step that will provide Council with the ability to facilitate urban growth and economic diversification across the shire. The development of the Mass Transit Strategy is an important component of an integrated transport strategy and should inform the new Sunshine Coast Planning scheme. When finalised, the transit system and subsequent urban corridor will provide the ideal spine for Council to realise and fulfill urban growth and consolidation targets.

Due to this, the Property Council commends the Sunshine Coast Council on their initiative in undertaking the initial planning and business case development for the project. The Property Council provides the following feedback for consideration by Council.

Mode of transport

The Property Council supports a Mass Transit system that can be readily and affordably expanded to key centres such as Sippy Downs, Coolumb, Caloundra and Nambour in the next ten years. Of the four category B options identified the preferred approach is the provision of a dedicated corridor which can support the integration of the broader bus network with investment over time enabling the dedicated corridor.

It is crucial that the final recommendation on the mode of transport acknowledges that the Sunshine Coast is very likely to undergo an unprecedented level of population growth over the next decade. The last year has evidenced that assumptions about future growth can change rapidly. Recommending a mode of transport that is incapable of properly servicing the region's population

will be a significant lost opportunity that will hamper the region's growth for decades. Due to this, it is critical that the final recommendation is the most efficient and effective possible option that provides the greatest chance to service the broader Sunshine Coast over the longer term.

Route

The Property Council supports the proposed routes for public transport as outlined in the Mass Transit Option analysis including the alignment for Stage 1 from Maroochydore to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital at Birtinya as the preferred option due to the density of population, jobs and services. However, the success of the strategy will largely rely on how it integrates with areas that sit outside the identified urban corridor. These areas will have to rely on other forms of transport to connect with the transport route. As the Council has noted, only 3 percent of trips within the Sunshine Coast are undertaken via public transport. To facilitate a large-scale transition to public transport in the way the strategy envisions, it will be necessary to enhance existing public transport infrastructure (such as local bus networks) to ensure those outside the urban corridor are encouraged to utilise the eventual transit system. To facilitate this, the Property Council believes that the Sunshine Coast Council should prioritise immediate infrastructure upgrades that improve public transport network in the near term to centres such as Sippy Downs, Caloundra and Coolum as well as funding for the heavy rail along the CAMCOS corridor. Council should also use this opportunity to advocate to the Queensland Government for immediate upgrades to the public transport network and existing infrastructure for the entire Sunshine Coast region.

Incorporating Growth

The final strategy's focus on incorporating growth along the urban corridor should not diminish the need to respond to current rapid population growth in Greenfield areas. While the strategy plans for targeted future growth in the Urban Corridor, the Sunshine Coast's Greenfield areas are undergoing a current population boom and have done the heavy lifting over the last year in supporting the region to meet *ShapingSEQ* growth targets. In particular this growth has been experienced in existing greenfield developments such as Aura and Palmview. This growth has pushed local transport infrastructure to capacity, particularly along Kawana and Nicklin Way. Due to this, the Property Council believes that it is important for Council to prioritise the delivery of regional transport infrastructure to adequately service areas that have already undergone high levels of population growth.

Additionally, the option analysis excludes the potential role the Halls Creek PFGA can play in managing growth, despite its designation as a potential longer term growth area outlined in *ShapingSEQ*. The detailed business case must have scope to strategically consider all options including this PFGA in relation to the region's growth and public transport needs.

Furthermore, the Property Council welcomes the draft options analysis' acknowledgement that the development of regional rail along the CAMCOS corridor is vital. The development of this transport corridor will play a significant role in connecting the populations of the residential developments including Aura, Caloundra South and Beerwah East with employment opportunities and retail and entertainment hubs. As such, it should be a priority for Council to be advocating for the State Government to progress the development of the already canvassed rail connection along the corridor as well as upgrading the existing link from Beerwah to Nambour.

The delivery of regional rail will compliment a broader regional movement strategy and better integrate the Sunshine Coast with the broader SEQ region. Over the longer term this connectivity will be essential in allowing the Sunshine Coast to maximise the economic and tourism benefits of a potential 2032 Olympic games.

Planning Scheme

The success of the final strategy and its ability to facilitate infill development along the corridor will be entirely dependent on the development of the new Sunshine Coast planning scheme. As previously noted, the strategy is dependent on assumptions about hypothetical growth along the corridor. This is despite a level of community resistance to this vision which could in turn create uncertainty and impact the private sector's capacity to invest along the corridor. To remedy this and fulfill the vision outlined in the draft options analysis it is imperative to address existing constraints along the urban corridor in the new planning scheme. Land fragmentation along the corridor will continue to pose a significant risk that the new scheme should strive to address through rezoning, increased densities and building heights, and infrastructure upgrades.

Value capture should not form a basis for future public transport investment

The draft options analysis references the intention for the detailed business case to consider 'value capture' within to understand economic benefits.

Relying on 'value capture' to directly offset (or contribute) to the cost of construction and operations has proven to be problematic on other projects, will make projects less commercially viable and make housing more unaffordable.

Assessment of 'value capture' through uplift in land value should not form the basis of investment decisions for public transport and should not form part of Council's Planning Scheme without significant consultation and agreement with the development industry.

The Property Council looks forward to continuing to work with Council on the development of the Mass Transit Strategy and on identifying how it can be supported via a new planning scheme. If you have any questions in relation to the Property Council or this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on jwilliams@propertycouncil.com.au or 0448 432 936.

Yours sincerely,



Jen Williams
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