

# Draft Southern Sunshine Coast Public Transport Strategy

February 2022



DRAFT - NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

## Preface

The draft *Southern Sunshine Coast Public Transport Strategy* builds on the foundation of previous transport planning for the Sunshine Coast region. The strategy has been developed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads with input from Sunshine Coast Council. It has been prepared to help address the challenges facing the region due to population growth and forecast increased demand for public transport services.

The strategy sets out a vision and direction for how the Queensland Government will deliver a public transport system to meet the future needs of the southern Sunshine Coast, while protecting its natural environment and lifestyle. It responds to actions in *ShapingSEQ: the South East Queensland Regional Plan* and the *Draft South East Queensland Regional Transport Plan* to progress planning for public transport. The draft strategy does not specify the form of public transport (i.e. rail or bus) across the network as this will be decided in future detailed project planning and business case assessment.

The strategy also sets the wider context for the future of public transport on the southern Sunshine Coast. This will be used to inform the detailed business case for the first stage of a Mass Transit connection between Maroochydore and Kawana, and provide a plan for future stages of the network's expansion. TMR

and Sunshine Coast Council will jointly develop the detailed business case building on Council's options analysis.

It aligns with the Department of Transport and Main Roads' *Transport Coordination Plan 2017-2027*, which outlines high-level objectives for Queensland's transport system across five key areas:

- Customer experience and affordability
- Community connectivity
- Efficiency and productivity
- Safety and security
- Environment and sustainability.

The public transport network proposed by this draft strategy is designed to accommodate forecast trip behaviour and demand.

While the network was developed with a preference for improving existing links and identifying new and innovative ways to do more with less, new infrastructure is proposed for some parts of the Sunshine Coast to create better, more integrated connections across the whole network.

Reforming and enhancing services are cost-effective measures that can be delivered in the short to medium term to support this draft strategy.

## About the southern Sunshine Coast

**The southern Sunshine Coast, between Beerwah and Maroochydore, is home to the majority of the Coast's population and employment. People choose to live and work here because of the great lifestyle it offers and its ease of access to jobs, services and recreation. It is already home to many of the region's 30,000 businesses and is where majority of the Sunshine Coast's daily trips already take place.**

Further population and employment growth in this area will present challenges, but also great opportunities if it is managed effectively and is supported with convenient and reliable travel options. This will help achieve community aspirations, economic growth, and efficient and affordable public transport.

New urban development should support convenient access to employment and services. Inclusive travel options will allow all members of the community to access and participate in the Sunshine Coast's vibrant lifestyle.

*ShapingSEQ: the South East Queensland Regional Plan* recognised this issue when it was published in 2017. It sets out sub-regional directions to manage population growth and plans for 62 per cent of all new dwellings on the Sunshine Coast to be in the existing urban area. It also proposes the delivery of a system of high-frequency public transport connections on the southern Sunshine Coast by 2041.

*The South East Queensland Regional Transport Plan* identifies planning for the southern Sunshine Coast's system of high-frequency public transport connections as a short-term action, while Sunshine Coast Council's Integrated Transport Strategy also advocates for development of a public transport strategy.

Establishing quality public transport corridors in the southern Sunshine Coast area presents the best opportunity to connect communities and reinforce the Sunshine Coast lifestyle.

By **2041** the Sunshine Coast will need a transport network that can support:



**87,000**  
More dwellings  
a **69%** increase

ShapingSEQ

**85,000**  
Additional jobs  
a **64%** increase

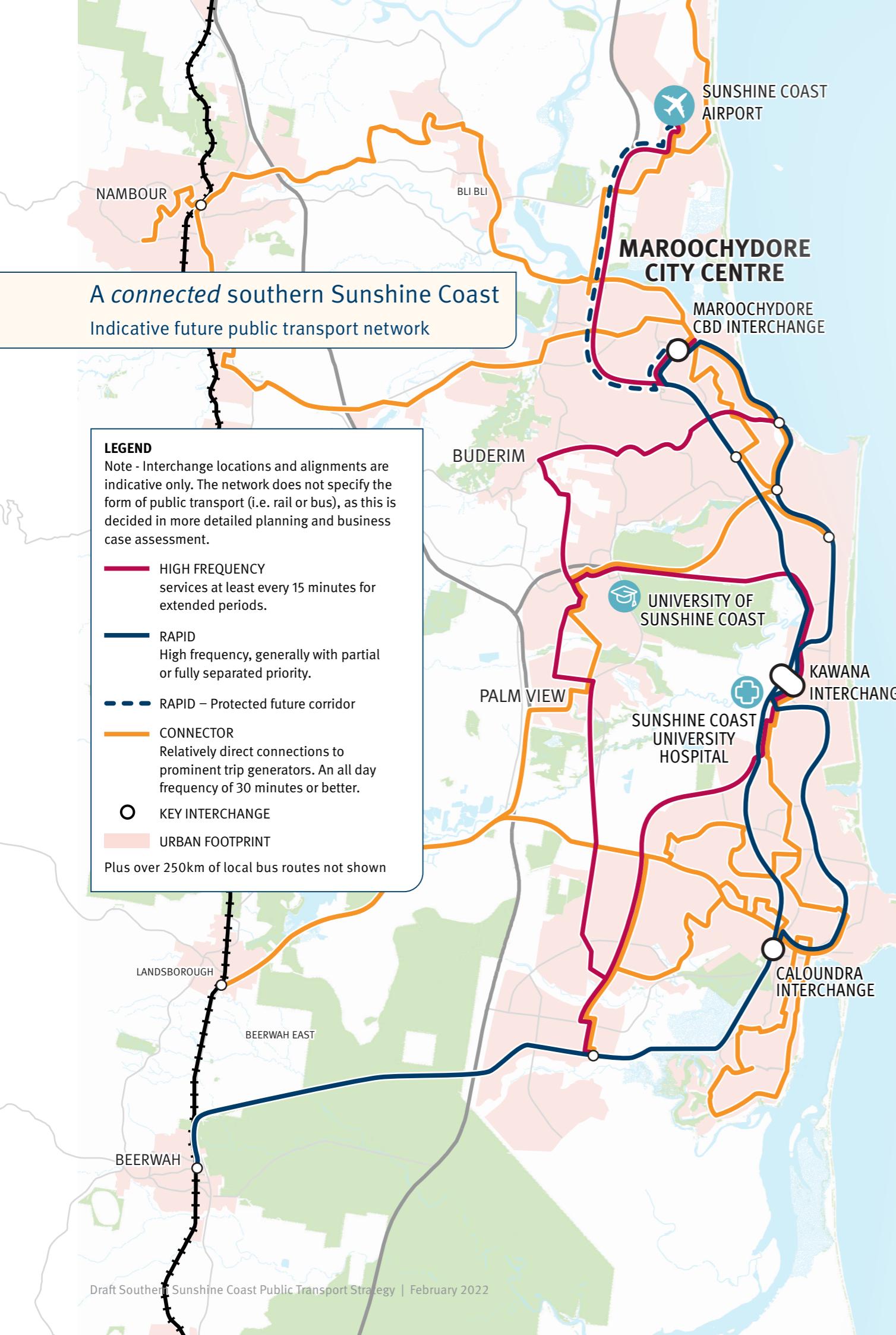
ShapingSEQ

**More**  
travel options

A population of  
**500,000+**  
residents

ShapingSEQ

Kings Beach



## Our vision – a *connected* southern Sunshine Coast

A bold approach is needed to shift the southern Sunshine Coast towards more sustainable travel choices and to help protect the natural, social and cultural assets of the region.

Public transport services need to link the community to everyday destinations and must provide local connectivity as well as cater for longer regional connections. 95 per cent of trips starting on the Sunshine Coast stay on coast. A balanced response to meeting the diverse travel needs of the community will require a package of public transport initiatives. The different types of services and facilities required across the network may include high capacity services, fast and direct services or high frequency hop-on hop-off services.

One service or corridor cannot meet the needs of all customers. The key public transport corridors in the southern Sunshine Coast will work together to cater for different types of trips, providing a comprehensive travel solution that meets the varied needs of the community.

Public transport services in the key corridors will be accessed through a variety of walking, cycling, private vehicle access and interchanging with other public transport services.

### The vision for 2041 is:

*A public transport network that is connected, safe and accessible, and provides a reliable travel experience for the community.*

*The network provides frequent and attractive services for the southern Sunshine Coast, other Sunshine Coast communities and for visitors travelling to and from Brisbane.*

*People living within urban areas have fast and convenient access to all their primary needs and the rest of the region is accessible by easy transfer. Locals and visitors alike have attractive public transport travel options, reducing reliance on car ownership.*

## Planning for the future network

The Queensland Government has consulted with Sunshine Coast Council to identify an ambitious but achievable public transport network strategy – a *connected* southern Sunshine Coast. It sets a benchmark that all levels of government can work towards. The strategy will be delivered in stages over time to keep pace with growth.

In planning this future network, the unique environment, lifestyle and travel needs of the Sunshine Coast have been carefully considered. The proposed network will complement the region's character and keep people moving during a period of intense growth up to 2041 and beyond. It has been developed with an acute awareness that an aging population, tourists, and a growing proportion of younger people without drivers' licences, need improved travel options for all their daily trips.

Delivering this network requires more detailed planning to align and coordinate local and regional infrastructure priorities.

The strategy will be revisited overtime as transport and land use planning and development matures and travel patterns evolve.

The network's major corridors and strategic connections are outlined in the following pages. In the remainder of the document, focus topics are used to describe the future network strategy:

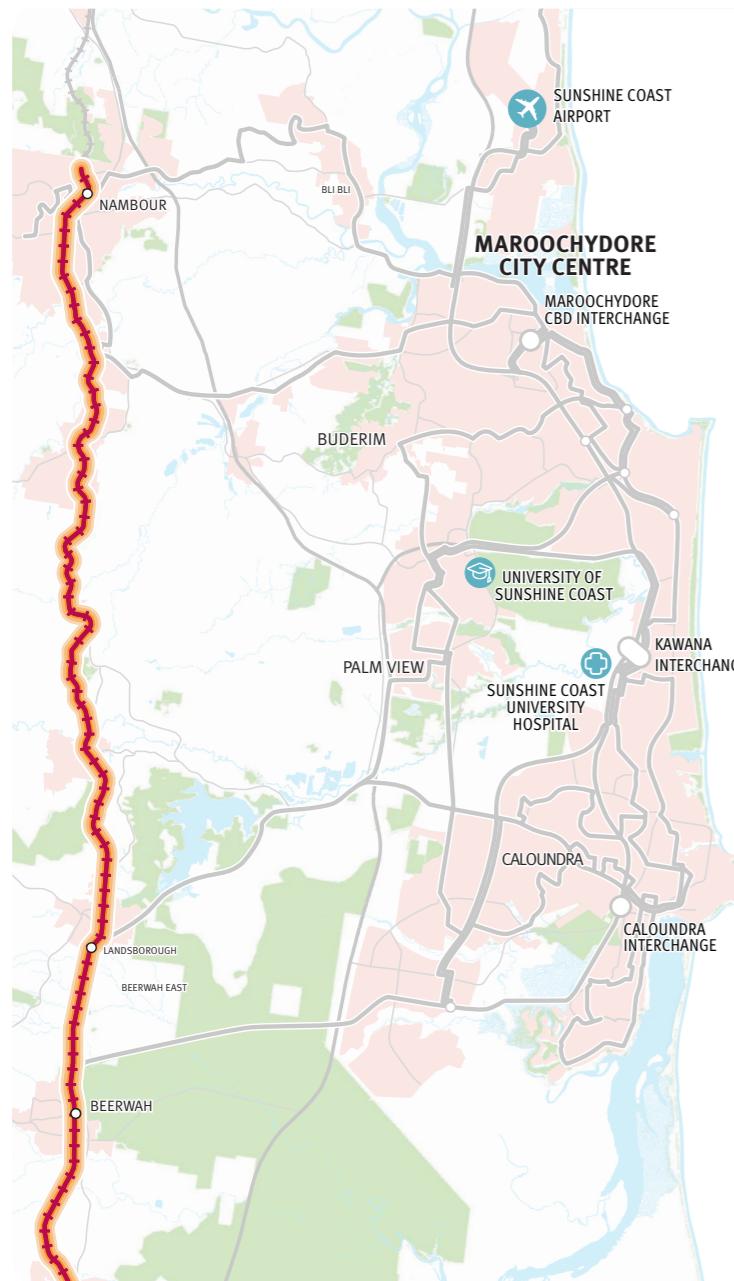
- Focus 1: Connections
- Focus 2: Access
- Focus 3: Support and Enable

*The strategy will provide strategic network context for the detailed business case for the first stage of a Mass Transit connection between Maroochydore and Kawana, and provide a plan for future stages of the network's expansion.*

*This strategy will also guide all levels of government in preparing the Sunshine Coast's public transport network for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.*

# The connected southern Sunshine Coast – Major corridors and strategic connections

The vision for a connected southern Sunshine Coast transport network consists of several key corridors and connections. Each element is required by 2041 and has a distinct role in supporting movements between communities in the southern Sunshine Coast and areas beyond. Some of these corridors and connections are already in place. Others require future decisions on road and/or public transport infrastructure initiatives.



## The western corridor

### Description

The North Coast Rail Line.

### Function

Inter-regional freight and passenger line, connecting coastal Queensland between Brisbane and Cairns.

### Form

Dedicated corridor designed for long distance travel and between existing widely spaced towns.

### Access

Predominately via the centre corridor and by park 'n' ride facilities. Feeder buses will service select stations. Active transport access will be encouraged within railway towns and villages.

### Features

- Long distance services
- Higher capacity services
- Higher frequency peak hour services
- Limited stops /stations
- Higher speed (comparable to private vehicle)
- Park 'n' ride facilities at all stations

### Next steps

The Beerburum to Nambour Rail Upgrade (B2N) project covers about 40 kilometres of the North Coast Rail Line and will provide additional track capacity and reliability, creating travel time savings and increased passenger and freight services to the growing Sunshine Coast region.



## The centre corridor

### Description

Consisting of the protected CAMCOS\* public transport corridor and adjacent parallel roads.

### Function

Medium and longer distance trips connecting the economic centres of the Sunshine Coast and providing a fast, reliable and direct link to the western corridor at Beerwah.

### Form

Dedicated corridor designed for higher speeds with wider stop spacing.

### Access

Predominately via feeder bus and park 'n' ride. The coastal corridor will interchange customers at select stations. Active transport will be encouraged at major residential and activity centres.

### Features

- Higher capacity services
- Higher frequency peak hour services
- Higher speed (comparable to private vehicle)
- Limited stops / stations
- Park 'n' ride facilities at select stations
- Interchange with the coastal and western corridors

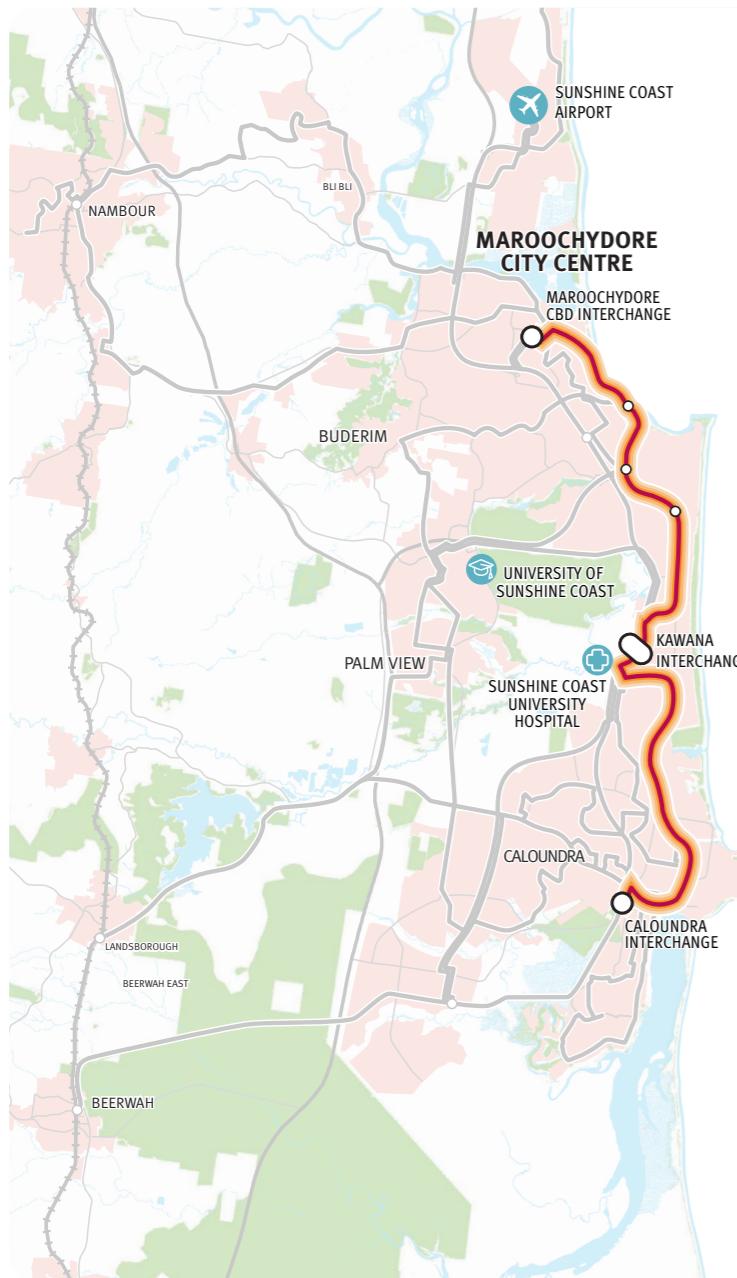
### Next steps

Staged implementation of public transport within the centre corridor between Beerwah and Maroochydore.

Road management will focus on the Mooloolah River Interchange (MRI) upgrade. The Mooloolah River crossing proposed as part of the MRI will provide a direct connection of the Sunshine Motorway to Kawana Way, completing a critical missing link to the future Kawana Motorway. This will enable the Coastal Corridor to better accommodate public transport.

\*Note – the protected CAMCOS corridor extends to the Sunshine Coast Airport. Mass transit between Maroochydore and the Airport is unlikely to be required by 2041. The corridor will continue to be protected to allow for future extension when necessary.

# The connected southern Sunshine Coast – Major corridors and strategic connections



## The coastal corridor

### Description

Nicklin Way, Brisbane Road, Aerodrome Road and other coastal roads between Maroochydore and Caloundra.

### Function

Local travel with access to coastal tourism, health and business precincts and to the centre corridor.

### Form

On-road, designed to give priority to passenger and active transport. Part of the urban landscape providing a gateway to communities along the Coast.

### Access

Predominately via active transport and feeder bus. Park 'n' ride and transfer from the centre corridor at some stations.

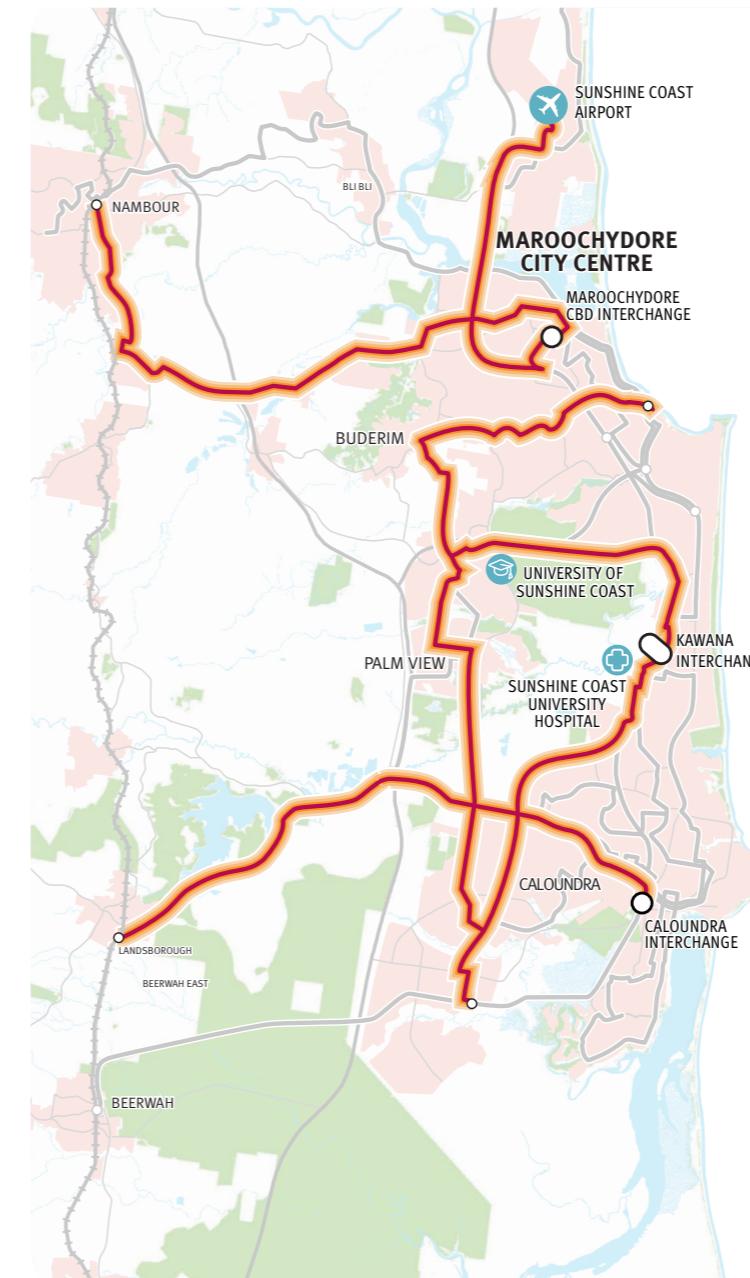
### Features

- High patronage (locals, tourists, commuters)
- High capacity services
- Stop spacing to balance speed and accessibility
- Integrated with surroundings
- Access into centre of health, tourism and business precincts
- High frequency all day, extended hours services
- Walk up catchments

### Next steps

Public transport will focus on incremental and staged improvements to high capacity, reliable public transport. This will commence with the detailed business case for the first stage of a mass transit solution.

Road management will focus on diverting medium and longer distance trips onto the centre corridor to better accommodate public transport, cycling, walking and streetscaping.



## The key connectors

### Description

Comprised of various roads throughout the Sunshine Coast.

### Function

Connections to and between major centres, trip attractors and areas of strategic importance that are not directly serviced by the western, centre or coastal corridors.

### Form

On-road, designed with limited public transport priority as required to improve the speed and reliability or services.

### Access

Predominately by active transport or transfer from other services on the network.

### Features

- Express services
- Limited stops / stations
- Extended hours of operation
- Access to key destinations including the Sunshine Coast Airport, Sunshine Coast University, Sunshine Coast University Hospital and Nambour

### Next steps

Public transport will focus on the introduction of new services and improvements to frequencies and hours of operation.

Road management will focus on incremental and staged improvements to the road network with consideration of future public transport priority requirements, and provision for active transport.

## Focus 1: Connections

The southern Sunshine Coast public transport network will be revitalised and expanded through staged investment in new rapid connections, stops and stations, and by providing more frequent and reliable services.

### Rapid connections

The Sunshine Coast's linear shape and trip patterns are best serviced by a public transport network arranged around two parallel rapid connections between Caloundra and Maroochydore.

The coastal corridor provides a rapid connection focused on servicing short and medium distance public transport trips on the Coast. Over time, infrastructure in the corridor must evolve to separate public transport services from general traffic between intersections. This will ensure it is resilient to future growth in demand; provides fast and reliable services; and is well placed to accommodate autonomous public transport vehicles when available.

The centre corridor will cater for longer distance trips on the Coast and improve accessibility between regional centres by connecting to the North Coast Rail Line (the western corridor) at Beerwah. This corridor will ultimately need to provide for full priority public transport to maximise speed and reliability.

These rapid corridors will provide the efficient and reliable spines, connecting the rest of the southern Sunshine Coast network. This approach balances travel speed, accessibility and appropriate levels of capacity. It also supports the Queensland Government's urban consolidation benchmarks by focusing our investment in areas with the greatest opportunity for urban renewal.

The rapid corridors will be progressed in stages as part of a long-term investment in the ultimate network. This will likely include on-road connections transitioning to dedicated infrastructure over time.

### Stops and stations

The form and spacing of stops and stations within a *connected* southern Sunshine Coast will reflect each corridor's function.

The centre corridor will have longer stop spacing allowing for more competitive travel times with private vehicles over longer distances. Access to these stations for customers outside of their direct catchment will be via connecting bus services, ride-share, park 'n' ride, demand responsive transport or personal mobility devices.

In contrast, the coastal corridor will have shorter stop spacing to facilitate shorter trips. This provides a higher level of local accessibility.

The rest of the network will position stops to balance accessibility with directness and travel time. High frequency routes will have longer stop spacing, while local services will aim to have 90 per cent of the population within 400 metres of a stop.

### More reliable services more often

Improvements to frequency, hours of operation, safety and reliability will be critical to making public transport a more viable and positive experience.

The rapid corridors and high frequency bus routes will operate at extended hours of operation throughout the day. This will provide convenient connections to major centres and popular destinations, including the Sunshine Coast University, Sunshine Coast University Hospital, and Sunshine Coast Airport.

Targeted bus priority will improve reliability and travel times. Decisions on where and how to invest in bus priority will be informed by detailed assessments and opportunities to integrate with road or intersection upgrades along key routes.



## Focus 2: Access

An effective public transport system relies on it being safe and easy to access. Access to the proposed network will be provided through several core interventions.

### Transport interchanges

The *connected* southern Sunshine Coast network uses interchanges to get the most mobility for the community. Multi-seat journeys are minimised but planned to seamlessly connect customers between services where they are necessary. This approach provides many benefits. It allows more journey combinations and access to more destinations, maximises travel opportunities for customers, and balances efficiency and speed.

The *connected* network will provide opportunities for convenient and safe interchange between the rapid corridors at Caloundra, Birtinya and Maroochydore and between the rapid corridors and the rest of the network in the following precincts:

- Aura Town Centre
- Caloundra
- East of Birtinya
- Mooloolaba
- Maroochydore CBD.

### Local and connector buses

The *connected* southern Sunshine Coast will make public transport access equitable for all potential customers. A network of local and connector buses in suburban areas will provide for short trips and provide access for lower density residential and business areas to major transport hubs. In this way, the benefits of improved infrastructure and services on the coastal and centre corridors can be extended to the broader region.

### Park 'n' ride facilities

Park 'n' ride facilities will play an important role in the southern Sunshine Coast's future transport system, connecting customers to public transport.

Park 'n' ride facilities will be positioned at locations with good access from arterial and sub-arterial road networks. They will aim to service low density and rural residential catchments that cannot otherwise be connected to the public transport network efficiently.

Sites identified for further investigation include:

- Caloundra West – where the two rapid routes intersect
- Mooloolaba – near the future intersection of the Sunshine Motorway and Brisbane Road
- Mountain Creek/Buderim – at the future centre corridor station location.

### Active transport access

Every public transport trip includes some walking, cycling or personal mobility device to get from your home to the station, and from the station to your destination. If these connections are not convenient, safe, legible, or comfortable, this makes it less desirable for customers to use public transport.

The Queensland Government will continue to work with Sunshine Coast Council to improve links to public transport infrastructure and support people to get active as part of their journey. This includes bike facilities and secure bicycle parking.

### Emerging transport options

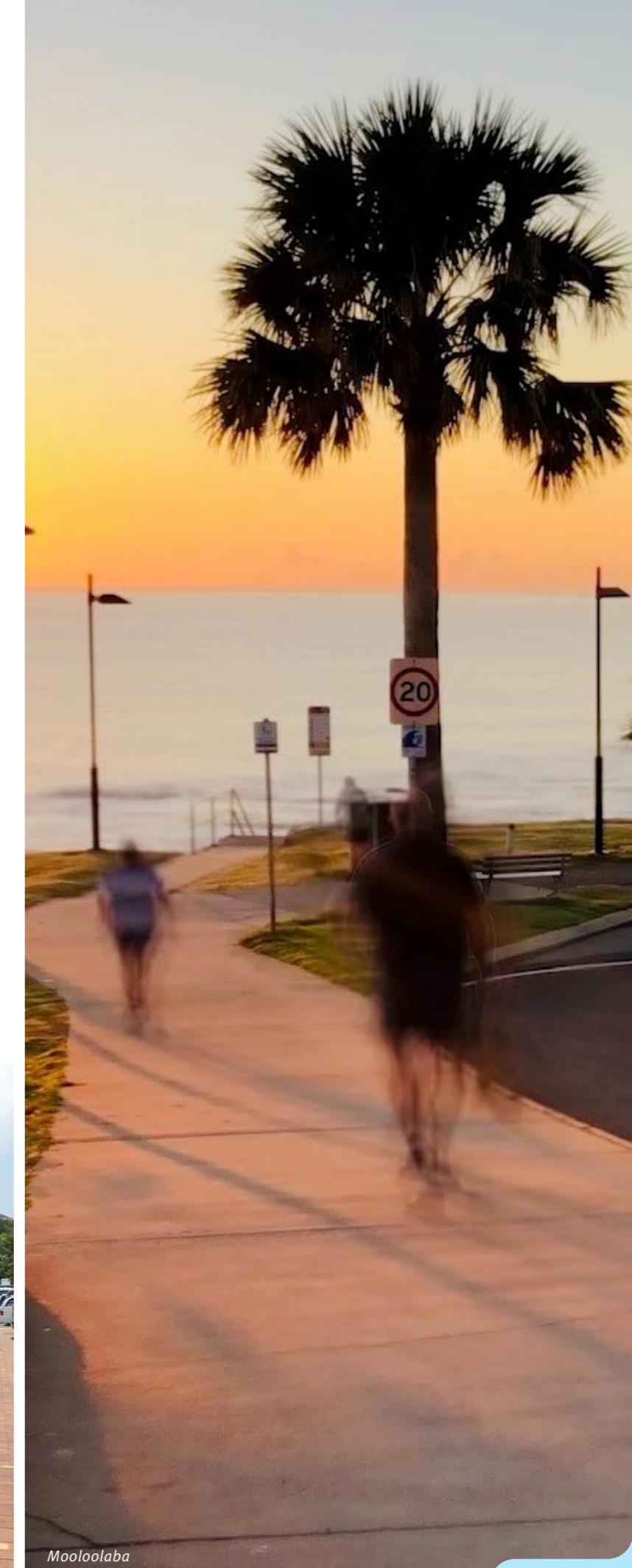
New and emerging transport technology and delivery models, such as demand responsive transport, Mobility as a Service, and ride-share services will enhance the convenience of public transport by providing new and innovative ways to access the network.

The Queensland Government will continue to investigate and pursue opportunities to provide intelligent and seamless transport options, such as:

- Enabling the introduction of new mobility providers and technology
- Investing in shared transport services and infrastructure
- Planning, facilitating and partnering to support more on-demand transport.

### Accessibility upgrades

Public transport plays a vital role in providing access to employment and services for people with a disability, restricted mobility or the elderly. The Department of Transport and Main Roads has developed an *Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy 2020* to improve accessibility of the transport network, making it easier for everyone, including people with disability to participate. The principles of universal design will be applied in rolling out new infrastructure and services to cater for all customers and maximise accessibility.



## Focus 3: Support and enable

The *connected* southern Sunshine Coast network needs to be supported by changes that encourage public transport use.

### Parking management and supply

Parking opportunities in the southern Sunshine Coast need to be managed effectively to balance the parking requirements of businesses, visitors and residents. This is in addition to promoting public and active transport connections that can reduce the overall demand for parking supply.

To support successful transformation of the public transport network the Queensland Government will rely upon Sunshine Coast Council to continue to implement and expand its parking management and related activities.

### Customer focused innovations

Improving the user-friendliness of the passenger transport system can be achieved by:

- Promoting benefits of active and passenger transport
- Improving safety through incorporating Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- Providing improved and highly accessible customer travel information
- Improving wayfinding signage and pedestrian access in and around passenger transport hubs
- Introducing Smart Ticketing to streamline payment and travel times
- Improving system information through the online journey planner and real-time information at stops and stations.

### Land use and economic transformation

*ShapingSEQ* sets a benchmark to construct 62 per cent of the Sunshine Coast's future dwellings within existing urban areas. More residents will inevitably bring change, but if appropriately located and managed, this increase in density will make high frequency and rapid transit viable without undermining the Sunshine Coast's unique character and natural assets.

Population densities are a product of a development market that can be managed by local planning controls, and the provision of high-quality public transport.

On the Coast, the development market is favouring 'greenfield development' rather than consolidation. The resulting urban sprawl limits the viability of quality public transport and places pressure on all levels of government to provide local and regional road infrastructure. Less viable public transport and longer journeys inevitably causes more parking pressure and congestion in our urban centres.

All levels of government and the private sector need to look for new ways to facilitate land use and economic transformation on the Sunshine Coast:

- Council will need to adapt their land use planning and other urban initiatives to achieve the urban form outcomes required by *ShapingSEQ*.
- Ongoing decisions about public transport infrastructure and services will be required to improve connectivity and enhance the identity and amenity of the urban form. Public transport investment will play a key role in helping to achieve *ShapingSEQ*'s benchmarks and support sustainable land use and transport outcomes.

Working together will limit risk and maximise the overall likelihood of success to deliver a high-quality public transport system for the southern Sunshine Coast region that will support and sustain economic growth.



# Collaborative integrated planning

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## Queensland Transport Strategy

The *Queensland Transport Strategy* sets out a 30-year vision for the transformation of the state's transport system that will flexibly respond to customer preferences, global trends and emerging technologies. Directions relevant to the Southern Sunshine Coast Public Transport Strategy are:



**Enabling**  
the introduction of new mobility providers and technology



**Prioritising**  
investment in shared transport services and infrastructure



**Upgrading**  
roads and delivering new capacity to improve journey times and reliability



**Ensuring**  
transport is accessible for all

## Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders

*Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders* is a draft 10-year plan for passenger transport in Queensland. It is a high-level, strategic plan centred on five key passenger transport priorities. 20 signature initiatives will deliver on these priorities over the next 10 years.

*Creating Better Connections* supports the *Queensland Transport Strategy* and builds on the solid foundation of our current passenger transport system in Queensland to deliver a single integrated transport network that is efficient, safe, reliable and accessible to everyone.

The *Southern Sunshine Coast Passenger Transport Strategy* directly aligns with the priorities and initiatives within *Creating Better Connections*.

## South East Queensland Regional Transport Plan

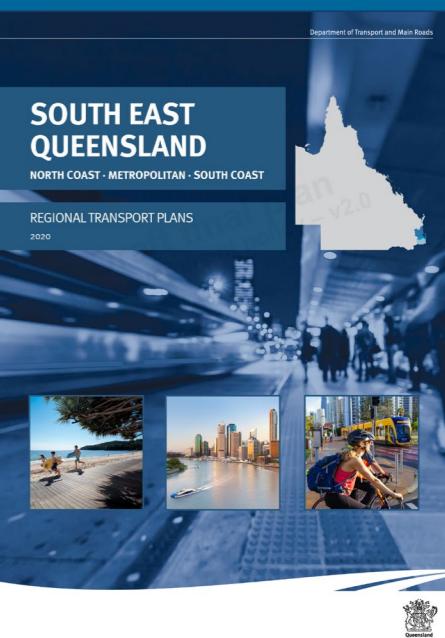
The *South East Queensland Regional Transport Plan* (SEQ RTP) outlines a shared direction for shaping the region's transport system over the next 15 years. It covers all modes of transport with a focus on the networks and services in the region and the inter-regional and international connections that are vital to the region's social and economic prosperity.

SEQ RTP priorities for the region's future transport network are:

- Priority 1: Grow – A transport system that supports a consolidated and sustainable urban structure
- Priority 2: Prosper – A transport system that supports the economic competitiveness of the region
- Priority 3: Sustain – A transport system that contributes to the environmental sustainability and resilience of the region
- Priority 4: Live – A transport system that supports safe and liveable communities for everyone

The SEQ RTP includes a short-term action to develop the *Southern Sunshine Coast Public Transport Strategy*.

[www.tmr.qld.gov.au/regionaltransportplans](http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/regionaltransportplans)



## Smarter solutions: network optimisation framework

The Department of Transport and Main Roads applies the *Smarter solutions: network optimisation framework* to guide investment planning and decision making and prioritise consideration of lower cost and non-infrastructure solutions before considering more extensive infrastructure solutions. Solutions which optimise existing networks and services will deliver the most cost-effective public transport system.

Please visit the Department of Transport and Main Roads website, [tmr.qld.gov.au](http://tmr.qld.gov.au), and search for "Southern Sunshine Coast Public Transport Strategy"

## Photo credits

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