

# Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Action Group Inc. (MTAG)

## March 2024

### Divisional Councillor Candidate Questionnaire

As a key advocacy groups on the Sunshine Coast, we are seeking your views on public transport and housing densification in the region. Please be advised your responses will be collated and made public as we believe all voters should be aware of your position on these two key issues prior to voting. No response will be taken to mean you agree with the following:

1. The current Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Southern Sunshine Coast Public transport strategy and their decision to proceed with Rapid Bus Transit in a dedicated lane along our coastal strip.
2. The current Sunshine Coast Regional Council plan to house the large majority of the future population growth out to 2041, in the Coastal corridor between Maroochydore and Caloundra.

Name of candidate:	Ken Mackenzie	Date:	28 January 2024
Division contesting:	Division 7		

## Section 1: Transport

- 1 Do you think two public transport spinal networks (Heavy Rail from Beerwah to Maroochydore and a Mass Transit system from Maroochydore to Birtinya) with feeder networks running to them, is the best public transport system for the region?

YES/NO No

- 2 If NO, and you are elected, will you advocate to TMR for a different Sunshine Coast Public Transport strategy?

YES/NO Yes

If YES what?

TMR should have included (as a minimum) other options such as the CAMCOS heavy rail option with supporting electric or similar sustainable bus options that are flexible in their routes and not constrained by mass transit dedicated infrastructure. Mass transit dedicated infrastructure will require either resumption of existing traffic lanes resulting in higher congestion, or will require land resumptions which will impact businesses and active travel / pedestrian flow. This mass transit option may also result in high rise development in areas which should be protected. Flexible bus routes without dedicated infrastructure provide the public transport system with the agility and flexibility to respond to changing patronage needs without the expense of installing or changing infrastructure.

- 3 Do you support a Rapid Bus Transit system in a dedicated right of way along our coastal corridor?

YES/NO No

- 4 What will you do to improve public transport now?

Response:

Improvement of local public transport will require at least two (2) levels of government involvement (State and Local). Working at the local level, I will drive input into Council's strategies such as the Sunshine Coast integrated transport strategy. I am concerned that Council undertook consultation on the strategy back in 2017/2018 and only received 157 submitted feedback forms and 18 detailed written submissions (refer Council website) out of an estimated population of 365,000. Almost seven (7) years on, it must now be up for review and must have meaningful stakeholder consultation.

Working with the State I will drive both advocacy and input into strategies such as the State Southern Sunshine Coast Public Transport Strategy, where the community's thoughts and expectations should be included. Immediate options will also require my lobbying the State for improved and more regular bus services and/or bus routes.

- 5 What do you think should be the priority for better public transport in the future?

Response:

Cost effective flexible transport options that can respond to changing patronage needs. This should support a dedicated transport corridor, such as heavy rail (eg. CAMCOS) which can accommodate both the current population as well as future projected populations. This will require extensive and meaningful stakeholder consultation, with an emphasis on what the current local community thoughts and expectations are (not just holiday makers).

## Section 2: SCRC 2024 Draft Planning Scheme

**6 Do you support the current plan to put the large majority of new arrivals out to 2041 within the Coastal Corridor? (Maroochydore to Caloundra)?**

YES/NO No

**7 What does high-rise mean to you (how many storeys)?**

Response:

Depends on the context of the area (eg. urban, peri-urban or rural) and the context on where the high rise is to be located in those areas. Following community stakeholder consultation, the community may expect higher densities around services like universities and hospitals or heavy rail transport nodes (ie. the community may expect density around these areas as acceptable to 10 stories, but consider anything above 10 stories as unnecessary high-rise), whereas around beach foreshore areas the community may consider anything over three (3) stories as high-rise.

**8 Do you think housing densification should occur along the Heavy Passenger Rail Corridor rather than the Mass Transit Coastal Corridor?**

YES/NO Yes

Explain why?

Concentrating densification around heavy passenger rail, such as Transit Orientated Development (TOD), has many benefits such as maximising the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport. It makes best use of brownfield or infill areas (ie. existing urban built form areas) in a nodal type pattern which takes the form of increased heights in the centre, spreading out to lower density away from the centre. This alleviates rows of high rise (canyoning effect) which can also result in unacceptable bulk and scale. It also helps to maintain the balance of higher density, lower density and public open space. In this way, nodal or TOD type development patterns aim to increase public transport patronage by reducing the use of private cars and by promoting sustainable urban growth. The risk of mass transit type development is a continual row of higher densities causing canyon development patterns with continual bulk and scale.

**9 If you are an existing Councillor, did you vote in favour of the current draft 2024 Planning Scheme?**

YES/NO

**10 If you are elected, will you vote to review the draft 2024 Planning Scheme, in particular the densification of the coastal corridor?**

YES/NO Yes

**11 As a Divisional Councillor, what will you do to ensure we do not become another Gold Coast?**

Response:

The only meaningful way to control development is through the Sunshine Coast Council Planning Scheme. This not only sets out the strategic development patterns for the city, but also allows localised patterns of development through Local Plans. If I am elected I will be calling for a full review of the Planning Scheme. My call will also include a review of Long-term Community Plans, which must be based on extensive and meaningful stakeholder consultation, with an emphasis on what the current local community thoughts and expectations are.

**12 Do you think the current planning decision making process is too lenient toward developers, especially in regard to site coverage, set backs and density?**

YES/NO Yes	Why? There needs to be a major overhaul of the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme, which is in line with community expectations. This should be linked to documents such as long-term community plans that have been endorsed by the community after extensive and meaningful stakeholder engagement. The current Planning Scheme (including local plans) is too ambiguous and does not adequately address sustainability and/or community dividends and/or community expectations in terms of patterns of development.
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**13 Do you think all Development Applications should require Council to notify all adjoining neighbours?**

YES/NO No	If YES, what will you do to try and make this happen? Whilst I support open and transparent government and community consultation (refer to my policy on this), it may not be a logistical or meaningful option to notify on all development applications. Some applications (eg. simple boundary realignments) may be inconsequential to neighbours. It may also be inconsistent with the Planning Act 2016 which already specifies the public notification process for certain types of applications. However, I am fully supportive of public education on Sunshine Coast Council's Development-i system where anyone can view what development applications have been lodged with Council. I also support Sunshine Coast Council updating their Development-i system to make sure all the information relating to development applications is comprehensive and available through Development-i free of charge.
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**14 As a Divisional Councillor, what will you do to achieve better development outcomes for the region and your Division?**

Response: I plan to call for a review of documents such as Long-term community Plans, transport plans and the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme. With over thirty (30) years experience in planning schemes, sustainability and community dividend outcomes, I believe I am best placed to represent the community and work hard when it comes to review, adoption and implementation of planning schemes to achieve better development outcomes for the community.
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