

# Light rail is Sunshine Coast community's least favoured option for mass transit system: report



An artist impression of light rail with 45 metre long trams.

**KAT DONAGHEY**

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Opponents of a mass transit system on the Sunshine Coast say light rail should be removed as an option after the council's public feedback process found it was the least favoured mode.

[Sunshine Coast Council on Wednesday released the much-anticipated results of its community engagement on the five public transport options under consideration](#) — bus rapid transit, high-quality bus corridor, trackless trams, light rail with wires, and wireless light rail. Among the feedback findings, which have been added as an attachment to the *Sunshine Coast*

*Mass Transit Options Analysis* report, was “particular concern” in the community about light rail with overhead wires.

This concern is reiterated in an agenda report for an upcoming council meeting on October 20 which states: “Options with tracks and wires received the lowest numbers of positive comments.”

“It therefore appears the wires are of significant concern to those persons who participated in the community engagement process.”

Despite the opposition to light rail with wires, the agenda report states it would still be retained as one of the five shortlisted options to progress to the next stage – the State Government undertaking a detailed business case.

“Light Rail Transit with overhead wires remains a recommended option to progress to the Detailed Business Case because it is the most energy efficient option,” the report states.

But Mass Transit Action Group (MTAG) spokesperson Tracey Goodwin-McDonald told *Sunshine Coast News* light rail should be removed as an option and deleted from the Options Analysis report.

Ms Goodwin-McDonald said it did not appear as though the council used any of the public feedback to review the options on the table.

“They’ve completely ignored the fact that the community do not want light rail,” Ms Goodwin-McDonald said.

“There have not been significant changes (to the report). The draft options as they were laid out in the community consultation have not changed, the assessment criteria and the results of that criteria have not changed.

“The community actually wanted to have a say as to whether they wanted it to go ahead or not and that’s been completely ignored.

“Generally it’s (the Options Analysis report) exactly the same. What is going to the State Government is exactly the same as prior to consultation, the same five options, the same criteria.”

Council states that seeking the community's views was never intended to alter the five mass transit options or rewrite the report.

"The purpose of seeking this feedback was to obtain community perspectives on the options being recommended in the Options Analysis which would then inform the further investigations to be undertaken during the preparation of the Detailed Business Case," council's agenda report states.

"This feedback was not intended to result in the removal or elimination of any options from the Options Analysis."



Ms Goodwin-McDonald said the council's 35-page summary of public feedback was very disappointing because it did not go into detail.

"We were hoping to see the full results. Instead it's been sanitised to suit the outcomes that council wants," she said.

"\$500,00 of ratepayer money has been spent on this and they failed to give any sort of quantitative benchmark analysis on any of it, and anything that the community is overwhelmingly against they are refuting with their own subjective reasons."

Ms Goodwin-McDonald said she had personally handed over more than 1000 written submissions from residents "stating they did not want light rail nor highrise – and they weren't pro forma they were all in their own words".

"That doesn't even get a mention (in the report).

“I can’t see anywhere where they say there was over 1000 residents’ submissions and I personally took them to council and handed them in and got a receipt for those submissions.”

The council says its public consultation included 1,478 people engaged face-to-face at various pop-up events and roundtables and 3,894 unique completed surveys.

Of the few statistics contained in the Options Analysis engagement summary is the finding that [more people who took part in the feedback process were opposed to all five public transport options, but there was no majority for or against \(more than 50 per cent\).](#)

“45% of respondents were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with all five options proceeding to the detailed business case,” the report states.

“46% of respondents were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, however, a third of these respondents went on to express a positive sentiment to at least one of the mass transit options.”

Ms Goodwin-McDonald said the future of the Sunshine Coast was now in the hands of 11 councillors who would have to vote on October 20 whether to push on to the third stage which was referring the Options Analysis Report to the State Government.

“My read is that really the public consultation is smoke and mirrors and they’re progressing regardless.

“It’s really the 11 elected officials who are going to make the final decision as to whether this goes forward, we are calling on those 11 elected officials to see through the farce that is in this report and do what the community wants them to do.”

The third stage, the Detailed Business Case, will require a more detailed investigation of the options.

If the project is deemed to demonstrate value for money, an investment decision may then be considered by the State and Commonwealth Governments.