

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:	Taylor Bunnag	Date:	31 January 2024
Division contesting:	Division 8		

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?

I believe that the debate regarding the optimum transportation infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast is unsettled from an economic and planning perspective. The business case for 'Direct Sunshine Coast Rail' (ie heavy rail) along the CAMCOS corridor all the way to Maroochydore is yet to be released. Funding of the project in full is yet to be committed to by any level of government. If it's the case that funding for the project does not deliver a direct rail line all the way to Maroochydore, I have significant concerns about what that will mean for the entire Sunshine Coast Public Transport strategy. A rail line that stops at Caloundra or Birtinya for example, will place more pressure on our existing road connections in those areas and defeat the purpose of an integrated public transport system on the Sunshine Coast. It would also place considerable strain on a proposed rapid bus transit system along the coastal corridor which is why in your following question, I do not support a Rapid Bus Transit system in isolation along the coastal corridor. Until we understand the financial viability and funding arrangements for the entire future Sunshine Coast Public Transport System, it would be imprudent to offer my support to one single piece of it. Therefore, if the business case for Direct Sunshine Coast Rail all the way to Maroochydore doesn't stack up and is unfunded, we don't have a choice but to look at other strategies for our region's public transport strategy but the CAMCOS corridor is the main public transport corridor that should be utilised.

- 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:

The Sunshine Coast Regional Council collects a \$47.00 transport levy. In the 2023/24 budget, the levy raised \$7.1 million in revenue, with \$2.813 million put into the Transport Futures Fund (which already has a considerable balance well over \$20 million). This is in the context of very low (less than 3%) public transport patronage in the region. What this tells me is that instead of planning for a rainy day, Council should start helping to change our car dependence now by implementing more public transport services in key areas which people might actually use (ie a bus loop connection servicing Cotton Tree, Maroochydore CBD, Alex Headland and Sunshine Cove which is currently unserved etc). This would be within the scope of Council's transport levy policy, which includes contributing to trials of flexible public transport services to meet specific community needs. If we want better public transport patronage, we need to give people a reason to use it now.

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

Response:

A comprehensive regional transport infrastructure plan that meets the demands of residents instead of a patchwork of projects which are unfunded. We cannot look at projects in isolation.

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:
Buildings above 6 storeys

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?

I support housing densification along the proposed CAMCOS Heavy Passenger Rail Corridor because whether it's heavy rail or another form of public transport (depending on the business case as per my answer in Question 2), this is likely to be the main public transport artery of the Sunshine Coast and logically, it should be servicing residents who can readily access this transportation system.

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:

Advocate for a planning scheme that keeps high rise developments off our coastal strips and reject development applications which do not conform with this approach. We have a CBD which is masterplanned and there is recognition that this is a suitable location for a limited number of high rise developments, not our coastlines. As a lifelong surfer, I think that surfboards and boardshorts belong on the beach, not buildings and shadows caused by them.

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?

Yes. My view is that the current council has been skewed in-favour of development driven objectives. I have recently made a submission to Council regarding a proposed development close to my home in Point Arkwright (I live in nearby Yaroomba). The development application does not conform with several aspects of the local code or multi-dwelling unit code with respect to height, setbacks and overall land usage size. Despite this, the development application makes reference to a meeting with Council in which officers gave 'in-principle' support to the proposal. Given that the proposal does not conform with several codes of assessment, this shows that council is not being strict enough with

	developers.
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13 Do you think all Development Applications should require Council to notify all adjoining neighbours?

YES/NO Yes	<p>If YES, what will you do to try and make this happen?</p> <p>As outlined in response to Question 12, the scenario I referred to is a code assessable application, despite the application not meeting certain aspects of multiple code assessments. This type of application in my view should be impact assessable (which allows community submissions and rights of appeal). This will require alteration of the reference tables within the Planning Scheme. I will also discuss my concerns regarding this planning loophole with the State Planning minister of the day.</p>
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14 As a Divisional Councillor, what will you do to achieve better development outcomes for the region and your Division?

<p>Response:</p> <p>As a member of the community reference group for the first regional planning scheme, I have a good understanding of community expectations with respect to development outcomes on the Sunshine Coast. I'm a born and bred Sunshine Coast local. I've been a lawyer for the last 8 years, dealing with complex legal issues while representing workers and healthcare patients. My legal work has involved considerable analytical skills and forensic attention to detail. I will combine all of these three qualities - sustainable development values, local knowledge and tenacity to ensure that Division 8 and the rest of the Sunshine Coast maintains it's coastal character.</p>
