

Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Action Group Inc. (MTAG)

March 2024

Mayoral 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:	Wayne Parcell PSM	Date:	2 February 2024
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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

If YES what?

The public transport system needs to be flexible and adaptable to ensure that it is able to meet both current and future needs. Today's choices will need refining and changing as growth proceeds. The current binary approach lacks vision and ignores potential innovation.

We will advocate that TMR is actively engaged with the community in defining and refining its Sunshine Coast Public Transport strategy. A static strategy is unacceptable. A public transport strategy for the future must be dynamic and innovative.

- 3 Do you support a rapid bus transit system in a dedicated right of way along our coastal corridor?

YES/NO Yes

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

Response:

We are concerned that a rapid transport system is not being actioned. A rapid bus transit system requires a sufficient dedicated right of way be created, and therein lies a problem and a challenge that we will immediately tackle to ensure its success.

We will lobby for the State to take a more immediate role in improving the current public transport system. We would meet with the private operators to see how they can improve. We would investigate on-demand public transport for low density areas, for example in The Hinterland and west of the Bruce Highway, and the scope for greater opportunity for active transport and innovative transport solutions that incorporate technology.

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

Response:

Better public transport that continues to attract a very small percentage of patrons does not equate with better public transport. The priority must be to enhance the attractiveness of public transport to encourage people to choose active transport or public transport before their car. This will be a priority for us.

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:

Council does not put people anywhere. People choose where they live based on the attractiveness of an area, availability and affordability. We will advocate enhancement of other locations and areas, with a focus not to continue to expand the current urban footprint.

We understand and agree with the current height limits - "high-rise" means something different to everyone and does not advance a discussion that requires clarity and focus.

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

YES/NO

Explain why?

Housing densities will change in various areas, pursuant to the planning scheme, and in many places east of the Bruce Highway as population growth continues. It is more important to ensure that density changes are appropriate and sensitive to communities and support livability of the Sunshine Coast region as a whole. Balancing liveability and density is crucial for our future.

- 9 If you are an existing Councillor, did you vote in favour of the current draft 2024 Planning Scheme (no answer required if not an incumbent Councillor)?

YES/NO

- 10 If you are elected Mayor, will you review the draft Planning Scheme, in particular the densification of the coastal corridor?

YES/NO Yes

- 11 As Mayor, what will you do to ensure we do not become another Gold Coast?

Response:

Our priority is to ensure transparency in decision-making and community consultation. This will be a major focus for us and be a significant factor in ensuring the Sunshine Coast maintains its own character and liveability, and not become another version of the Gold Coast.

- 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

Why?

The current planning decision-making process, which includes the State and the Planning and Environment Court, is failing to properly connect the community and stakeholders, leading to misalignment of aspirations and outcomes. We will address this as a priority.

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

YES/NO	If YES, what will you do to try and make this happen? We support stronger neighbourhood engagement and will seek legal advice as to what changes Council can implement to achieve this.
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14 As Mayor, what will you do to achieve better development outcomes for the region that better protect existing residents' privacy and amenity?

Response:
Everyone should benefit from better development outcomes, existing and new residents. The planning processes are legalistic and complex and not readily able to be understood by many in the community. We will raise awareness and understanding of how the planning processes operate so that everyone is empowered with knowledge to participate. Consultation can then be informed and meaningful. Transparency of process is followed by clear and timely communication of decisions and the reasons for them. Our fresh approach will build trust and confidence so that outcomes are understood by everyone.