

# 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:	Joe Natoli	Date:	30 January 2024
Division contesting:	Division 4		

## 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?

The loss of two lanes of traffic for a right of way Mass Transit System will impact congestion on already busy roads. My preference is Passenger Rail all the way to Maroochydore which acts also as a commuter system as well as direct travel to Brisbane. Dedicated bus ways with electric buses or hydrogen fuel cells, with the ability to have right of way at signalised intersections will meet the need.

Mass Transit has never been about better public transport, it has been used as the conduit to direct much higher density along the coastal corridor. The dedicated busways must not be attached to density but needs to be attached to a better public transport network.

- 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:

I will promote to councillors to change the policy of the Transport Levy "Future Fund" and have the ability to access the \$25 million in that fund to encourage the State Government to improve bus travel time efficiencies, as well as reducing fares to low or no cost to encourage mode shift from cars to buses. For those who then would move to using a low or no fare public bus system will benefit towards lowering their cost of living, reduced costs of running a car. For those who still need a car to get around the coast they will benefit with less cars on the road and congestion will ease.

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

Response:

A passenger rail line spine Nambour to Beerwah, Beerwah to Maroochydore both connected to Brisbane. Long haul express buses which during peak can travel every 15 minutes, Nambour to Maroochydore, Noosa to Maroochydore, University at Sippy Downs to Maroochydore, Maroochydore to Caloundra via the Hospital at Birtinya. The government needs to look at small electric buses operated by the private sector which is subsidised by Translink. These privately owned buses operate on demand and pick up passengers along the way and take them to the closest station, either bus or train. They feed passengers to larger buses or train which travel from station to station. The passenger then can be taken to their final destination by one of these on demand mini-buses. It works like uber with an apt, the only difference is it will pick up other passengers on route to the closest station, and only after arriving at your last station will it drop you off at your final destination.

## 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:  
8 stories plus

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?

Plan greenfield sites with density in mind. This means well planned medium to high density communities with wider roads, footpaths on both sides of the street, a dedicated separated bikeway network, heavily treelined streets all in a parkland setting. It means developers will pay for major infrastructure compared to the massive amount of money required to retrofit major infrastructure. A greenfield site can accommodate land for all sporting and recreational uses as well as for community facilities. The existing built-up area of Division 4 does not have any more land for sporting or recreational uses. It puts extraordinary pressure on existing parks and sporting reserves. While I support a need for renewal and some increase in density, I do not believe the cost both in dollars to retrofit existing built-up areas can be justified and will only burden existing ratepayers. It will also be so disruptive for so many who purchased their forever home to know they are expected to trade their quiet residential street to higher density unit developments. Those who want to move here to the coast can either buy a unit along a passenger rail corridor or buy an existing detached house if they can afford it.

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

YES/NO 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:

We need to put this question to the community. Since 2017 this has been a well kept secret council has had which this settlement pattern was never put to the community. If the community is opposed to the current plan, then I will urge council to go back to the drawing board and rethink its future settlement patterns. There is no urgency to add so much infill density in this current draft planning scheme especially with another planning scheme due in 10 years time. We have the time to go back add a little density to satisfy the Regional Plan 2017 requirements, and take our time to get this right.

**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? Council has been very firm about height, but that's where it ends, density, site cover and setbacks have been steadily been relaxed over the years. What we are now getting are much bigger and bulkier buildings which means it is harder to get separation between buildings for deeper landscaping. Landscaping can soften the appearance of the built form, and can also reduce the heatsink effects of too much hard infrastructure, buildings and roads.
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**13 Do you think all Development Applications should require Council to notify all adjoining neighbours?**

YES/NO Yes	If YES, what will you do to try and make this happen? Most of the application council receives are code assessable. It is not a requirement to notify the adjoining owners, however I believe it would be a good practice for council to do so. Code Assessable applications don't allow for third party appeal rights or formal notification or formal submissions, however council does allow anyone to make a representation in writing to any code assessable application and the planning assessment officer will attempt to address any concern. To include a notification to the immediate neighbours would be a very goodwill gesture and allow more time for neighbours to be aware and provide written representations to council.
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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 want to restrict the number of dual occupancy dwelling which can be built on any one street. Set a minimum land size which would trigger an impact assessable application if the land size is smaller. Make sure privacy provisions are front and centre of all dual occupancy and unit developments. A focus on better designs suited to our climate. Make sure council focuses on creating an urban forest to reduce the heatsink effects. Work with the community to better understand what are the non-negotiable aspects they want council to protect and enshrine into our planning scheme which will ensure what is special about the Sunshine Coast to us is never lost.
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