

**Submission
No 44**

INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Organisation: Coffs Harbour City Council
Name: Ms Anne Shearer
Position: Road Safety and Transport Officer
Date Received: 10/05/2012

Ref: IR 3034932

Good afternoon Dr Littlefair

Please find attached the submission from Coffs Harbour City Council to the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan which contains information pertinent to your enquiry.
Please also find attached a paper titled "Beach Glider" referred to in the submission.
Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. Council looks forward to reading the resulting report.

Kind Regards

Anne Shearer

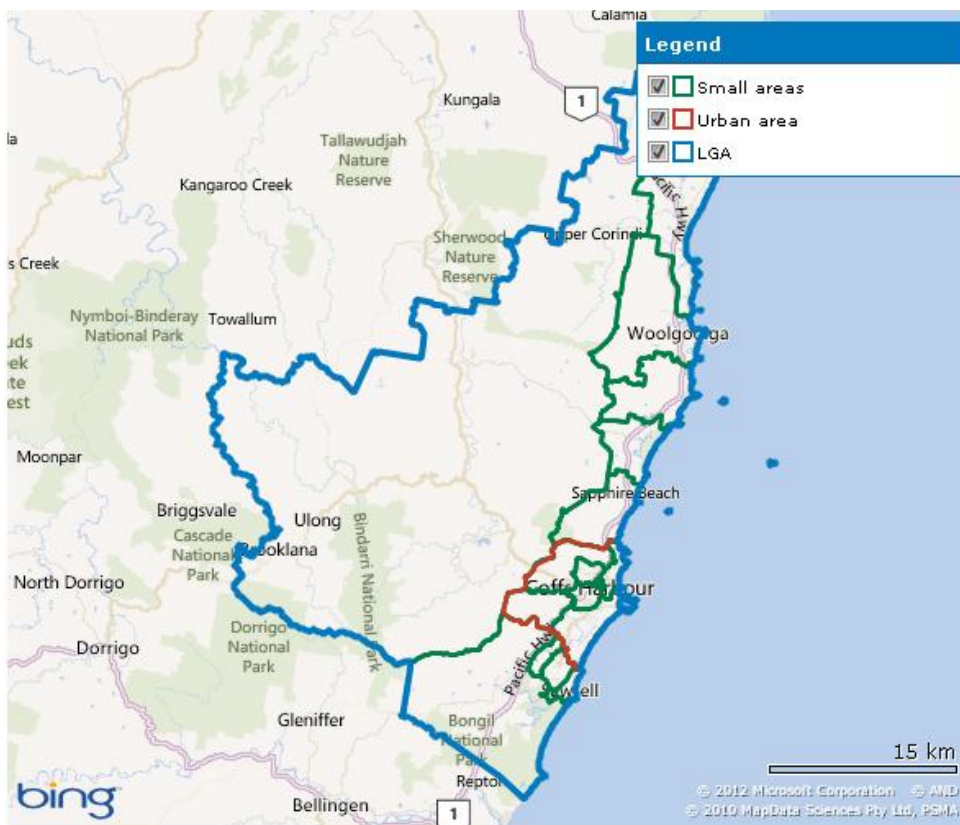
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Coffs Harbour City Council
Response to the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan Discussion Paper
April 2012

Coffs Harbour City Council welcomes the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan, the Regional Transport Plans and the various strategies which will arise from the plans as well as the associated community consultation. The resulting documents will hopefully establish a structure for future planning within the LGA, giving certainty and ending speculation about the future of different transport modes in the regional areas.

Background information

Coffs Harbour City is located on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, about 540 kilometres north of Sydney and 440 kilometres south of Brisbane. It is bounded by the Clarence Valley Council area in the north and west, the Coral Sea in the east, and Bellingen Shire in the south.



The Mid North Coast region has been a focus for consistent population growth in recent decades, and Coffs Harbour area is one of the fastest growing cities in the region. In 2009 the population was 71 677 with average annual growth over 5 years at 1.6%. (cf: Mid North Coast SD - 1.3% and NSW 1.2%). The projected population for 2036 is 101 800.

The region offers high quality lifestyles and, for many, more affordable housing than can be found in Sydney or Southeast Queensland. The natural environment – including beaches, rivers and national parks – distinctive townships and strong sense of community underpin the region's attractiveness.

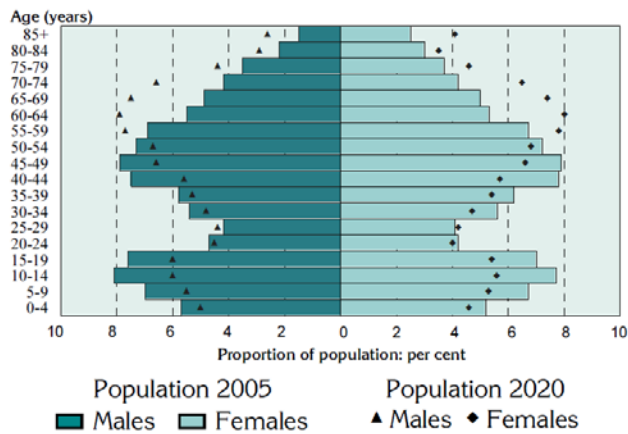
Coffs Harbour is located along the Pacific Highway which bisects the city. The North Coast Railway also runs through the eastern part of the city, forming a barrier between the Jetty residential and retail / accommodation areas and the foreshores and marina.

Coffs Harbour City comprises of an urbanised coastal strip with predominantly rural areas to the west of the Pacific Highway. The City experiences growing residential, rural-residential and resort areas, and an expanding industrial and commercial centre. It encompasses a total land area of nearly 1,200 square kilometres, including substantial areas of National Park, State Forest, parkland, coastline and beaches. The Great Dividing Range is within one kilometre of the sea in some places.

Settlement is based around the main town of Coffs Harbour, and the townships of Sawtell, Toormina and Woolgoolga, with many small villages and localities along the coast and inland. The Coffs Coast is a well-recognised holiday destination, with numerous tourist facilities.

Demographics

Coffs Harbour ranks higher than the State average in most indicators of chronic disease, ageing population and low socio-economic factors. People who are not able to drive a car often feel isolated. They find difficulty accessing health and education facilities as well as social gatherings such as festivals and markets. The numbers of transport disadvantaged people in our community will increase with numbers of retirees and rising transport costs.



The population projections for the Division show a number of changes in age distribution, with the 2020 population projected to have:

- at younger ages – generally much lower proportions of males and females aged 0 to 19 years;
- from 30 to 54 years old – lower proportions of both males and females; and
- from age 55 years and over – relatively more males and females (most pronounced at ages 60 to 74 years and for the 85+ age group).

Population projections for Mid North Coast DBP, by age and sex 2007 and 2020

Effective transport is essential for the community’s quality of life and economic development. Coffs Harbour needs to maintain its links with capital cities such as Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, whilst providing facilities for the residents who live, work and study in the area.

Coffs Harbour City Council initiated a 2030 Plan from the Community Vision 2030, developed in 2008. It outlines the key steps to delivering a more sustainable Coffs Harbour to the year 2030 and beyond. Participants included individual citizens, community and volunteer groups, State agencies, non government organisation and businesses. Their ideas, along with community ideas from the various forums have been integrated in the Coffs Harbour 2030 Plan. One of the 5 themes is titled “Moving Around”. Under the theme are three outcomes:

- We are well connected to each other and services
- We make best use of an excellent environmentally friendly public transport system
- Many of us walk and cycle from place to place

Local Government has limited ability to influence transport policy development and funding models. The inter-jurisdictional nature of transport patterns and infrastructure means influencing transport patterns is complex.

Recommendation:

- The NSW Masterplan should reflect the plans of Local Government Areas within the region.
- There should be a whole of government approach to long term transport planning, and Local Government should be party to transport policy development that affects their LGA.
- Set measurable outcomes with timelines and state how these objectives will be achieved in an action plan for the region.

- There needs to be a clear long term plan for investment in public transport, clarifying the feasibility of rail travel and investment in an effective public bus system.

Settlement patterns dictate transport needs. The current settlement pattern has led to a high use of the private car, and less use of walking, bikes and public transport. It requires significant investment to change the infrastructure and the culture of this community. The impacts of this planning are;

- Environmental – urban sprawl and pollution from gas emissions.
- Economic – Coffs Harbour is a ribbon development along a narrow strip of coast line.
- Social – isolation; social stratification of areas and reduced access to public transport.

The challenge is to implement best practice sustainable transport models with a relatively small, but growing population, lack of resources and large distances between centres.

The Pacific Highway

The Pacific Highway, as well as servicing interstate and inter-regional traffic, needs to provide for a high number of daily north / south trips to service local needs: including school buses, elderly drivers and bicycles. The highway cuts through many of our urban areas. There is the need to develop an improved transport system to separate local and through traffic which includes an increasing number of heavy vehicles carrying freight. The fear of a serious crash in Coffs Harbour was heightened by the recent tragic crash in Urunga when a truck careered through three houses killing an 11 year old child. Additionally, the highway creates a barrier to movement. It effectively severs the community in many of our urban areas, and hinders movement of east-west local traffic. Residents from West Coffs have to cross the Highway to access the civic centre, education and health facilities, and the business district. The main shopping centre: Park Beach Plaza is dissected by the Highway with no satisfactory way for pedestrians and cyclists to cross a highway with up to 10 lanes of traffic. Roads and Maritime Services have determined their preferred Coffs Harbour Pacific Highway by-pass route however no commitment to funding or timing for the project has taken place.

Recommendation: Construct Coffs Harbour Pacific Highway by-pass as soon as possible.

An alternative view questions the investment in road infrastructure with the prospect of rising oil prices and potentially significantly less traffic.

Recommendation: Conduct an economic risk assessment with all State Road planning projects which includes strategies for diverting funds to more sustainable transport projects.

Transport of Freight

The impact on the community of heavy freight vehicles through and around the local area is a cause of concern for many residents. Other road users feel unsafe around large trucks; they are noisy and damage the roads. Meanwhile, demand for freight increases every year. The community tell us very clearly that they would like more freight to be transported by rail.

Recommendation:

- Reduce the numbers of heavy vehicles travelling through towns and ensure that the majority of freight is transported by rail.
- Improve integrated road and rail freight services.
- Provide infrastructure for freight transport demands
- Provide more regional transport hubs

Buses

Coffs Harbour has a public bus service which provides for limited travel around our urban areas. A multi-faceted approach to public transport is required, taking into account local land use planning and infrastructure constraints. In Coffs Harbour the challenges are considerable given its linear development. The current contracts system links passenger services and school bus transport. For example, all the contracted operators maintain a fleet of large buses, but no small buses. However, there is a need for smaller, more flexible passenger services for residential areas.

Coffs Harbour LGA has three private bus operators. The terms of their contracts contain no incentives for innovative practice in providing safe and affordable passenger transport services. Public transport in this area is complex, expensive and difficult to access. The services are not integrated. For example, bus services do not coincide with train and airline arrivals. Increasingly organisation such as local resorts, clubs and children's services are purchasing their own buses. This raises issues about safety standards on deregulated bus operators, and reduced passenger numbers for the existing contracted bus operators.

One bus company has recently initiated a "Hopper" card which can be used to pay for bus tickets. This system should be available and transferable for all bus companies.

Some bus timetables are difficult to read and inaccessible to many disabled people and some new Australians. Coffs Harbour Council is keen to work with Transport for NSW to develop a Google based trip planner to assist people to understand the timetables.

The Transport for NSW Regional Coordinator should be given the skills and authority to resolve

local transport and bus issues.

A lack of a quality public transport system leads to car dependent travel patterns now and for future generations and significantly disadvantages children, younger adults and the elderly, who are the primary users of public transport for access to education, work, shopping, recreation opportunities and other community facilities and services.

Coffs Harbour has a relatively small (but growing) population density. Local Government should be working in partnership with State planners to ensure that when the population increases to a critical mass the services will be in place to meet the demand. Services in other places demonstrate that people will continue to travel in private vehicles until it becomes easier to ride on public transport. Prioritising public transport routes and discouraging private vehicles in business districts are two strategies that could encourage more use of buses. Council is working with the Transport Working Group to promote awareness of and use of public transport.

A recent review of bus operator contracts by Transport for NSW was conducted without consulting the community. This resulted in minor changes to contract conditions which had little or no impact on the community. A comprehensive review is required with community consultation. This must include future infrastructure plans and ensure more transparency and accountability. Transport for NSW should work with Council to ensure public transport priority routes and improved bus stop facilities with shelters and safe waiting rooms in the main business districts.

Recommendations:

- A comprehensive review of the bus contracts taking into account the needs of the community for flexible, affordable and regular public transport.
- Review the use of large buses for passenger transport services and introduce a more flexible service catering for the needs of members of the community such as tourists, commuters, shoppers, students and those who are transport disadvantaged.
- Establish a fully integrated public transport system.
- Develop a Google base trip planner
- Plan for future infrastructure such as public transport priority routes, improved bus stop facilities including adequate shelters and waiting rooms.
- More powers should be given to the Regional Coordinator to work with public transport operators to improve their service.
- Establish priority routes for buses and discourage the use of private vehicles for short trips.
- Work with bus companies to develop a smart card system for passengers.
- Plan for intelligent transport information systems.
- Ensure there is consistency of concession fares across different modes of transport such

as long distance coaches, rail and local buses.

School Buses

The school bus service is also very complex and in need of a comprehensive review. The present system provides free bus transport to a school of the parents' choice. As a result there are children spending three to four hours a day travelling along narrow rural roads and the highway. Some buses are overcrowded, whilst others are transporting one student to a school. The responsibility for students at interchanges is not clear, and can result in considerable danger for the students who cross and wait on dangerous roads.

The current capacity regulations allow for students to stand and sit in the aisles in buses with up to 80 passengers whilst travelling on the Pacific Highway and narrow rural roads.

The issue of safety on school buses was the subject of a recent State Government review. The community is looking forward to a clear action plan which will ensure that students are travelling as safely as possible given the constraints of bus travel.

Recommendations:

- A comprehensive review of the school bus transport system, including the student subsidy scheme to limit student travel times and distances to educational centres
- A review of the passenger capacity loadings to ensure that buses are not overcrowded on the riskier routes.
- An action plan to make buses safer for students.

Rail and Regional Transport

The North Coast railway line traverses Coffs Harbour and connects satellite towns to the city. Residents of the west hinterland villages chose to live there in anticipation of a long term passenger rail link to Coffs Harbour. Unfortunately this service is no longer operating, but could offer a transport link which has a small environmental and physical footprint. A local rail service would be popular for many sections of the population. Attached is a paper (Beach Glider) which outlines a model for local rail transport infrastructure.

Coffs Harbour would also benefit from a high speed rail link to cities such as Sydney and Brisbane. This would present a very viable alternative to air travel, and private car. It would be a tourist attraction, and provide new economic opportunities for Coffs Harbour, not least the ability to build around the railway which is ideally placed in the Jetty Development area.

A State wide strategy is required for the location of intermodal hubs and a clear plan to ensure the efficient delivery of goods to and from ports including international air ports, and unimpeded access to city hubs.

Recommendations:

- Plan for increased use of local rail, high speed rail and freight transport
- Provide customer friendly schedules – regional transport that will cater for commuters, families and students.
- When buses are provided in lieu of the train, allow passengers to disembark at bus stops along the way -eg when travelling from Grafton to Coffs Harbour, allow passengers to disembark in Woolgoolga.
- Provide an integrated intra regional and local road and rail passenger service
- Provide an integrated transport service with connecting services.
- Provide affordable transport of all types. If a bus or train isn't full, sell seats cheaper to fill it up – just like the airlines.
- Develop a State wide strategy and clear plan to locate intermodal transport hubs and ensure the efficient delivery of goods, including the alleviation of bottlenecks and ensuring easy access to ports and city hubs.

Coffs Harbour Regional Airport

Coffs Harbour Regional Airport is a modern and busy regional airport. It has a diverse range of services based in and around the airport that contribute to the uniqueness of this facility. This includes a travel agent on site. The airport is located approximately 2km south of the city centre, making it one of the most accessible airports in the country.

The main runway is 2,080m long and 45m wide with the capacity to handle aircraft up to Boeing 767-300 size and is designed as a restricted International Airport. However, runway resurfacing is needed in the near future which will cost approx 5 million dollars.

There is a convenient flight schedule provided by Qantaslink, Virgin Australia and Brindabella Airlines. Services are a mix of jet and turbo-prop aircraft, this combination gives frequent flights at convenient times for both business and leisure travellers. There are approximately 350,000 passengers annually.

Recommendation:

Continue to provide support for and expand the facilities of the Coffs Coast Regional Airport, including \$5 million for a newly surfaced runway.

Alternative Transport Modes

Residents within 1.6km of a Primary School and 2.3km of a High School are not eligible for a bus pass (with the exception of children in grades K-2). Safe pedestrian and cycle access to schools is a priority for these students. Alternative transport access to schools also provides some relief to the parking difficulties around schools at opening and closing times.

In Coffs LGA, path and cycleway facilities are provided at two levels. Local streets are used for walking and cycling, and footpaths and cycleways are provided along collector and distributor roads. Council is under continued pressure to provide footpath and cycleway facilities throughout the city.

Pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets are vital public amenities, contributing to community sustainability. Traffic can limit neighbourhood activities such as children playing outside, neighbours socialising, and people walking. Car dominance erodes the independent mobility of children and other vulnerable road users.

Streets that are pedestrian and bicycle-friendly promote social interaction and enable people to engage in physical exercise, which enhances personal wellbeing, while discouraging car usage and its associated effects. Placing priority on walking and cycle facilities provides a larger part of the population with equality of opportunity for access to social, material and cultural services.

Footpaths are used by a variety of people, following an equally wide range of pursuits. There is a generally accepted view by the community and road safety authorities that footpath cycling provides major benefits to the community, and particularly primary school aged children.

There are not enough footpaths provided in the Coffs LGA, and funding is limited for capital works and infrastructure maintenance. Alternative means of transport such as buses, trains, pedestrians and cycling are not as well serviced as the car. The availability of an extensive network of paths will encourage walking and cycling by the community.

There is also a need to promote and educate active transport in the community through models such as the TravelSmart scheme. Employers should provide end of trip facilities such as lockers , parking and showers, and Council needs more funding for bike racks and bike rental schemes.

Carpool Website

The Northern region has received funding from Transport for NSW to establish a carpool website. It

is a very useful tool particularly in areas with limited public transport. The website needs to be expanded to at least cover NSW. This would be unwieldy with the current alliance model, so needs to be managed by Transport for NSW.

Recommendation:

- Assist Local Government (through provision of additional funding) to complete construction of, and to maintain a network of shared paths linking residential areas, health and education facilities and central business districts
- Promote and provide education about the safe use of active transport and its benefits.
- Expand the Northern River and Mid North Coast car pool website to incorporate all parts of NSW and transfer management of the website to Transport for NSW.

Accessible Public Transport

In 1992 the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act was introduced. It has made it unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability in almost every aspect of daily life. Access to appropriate support services including person care, respite care and transport are fundamental for many in the community.

A series of mobility maps for the area have been developed utilising the skills and experience of community members who, themselves have a disability.

Council needs State government assistance to implement accessible transport infrastructure, and to retrofit existing infrastructure. This is a challenging project which requires some clarification about how operators and infrastructure providers can provide 100% accessible transport facilities by 2022.

Recommendation: Assist Local Government to determine the standards for accessible public transport infrastructure and to retrofit existing infrastructure as appropriate.

Safe Systems

The National Road Safety Strategy 2011 – 2020 advocates a safe systems approach concentrating on safe roads, safe people and safe vehicles. The strategy recognised that Local Government owns 85% of the road network on which 50% of the road trauma occurs.

To fully implement this methodology Councils need State support to become an active and willing member of the strategy.

The Local Government Road Safety Program

The NSW Staysafe Committee have affirmed their support for a continued program of Road Safety Officers and expansion of their role in the local community. The program has delivered substantial road safety benefits to the area via projects such as the Nightrider program, seatbelt use and the Slow Down speed project conducted in conjunction with the local police, work with local schools and community groups. Despite a rapidly growing number of vehicles in the area, the number of crashes since the program began has shown a downward trend. The resulting reduction in road trauma is valued highly by the local community.

Council strongly supports the retention of the current funding model including a 1:1 contribution toward an officer in Council to address local road safety issues.

Recommendations:

- Confirm continued (long term) funding for existing Road Safety Officers under the LGRSP
- Review the role to empower the RSO to be an agent of change in the community and establish a safe system culture within Local Government.
- The LGRSP needs to be fully resourced both financially and physically.

Maintenance Backlog

The estimated cost to bring road infrastructure up to a satisfactory condition in Coffs LGA is \$46.5 million and requires maintenance of \$4.3 million. The renewal gap is widening. Local Government needs support from State and Federal government to meet the maintenance backlog of infrastructure assets. The renewal gap affects the local economy – including industry that use heavy vehicles – tourism, road safety and the amenity of the roads for all users.

The State Government should revisit the extent of allocation of capital funds to major infrastructure works and reallocate 20% of these funds to reintroduce a substantial minor capital works programme (for projects up to \$20million in value).

There has been a substantial reduction in real terms of the Block and Repair grant programmes over the last decade. Coffs Harbour City Council requests that State government increase Regional Road funding based on the Construction Cost index. We also call on the State government to form regional partnerships between the RMS and local government practitioners to facilitate assessment of the condition and capacity of the Regional Road network and to enable this information to be fed into Integrated Regional Transport Plans. This partnership should also have the specific goal of building capacity of practitioners through shared training and experiential opportunities.

Coffs Harbour recognises the critical part Roads to Recovery funding plays in maintaining local road infrastructure and applauds extension of this programme to 2014. However, it is noted that no undertaking has been given to make this programme permanent after 2014 and the level of funding increased and tied to the Road Construction Cost Index so that an adequate level of service can be provided to local communities. Federal funding provided for infrastructure to date has largely been allocated to new infrastructure works with little being provided to meet the funding gap identified in the reports published by the Roads & Transport Directorate.

Coffs Harbour City Council requests that a review of existing maintenance responsibilities for State and National Highway road reserves be carried out by Transport for NSW to clarify responsibilities and funding arrangements applying to Local Government.

Local Government recognises the need to implement more efficient freight transport links across the State. A major impediment to realising this efficiency results from the limited load capacity of a large number of bridges on regional and local roads. The Council calls on both State and Federal Governments to establish an assistance programme modelled on the highly successful Timber Bridges on Regional Roads Programme as a matter of urgency.

Coffs Harbour notes the work complete to date under the COAG Road Reform Plan (CRRP) and awaits a determination which may provide some compensation for the road pavement deterioration attributed to higher mass limits. In addition, the establishment of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator on 1st January 2013 will rationalise the management of heavy vehicles

Coffs Harbour recognises the activities undertaken over the last year to address the skills shortage. Local Government is keen to work with State and Commonwealth Governments, professional bodies and tertiary educational institutions to address the worsening skills shortage by introducing more training incentives.

Recommendations:

- State and Federal government to work with Council to meet the maintenance backlog of infrastructure assets.
- State government increase Regional Road funding based on the Construction Cost index.
- Form regional partnerships between the RMS and local government practitioners to assess the condition and capacity of the Regional Road network. Feed this information into the Integrated Regional Transport Plans.
- Ensure a permanent Roads to Recovery program after 2014. Increase the level of funding and tie it to the Road Construction Cost Index .Review existing maintenance responsibilities

for State and National Highway road reserves to clarify responsibilities and funding arrangements applying to Local Government.

- Establish a State and Federal assistance programme modelled on the highly successful Timber Bridges on Regional Roads Programme as a matter of urgency.
- Provide some compensation for the road pavement deterioration attributed to higher mass limits.
- Work with Local Government and Commonwealth Governments, professional bodies and tertiary educational institutions to address the worsening skills shortage by introducing more training incentives.

The Beach Glider

Suburban Train System for Coffs Harbour City
Passenger Rail Service from Glenreagh to Macksville

Executive Summary

The 2030 Vision Summit indicated strong community support for rail to be a part of the future for transport in the Coffs Harbour Region. The projected population increases (Mid North Coast Regional Strategy) for this region would certainly justify rail in economic and environmental terms.

Commuter Rail Service for Coffs Harbour City – from Glenreagh to Macksville

Infrastructure Cost: Ranging from \$10 to \$20 million.

Frequency of Service: Once every 30 minutes, 6am to 9pm. 30 services per day.

Locomotives: Diesel Locomotive, running on Biodiesel or Passenger Motor-Rail Units.

Ticketing: Free, no ticketing.

Indicative Capacity: 300 persons

Number of Stations: Five Stations (Stage 1), Ten Stations (Stage 2). Possible list of future stations for Stage 2 include Orara High School, Nana Glen, Glenreagh, Coffs Harbour Education Campus (CHEC), Raleigh, Urunga, Oyster Creek and Valla Park.

This document forms one part of a funding Submission for a Passenger Rail Feasibility Study (\$30,000 to 50,000)

Stage 1 ~ Proposed Passenger Rail Service from Coramba to Bonville



Proposed Stations:

Bonville: Proposed new platform on available site with passing loop.

Bonville has available land right next to the station site. A High School already exists in Bonville near this line. Urban districts are proposed near station site. 'Park and Ride' potential via the easy station access from Bonville Station Road. Intermodal potential for regions to the south.

Sawtell: Existing ARTC Platform only

Sawtell has an industrial area next to the station site, low density residential. Significant potential for urban consolidation, access to major beaches and shopping centre.

Coffs Harbour: Existing ARTC Harbourside Station

Coffs Harbour has considerable high density residential development next to the station. Shopping areas, restaurants, tourist sites, boat harbour all located within walking distance. A High School is situated nearby, as well as TAFE.

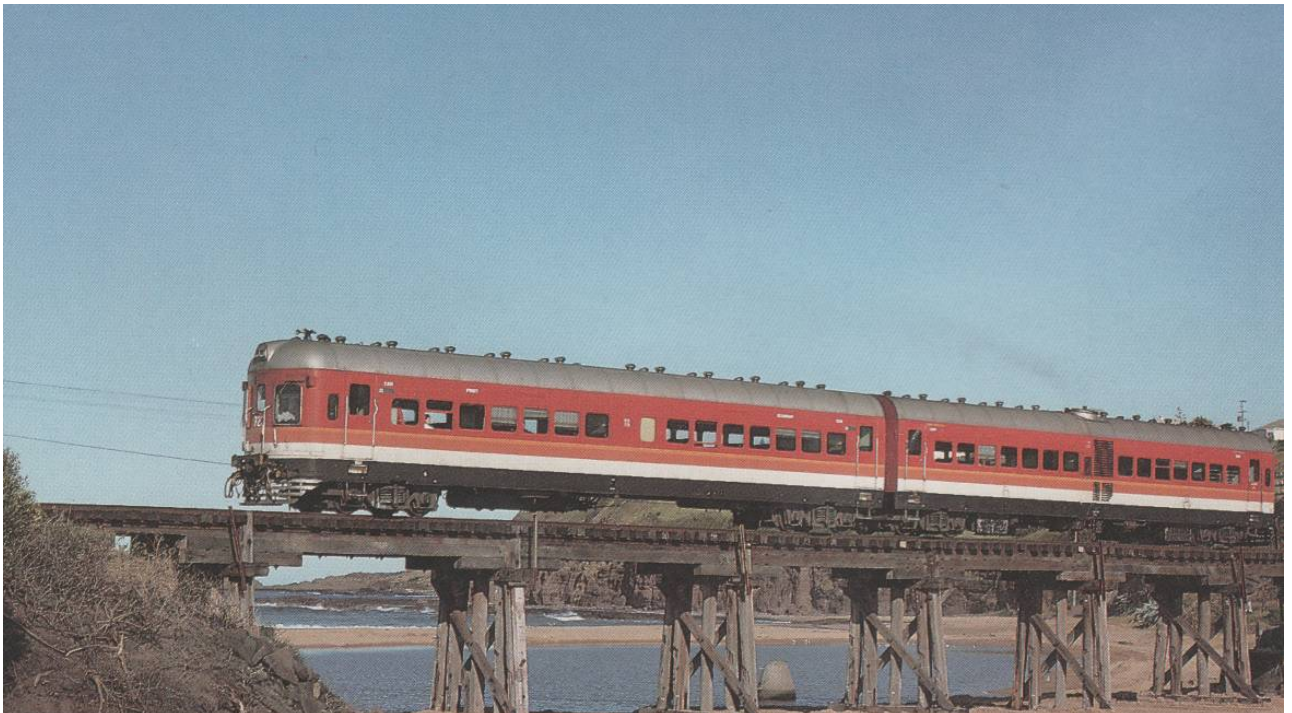
Park Beach Plaza: Proposed new platform

Park Beach Plaza has a major shopping centre, movie theatres, bulky goods industrial areas as well as the potential for affordable housing initiatives identified by the State Government. A High School is situated near by. Link to Pacific Highway as an Inter-Modal Transport Hub.

Coramba: Proposed new platform on available site with newly renovated passing loop. A well established village of several hundred residents. Expansion potential for both residential and industrial zones. This station could also service the residents of the Eastern Dorrigo (Ulong/ Lowanna/Timmsvale/Brooklana/Bobo), Nana Glen and the Orara Valley as another 'Park and Ride' Station.

Locomotive Options: Two Train Sets

1. 2 x New Commuter Units needed at \$5,000,000 approximate cost each.
Query: whether Macksville can be used for maintenance.
2. 2 x Second Hand Rail Motor Units (image below). Restored, ready to run Rail Motor Units are available for immediate use.
3. Purchase of 2 x Class 44 loco, pulling two (2) carriages.
Carriages free but \$100,000 each to restore (image Part 2).
- 4, Privately leased Rolling Stock Sets and Locos.



Timetabling:

Approximately 30 minutes between each service.
Timetable needs to work in with daily XPT and Freight services each day.

Total Start-Up Costs

\$10 to \$15 Million

Stations: \$5 million

Rail Units \$5 million each (two rail units required)

The Coffs Harbour City Council Rail Working group has very tentatively priced a possible initial start up cost of as little as \$10 to \$15million depending on the choices preferred. This is for a total of 5 stations from Coramba to Bonville as Stage One, using the main line, with two rail units operating to deliver a rail service every 30 minutes.

The annual running cost to be determined by a feasibility study.

Other Rail Related Issues:

Maintenance Options

1. Set up Local Maintenance Operation locally or
2. Repair rail motors at Newcastle, Goulburn etc.

Local Maintenance Yards:

Local yards could be feasible if:

1. North Coast Rail line operators were interested in establishment of new Yards outside of Sydney - Newcastle area due to congestion along that rail corridor. Yards could be run together with the Rail Operators.
2. In consideration of breakdowns for the main line operators. Freight operators on the main line could benefit from extra maintenance yards negating the need for very slow return trip with disabled locos etc. to Newcastle, Goulburn, etc.

Depot/Railway yards exist at:

- a) Macksville - could be a suitable site for future maintenance yards
- b) Glenreagh – possibility of maintenance yards being established in the future.

Track Options

Passing Loops at Coramba and Bonville suggest that the Beach Glider operate between these two points initially.

Macksville to Glenreagh or Nana Glen also have passing loops for future extensions of the service. New stations at Orara High School, Nana Glen, CHEC and South Sawtell are possibilities.

Ticketing Options

Tickets are intended to be free at this stage, with the cost coming from increased rates as the service attracts its clientele around its stations. The group is confident that a service of this nature will be a tourist and resettlement magnet for Coffs Harbour City. Free transport encourages patronage which in turn encourages purchase of real estate centrally located.

Funding Options

Running costs to be borne by either NSW State Government and/or Council or the operator. Costs to be recouped by a variety of means such as on-line marketing on the train or stations themselves, rent from shops on the stations or railway land, or roof top real estate rent (roof top meaning the space above the stations themselves). The resulting increased density around the stations will also lead to large rate revenue for Coffs Harbour City Council – these funds also contributing to the running cost of the service.

Other Transport Related Issues:

Coffs Harbour Bus System:

The Coramba/Bonville 'Beach Glider' proposal does not intend to replace existing bus services, rather it is complementary to them. The intention is to increase patronage of public transport in general and by implication to improve bus patronage as well. The concept offers the potential for new and improved bus services for Coffs Harbour. A Park Beach/Town Centre/Health Campus/Jetty Station route is an obvious connecting feeder requirement.

School Bus Runs:

The Beach Glider has the potential to transport a significant number of students to the Jetty High School, Bonville Christian College, possibly to Orara High School and Toormina High Schools. If a station were constructed near the Coffs Harbour Education Campus, then both CHEC and John Paul College could be accessed by train. Ultimately the 'Beach Glider' would be capable of providing transportation for students outside of the Coffs Harbour LGA into these Coffs Harbour Schools. Minimal impact would be sustained by the providers of the present school bus services operating within the Coffs Harbour LGA.

Rail and Ride:

Storage for bicycles to be made available on each carriage to promote the 'Rail and Ride' concept.

Sustainability Assessment:

Environment:

Increased efficiency of land use.

Decreased consumption of fossil fuel/ energy.

Cleaner Air: Less vehicle emissions.

Cleaner Water: Less run off of tyre waste, engine oil, from roads into water systems.

Cleaner Food: through reduced food mileage, local production.

Positive impacts on Climate Change.

Transit systems need population density of 35 jobs/people per hectare (Peter Newman Resilient Cities). This is approximately 6 times the present population density of newly built suburbs. Mass Transit encourages high density living which again encourages patronage of mass transit systems.

Positive Feed Back Loop: Mass Transit creates a self perpetuating, cyclical positive feed back loop.

Generator of a greater diversity of urban environmental design through increased living density.

Bio Diesel: Carbon neutrality as well as carbon friendly fuel.

Rail and Ride decreases traffic emission and congestion.

Social Impacts:

Rail has a density-inducing effect around stations.

Rail is civic character building and a potential tourist magnet.

The need for car ownership is reduced, allowing incomes to be reserved for housing, food and health.

Streets around stations may be reclaimable for recreation and/or leased for other purposes.

Walking is encouraged.

Rail and Ride encourages healthy commuting.

Cycling is encouraged and becomes less dangerous with a reduction in motor vehicle numbers.

Elderly, disabled, non driving licenced teens empowered through increased mobility.

Employment options: Possible maintenance yards increase employment options.

The encouraged increased density attracts younger demographic to the region, stimulating employment growth.

Economic:

Initial costs for infrastructure will need to come from State Government and/or Federal Government to be investigated.

Options for running costs to be investigated.

Potential increased capacity for urban population means increased revenue from rates outright within Coffs/Sawtell/Coramba and Bonville urban districts.

Higher density lends to increased range of diversity of goods and services in CBD.

Increased resettlement/migration to Coffs City delivers economic stimulus in general.

More efficient use of outlying land and incorporation into the larger Coffs Harbour economy.

Linking outlying disadvantaged rural communities with greater employment opportunities.

Decentralisation: A driver of decentralisation away from the capital cities.

Increased revenue from Tourism.
Increased resilience to Peak Oil
Increased resilience to Economic Shocks.
Proportional decrease in road area maintenance costs per population count.
Resultant increase of protection of agricultural and vegetated land maintains tourist potential for the region.
Increased rail activity stimulates an appreciation of rail heritage with the region with associated tourist economic benefits.
A percentage increase in migration to the Coffs Coast of younger populations will boost local economic output for the city.

Stages 2 & 3

Extensions of the Beach Glider Service:

To Macksville (Stage 2) and/or then to Glenreagh (Stage 3) as later extensions with new stations at Orara High School, Nana Glen, CHEC etc as outlined above.

Questions to be addressed by Feasibility Study

Economic benefit to City.
Developer interest, industrial interest.
Economic justification of Beach Glider Proposal and Light Rail Option for Northern Beaches.
Likely future economic impact on Coffs Harbour.
Likely increase in employment, quantifiable?
Validation of the content of this submission.
Estimations of potential Clientèle:
Retiree concession passengers, full fare paying passengers, student concession etc.



Transit Oriented Development.

Suburban Train System for Coffs Harbour City.

The 2030 Vision Summit indicated strong community support for rail to be a part of the future for transport in the Coffs Harbour Region. The projected population increases (Mid North Coast Regional Strategy) for this region would certainly justify rail in economic and of course environmental terms.

To test these assertions a Passenger Rail Feasibility Study is recommended to be undertaken.

Once the above feasibility study indicates a go ahead, more serious negotiation with the Rail Operators using the North Coast Rail line would need to occur along with a Delegation from Coffs Harbour City Council to Sydney and Canberra to meet with the appropriate Ministers of Transport.

The Projects being explored are the Macksville to Glenreagh Passenger Rail System on the North Coast Line with Coramba to Bonville being Stage 1.

In Coffs Harbour we are blessed with one of the most beautiful natural environments which paradoxically is also referred to as a 'city'. The city is approximately 40 kilometres by 40 kilometres in size including its satellite suburbs which is a little larger than the size identified as the minimum by Peter Newman, the keynote speaker at the 2030 Vision Summit, that is of a city 20 to 30 km in diameter with a town centre as its focus and local centres linked along transit services that include both rail and bus.

Sydney, in 2009, has been witness to the inadequacies of its own passenger rail service during the height of the oil peak/global financial crisis. Since then, the difficulties that city now faces in retrospectively refitting the city with rail are all too obvious. Rail projects need to be a part of urban design early rather than later.

To preserve the natural beauty of this north coast city, the heavy and overbearing concrete road systems will never blend with our beautiful and fragile environmental paradise. Public transit systems, light and easy on the environment that produce living areas of greater density are the generators of what we might call a greater urban diversity and allow the naturalness of this region to continue.

Greater density is a choice preferred by a certain percentage of the Australian community and a large percentage of the international community from whom we would like to draw from as potential new residents in this region. There is no reason why a more highly dense urban environment cannot form a part of the City of Coffs Harbour in certain locales. Economically it means that our recently built or rebuilt water and sewage systems are more efficiently used, and more cheaply maintained, as well. Socially, an increase in the variety of restaurant and of other services, a greater choice of life style for those unable or unwilling to drive, for our retirees for example, all combine with the obvious environmental advantages of this type of development.

If the North Coast Regional Strategy is realized in its aims to resettle 20,000 to 30,000 people into this region during the next two decades, the resulting income to the city would be considerable; however, the damage to the natural integrity of this region would be simply devastating without the alternatives described above. To function successfully at an economic level, Coffs Harbour needs the kind of future development created by developmental strategy that is Transit Oriented. Build it, and then they will come as they say

Recent experience in the Gold Coast, December 2004, highlights the difficulty of establishing a light rail system after urban development has already taken place.