

13 January 2021



Jaco Ackerman
Manager, Strategic Planning
Mackay Regional Council
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BY POST/EMAIL – strategic.planning@mackay.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Ackerman,

RE: Mackay Regional Integrated Transport Strategy (MRITS)

The Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland Mackay branch (the Institute) writes to Mackay Regional Council (council) on the proposed Mackay Regional Integrated Transport Strategy (MRITS).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the MRITS and the extended consultation period provided. The Institute supports the intent of the strategy including the following:

... help improve consistency across Council in the planning, prioritisation and implementation of transport infrastructure and services and will provide a foundation for proactively developing and advocating to other stakeholders for a transport system that responds to the diverse range of current needs and aspirations, adapts to changing circumstances, and leaves a positive legacy for the benefit of future residents and visitors to the region.

... the need for a resilient transport system that provides options and supports travel choice while ensuring the region's natural assets can be enjoyed by current and future generations.

The Institute recognises that substantial work has been undertaken for the strategy and commends the:

- key setup and context reporting for the region included in the document that provides a very useful overview
- Identification of key challenges around population growth, economy, within the region
- Commitment to the specific vision, objectives and actions.

The Institute notes that the MRITS identifies a *local area transport plan for the Northern Beaches to support current and planned growth, improve multi-modal access and network resilience* as an immediate priority. The Northern Beaches is well documented as the most significant key growth area in the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Plan and Mackay Regional Planning Scheme 2017

and has been identified as a key jobs growth area. The Institute strongly supports the development of a *local area transport plan for the Northern Beaches* and in particular the need to urgently reduce congestion and improve safety of the Mackay Bucasia Road for all modes of transport.

The Institute points out that it has liaised with many key developers in the northern beaches, all of whom share a common concern with the Mackay Bucasia Road's congestion and its negative impact on livability, safety, and growth. Also, with the present very high level of house construction in the area this issue has become even more critical. Accordingly, the Institute wishes to be noted as a key External Stakeholder under the MRITS Action Plan.

The Institute would also like to take this opportunity to raise a number of issues below. As you may be aware, the Institute conducts an extensive research program under the banner of the Institute's Research Foundation. Research from the qualitative component of the Institute's Research Foundation program notes concern from communities generated from interacting with the transport system, including public transport, that is consistently identified as a 'pinch point' for the community.

The Institute notes it is a challenge to encourage the movement of residents and communities outside of private vehicles. There are, however, several avenues both covering infrastructure and non-infrastructure mechanisms that can support this outcome.

The Institute is concerned the MRITS presents policies that are unlikely to fully address the community's concerns. Without consideration of other options outlined in this submission, the MRITS could run the risk of 'too much of the same' resulting in the system being placed under greater strain.

The Institute considers the MRITS is an opportunity to specifically:

- Commit to clear targets for transport outcomes in particular for non private motor vehicle activity
- Identify investments to achieve targets
- Undertake a substantial community engagement program on targets and investments
- Monitor and publicly communicate targets
- Identify improvement to public transport facilities to improve speed, service, and reach of facilities, to limit future transport congestion
- Seek improved service standards for public transport in growing urban areas
- Emphasise the importance of a collaborative working relationship between state government and council
- Articulate better connection to the CBD with good public transport to provide access to the growing number of jobs
- Further support and facilitate innovative micro smart shared mobility revolution options.
- To identify declining or slow growth suburbs and consider for redevelopment/renewal in concert with transport actions
- Manage traffic peaks
- Prepare future network plans for cycling infrastructure, including priority infrastructure
- Ensure all infrastructure meets relevant design standards
- Incorporate design features aimed at increasing priority use by cyclists
- Identify actions, suitable to the Mackay environment, to assist in reducing urban heat impact on the active transport network
- Incorporate walking and cycling infrastructure into all transport projects

- Update the LGIP with identified priorities from the Strategy
- Consider a range of incentives for desired transport behaviours.

The Institute believes that this Strategy will be critical in informing council's Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) and the delivery of the necessary active transport infrastructure to service the community now and into the future. The Mackay region continues to be a desirable place to work, live, and play with rich resources and strong economic base supporting the region. Therefore, it is important to identify, plan, and deliver safe and accessible infrastructure for active transport that supports a healthy and active community. Establishing clear and explicit benchmarks for all transport modes within a given timeframe will enable the council to set milestones to work towards and inform budgetary commitments. The Institute strongly recommends council undertake the process to set targets for each mode of transport.

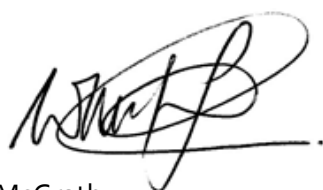
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the MRITS. As previously mentioned, the Institute is appreciative of the opportunity to provide comments on council matters that may affect the industry. We recommend council continue to maintain this dialogue in any future changes or amendments relating to planning and development.

In summary, the Institute recommends council:

- Develop a response for access to and in the Northern beaches growth area with industry
- Within 3 months, in consultation with industry, prepare a local area transport plan for the Northern Beaches to support current and planned growth, improve multi-modal access and network resilience and in particular address Mackay Bucasia Road congestion
- Establish and commit to transport targets to benchmark the current travel patterns and seek to improve future figures
- Consider micro mobility as a form of transport and adequately plan for this mode of transport in order to fully maximise council's existing active transport infrastructure
- Define at an early stage with the industry, implications for the LGIP.

If you have any questions relating to the material contained in this submission, please contact Manager of Policy, Martin Zaltron (mzaltron@udiaql.com.au) on (07) 3229 1589.

Yours sincerely,
Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland



Mark McGrath
Mackay and Whitsunday Branch President