Delivering the next generation of public transport

Public Transport Plan 2018–2028

CITY OF GOLDCOAST
Mayor’s message

In March 2013, I launched the Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031 – a long-term plan for our city’s transport future. Getting more people to use public transport is a big part of that strategy.

World-class cities have a strong culture of public transport use. Providing quality public transport allows people to rely less on their cars resulting in fewer vehicles in our important centres and iconic beachside precincts and less congestion overall.

We recognise that, for the Gold Coast to have world-class public transport system, it needs to be underpinned by an extensive light rail network across the city’s major transport corridors to connect people to places. Since the Gold Coast Light Rail commenced in 2014 overall public transport use has increased by more than 25 per cent.

The City of Gold Coast will continue to ensure the State Government achieves an integrated system of bus, tram, train and other services that provide the community with convenient ways to travel around the city day and night. These public transport options must be affordable, reliable and responsive to customer needs.

As our city grows, implementing this Plan will support and encourage residents and visitors to use public transport more often – whether it’s to get to work, school, the local shop or the beach.

Our focus is on ensuring we keep the city moving, and this Plan will help us to get there.

TOM TATE
MAYOR
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This plan will enable the City to partner with the State to achieve an increase in the use of public transport on the Gold Coast, by targeting the following five key priorities:

1. extending the G:link light rail across the city
2. developing a public transport network that provides fast, frequent and reliable services to optimise the coverage of public transport across the city
3. connecting and coordinating the heavy rail, light rail and bus network
4. making public transport inclusive and equitable for all
5. providing facilities and information that make public transport easy to access, use and understand.

A key focus for the City over the next decade is to work with TMR to extend the public transport network (notably the light rail network) across the Gold Coast. The City will continue to advocate for and support the State in developing a connected and coordinated public transport network that provides fast, frequent and reliable bus services with city-wide coverage.

The City recognises the need to provide transport alternatives for those living in geographically diverse areas and those who are mobility impaired. The City will continue to play a key role in delivering community transport initiatives to make public transport inclusive and equitable for all residents.

To encourage more people to use public transport, facilities and information must be available that make it easy to use and understand. The City will continue to advocate for and support the State in the provision of improved passenger information services and electronic ticketing products.

A coordinated approach by the City and the State to plan, design and implement an improved public transport network is vital to achieving success.

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2 City of Gold Coast, 2013, Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031: Technical Report
Purpose

To support the sustainable growth of our city, we need more people catching public transport more often.

The Gold Coast Public Transport Plan 2018–2028 (Public Transport Plan) recognises the important role that public transport has in shaping the city’s future transport network and identifies priority actions to improve public transport over the next 10 years. Through this plan, we will advocate for, support, plan and deliver public transport improvements to help meet objectives identified in the Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031 (Transport Strategy).

Importantly, this plan will guide our future investment in public transport to help us achieve increased use of public transport on the Gold Coast.
Our context

A growing and diverse city

The Gold Coast is a vibrant, internationally-renowned city with a population of more than 590,000, making it Australia’s sixth-largest city. The Gold Coast also attracts approximately 13 million visitors annually. As an historically linear, dispersed city with low-density residential development spread over a large area, travel patterns are complex. This settlement pattern brings unique transport challenges and the Gold Coast has evolved into a city where car travel is the main mode of transport.

By 2031, our population is expected to grow to approximately 800,000 and the number of daily trips on our transport network is expected to reach nearly 4 million. Continued reliance upon private vehicles will mean increased congestion on our road network and negative impacts on our economy, lifestyle and environment.

Making the transport network more efficient

Each new resident generates on average an additional 3.1 trips per day. If current levels of car dependence continue, this population growth could lead to a doubling of car trips on our road network by 2031.

Car-based suburban development and urban sprawl emphasises this trend, meaning people will spend more time in traffic as congestion increases. The City of Gold Coast (City) recognises that continually expanding the road network is not the solution. We need to prioritise people over cars to protect the amenity and attractive lifestyle our city offers.

Public transport can carry more people whilst occupying less road space, helping to make the transport system more efficient (refer Figure 1). Improving the network of buses, trams and trains is a central part of the City’s approach to managing growth pressures and transport demands.

Figure 1: The carrying capacity of public transport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public transport can move large numbers of people efficiently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A typical car carries</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A standard bus can carry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 people = about 55 cars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia 2016-17 (catalogue 3218.0)
5 City of Gold Coast, 2013, Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031: Technical Report
Benefits of improved public transport on the Gold Coast

Land use integration
An improved public transport system is needed to support the sustainable development of our city. The progressive provision of public transport services to new growth areas will enable residents to establish travel behaviours that favour walking, cycling and public transport rather than relying on a private vehicle.

Land use planning that supports urban intensification to create compact and self-contained communities will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public transport services in the city’s urban neighbourhoods. The Gold Coast City Plan (City Plan) aims to achieve these outcomes through encouraging urban intensification and consolidating urban growth in locations where there is access to key employment areas and high-frequency public transport.

Reducing traffic congestion
Public transport can move large numbers of people efficiently. Providing high-quality public transport can attract people out of their cars resulting in fewer private vehicle trips, and reducing traffic congestion. Traffic counts at multiple sites along the light rail corridor have shown a general reduction in vehicle movements since the light rail was first introduced, with one site recording 5312 fewer vehicles (a 29 per cent decrease) from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

Improving community health
Public transport helps us build healthier communities. A significant proportion of the community does not undertake any regular form of exercise. Walking or cycling to and from public transport can improve personal health and fitness. Most people are prepared to spend about 10 minutes walking or cycling to a high-frequency, direct public transport service. The incidental exercise associated with the use of public transport is often under-reported and it can add up to 2 kilometres per day for an average commuter.

Improving the economy
Public transport helps connect our communities and ensure our busy centres are great places for people to be. Trains, trams, buses and community transport connect people more efficiently to shopping, jobs and services, which translates into greater productivity.

Investing in public transport creates jobs in infrastructure provision and ongoing service delivery. It also reduces car use and demand for car parking and can save the City approximately $16,500 per car park space in land costs. Travelling by public transport is also cheaper than owning and operating a car.

Protecting our environment
Greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector account for approximately 24 per cent of all emissions in Australia, second only to electricity generation. Passenger cars are the single largest contributor to emissions. By leaving your car at home and opting to catch public transport instead, you are reducing urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and assisting in lowering congestion.

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6 City of Gold Coast, 2015, Building our city: Light Rail Corridor 2015 Status Report
7 Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2013, Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport: Supporting Active Travel in Australian Communities, Australian Government: Canberra
8 City of Gold Coast, 2013, Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031: Technical Report
9 City of Gold Coast, City Parking Plan 2015
The public transport network

On the Gold Coast there are now three primary modes of public transport to choose from – buses, trains and trams. The introduction of the G:link light rail system in 2014 represents an important milestone in delivering the next generation of public transport as outlined in the Transport Strategy.

The Gold Coast public transport network consists of:

**Heavy rail network**
The Gold Coast heavy rail line connects the Gold Coast to Logan, Brisbane and the rest of South East Queensland. The Gold Coast is served by six rail stations. There are 92 daily weekday services operating in both directions between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

**Light rail network**
The G:Link light rail system extends from Helensvale to Broadbeach, with 19 stations along the route. Services currently operate from 5am to midnight on weekdays and 24 hours a day on weekends. Service frequency is 7.5 minutes between the hours of 7am and 7pm on weekdays.

**Bus network**
The Gold Coast is serviced by 56 urban bus routes with more than 16,500 bus services operating each week. The bus network currently consists of 10 high-frequency services. There are approximately 1500 bus stops throughout the city.

**School buses**
School buses are funded and managed by the Queensland State Government (State) and delivered by private sector partners. Bus services are also provided by some private schools.

**Community transport services**
The City funds and manages the community transport program which includes the Council Cab service, the Jacobs Well-to-Beenleigh service and the Free Seniors Travel initiative. A range of non-City community transport options also exist.

**Taxi services**
There are more than 350 taxi vehicles on the Gold Coast providing commercial passenger transport services. A third of the operational taxi fleet are hybrid vehicles which emit fewer air pollutants.

**Water transport services**
There are a number of privately operated services including courtesy water transport to resorts, water taxis, water sports and tourist and charter vessels that operate on the city’s waterways.

**Park and ride facilities**
Park and ride facilities are provided at all Gold Coast heavy rail stations. Additional park and ride facilities are available at the Parkwood and Helensvale light rail stations. Some part-time park and ride facilities are brought into service for major events, which rely on specially-programmed shuttle bus services.

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**Booked hire services**
Booked hire services, delivered through ride-sourcing providers such as Uber, are a relatively new development within the personalised transport industry in Queensland. Since the State’s decision to legalise booked hire services as of September 2016, the popularity of these services has been growing rapidly on the Gold Coast.

The impact and full potential of booked hire services on the Gold Coast is still to be determined. However, there is potential for such services to complement and expand the reach of public transport. This, too, would help ease congestion and reduce demand for parking.
Government responsibilities for public transport

The establishment and management of an effective public transport network requires the City to work collaboratively with the State, the Australian Government and private sector service delivery partners.

What is the Australian Government responsible for?
The Australian Government plays an important role in funding major public transport initiatives. The Australian Government was a major funding partner in stage 1 and stage 2 of the G:link light rail system.

What is the State responsible for?
The State, chiefly through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), has overall responsibility for planning and delivering improvements to the heavy rail, light rail and bus networks that operate throughout the city. The State is also responsible for planning, protecting, delivering, managing and maintaining State-controlled road corridors and public transport infrastructure.

TMR’s TransLink Division is directly responsible for public transport route planning and the delivery of public transport services through contracted operators. TransLink operates and maintains the G:link light rail through its contracted franchisee, GoldlinQ. The current Gold Coast operator for delivering bus services is Transit Australia Group which operates as Surfside Buslines. TransLink also provides school transport for eligible students.

What is the City responsible for?
The City partners with and supports the State in the planning and delivery of public transport services and infrastructure through a range of financial, operational and promotional measures.

The City is a major partner in the funding, planning and delivery of the G:link light rail system and associated supporting infrastructure.

The City also:
- upgrades and maintains bus stop infrastructure
- builds and maintains the local road network and undertakes kerb-side management to enable effective public transport operations
- ensures that public transport facilities are well designed and integrated into the surrounding urban environment to promote safety
- plans and builds the city’s active transport network of pathways and bikeways to support walking and cycling to public transport services
- coordinates community transport grants and funds community transport services, such as the Free Seniors Travel initiative
- coordinates service and utility networks to minimise impacts on public transport operations.
What have we achieved?

The number of people using public transport on the Gold Coast continues to grow (refer Figure 2). Since the commencement of light rail in 2014, overall public transport travel has increased by more than 25 per cent. More than 24 million public transport trips were completed on the Gold Coast in the 2016-17 financial year; a third of them on light rail (refer Figure 3).

Key City achievements

• working with the State to deliver stages 1 and 2 of the Gold Coast light rail network
• establishing the Free Seniors Travel initiative and Council Cab initiative
• delivering a bus stop upgrade program to ensure bus stop infrastructure complies with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

Key State achievements

• implementing a simplified zone network across South East Queensland, which has resulted in reduced public transport fares on the Gold Coast
• delivering stages 1 and 2 of the Gold Coast light rail network in partnership with the City
• implementing improvements to the bus network, with additional high-frequency bus services, to align with the introduction of the light rail network
• completing dual-tracking of the Gold Coast heavy rail line between Coomera and Helensvale train stations
• undertaking infrastructure improvements at the Helensvale bus station to improve the customer experience when interchanging between bus, train and tram.

Figure 2: Total annual passenger trips on the Gold Coast public transport network

Source: Queensland State Government, 2018

Figure 3: Percentage of trips by public transport mode

Source: Queensland State Government, 2018
Challenges we need to address

- Although the introduction of light rail in 2014 resulted in increased public transport use, it is likely that this level of patronage growth will not continue without further investment to extend the light rail network across the city.

- Traditionally, the public transport network has focused on the coastal corridor. Network coverage needs to be expanded to provide more cross-town services to allow for the long-term sustainable growth of our existing and growing urban areas, away from the coastal corridor.

- Existing bus services can often experience delays and inconsistent travel times due to congestion in road corridors.

- Transferring between public transport modes can be unattractive to commuters unless there are:
  - well-maintained stops and facilities
  - appropriately (or conveniently) located stations and interchanges
  - coordinated timetables between services.

- Some suburbs are highly car dependent as a result of their location and settlement pattern. In these areas it can be difficult to provide direct and frequent public transport services in a cost-effective manner.

- Approximately 91,000 Gold Coast residents are over 65. This number has increased by 28% over the 5 years since 2011. As our population ages this figure will continue to grow, thereby increasing the need for public transport.

- The Gold Coast attracts a high number of visitors who may not be familiar with the local transport network. Improvements are needed to provide better wayfinding, real-time information and quality waiting environments, so that the public transport network is easy to use and understand.

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A structured approach

South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 (ShapingSEQ)

ShapingSEQ is the State’s plan to guide the future of the South East Queensland region over the next 25 years. The plan identifies a 50-year vision underpinned by five key themes: Grow, Prosper, Connect, Sustain and Live.

As South East Queensland’s second-largest sub-region, the Gold Coast is recognised within ShapingSEQ as an urban coastal city offering diverse living opportunities, supported by world-class beaches, waterways and hinterland areas. Over the next 25 years the Gold Coast will see a strong focus on consolidation around major urban centres and along the light rail urban renewal corridor (and its future extensions). Supporting this growth will be an integrated transport network that accelerates access within the city, and provides strong social and economic connections to the Brisbane metropolitan sub-region (including Brisbane, Logan, Moreton Bay and Redland).

Gold Coast City Plan (City Plan)

The City Plan sets out the City’s approach to managing and supporting long-term growth that will shape the Gold Coast into a mature, world-class city. The City Plan aims to address our forecast growth through transforming the Gold Coast into a highly connected, compact city with vibrant centres, specialist precincts and urban renewal corridors.

The City Plan encourages a sustainable settlement pattern that is supported by a highly accessible and integrated public transport and active transport network, to ensure that households within the city’s existing urban area are presented with travel choices. This settlement pattern includes the consolidation of urban growth within neighbourhoods, key centres and along the light rail corridor.

Through integrating land use and transport planning initiatives, the City will encourage and enable residents to use public transport more often.
Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031 (Transport Strategy)

The Transport Strategy builds on the policy direction of ShapingSEQ and the City Plan and establishes objectives and actions that aim to ensure the Gold Coast:

- enjoys smart growth – where the majority of new development is based on compact, mixed-use centres that are supported by high-quality public transport
- is a connected city – where people and places are connected by an integrated, safe and efficient transport network
- makes sustainable travel choices – where a significant proportion of Gold Coast residents and visitors choose to walk, cycle or take public transport as part of their daily travel.

The role of the Public Transport Plan

The Public Transport Plan sits alongside a suite of other implementation plans within the City’s planning hierarchy (refer Figure 4). This plan acknowledges the primary role we play in assisting the State with, and advocating for, public transport improvements.

The Public Transport Plan will guide the City’s future investment to improve and expand the public transport network over the next 10 years. This plan contains five priority goals and specific ‘actions’ that work towards achieving those goals. Coordinating the delivery of actions across the transport implementation plans will collectively achieve the objectives of the Transport Strategy.
Our targets

In 2011, just over 3 per cent of all daily trips were made on public transport. It is the aim of the Transport Strategy to increase public transport use to 12 per cent of all trips by 2031 (refer Figure 5).

To achieve this target, the public transport system needs to provide enough capacity to carry an additional 370,000 daily trips in 2031 (over the number taken in 2011).
Achieving an increase in public transport use

Meeting mode share targets will require a coordinated effort across all levels of government to:

• manage demands on the transport network
• influence travel behaviours
• invest in public transport infrastructure
• promote sustainable urban growth patterns.

Public transport patronage grew by 32 per cent in the three years since light rail was first introduced (refer Figure 6). Following the delivery of light rail stage 2 to Helensvale, 2.3 million trips were taken on light rail in just three months.

This shows that continued improvements to the network made through the delivery of further stages of light rail and additional high-frequency bus corridors can dramatically increase levels of public transport usage and assist in achieving our mode share targets.

Figure 6: Annual public transport patronage growth since the introduction of light rail
Our opportunity
Our vision

The Public Transport Plan vision is to improve the quality of the Gold Coast’s public transport system to provide as many travellers as possible with attractive alternatives to the car.

Achieving this vision means the city will have:

- fast, frequent, more reliable public transport services
- better access to public transport services across a greater range of destinations
- expanded public transport coverage with the majority of Gold Coast residents living within a 10-minute walk of frequent services
- increased community transport options for older people and those with a disability
- a range of public transport options to service major events.
The future high-frequency network

The 2018 high-frequency network

The Gold Coast heavy rail line, the G:link light rail and ten high-frequency bus routes form the 2018 high-frequency public transport network (refer Figure 7).

The G:link light rail commenced operation in July 2014. Fast, frequent trams now connect 19 light rail stations along a 20-kilometre route from Broadbeach to the Helensvale rail station. As part of the implementation of the light rail system, TransLink carried out a network review which resulted in a simpler high-frequency network with better integration between buses and light rail.

Over 16 million passenger trips were recorded on the high-frequency bus network, light rail and heavy rail network during 2016-17. During this same year, a further 6 million trips were recorded on the local bus route network.

The 2021 high-frequency network

We will advocate for the establishment of a 2021 public transport network that features light rail from Helensvale to Burleigh Heads and a high-frequency bus network that is connected to light rail at key interchange points (refer Figure 8).

As many of the existing bus routes follow the alignment of future light rail extensions, there is opportunity to re-align these bus routes to provide greater coverage and higher service frequencies within other corridors once the light rail extensions are in place. This allows for the benefits of the high-frequency public transport network to be shared across the city rather than being concentrated in the communities that will directly benefit from the new light rail service.

The 2031 high-frequency network

For public transport to have the capacity and attractiveness to meet the mode share target of 12 per cent by 2031, the network will need considerable expansion and increases in service frequency. Figure 9 illustrates the proposed high-frequency public transport network in 2031.

The City supports expanding the light rail to establish a network that extends across the city, from Helensvale to Coolangatta, with various western and northern extensions. The 2031 network also includes the delivery of new heavy rail stations to improve access to the Brisbane to Gold Coast rail service.
Figure 7: 2018 Gold Coast high-frequency public transport network

The high-frequency public transport network is supported by a network of integrated local bus routes.

Only major stations and stops shown.

Source: TransLink High Frequency Services map, January 2018

KEY

Heavy rail
- Brisbane - Varsity Lakes

Light rail
- Broadbeach to Helensvale

High-frequency bus
- 700 Tweed Heads - Broadbeach
- 704 Helensvale - Sea World
- 708 Sea World - Broadbeach
- 713 Southport - Paradise Point
- 719 Southport - Paradise Point via GCUH*
- 740 Surfers Paradise - Nerang
- 750 Robina - Broadbeach
- 765 Elanora - Robina
- 777 Gold Coast Airport - Broadbeach
- TX7 Coomera - Helensvale via theme parks#

* Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH)

# High-frequency during theme park peak times

Map not to scale

Source: TransLink High Frequency Services map, January 2018
Figure 8 – Proposed 2021 Gold Coast high-frequency public transport network

The high-frequency public transport network is supported by a network of integrated local bus routes. Investigate and progressively implement high-frequency bus services to support emerging growth areas north of the city.

Protect corridor for future heavy rail extension
Investigate infill heavy rail station

* Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH)
* High-frequency during theme park peak times

Source: Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031
The high-frequency public transport network is supported by a network of integrated local bus routes.

To Brisbane

Brisbane - Varsity Lakes intercity rail
Investigate Beenleigh - Varsity Lakes suburban rail
Protect corridor for future heavy rail extension
Investigate infill heavy rail station

Helensvale - Coolangatta
Investigate and protect corridor for future light rail extension

Paradise Point - Southport
Pimpama - GCUH
Pimpama - Biggera Waters
Helensvale - The Spit
Broadbeach - The Spit
Nerang - Southport
Nerang - Surfers Paradise
Nerang - Broadbeach
Southport - Robina
Robina - Broadbeach
Coolangatta - Robina via Gold Coast Airport
Robina - Burleigh Heads
Coomera - Helensvale via theme parks
Investigate and progressively implement high-frequency bus services to support emerging growth areas north of the city.

* Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH)
# High-frequency during theme park peak times

Only major stations and stops shown

Source: Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031
Our plan for the future

We will achieve an increase in public transport use by partnering with the State to target five key priorities.

**P1**  
**Priority 1:** Extending the G:link light rail across the city.

**P2**  
**Priority 2:** Developing a public transport network that provides fast, frequent and reliable services to optimise the coverage of public transport across the city.

**P3**  
**Priority 3:** Connecting and coordinating the heavy rail, light rail and bus network.

**P4**  
**Priority 4:** Making public transport inclusive and equitable for all.

**P5**  
**Priority 5:** Providing facilities and information that make public transport easy to access, use and understand.
We will work with the State, the Australian Government and private sector partners to extend the network in stages to service and support future growth corridors. Following the completion of light rail stage 2 the next priority is to extend the light rail south to Burleigh Heads and on to Coolangatta via the airport.

The success of the first stage of the G:link light rail system has demonstrated that increased ridership can be achieved through the provision of high-quality and accessible services and infrastructure. Building on this success, the light rail network will be extended to service new urban areas and operate at higher frequencies along key urban renewal corridors. The delivery of light rail extensions is subject to further technical investigation and the availability of funding from all levels of government.

### High-priority line extensions south to Coolangatta via the Gold Coast Airport

The Transport Strategy identifies a preferred light rail network for the city which includes a number of proposed extensions to the existing system. Results of public consultation undertaken in late 2015 have shown support for linking light rail south to Burleigh Heads and on to Coolangatta. Council subsequently endorsed the priority route from Broadbeach to Coolangatta via the Gold Coast Airport to guide future planning activities relating to the Gold Coast light rail stage 3.

Due to the benefits generated by connecting the city’s airport to high-frequency public transport, the City has prioritised planning investigations to determine a light rail alignment, station locations and consequential amendments to the City Plan for the following stages:

- south from Broadbeach to Burleigh Heads
- south from Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta via the Gold Coast Airport. This extension would enable future consideration of a cross-border extension to Tweed Heads by the New South Wales State Government.

### Longer-term line extensions

The City supports extending the light rail system with further line extensions that link to key centres including Robina, Bundall and Biggera Waters. The following light rail extensions will be maintained as future options for ongoing consideration and planning:

- Nobby Beach to Robina Rail
- Surfers Paradise to Bundall
- Gold Coast University Hospital to Biggera Waters.

### The City Plan

Recognising the importance of high-quality public transport, the City Plan supports the light rail through encouraging urban consolidation within this high-frequency public transport corridor. Specifically, the City Plan supports light rail through:

- appropriate zoning, heights and densities to create a sustainable city shape and settlement pattern that respects our city’s natural features
- recognising and supporting high-density development in Surfers Paradise (excluding Chevron Island) and Broadbeach
- identifying a defined light rail urban renewal area within proximity of the light rail system
- providing for the continued development of a high-quality active transport network to support walking and cycling to the light rail
- establishing requirements for development in the light rail urban renewal area to ensure development creates a high-quality urban environment that supports pedestrian access to light rail
- providing appropriate controls that assist in the management of overall demand for car parking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Intent</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Work with the State and the Australian Government to plan and deliver the stage 3A light rail extension between Broadbeach and Burleigh Heads.</td>
<td>The delivery of the stage 3A light rail extension will support the sustainable growth of the southern coastal corridor.</td>
<td>1–5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Work with the State and the Australian Government to plan for the future delivery of the stage 3B light rail extension, from Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta via the Gold Coast Airport.</td>
<td>The light rail extension from Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta via the Gold Coast Airport will further support the sustainable growth of the southern coastal corridor.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Work with the State to undertake land use and transport planning investigations relating to proposed western and northern light rail extensions, with a particular focus on Biggera Waters and Robina.</td>
<td>Land use and transport planning investigations will help to establish the feasibility of future stages of light rail.</td>
<td>5–10 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priority 2:
Developing a public transport network that provides fast, frequent and reliable services to optimise the coverage of public transport across the city.

The provision of efficient public transport can significantly influence the way the Gold Coast region grows and develops. The Gold Coast is characterised by a geographically dispersed settlement pattern which makes public transport coverage a challenge. In many cases, bus services don’t run fast enough or directly enough to accommodate travellers’ needs and reduce private car use. There are opportunities to optimise the bus network and support other passenger transport modes to improve the coverage of public transport across the city.

A network of integrated, high-frequency bus services
We will support TMR’s introduction of additional high-frequency bus services to fill the gaps between the light rail and heavy rail corridors, and to ensure at least 80 per cent of Gold Coast residents live within a 10-minute walk of frequent bus services by 2031. Delivering network improvements will be subject to further planning and the availability of funding.

Priority treatments for congested corridors
For the high-frequency bus network to operate at maximum effectiveness, services need to be supported by a road network that incorporates smart technologies and targeted upgrades that limit the impact of traffic congestion on travel time and reliability. The implementation of priority treatments, such as bus lanes on roads, depends on a number of factors including the level of road congestion, number of buses and environmental and urban constraints. We will work with TMR to identify, plan and design bus priority measures in appropriate city locations.

Expansion of bus services in line with land use planning
With the introduction of light rail services, there are opportunities to optimise and expand the bus network and improve network coverage by re-directing more buses through residential areas. Urban bus routes can be expanded into residential areas where services are viable and cost-effective. Service hours and frequencies can also be improved to support further urban intensification along high-frequency public transport corridors.

Servicing the northern growth corridor
The northern suburbs between Yatala and Helensvale are experiencing significant growth. Coomera, as a major regional activity centre, is anticipated to transform into an employment hub with retail and commercial development initially occurring west of the heavy rail line and close to the Coomera rail station. Ormeau and Pimpama will also experience new residential, commercial and retail development.

In the absence of quality public transport services, the private car will continue to be the main mode of travel for residents living in these areas. This is contributing to rising levels of traffic congestion on the Pacific Motorway. The progressive roll-out of fast, frequent and reliable public transport to service the northern growth corridor is vital in order to alleviate congestion and support the sustainable development of these emerging activity centres.

We will continue to work with TMR to ensure that public transport infrastructure, including the heavy rail corridor, aligns with and supports the growth of the northern suburbs.

Provision of other transport modes to support and improve service coverage across the city

Taxis
Taxis are an important element of the city’s transport network, providing a transport option when travel by public transport or private vehicle is inconvenient or unfeasible. ‘Secure’ taxi ranks provide additional facilities to ensure a safe environment for patrons during late-night or special event travel.

Water-based transport
We will continue to support TransLink and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority in the assessment of proposals for commercial water transport services. The circuitous nature of some waterways, the existence of low bridges and low speed limits, and the lack of disability-compliant and exclusive use infrastructure will continue to challenge the ability to operate these services in an affordable public funding framework.

The potential exists for water-based transport services nevertheless, and non-scheduled services such as water taxis and shuttle services may assist in carrying additional transport trips particularly during major events.

Booked hire services
Booked hire services offer demand-responsive, personalised and flexible passenger transport options. These services can take a passenger directly to a public transport stop or station, extending the reach of the public transport system particularly in areas with limited service availability and poor network coverage. We will continue to monitor the progress, trends and issues associated with booked hire services and continue to support the safe operation of all personalised transport services on the Gold Coast.
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<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Work with TMR to plan and deliver an integrated network of high-frequency bus services across all urbanised areas of the Gold Coast. This includes planning for the optimisation and expansion of the bus network as part of light rail stage 3.</td>
<td>An integrated network of high-frequency bus services will provide all Gold Coast residents with opportunities to make direct connections both east-west and north-south across the city.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Partner with TMR to plan and deliver bus priority measures along congested State-controlled and City-controlled corridors, to improve the reliability of high-frequency bus services.</td>
<td>Bus priority measures can enable services to maintain travel times and reliability across the high-frequency network, giving buses the advantage they need over private cars.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>Partner with TMR to plan and progressively implement high-quality public transport services to the northern growth areas of the city. Where initial service demand cannot be quantified, we will seek to trial demand-responsive services to grow demand.</td>
<td>Providing high-quality public transport services to the northern corridor, including areas of Coomera, Pimpama and Ormeau, will support the continued growth of these emerging activity centres and reduce the reliance on private vehicles. The early provision of public transport will enable residents to establish sustainable travel patterns from the outset.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>Identify other types of passenger transport services that can improve the coverage of our public transport network, and deliver supporting measures (for example signage and passenger set down areas) where appropriate to facilitate the safe operation of these services.</td>
<td>Flexible, demand-responsive passenger transport services can complement and extend the reach of the public transport network, particularly in geographically-challenged locations.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>Support the State and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to investigate water shuttle services between key destinations along the city’s waterways.</td>
<td>Water-based transport services have the potential to deliver public transport and tourism benefits for the Gold Coast. Non-scheduled or shuttle water transport services would carry additional passengers when the public transport network is under pressure, such as during major events.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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Coordinating the high-frequency heavy rail, light rail and bus networks will enable passengers to conveniently transfer between services, opening up a much larger range of destinations.

**Improved interchanging ability for passengers**

**Passenger interchanges**

A one-seat journey across the city on the public transport network isn’t always possible on the Gold Coast due to the long distances involved. Interchanging between public transport modes can be unattractive for many passengers, particularly those commuting to work. As the public transport network expands, high-frequency light rail and bus corridors will offer the opportunity to transfer between fast, frequent and reliable services without the need for a timetable. Local bus feeder services will connect to the high-frequency spines at key interchange locations.

We will plan and deliver supporting infrastructure works where required to ensure interchange locations allow passengers to safely and conveniently transfer between services.

**Park and ride**

Across the Gold Coast, park and ride facilities can serve three functions:

- inter-city park and ride, which is currently predominantly at heavy rail stations
- event park and ride, which is currently predominantly used for the stadiums at Robina and Carrara
- city-access park and ride, which is used to access public transport to reach an activity centre within the city.

Consistent with park and ride planning principles, the location of park and ride facilities on the Gold Coast must:

- support the public transport network and contribute to reducing private vehicle trips to and from activity centres
- contribute to reducing traffic congestion during peak travel periods and at events
- reduce the need for increased road capacity and parking to service activity centres
- support the most productive use of land
- support the implementation of parking demand measures in activity centres.

We will work with TMR to identify and prioritise the delivery of park and ride facilities in appropriate locations where they can support high-frequency public transport services (refer Figure 10 for potential locations). To encourage walking and cycling, we will partner with TMR to deliver cycle facilities and pathway connections at park and ride sites.

Park and ride facilities to service light rail will also be investigated to inform light rail stage 3 planning.

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**An extended heavy rail network**

As population and employment opportunities increase, both within key urban centres and to the north and south of the city, increased levels of intra-city connectivity will be required. There is potential for the Gold Coast heavy rail to play a greater role in providing uninterrupted, fast and direct public transport connections along the north-south spine.

Introducing more stations would strengthen the inter-city rail service and improve network coordination and connectivity. In the longer-term, extending the heavy rail line south from Varsity Lakes to the Gold Coast Airport would also improve public transport connections within the Gold Coast region. We will advocate for the introduction of new rail stations at Yatala, Ormeau North, Pimpama, Hope Island, Parkwood, Merrimac and Elanora, and the introduction of suburban rail services to meet local demand.

We will support TMR in the planning and delivery of future extension and improvements to the heavy rail network. These works are subject to further technical investigation and the availability of funding.
### Actions

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| 3.1 | Support TMR in the delivery of improved interchange facilities. This includes:  
- undertaking land use planning in corridors where it is anticipated the light rail will be delivered, and in key network interchange locations  
- providing high-quality customer infrastructure such as seating, shelter and passenger information at bus stops on trunk routes throughout the city  
- working with TMR to develop a policy outlining agency responsibilities for the construction and maintenance of bus stops.  | To enable convenient transfers between services, passenger transport infrastructure must:  
- have a consistent look and feel across the network for improved system legibility  
- be clean and functional, providing passengers with seating and shelter where appropriate  
- be well-lit and located close to surrounding activities to promote safety.  | Ongoing |
| 3.2 | Partner with TMR to plan and deliver park and ride facilities that are consistent with best-practice planning principles. More specifically we will:  
- implement supporting infrastructure where required to improve the operation of inter-city and major event park and ride facilities  
- finalise and endorse the draft City of Gold Coast Park and Ride Planning Study and develop a program to progressively implement the study’s recommendations  
- investigate and progressively implement new park and ride facilities at locations that support travel on public transport within the city.  | Park and ride facilities can be implemented in appropriate locations to improve accessibility to public transport.  | 1-5 years |
| 3.3 | Assist TMR to plan and deliver new heavy rail stations at Pimpama, Hope Island and Merrimac.  | The State has committed to deliver 3 infill rail stations to improve connectivity for Gold Coast residents, and support increasing population and employment opportunities in these areas.  | 1-5 years |
Figure 10 – Existing and potential park and ride sites

KEY

Rail
- Potential park and ride site for further investigation
- Existing park and ride site

- High-frequency bus
- Light rail
- Heavy rail

* Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH)
Providing viable and efficient passenger transport options can increase employment, education and social opportunities for young people, lower income and other marginalised or disadvantaged people for whom private car ownership is not available or practical.

Currently, some areas of the Gold Coast have limited access to scheduled public transport services. The viability of scheduled services can be limited by factors such as low population density, and dispersed travel patterns. The cost of public transport may also be unaffordable for residents on lower incomes, which reduces their access to services, recreation, employment and volunteer activities.

Transport options for those with limited access to scheduled public transport services

Flexible, demand-responsive transport services can meet the transport needs of people within the community who cannot access scheduled services because of geographic isolation or accessibility requirements. Taxis and booked hire services also play an important and growing role in the provision of personalised transport services. We will investigate the provision of demand-responsive services in areas where public transport options are limited.

The City currently provides a Free Seniors Travel initiative that enables eligible Gold Coast seniors to travel for free on Surfside buses. The Council Cab service also provides an affordable option for seniors or those with a disability to access their nearest shopping centre.

Facilities that comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation

Bus stop infrastructure upgrades ensure facilities comply with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002. We are on track to achieve accessibility compliance targets which require all bus stops to be compliant by 31 December 2022.

Public transport that is affordable

The State has implemented a simplified eight-zone network across South East Queensland resulting in reduced fares. For the Gold Coast, this means the previous 11 zones were reduced to four, making public transport more affordable and attractive to customers.

For those who are eligible, concession tickets can halve the cost of a regular public transport fare. We will continue to advocate for affordable ticketing products, including concession initiatives that support eligible residents.

Providing community transport options

Case study: Council Cab service

The City’s Council Cab service provides a door-to-door transport option for Gold Coast residents aged over 60 and those with a disability.

The service offers an affordable transport option for residents allowing them to travel to their local shopping centre with their carer or dependants for a minimal fee.

Residents from 51 suburbs are able to access the nearest of the 18 shopping destinations available. There were approximately 20,000 passenger trips recorded for this service in the 2016–17 financial year.

Case study: Free Seniors Travel

The Free Seniors Travel initiative is fully funded by the City and is part of our commitment to encourage more Gold Coast residents to use public transport and make better use of existing services.

Due to the success of this scheme, the City has committed to continuing this initiative to 30 June 2020. The scheme provides seniors (holders of a TransLink Seniors red go card) with free travel on TransLink urban bus services during off-peak hours from Monday to Friday. In the 2016-17 financial year, there were 930,000 passenger trips recorded using this scheme.
Delivering DDA-compliant facilities

Case study: bus stop DDA upgrade program

The City is committed to improving the standard of its public transport infrastructure to ensure the system is accessible and inclusive to all. We are on track to achieve accessibility compliance targets, which are a statutory requirement within the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.

We’re partnering with TMR to determine the most appropriate location and design for new bus stops and the upgrade requirements of existing facilities.

The works involved in upgrading a bus stop will depend on the bus stop type. The four bus stop types are outlined below:

Minimum boarding point
Typically installed in built-up suburban areas, urban or rural sites with low customer demand.

Regular stop
Generally located in low density suburban or non-urban areas. These stops have low-frequency bus services.

Intermediate stop
Predominantly located in suburban areas or along main passenger transport corridors, these stops have moderate-frequency bus services.

Premium stop
Premium stops are predominantly located at major attractions (such as shopping centres, places of employment and near community or health facilities) and/or along corridors with high-frequency services. These stops can serve locations which have a high level of customer demand and contain a high level of supporting components.

Images sourced from the Queensland State Government
## Actions

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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Continue to provide the Council Cab service and review geographic coverage and eligibility criteria to ensure value for money is achieved in delivering the service.</td>
<td>Providing these types of flexible transport options helps to fulfill public transport’s essential social role of enabling people to access jobs, housing, education, health services and recreation opportunities.</td>
<td>Annual</td>
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<td>ACTION TYPE: Deliver</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>Advocate for State support to secure the continuation of the Free Seniors Travel initiative beyond 2020 and to expand the initiative to include light rail and weekend travel.</td>
<td>This scheme encourages seniors to travel more on public transport, helping them to better connect with their communities. Including light rail services within the initiative would provide greater benefits to the community.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>ACTION TYPE: Advocate and support</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
<td>Ensure DDA targets for accessible public transport infrastructure are met. This requires that 100 per cent of bus stops are DSAPT-compliant by 2022.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 are a set of legally enforceable standards, authorised under the Disability Discrimination Act. These standards provide a timeframe for compliance.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>ACTION TYPE: Deliver</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td>With the support of TMR, develop an integrated approach to making bus stops, light rail stations and heavy rail stations more accessible, which includes the delivery of: • improved bus stop and station infrastructure (for example wider platforms and bicycle racks) • safe road crossings, kerb ramps and pathways • improved amenity through additional street trees, shelter and hydration stations.</td>
<td>As trips on public transport increase, bus stops and stations will need to be progressively upgraded to ensure all passengers can safely board and alight services. The area surrounding a stop or station can also be improved to encourage safe walking and cycling trips to public transport.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>ACTION TYPE: Support and deliver</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>Work with TMR to trial flexible demand-responsive services within developing areas of the city that have limited public transport services and poor network coverage. The role of booked hire services in providing personalised transport options will also be considered.</td>
<td>In areas where scheduled urban bus services are not viable, flexible demand-responsive services can provide residents with transport options that help to reduce the reliance on private vehicles.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>ACTION TYPE: Support and deliver</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td>Develop a program of upgrade works to ensure safe, accessible and easily identifiable taxi ranks within activity centres and near key destinations throughout the city. This will also include consideration of kerbside requirements associated with booked hire services.</td>
<td>The City needs to ensure kerbside facilities provide a safe environment for the operation of taxis and booked hire services.</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
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<td>ACTION TYPE: Advocate and support</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>Advocate for affordable ticketing products that are easy to use and cater for various needs (for example tourist and family travel).</td>
<td>Reducing the cost of a public transport trip will encourage greater use of public transport.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>ACTION TYPE: Advocate</td>
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Priority 5:
Providing facilities and information that make public transport easy to access, use and understand.

The Gold Coast attracts approximately 13 million visitors and more than 15,000 new residents every year\(^\text{11}\). For new or occasional users of public transport, easily accessible customer information and state-of-the-art technology and equipment can make catching public transport easier.

**Improved facilities and customer information**

We will work with TMR to continually improve ticketing products and equipment to make public transport travel on the Gold Coast easier. TMR is expanding the distribution network of go card outlets and the next generation of go cards will enable instantaneous balance top-up and incorporation of the go card into a much wider variety of media.

By investing in innovative technologies we will provide real-time information and services to a greater number of residents and visitors. For example, integrating real-time data into wayfinding signage would provide travellers with information to help them with their travel choices.

Improving bicycle facilities surrounding bus stops, light rail and heavy rail stations can make it easier to cycle to public transport. In addition to improving pathway and bikeway facilities, we will investigate the potential to allow bicycles on board buses and trams.

**Better signage and wayfinding**

Many people walk to public transport. Passenger information and signage to direct people to and from public transport can help to make travel easier. A well-designed wayfinding system is key to building people’s confidence in reaching their destination.

A wayfinding strategy has been developed to include public transport as one of the principal destination points. The new wayfinding system will allow people to reach their destination on informed routes by providing cues at key decision points.

Following a successful wayfinding pilot project in Broadbeach, signage (that aligns with State wayfinding requirements where appropriate) will be implemented in key centres across the city to encourage greater utilisation of public transport.

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\(^{11}\) Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016-17 (catalogue 3218.0)
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| 5.1 | Support TMR in improving customer access to public transport information, including:  
- enabling broader access to public transport journey planning information via mobile and wifi-enabled devices and the provision of information displays near public transport stops and stations  
- providing public transport users with easy-to-understand maps and customer information about the public transport network. | To encourage more people to use public transport, ticketing facilities and real-time information must be readily available. | 1-5 years |
| 5.2 | Progressively implement wayfinding signage in the priority areas of Broadbeach, Southport, Surfers Paradise, Robina, Burleigh Heads and Coolangatta. | Wayfinding signage will be delivered to improve the customer experience and assist in making the public transport network more legible. | 1-5 years |
| 5.3 | Continue to work with government partners to investigate the potential to allow people to take their bike onto public transport. | Cycling to access public transport is encouraged as it reduces localised congestion and demand for car parking spaces. Currently, full size bikes are not permitted on a light rail tram or on a bus. This is a disincentive to cyclists who wish to complete their trip by cycling and using public transport. | Ongoing |
| 5.4 | Advocate to TMR and the New South Wales State Government to better integrate public transport services across the southern Gold Coast border into the Tweed Shire. | For those that live and work close to the Gold Coast border, differing fare and service contract arrangements can make catching public transport unattractive and costly. There are opportunities to improve service integration and encourage greater use of public transport in these areas. | Ongoing |
Implementing the plan

The Public Transport Plan will be implemented by the City in partnership with the State.

Monitoring

Monitoring activities will determine whether we are on track to meet the vision and intent of the Transport Strategy and the City Plan. It is critical to monitor the number of daily public transport trips, the number of people encouraged to switch modes, the change in people’s perceptions of public transport and the overall mode shift.

Key measures of success will be analysed to monitor progress against the plan, including:

- public transport patronage increase (and mode share proportion)
- public transport accessibility
- public transport network coverage
- public transport average speeds compared with car travel
- reduction in vehicle trips and increase in public transport trips within the light rail corridor
- public transport user satisfaction
- an increase in the number of seniors using the Council Cab service and Free Seniors Travel initiative.

The City’s collaborative partnership with the State allows the sharing of information and data that will help us track progress on Public Transport Plan initiatives.

Review

We will continually improve the way we undertake planning, prioritisation and implementation of public transport improvements. The Public Transport Plan will undergo a review within five years of adoption and will feed into future reviews of the Transport Strategy.

Delivery

Funding for public transport must be sustained to reflect its importance in the future transport network. With adequate planning and funding from all levels of government, we can appropriately manage future traffic demand to improve amenity and ensure ongoing quality of life in our city.

Public transport investment

The transport program is one of the seven programs in the City’s budget. It provides the investment required over the next 10 years to deliver the actions contained within the Public Transport Plan. We will take the lead on a number of actions and also provide support to TMR in delivering improvements to certain services and infrastructure. The Public Transport Plan contains a balance of:

- low-cost, short-term actions (such as undertaking planning studies for future network upgrades and making improvements to customer information and wayfinding infrastructure)
- high-cost major infrastructure projects (such as new light rail lines) that will require substantial investment from the State and the Australian Government to be progressed
- minor infrastructure projects including bus stop upgrades.

The program also recognises there are a number of State-led actions yet to receive government prioritisation, approval or funding. In particular, the ongoing development of the bus, heavy rail and light rail network is a State responsibility. The City continues to work collaboratively and support the State in the planning and delivery of public transport services and infrastructure on the Gold Coast.

Public transport operation on roads

We also deliver a large road network investment program. Planned investments in the road network are contained in the City of Gold Coast Road Network Plan. These investments will include opportunities to improve running speeds and reliability of buses operating on the road network, through bus priority measures on roads and at intersections.

Active transport facilities to support public transport

Actions to boost walking and cycling across the city are contained in the City of Gold Coast Active Transport Plan. This plan outlines the need to design and deliver high-quality pathway and bikeway facilities, including off-road paths and on-road bike lanes, within close proximity to key activity centres and public transport stations. Actions also include trialling a bike share scheme, which can extend the reach of the public transport system by making it easier to access stations and stops by bike.

We have significantly increased our active transport contributions in recent years and continue to work with the State to deliver infrastructure projects through cost-sharing arrangements under the Cycle Network Local Government Grant funding program.
For more information
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