



Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET42641
Your ref: A757647

30 September 2021

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3533-21 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Michael Hart MP, Member for Burleigh on 1 September 2021 requesting a comprehensive evaluation of all route and mode options for Stage 4 of the Gold Coast Light Rail (GCLR4) and a pause on all planning, business case and land acquisition actions until the review is completed.

The Gold Coast Light Rail has transformed the way people move around the Gold Coast, supporting its growth as a modern, accessible city. With the success of stages 1 and 2, construction is now underway on Stage 3, which will expand the tram network from Helensvale to Burleigh Heads. The key to ensuring an integrated and sustainable transport network now and into the future is to connect communities to jobs, businesses, hospitals, medical facilities, education, shopping, dining, entertainment and sporting centres.

The proposed GCLR4 will further connect communities to essential services, as well as cultural and urban attractions. GCLR4 will deliver a 13-kilometre extension south of the Gold Coast Light Rail stages 1 to 3, linking Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta, via the Gold Coast Airport. The Palaszczuk Government has committed \$1.5 million to undertake a transport planning study (Tugun to Coolangatta) and \$5 million (jointly funded with the Gold Coast City Council) to undertake a preliminary business case for light rail planning.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) completed a Gold Coast Highway (Burleigh Heads to Tugun) Multi-modal Corridor Study (the study) in 2020. The aim of the study was to review all previous planning and develop an updated transport strategy for this corridor that considers all modes of transport including walking, bike riding, public transport and private vehicles.

The study identified that the Gold Coast Highway route from Burleigh Heads to Tugun has the greatest potential for a shift to public transport as it is close to where people already live. It also provides the potential to transform the Gold Coast Highway into a high amenity, community-focused boulevard with priority given to walking, bike riding and a world class light rail system that enhances the liveability and character of the southern coastal suburbs. The study investigated several alternative routes and found a light rail extension down the Gold Coast Highway was the most direct and efficient route.

This alignment:

- responds to population growth
- minimises property impacts
- minimises travel time
- provides the best opportunity to improve walking and bike riding connectivity and safety
- delivers greatest benefits for cost
- minimises impacts to the environment and cultural heritage
- maximises opportunities to enhance sustainability objectives
- protects the M1 corridor for future heavy rail extension.

Five corridors—including West Burleigh Road—were reviewed to determine the most appropriate route for light rail from Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta. The potential corridors were assessed against the South East Queensland Regional Plan's (*Shaping SEQ*) themes of growth, prosperity, connectivity, sustainability (environment/social) and liveability.

As part of the corridor study, a detailed traffic analysis process was undertaken to determine the number of traffic lanes, intersection configuration and performance of the Gold Coast Highway now and into the future. The analysis confirmed the nearby M1 (Varsity Lakes to Tugun) upgrade will perform a critical transport function on the southern Gold Coast, providing the opportunity to:

- accommodate a significant increase in vehicle demands, including both local demands on service roads and regional demands on the motorway itself
- improve local connections to the M1 and service roads, including a new connection between the M1 and 19th Avenue.

This significant increase in capacity will provide through traffic with a viable alternative, reducing demand on the Gold Coast Highway. This provides an opportunity to redesign the Gold Coast Highway as a more multi-modal and pedestrian friendly corridor. Through careful analysis of travel demands and traffic movements throughout the wider southern Gold Coast network, this study has identified the opportunity for some sections of the Gold Coast Highway to be reduced from four to two through lanes, in parts of Palm Beach and Currumbin, without detrimental impacts on travel time and traffic capacity. This will involve the rationalisation of intersections and relocation of some right-turns to ensure traffic flow and property access is maintained without significant additional property resumptions.

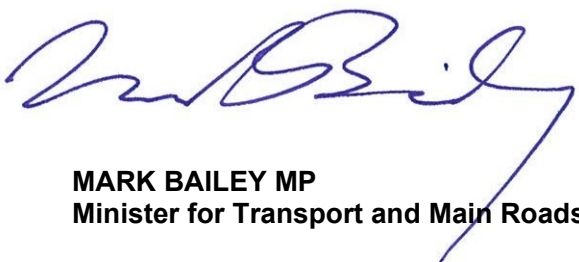
In 2012, the Gold Coast Southern and Central Area Transport Strategy assessed the specific transport benefits of light rail on the Gold Coast Highway relative to continuing frequent bus services. The Strategy found that light rail between Broadbeach and Coolangatta would increase daily public transport trips by 22 per cent relative to buses. This is compared to light rail between Broadbeach and Burleigh Heads, which had a 12 per cent increase in daily public transport trips relative to buses.

TMR has recently finalised a ten-week period of public consultation about GCLR4. I was pleased to learn about interest in the project, with more than 4100 people visiting face-to-face pop-up consultation sessions across seven southern Gold Coast locations. Feedback provided will be considered in the next stage of planning for the extension south of Burleigh Heads. I have referred this petition to TMR so that it may be considered alongside other submissions.

Further analysis of alternatives, such as trackless trams, and confirmation of the preferred route, will be investigated during the Preliminary Evaluation process, prior to commencing a detailed business case.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



MARK BAILEY MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads