

Strategic Policy

Transport Levy

Corporate Plan reference:	A strong community <i>In all our communities, people are included, treated with respect and opportunities are available to all.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connected, resilient communities, with the capacity to respond to local issues
Endorsed by Council on:	July 2017 (OM17/120)
Manager responsible for policy:	Manager Transport and Infrastructure Planning Built Infrastructure Group

POLICY PURPOSE

The Transport Levy Policy (Policy) is aimed to improving the strategic integrated transport network and supporting its users understanding to travel effectively, efficiently and more sustainably. The Policy, while providing a strong focus on improvement of the public transport system for the Sunshine Coast, has an additional element related to securing and supporting the future strategic major transport needs of the Sunshine Coast, primarily relating to multi-modal corridors and infrastructure which assist economic activity.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a basis for utilising revenue raised through a Transport Levy (Levy) on rateable properties in the Sunshine Coast Regional Council (Council).

POLICY OUTCOMES

This Policy provides guidance to ensure the effective allocation of revenue raised from a Levy.

This Policy applies to selected eligible transport improvements considered of value to residents, delivered in a timely manner and supporting economic activity.

This Policy will bring forward beneficial multi-modal transport outcomes beyond the reach of currently available funding streams.

The creation of strong partnerships, particularly with the State, will be required to deliver on the policy outcomes and to facilitate:

- Policy development
- Improved advocacy capacity
- Delivering catalyst projects with economic development potential
- Creating a more sustainable travel culture which benefits the transport networks and the community overall
- Directing 'seed funding' to attract improved and earlier transport investment by the State
- Partnering the delivery of mutually beneficial transport projects.

The outcomes of this Policy include:

- Utilising transport levy revenue to fund or leverage selected eligible transport infrastructure for multi-modal transport outcomes that have priority but cannot be provided in a timely manner through existing funding mechanisms
- Allowing Council to influence State and Federal Government transport network investments, or bringing forward of investments, to attract State and Federal funding
- Enabling Council to enter into partnerships with the State Government, and potentially third party interests, to jointly fund selected eligible transport infrastructure and services
- Enabling Council to fund selected eligible initiatives, projects and services for community benefit
- Enabling Council to raise awareness within the community of travel choices, leading to a change of travel behaviour, to increase the use of sustainable transport and related network operation
- An increased level of community awareness on the current and future transport issues facing the Sunshine Coast
- Develop and maintain a broad understanding of likely future strategic transport 'disruptions'
- Building a transport futures fund directed at achieving long term multi-modal transport infrastructure outcomes.

POLICY SCOPE

This Policy relates to any new or continuing initiative that is funded with revenue from the Levy and applies to all Councillors, Council staff, contractors and others associated with any existing or new transport levy initiative. The scope of the policy includes:

- Complements Council's vision for the Sunshine Coast to be Australia's most sustainable region
- Supports the objectives of Council's *Integrated Transport Strategy*
- Supports multi-modal transport corridor planning and development providing for the future transport needs of the Sunshine Coast either as a sole participant or in a partnered way, primarily with the State Government
- Assists in leveraging investment in projects to improve multi-modal transport infrastructure and services and to influence State and Federal Government funding priorities
- Look to leverage outcomes related to major non-road based projects with the State and Federal Governments
- Enables bringing forward selected major transport projects to achieve economic development outcomes for business and industry, particularly in partnership with others
- Enables Council to create a 'Transport Futures Fund' to apply strategically and with a focus on the coastal corridor mass transit initiative
- Enables ready reaction to emerging issues
- Seeks more efficient use of private cars and modal shift from private cars to public passenger transport
- Sourcing relevant transport related reliable data for analysis, forecasting and trend identification
- Tracking potential transport 'disruptors' and evaluation of any strategic transport impacts
- Allows Council to be approached by external agencies, institutions and partners offering significant partnered opportunities with broad community benefit
- Applies to external agencies, institutions and partners to the extent possible.

POLICY STATEMENT

Sunshine Coast Council recognises, through its Integrated Transport Strategy, the important role of all transport modes in providing for the movement of people and goods, thereby creating a connected community supporting an economically viable and sustainable region. This commitment is demonstrated by activity through this levy and will assist in ensuring the Sunshine Coast is provided with more sustainable travel choices and is able to cope with expected growth.

The State Government co-ordinates and delivers State roads, public transport (rail, bus etc) and strategic cycle networks throughout Queensland through various Divisions of the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Council expects the State to meet its role and the associated responsibilities but would consider providing ancillary support.

Council has a role in the local road, pedestrian and cycle networks predominantly. It is not intended for the Transport Levy to be linked directly to established transport budget programs financed through existing funding streams and mechanisms, except as indicated by the policy or as resolved by Council.

It is not intended that Council takes on roles and activities typically left to 'market forces' to provide (e.g. technology elements, specific service types, etc.).

Integration of initiatives and timely programming of projects are essential to achieve viable transport networks to move people.

The transition of people using cars to using more sustainable transport modes of travel (public passenger and active transport) for some of their journeys, as growth continues, is necessary. This will help utilize the capacity of existing alternative networks and alleviate or delay the need for investment addressing road capacity constraints. This may be more relevant if there is any sustained onset of externalities, i.e. peak oil related travel impacts.

Resources and actions are primarily directed to purely local government and community outcomes. However, Council could consider directing resources into partnering beneficial multi-modal transport projects in a timely manner and potentially consider participation in non-traditional areas in an informed, selected and limited way if there is a demonstrable and direct community benefit.

The policy should not replace what can realistically be achieved through the effective use of existing budget revenues and external funding sources, complemented with mechanisms for effective land use planning and its integration with multi-modal transport solutions.

Potential examples of outcomes of the desired aims are:

- Road corridors – bring-forward selected beneficial multi-modal projects/initiatives with the State, solely by Council or with development
- Public Transport – improvements to infrastructure, services, stops, user systems, information systems, priority works
- Travel behaviour change focused at individual and community wide benefits and outcomes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All revenue collected annually from the Transport Levy will be allocated to infrastructure, service improvement projects and initiatives with any balance directed to the Transport Futures Fund, and be broadly in line with an indicative Five Year Program. From 2017/18, the contribution to the Transport Futures Fund is targeted to be about 60%. Any unspent or uncommitted revenue raised each year identified at financial year's end (excluding valid commitments attracting carryover approval) will be transferred into the Transport Futures Fund.

All revenue collected will be accounted for separately to ensure that established processes governing collection and the management of allocations to specific qualifying projects and outcomes are followed. Any subsidy, grant or revenue generated by the application of this funding should also be included in the accounting of the Levy, with accrued interest on funds held in the Transport Futures Fund remaining with the Transport Futures Fund.

The annual Transport Levy Program should contain a generic outline of the types of projects within categories and sufficient information is to be provided to enable Council to confirm compliance with the Policy.

An indicative Five Year Program will be developed containing infrastructure, services and other initiative types grouped into sub-programs. A high level indicative Five Year Program at Sub-Program level will be incorporated as part of the annual Budget process and be used as a guide. Background information supporting the indicative Five Year Program should contain a generic outline of the types of projects or initiatives, expected timeframes and the proposed budget or its expected indicative cost.

A longer planning horizon will be applied when considering investment by the Transport Futures Fund.

There is no intent to deliberately supplement or take on core budget program elements.

Activities for which revenue from the levy can be used include:

- Investing in major strategic transport initiatives that have a genuine multi-modal outcome, with significant benefit(s) to public transport capability, including road improvements which may include bus and transit priority measures on Council roads and green links to provide penetration through developed areas
- Contributing to trials of flexible public transport services to meet specific community needs (subject to investigation, demonstration of value for money, consideration of other benefits, and approvals)
- Supporting the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and specifically its TransLink Division, with meeting Disability Discrimination Act compliance in relation to kerbside public transport infrastructure assigned as Council assets
- Take advantage of other activities benefitting public transport by supporting issues such as roll out of real time information, education material, etc.
- Advancing selected investigations to bring forward beneficial strategic transport outcomes on the Sunshine Coast (includes coastal corridor mass transit)
- Working in partnership with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to bring forward infrastructure improvements giving public transport an advantage (priority measures) on State roads and corridors, such as queue jumps and green links which have local benefit
- Selected bring forward of major planned multi-modal infrastructure improvements which have a significant economic and community benefit
- Transport network improvements related to maximizing the use of the existing network, adding resilience and limiting delays while maintaining safety. This may include network connectivity improvement works
- Assist with strategies and actions to improve transport outcomes for specific eligible events
- Develop and selectively implement coordinated travel behaviour programs to improve transport outcomes on the Sunshine Coast
- The establishment of a 'Transport Futures Fund' to focus on the coastal corridor mass transit initiative and to target specific strategic, long term, staged, transport projects which secure the transport needs of the Sunshine Coast
- Selective investigations and data analysis of transport related topics to inform Council of trends and future risks and opportunities
- Provision of short term (project based) resources to specifically plan, develop or deliver approved projects and initiatives under the Levy.

Activities for which revenue from the levy cannot be used include:

- Funding must not be directed towards maintenance costs for transport infrastructure
- Funding must not be directed towards employing long term resources to specifically plan, develop or deliver approved projects and initiatives under the Transport Levy
- Funding must not be applied to programs or projects beyond the scope of this policy
- Funding must not be applied to initiatives that could be identified as funding 'business as usual' activities and responsibilities of the Department of Transport and Main Roads which would normally occur or be required if the Levy was not in place, except as directed by Council. This includes but is not limited to:
 - provision of new services, or the improvement of existing services, related to known development proposals or specific milestones
 - ability to procure improvement through statutory or other mechanisms
 - improvement of a minor change or an operationally necessary matter.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council as a Local Government is not tasked with managing or operating public transport. This is legislated as a State responsibility and the community would expect this responsibility to be met.

Council will set and monitor the Policy and associated activities.

The Mayor and Transport Portfolio Councillor will establish a relationship with the Minister(s) for Transport and Main Roads.

Council staff will establish and maintain a working relationship with relevant officers of the Department of Transport and Main Roads and public transport providers.

In taking a "One Network" approach, the Department of Transport and Main Roads is the likely primary partner and external stakeholder. The Department of Transport and Main Roads plans, integrates and manages the road, rail and bus networks across Queensland through:

- TransLink Division dealing with the current and short term public transport network and also regulating and managing taxi services, limousine services, ride share services and other transport services
- Policy, Planning and Investment Division dealing with planning for longer term public transport infrastructure and service network, the strategic road network and principal cycle network
- Regional Offices dealing with local road planning studies and delivery of State transport programs.

The wider range of transport roles and responsibilities is outlined in the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Implementation responsibility

An indicative Five Year Program and a longer term plan relating to a Transport Futures Fund are to be developed and managed through the Built infrastructure Group with input from other Groups.

Any application of the Transport Futures Fund will be guided by the Transport Futures Fund Plan and applied through a resolution of Council or through a budget review process.

The annual Transport Levy Program will be developed and managed through the Built Infrastructure Group. Implementation of annual initiatives will occur in line with the substantive role of the respective Council Group/Branch/Unit or under direction, as appropriate.

Implementation guidelines

Projects and initiatives approved for funding under the Levy should conform to the guiding principles of this Policy. Additionally they should conform to any existing business policy or specifically introduced guidelines to apply across all or to specific projects.

The amount of the Levy and its method of application will be determined through the annual budget process. The status of the Levy will be reported at least annually to Council and overall progress monitored by the Chief Executive Officer.

An annual Transport Levy Program and indicative Five Year Program will be:

- developed and reviewed annually, to ensure the transport infrastructure and services improvements needs of the Sunshine Coast is being best served
- incorporated as a summary with budget papers/submissions
- reviewed annually as part of the Council budget cycle or as directed to ensure the Policy outcomes remain in focus.

Communications

The Policy and its intended application and outcomes, will be communicated with the community.

All relevant matters will primarily be communicated through the Council website and include other methods as appropriate and as opportunities arise.

Recognise and promote the results of the Levy through effective branding and signing (where applicable) of infrastructure projects and services.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed in line with all policies upon the election of a new Council, every four years or as directed by Council.

MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

The rate of vehicle registrations compared to the rate of population growth.

The patronage levels of public transport on the Sunshine Coast.

Progress toward meeting the requirements of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 which sets the following timelines by which all bus stops are required to comply:

- 31 Dec 2017 – 90% of bus stops, and
- 31 Dec 2022 – 100% of bus stops.

Change to public transport services in terms of coverage of urban residential areas.

DEFINITIONS

Business as usual – describes all activities within the usual roles and responsibilities by any entity which would normally have occurred, or be required, without the existence of the Levy.

RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Legislation

The following is a listing of legislation which may play a role in this policy:

- Local Government Act 2009
- Local Government Regulation 2012
- Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995
- Traffic Regulation 1962
- Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Road Rules) Regulation 2009
- Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994
- Transport Planning and Coordination Regulation 2005
- Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994
- Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2005
- Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994
- Transport Infrastructure (Rail) Regulation 2006
- Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Regulation 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Standards

- Australian Standards – various
- Public Transport Infrastructure Manual.

Internal Documents *(include)*

- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Indicative 5 Year Transport Levy Program (reviewed annually)
- Transport Futures Fund Plan
- Expenditure Guidelines (when developed).

External Documents *(include)*

- Regional Transport Plan for SEQ (Department of Transport and Main Roads)
- Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) (updated annually)

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Created New Transport Levy Policy 2014 to replace former Public Transport Levy Policy 2012	Yes	Council (OM14/86)	19/06/2014

2.0	Non-material change. (Clarification of treatment of accrued interest related to the Transport Futures Fund.)	Yes	Policy Owner	09/02/2015
3.0	Revised Policy - 2016. Non-material change. (minor wording and title updating)	Yes	Council (SM16/6)	09/06/2016
3.1	Updated branding and department names (non-material changes)	No	Corporate Governance	11/01/2017
4.0	Non-material change. (Corporate Plan update)	Yes	Council (OM17/120)	20/07/2017
4.1	Non-material change Update Organisation changes and minor wording	Yes	Policy Owner	19/03/2018
4.2	Non-material change. (Corporate Plan update and Strategy name change)	Yes	Policy Owner	22/01/2019
5.0	Revised Policy – 2020. Non material change (Corporate Plan update and minor wording)	Yes	Policy Owner	07/05/2020