

# Balanced and sustainable development': mixed views on proposed planning scheme



Traffic on Bungama Street in Maroochydore, which has been earmarked for extra height limits under the new town plan. See the video below. Picture: Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Action Group

ByChris Gilmore

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The proposed new planning scheme for the Sunshine Coast has drawn mixed reactions, with some criticising its increased densities while others have praised it as a driver of economic growth.

Sunshine Coast Council's draft plan was [released last month](#), with residents invited to submit their feedback until September 19.

The scheme outlines suggested changes to zoning, building heights, design, green space and more as the council seeks to manage an [expected influx of 219,100 people to the region](#) between 2021 and 2046.

Among the biggest changes are around Maroochydore, where new height limits of up to 18 storeys or 60m have been proposed.

The Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Action Group (MTAG) has been among the groups to criticise the changes, saying Maroochydore and the coastal corridor to Buddina would bear the brunt.

“This is an issue of both building heights and density,” MTAG president Tracey Goodwin-McDonald said.

“Residential streets that are currently only 8.5m high are being rezoned from low to medium density, which allows heights between three and six storeys, and only multi-storey unit development.

“These unit developments will be code assessable, which means neighbours are not notified and have no opportunity for objection. A new house cannot be built under the same rules.

“The majority of these changes are to smaller residential streets that do not have the capacity to deal with the extra traffic and parking. This, coupled with the increased heights, changes the character of these streets.

“Bungama Street in Maroochydore is an example where the extra traffic makes the street dangerous.” (See the video below, taken on Sunday, August 3, during the Sunshine Coast Marathon.)

MTAG said the planning scheme proposed to accommodate another 34,000 people into Maroochydore, which has a current population of 22,000 people.

The length of Aerodrome Road, including blocks backing onto Parker Street and Hinkler Parade, are proposed to be rezoned to 10 storeys, or 35m high. MTAG estimated this to be more than 100 blocks of land.

Either side of Bungama Street would be rezoned to 22m (six storeys) high, up from the current 8.5m, as would either side of Beach Parade, up from the current 12m.

The tallest buildings would be allowed directly north of the emerging Maroochydore city centre, between First Avenue/Duporth Avenue, Beach Road/Horton Parade and Maud Street, with a maximum of 18 storeys, or

60m. (The Maroochydore CBD is administered by the state government as a Priority Development Area.)

“This plan is putting in the additional people without the infrastructure to support it,” Ms Goodwin-McDonald said.

“The current road network, sewerage and water, police, ambulance, internet and other infrastructure won’t be able to cope with doubling the population in such a concentrated area.

“The Maroochydore area is already experiencing increased congestion and parking frustrations. Parked cars, caravans and boat trailers are **already an issue**.

“The proposed plan assumes a rapid transit public transport system along the coastal corridor, however this is not going to happen within this plan’s 10-year timeframe, if at all given no state commitment nor funding. So this plan will mean extremely congested roads with quiet streets becoming overcrowded with traffic and parked vehicles.”

Councillor Joe Natoli, speaking during July’s ordinary council meeting about the proposal for a mixed-use development at Pacific Paradise that was **ultimately rejected**, said his Division 4 – which covers the coastal strip from Maroochydore to Warana – had more than 140 streets impacted by increased heights.

“One part of Parker Street goes from 8.5m to 35m,” he said.

“My division is doing massive lift when it comes to height increases going into residential areas, where people bought their investment properties, their homes, (and are) having to give that up for the future growth.

“I look at the overall global pressure we’re under (with the housing crisis) and my division has to make the sacrificial part to be able to do the heavy lifting.”



Maroochydore is at the heart of the growing Sunshine Coast region. Picture: Shutterstock.

Others have praised the draft planning scheme for creating opportunities for businesses, investors and the wider community.

Commercial real estate agent and Caloundra Chamber of Commerce president Michael Shadforth said residential expansion would boost demand for retail, office space, industrial facilities and infrastructure upgrades.

“Residential growth doesn’t just mean more homes; it means more jobs, more services and a vibrant commercial ecosystem,” he said.

“As a local with a family deeply rooted in the Sunshine Coast, we genuinely care about the community that’s being built. The new town plan sets the foundation for balanced and sustainable development, and I’m passionate about continuing the path to maintain the Sunshine Coast as a community defined by integrity, resilience and opportunity.”

The state government’s SEQ Regional Plan sets out where future growth will occur and the population and dwelling targets that need to be accommodated on the Sunshine Coast, requiring that the council plans for an additional 84,800 dwellings between 2021 and 2046.

Across the South-East Queensland, the plan aims for 60 per cent of new dwellings to be in existing urban areas, with 40 per cent in new urban expansion areas.

Ms Goodwin-McDonald urged the council to consider amending the draft planning scheme with a “more realistic” target for growth to 2046.

“This would mean the level of high-density could be reduced now and introduced over a lot longer period, allowing infrastructure to catch up,” she said.

“Secondly, the northern section of the coastal corridor represents 12 per cent of the urban footprint but is getting 26 per cent of the growth. This level of concentration needs to be reduced and the distribution reviewed.

“Thirdly, better utilisation of the Maroochydore CBD area could be made. The CBD is only receiving 3 per cent of the population growth yet it is in the best location to maximise the transport infrastructure benefits of [The Wave that is being delivered by the state government](#).

“The CBD is recognised and accepted as a high-density development area, so why can it not take more people and leave the quiet residential streets alone?”

Sunshine Coast mayor Rosanna Natoli.



Mayor Rosanna Natoli has encouraged residents to have their say on the draft plan.

“Council has listened to our community and worked hard to reflect what matters most: protecting our natural environment, maintaining our unique character and addressing public transport, traffic and parking, improving development outcomes and housing affordability,” she said.

“This is your opportunity to see what’s proposed for your neighbourhood and the wider region, and to have your say.

“Whether you support the plan or have concerns, we want to hear from you. This is about shaping the Sunshine Coast we all want: now and into the future.”

The council is hosting a range of information sessions about the proposed planning scheme, click here for [dates](#). Three public meetings have also been added:

- Wednesday, August 13 – Nambour State College, Hungerford Hall, 5.30pm for a 6pm start and 8pm finish.
- Saturday, August 16 – Kawana Community Hall, 2pm for a 2.30pm start and 4.30pm finish.
- Wednesday, August 20 – The Events Centre, Caloundra, 5pm for a 5.30pm start and 7.30pm finish.

Click [here](#) to view the proposed planning scheme.

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