

# Townsville Mobility Strategy

Summary report March 2022



## Route to a connected city

The largest city in Northern Queensland, Townsville needs a modern, fit for purpose passenger transport network to support its ongoing growth as a diverse and maturing city.



Queensland  
Government

Over the next 15-years Townsville's passenger transport\* network will be transformed to provide a more attractive, equitable and sustainable experience.

The Townsville Mobility Strategy (TMS) outlines the priorities and key initiatives for this transformation.

### The Queensland Government will work with Townsville City Council to deliver:



a modernised network



a customer focus



targeted improvements

Townsville needs all levels of government to plan, invest and deliver land use and transport initiatives together. These initiatives will be used by the Queensland Government, Townsville City Council and the Australian Government to inform coordinated action and investment.

### Regional Priorities

The TMS is part of a wider strategic and integrated approach to transport and land use planning for a region that is keen to keep growing and developing its economy.

The key regional priorities that the TMS supports are outlined in:

- *The North Queensland Regional Plan*
- *The Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan*
- *Townsville2020 – Townsville City Council's masterplan for Townsville*
- *The Townsville Integrated Transport Plan – Strategic Directions*
- *The Townsville City Deal 2016*
- *The Townsville Health and Knowledge Development Strategy.*

## Existing situation

Townsville's passenger transport network includes bus, ferry, long-distance rail, community transport, taxi and booked hire / rideshare.

### Bus network

Urban bus routes in Townsville and Magnetic Island are part of the TransLink network.

Fourteen urban bus routes operate in Townsville connecting to the major trip attractors like: Townsville CBD; Aitkenvale; Thuringowa Central; James Cook University and Townsville Hospital; Breakwater Ferry Terminal; TAFE Queensland North; Magnetic Island.

The Queensland Government also funds a school bus network in Townsville.

### Long distance connections

Many long distance coach services connect Townsville to destinations including Cairns, Brisbane, Mackay, Rockhampton, Airlie Beach, Tennant Creek, Charters Towers and Mount Isa.

Queensland Rail operates two long distance rail services from the Townsville Railway Station:

- Spirit of Queensland – Brisbane to Cairns, stopping at 26 stations including Townsville
- Inlander – Townsville to Mt Isa.

*Townsville is critical to driving economic development in Australia's north.*

(Townsville City Deal 2016)



## A new bus hub

In mid-2019, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Townsville City Council delivered the new Townsville City Bus Hub to provide a single central arrival and departure point for the CBD.

Situated on Ogden and Hanran streets the bus hub is the core of the Townsville bus network. It provides customers with access to Flinders Street and the CBD, the new Queensland Country Bank Stadium and the Palmer Street restaurant precinct.

\* Public transport is scheduled urban bus, rail, light rail and ferry services. Passenger transport includes public transport and community and courtesy transport, long-distance services providing connections between communities, school transport services, taxi, rideshare and on demand public transport.

## Existing situation (continued)

### Walking and cycling connections

Townsville has a maturing network of footpaths, shared paths, cycle tracks, on-road cycle routes and other facilities that provide for walking or cycling.

The Townsville active transport network includes:

- more than 100 kilometres of on-road cycle lanes
- more than 40 kilometres of off-road cycle paths
- on-road cycle lanes, typically marked lanes or wider shoulders
- off-road facilities, typically shared paths
- designated cycle routes on quieter streets
- walking and cycling only bridges over major waterways.

### Island connections

Passenger ferries connect Townsville to Magnetic Island and to Palm Island.

There are up to 18 return ferry services each day between Townsville and Magnetic Island that depart from the Breakwater Ferry Terminal.

On Magnetic Island, bus route 250 provides good connections to the island ferry terminal with a maximum 5-minute wait between ferry and bus services.

Routes 200 and 201 connect to the Breakwater Ferry Terminal every ten minutes, ensuring passengers transferring from the ferry services have a minimal wait.

### Passenger transport challenges

- A rocky flood-plain with the meandering Ross River, Castle Hill and Mt Louisa disrupting transport connections.
- A hot and dry tropical climate regularly subject to extreme weather events and flooding.
- A dispersed population and employment with new growth forecast to occur on the fringes of the urban area.
- Some estates and subdivisions with roadways not designed for bus access or bus stops.
- Network with circuitous routes, service gaps and long travel times, resulting in low patronage.
- Fare zones and ticketing arrangements that customers and operators tell us are not easy to understand or use.
- Passenger information gaps.
- A legacy of Hail and Ride means many passengers and some bus drivers are uncertain about pick-up rules.
- Service unreliability from cancelled and late-running services has eroded passenger confidence that buses will turn up.
- Parking across Townsville is readily available and usually free or inexpensive.

### Passenger transport opportunities

- A growing, changing city where new development can be shaped to support transport and land use integration.
- Generous road corridors that offer opportunities to accommodate new passenger and active transport facilities.
- Gentle topography where generally flat suburbs support inclusive access and easy walking and cycling.
- New technologies and innovations like electric vehicles, mobility as a service, ride-booking, intelligent transport systems, smart ticketing and autonomous vehicles.

### Customer expectations

Our customers in Townsville have told us that their priorities for the Townsville network are:

- improved personal safety and security
- more convenient payment options and information sources
- a more reliable bus system
- better protection from the tropical climate.

# Moving into the future

## Evolving the network

This strategy outlines the route to a better-connected Townsville. The city will be easily accessible, reliable and its most populous and popular locations will be connected.

This more attractive, accessible, legible and safe passenger transport network for Townsville will be sustainably delivered through:

- **a modernised network** that applies fit-for-purpose contemporary network and infrastructure design to efficiently connect people to where they want and need to go
- **a customer focus** that understands the needs and wants of our current and potential customers and gives them the information they need to make informed choices
- **targeted improvements** that respond to urgent problems, quick wins, greatest customer benefits and emerging opportunities with focussed investments.

## A customer focussed network

Transport and Main Roads will work with Townsville City Council and our network operators to improve the user-friendliness of the passenger transport system by:

- promoting benefits of active and public transport
- providing improved customer-friendly travel information
- improving wayfinding signs and pedestrian access in and around hubs and stops
- improving passenger transport hubs and stops – shelter, information, seating and so on
- introducing Smart Ticketing to streamline payment and travel times
- reviewing fare zone arrangements.

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*An attractive passenger transport network conveniently accommodates the mobility needs of passengers. It is easily accessible, reliable and connects the most populous and popular locations within a city.*

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## Modernising the network

Transport and Main Roads will work with Townsville City Council and our network operators to modernise the Townsville bus network as the city grows. Over time, Townsville will transition to a ‘trunk and feeder’ style network.

This will benefit Townsville by: concentrating services on the highest demand corridors; facilitating new or improved transfer opportunities at interchange hubs; and allowing lower capacity connections/modes to feed higher capacity ones. Key initiatives include:

- high frequency trunk corridors supported by bus priority where required
- transit hubs developed at trunk junctions and major centres to allow convenient interchange
- various forms of local “feeder” connections including walk and cycle, park and ride, local bus and booked hire services (taxi, rideshare and demand responsive transit).



**90%** of trips to and from places of employment are undertaken by private vehicle



only **1%** by passenger



**5%** active transport modes



**4%** of people work from home

(This is a 2016 figure)

Source: statistics are based on 2016 ABS figures

# Townsville trunk public transport corridors

The trunk public transport map identifies existing, future and potential long-term high frequency public transport trunk corridors for Townsville.

Existing and future trunk corridors support the current and likely future needs for Townsville. The eight corridors for investigation may be required in the longer term if urban development and transport demand entails them.

These trunk corridors are numbered in order of expected need, however the actual sequence of delivery will depend on how Townsville actually grows and develops. Each of these corridors will be considered in detail to identify exact routes, service arrangements, stop and hub locations, and supporting infrastructure needs.

*Townsville is the region's major population centre and is home to 82 per cent of people living in Northern Queensland. It is anticipated Townsville will have an additional 68,000 residents over the next 25 years.*

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019)

## LEGEND

- Network Hub
- Activity centre
- Airport
- Hospital
- University/TAFE
- Ferry terminal

## Corridors

- Current trunk
  - C1 CBD – Aitkenvale
  - C2 Aitkenvale – Douglas
  - C3 Aitkenvale – Thuringowa
  - C4 CBD to Casino/Ferry Terminal
- Future trunk
  - C5 CBD – Garbutt
  - C6 CBD - Northshore
  - C7 CBD – Douglas (via Annandale)
  - C8 Magnetic Island route
- For investigation
  - C9 Castle Town – Aitkenvale
  - C10 Douglas – Thuringowa
  - C11 Garbutt – Aitkenvale
  - C12 Rising Sun – Fairfield
  - C13 Thuringowa – Northshore
  - C14 Thuringowa – Upper Ross
  - C15 North Shore – Northern Beaches
  - C16 Fairfield – Elliot Springs



*Smart land use planning and urban design is critical to supporting a more modern, connected passenger transport network.*



## *A very frequent bus corridor*

Ross River Road is the busiest bus corridor in Townsville. The 200 and 201 bus services run offset every 10 minutes to and from the CBD and Aitkenvale every weekday between 6.30am and 8.00pm, and half hourly afterwards to 12.00am.

This is the highest frequency extended bus corridor outside South East Queensland and compares favourably to most non-busway or light rail corridors in South East Queensland.

Optimising the Ross River/Charters Towers Road corridor will be the first priority (refer to C1, C2 on trunk public transport map – p.5) in developing the Townsville trunk public transport network.

## Moving into the future (continued)

### Targeted investments

Transport and Main Roads will work with Townsville City Council and our network operators to deliver short-term investments where they can have the most benefit, respond to urgent needs and build momentum for bigger changes. Targeted investments will help kickstart the transformation of passenger transport in Townsville.

Targeted investments will focus on:

- opportunities to improve bus performance on existing and future trunk corridors
- opportunities to connect to Townsville Airport
- less circuitous and lengthy bus routes through route and stop rationalisation
- wayfinding signage and paths, especially: CBD to train station; CBD to Breakwater Ferry Terminal; and Townsville bus hub to surrounds
- introducing the TransLink brand at key stops and hubs
- upgrading bus stop infrastructure to enhance safety and weather protection for local conditions
- inclusive access: hubs, stops and mapping
- opportunities for demand responsive transit.

### Mobility supportive land use

Transport and Main Roads will work with Townsville City Council and other Queensland Government agencies to ensure better land use and urban design outcomes, supporting the objectives of the North Queensland Regional Plan and the Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan.

Opportunities to progress collaborative integrated planning outcomes include:

- Transit supportive urban design – designing for bus access and walking and cycling connections to stops for people eight to 80 years old
- People and businesses along key transit corridors
- Accommodate more of people’s everyday needs locally
- Minimise out of sequence, low density developments on the urban fringe.

These goals will be reflected in:

- Statutory planning and development assessment: Townsville City Plan (TCC); State planning policy (Queensland Government); Guide to Traffic Impact Assessment (TMR)
- Development regulations and special instruments such as master planning; priority development areas; state development areas; major development areas
- Design and building codes.

## Delivering the strategy

The Department of Transport and Main Roads will work collaboratively with Townsville City Council and other stakeholders to prioritise the staged investment of the passenger transport network in alignment with the Townsville Mobility Strategy.

Actions have already been integrated into the recently released Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan.

Transport and Main Roads will deliver many of the actions in this Strategy through its existing investment programs, initiatives and business as usual. Some actions will be led by other agencies, such as Townsville City Council, in consultation with the Queensland Government.

### Existing Transport and Main Roads initiatives and funding programs

Some of the Transport and Main Roads programs and initiatives that may help deliver improvements to the transport network for Townsville in the coming years:

- Cycling Infrastructure Grants which aim to accelerate the delivery of cycling networks and encourage more cycling across Queensland
- Queensland Walking Strategy which provides the framework for promoting walking as an accessible active transport mode across the state
- Passenger Transport Accessible Infrastructure Program which provides funding assistance to local councils across the state to upgrade existing passenger transport facilities under this program
- Safe School Travel (SafeST) Program which provides funding for school crossing supervisors

- Look Out! Program which assists schools in managing the flow of traffic in pick-up and set-down areas, amongst other initiatives
- Safe School Travel Infrastructure program which provides transport-related infrastructure to improve the safety of students travelling to and from schools (funded 50/50 with councils)
- Passenger Transport Infrastructure program delivers infrastructure that supports passenger transport services including stops, stations, park 'n' rides, bus priority measures, signage, wayfinding, technology and accessibility upgrades
- Smart Ticketing will provide a consistent and seamless ticketing system across all modes of public transport in South East Queensland and regional urban bus services throughout Queensland. Smart Ticketing will provide customers with more choice in how they pay for public transport including contactless debit and credit cards, smart phones and smart watches, as well as go card and paper tickets. The new system will also provide customers with a new integrated ticketing and journey planning app with improved real-time information. The Department will be looking to roll-out the Smart Ticketing project across 18 regional urban centres which will include Townsville in 2022.
- The Bus Stop Shelter Program (BSSP) which provides local governments with funding for new bus stop shelters at approved bus stops throughout Queensland.

## CREATING BETTER CONNECTIONS FOR QUEENSLANDERS

A 10-year plan  
for Queensland  
passenger transport



*Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders* is a draft 10-year plan for passenger transport in Queensland. It is a high-level, strategic plan centred on five key passenger transport priorities. 20 signature initiatives will deliver on these priorities over the next 10 years.

*Creating Better Connections* supports the *Queensland Transport Strategy* and builds on the solid foundation of our current passenger transport system in Queensland to deliver a single integrated transport network that is efficient, safe, reliable and accessible to everyone.

The *Townsville Mobility Strategy* directly aligns with the priorities and initiatives within *Creating Better Connections*.

## Part of a wider strategy

### Queensland Transport Strategy

The *Queensland Transport Strategy* sets out a 30-year vision for the transformation of the state's transport system that will flexibly respond to customer preferences, global trends and emerging technologies.

Directions relevant to the Townsville Mobility Strategy are:



**Enabling**  
the introduction  
of new mobility  
providers and  
technology



**Prioritising**  
investment in  
shared transport  
services and  
infrastructure



**Upgrading**  
roads and delivering  
new capacity to  
improve journey times  
and reliability



**Ensuring**  
transport is  
accessible  
for all.

### Smarter solutions: network optimisation framework

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has developed the *Smarter solutions: network optimisation framework* to help those involved in investment planning and decision making to prioritise consideration of lower cost and non-infrastructure

solutions before considering more extensive infrastructure solutions. Ensuring that we consider solutions which optimise our existing network, will ensure we design and deliver a best-practice infrastructure program.

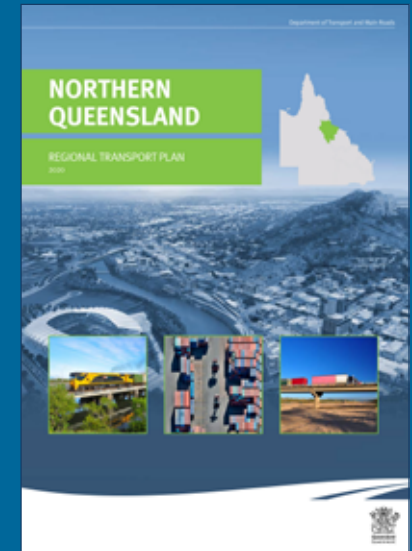
### Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan

The *Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan* (NQ RTP) outlines a shared direction for shaping the region's transport system over the next fifteen years. It covers all modes of transport with a focus on the networks and services in the region and the inter-regional and international connections that are vital to the region's social and economic prosperity.

The NQ RTP has developed priorities to set the direction for the region's transport network over the next fifteen years, which are:

- Priority 1 – Greater safety and resilience
- Priority 2 – Transport that supports the economy
- Priority 3 – Integrated transport for a sustainable, liveable and prosperous region.

The TMS is a key PT initiative to assist with the implementation of the Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan.



Please visit the Department of Transport and Main Roads website, [tmr.qld.gov.au](http://tmr.qld.gov.au), and search for “Townsville Mobility Study”

### Translating and interpreting assistance



If you need an interpreter call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service: [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

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